

Deleuze, Critique and the Problem of Judgement

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Abstract

The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze is often regarded as pre-critical, pursuing a pure metaphysics in the classical (pre-Kantian) sense. However, a closer inspection of Deleuze's work shows a complex engagement with the critical tradition. This article examines this engagement, and suggests that, where Kant failed to follow the consequences of his own 'critical revolution' Deleuze urges us forward, via the force of affirmation, towards its fullest realization. In this respect, I argue, affirmation and critique are not incompatible, and it would be a mistake for us to read the political intervention of *Anti-Oedipus* as merely affirmationist. This would be to ignore the fact that Deleuze and Guattari wish to suggest, through their notion of desiring production, a new means of evaluation beyond the capitalistic system of exchange from which psychoanalysis failed to extricate itself. This involves freeing judgement as a power of thinking from those constraints which are entirely illegitimate from the standpoint of a properly realized critique.

Keywords: *Deleuze, Kant, critical philosophy, judgement*

A moving object at A (declares Aristotle) cannot reach point B, because it must first cover half the distance between two points, and before that, half of the half, and before that, half of the half of the half, and so on to infinity; the form of this illustrious problem is, exactly, that of The Castle, and the moving object and the arrow and Achilles are the first Kafkian characters in literature.

(Jorge Luis Borges)

Life goes beyond the limits that knowledge fixes for it, but thought goes beyond the limits that life fixes for it.

(Gilles Deleuze)

It has become commonplace to align the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze with a certain non-critical attitude, in which affirmation replaces critique as the motor of thought. Lyotard, following the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*, remarked that the latter

in spite of its title ... is not a critical book. Rather, like *Anti-Christ*, it is a positive, assertive book, an energetic *position* inscribed in discourse, the negation of the adversary not happening by *Aufhebung*, but by forgetting. ... either you *leave immediately* without wasting time in critique, simply because you find yourself to be elsewhere than in the adversary's domain; or else you critique, keeping one foot in and one out, positivity of the negative, but in fact nothingness of the positivity. (1977, 11)

Political critique is here characterized as a discourse of limits. For Marxists, there is a point past which capital can no longer reproduce the social relations on which the

capitalist mode of production itself depends. But Marx insisted that this limit was already to be found within the very heart of capital: the separation, or alienation, of the proletariat from the product of their labour generates the primary form of exchange value on which all subsequent transactions will be based. The constitutive inequality of this relationship (between labour and capital) cannot fail to be passed on through the chain of equivalences which perpetuate the limit and defer it, bringing us closer, so the argument goes, to the end of capital with every turn of the reproductive cycle.

It is true that, for Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism has effectively re-invented the social function of limits: capitalism's exterior limit, the point past which it would be forced to transform irreversibly into a different type of social formation, can be displaced into its very interior, these interior limits then being 'exorcized', expelled in turn, so that capitalism is swept inexorably towards its outside without ever reaching it. This is why the exterior limit is to be found always on the inside, within the central axiomatic of the law of exchange. Lyotard says that Deleuze and Guattari have good reason, therefore, to dismiss "the politics of limits and of negativity" in favour of an affirmationist strategy (1977, 13). Transgression as a motive for revolutionary politics is rendered ineffectual because "every limit is constitutively transgressed, there is nothing to transgress in a limit" (1977, 25). The limit is no longer limiting, or inhibiting, as such but *generative*, assuming a crucial place within the reproductive regime such that every reproduction is also an expansion, a pushing back of the limit. This is the central capitalist innovation. Hegel, writing at the dawn of the industrial age, was, perhaps the first to note that

something is already transcended by the very fact of being determined as a restriction. For a determinateness, a limit, is determined as restriction only in opposition to its other in general, that is, in opposition to *that which is without its restriction*; the other of a restriction is precisely the *beyond* with respect to it. (2010, 105-6)

Pre-capitalist societies policed their exterior limits, rendered them unthinkable and uncrossable, through a mythos in which the destruction of society is encoded in a shared, primordial imaginary. Capitalism bases its power on the precise opposite of this, producing subjects who must, as a matter of course, traverse the limit itself, occupy and *live* it at the level of instincts and the psyche. Lacan said that the neurotic has his or her own mythos in the Oedipus complex (1979). The 'beyond' of the limit must become a representative of desire, *decoded* as such, and not simply an object of terror or foreboding (although it can be this too) so that the limit immediately promises the banishment of the limit, the liberation from it, at the very moment of its enforcement. The permissive structure is entirely coincident with the repressive structure (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 269).

