Deleuze, ethics and corpora: deconstructing an argument in favour of GM crops

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Structure

• flag some key concepts from Deleuze’s work

• show how these are productive for a form of corpus-based CDA - *Electronic Deconstruction*

• Use Deleuze to help reconfigure ‘critical’ (and thus ‘ethical’) in relation to use of corpora in CDA.
Deleuze...who and why?

• ‘Deleuze more and more serves as the theoretical foundation of today’s anti-globalist left.’
  (Slavoj Žižek, 2004: xi)

• (Nietzschean) Deleuze not part of theoretical base of CDA...

• Deleuze is useful stimulus for thinking what ‘critique’ (and thus ‘ethical’) means in corpus-based CDA?
Deleuze: some key concepts

• Becoming and life

• Immanence (versus Transcendence)

• ‘Desiring machines’ (versus Transcendental Subject)

• Rhizome
• Actual-Virtual

• Exterior / Interior
Deleuze: ethics and morality

- morality is transcendent and relates to *being*
- ethics is immanent and relates to *becoming* and thus creativity
- ethical life maximises one’s rhizomatic becoming (whilst not at expense of becoming of others)
- ethics of exteriority
Electronic Deconstruction

• A way of critically engaging with an argument whilst learning about how its topic is discussed

• via *keyword analysis* of Web 2.0 supplements (e.g. online discussion forum)

• electronic supplements can show *what* normal concepts for discussion of argument’s topic

• substitute for related concepts in the argument with normal concepts (*keywords*)

• explore if this leads to deconstruction in the argument
Electronic Deconstruction and Deleuze

- actual-virtual problems of an argument (*not* actual problems)

- analysis of (unfamiliar) *keywords* in electronic supplement

- analyst can *become* rhizomatically

- critique informed by ethics of exteriority

- the argument *becomes* deconstructed rhizomatically
Guardian Discussion forum corpus

10,314 words  78 comments

Keywords:

• biodiversity

• campesina

(+ qualitative analysis of keywords...)
La Via Campesina (www.viacampesina.org) corpus

Search terms: GMO, genetic(ally) modified, genetic modification

49,879 words  40 texts

Keywords:

• biodiversity

• sovereignty

• terminator

(+ qualitative analysis of keywords…)
Webgetter (WordSmith Tools)

Search terms: ‘sovereignty’ and GMO, genetic(ally) modified, genetic modification

87,754 words  63 texts

Keywords

biodiversity

terminator

(+ qualitative analysis of keywords…)

Critique and Electronic Deconstruction

- CRITIQUE is rhizomatic-surrogate and quasi-immanent

- the analyst is *not* a pre-formed transcendent SUBJECT

- actual-virtual problems in argument lead to actual-virtual deconstruction (analyst is surprised!)
Ethics and Electronic Deconstruction

• embracing of ethics of exteriority

• raises awareness of *becoming-restriction* of social groups

• my keyword choice is guided by ETHICAL-IMMANENT-LIFE value: *differentiation occurs when becoming is unrestricted*
Subjectivity and Electronic Deconstruction

• keyword analysis: reduces SUBJECTIVE basis for deciding upon normal concepts for a topic’s anti-discourse

• But SUBJECTIVITY is developed as a desiring-machine, producing connections with unfamiliar (use of) keywords…
the end