Psychoanalysis, especially in its structural variants, produces its formula for phantasy by stating that the limit is both imaginary (unreal) and structuring (real). What is denounced by Deleuze and Guattari as "Oedipus" is not, as some have claimed (Flieger, 1997, 602), Freud's reductive tendency to refer everything back to the family when, in fact, investments of desire operate on the basis of a much richer diversity of elements. Or rather, this denunciation is only preparatory, dealing with the content and not the form. As Deleuze says, if we replace, as Lacan does, the actual father and mother with pure symbolic operators, castration having nothing any longer to do with imagined actual wounds but with the actual symbolic wound of language, this makes no "practical" difference at all (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987, 81). The familial (imaginary)

limit can be exceeded, for example, in phantasies of seduction, incestuous dreams and so on, but such transgressions will only ever amount to the concretization of the non-familial (social and material) limits. Structure, when applied to the unconscious, designates this duality of an unrestricted imaginary restricted to the structural position of a personalized unconscious. It is not, then, the notion of limit that Deleuze and Guattari wish to dispense with, as Lyotard claims, but this particular *double articulation* of the limit to serve both a restrictive and an unrestrictive use, this specifically capitalist production of an *identity* of the two limits which cancels the difference between constraint and liberation.

In a philosophical register almost completely alien to the language of *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze had already articulated the idea of a generative limit, a limit that, through its very constraint, produces something positive. Recalling Heidegger's statement that what is most thought-provoking is the fact that we are not yet thinking (1968, 4), Deleuze writes that "thought thinks only when constrained or forced to do so, ... it remains stupid so long as nothing forces it to think" (1994, 275). But what is intimate enough with the workings of thought to spur it into life if not this stupidity [*bêtise*] itself? Deleuze also recalls a famous passage from Plato regarding the genesis of thought: Socrates gives the example of three fingers of different lengths, observing that there is nothing essential in an empirical individual of this sort which may be said to "summon or awaken the activity of the intellect". But if we compare the different lengths of the fingers and say that one is longer than another but shorter than another still, or harder than one but softer than another, etc., then the mind is confronted with the problem that an empirical individual is no longer "one", but also multiple, both shorter and longer, harder and softer, at the same time (*Republic*, VII, 523d-524c). Deleuze understands this as follows: an empirical object confronts the senses with the "being of the sensible" as such, with that which "can only be sensed", and this allows us to perceive the very limit of the "empirical exercise of the senses", which, from the point of view of the sensibility is, precisely, "imperceptible" (1994, 139-40). The sensible limit generates thought to the extent that we are forced to think that which necessarily escapes the empirical exercise of the senses: "sensibility, in the presence of that which can only be sensed (and is at the same time imperceptible) finds itself before its own limit, the sign, and raises itself to the level of a transcendental exercise: to the "nth" power" (140). This power is the power to think that which "can only be thought" (153), which is the generative element, an unlimited difference (bigger/larger, harder/softer) that lies "beneath things", beneath finite sensible objects but also constituting the being of the sensible as such (Deleuze, 1990, 2).

What needs to be noted here is that this concern with what is given to the senses and with what necessarily goes beyond the limits of the sensible places Deleuze squarely within the critical tradition of philosophy as inaugurated by Kant. Badiou is no less mistaken than Lyotard when he claims that "Deleuze's philosophy ... is resolutely classical. And, in this context, classicism is relatively easy to define. Namely: may be qualified as classical any philosophy that does not submit to the critical injunctions of Kant" (2000, 44.5). For Badiou, Deleuze re-asserts the claims of a pre-critical metaphysics in the name of an affirmative philosophy: "philosophical intervention is affirmative – a point on which I agree with Deleuze. When Deleuze says that philosophy is in its essence the construction of concepts, he is right to put forward this creative and affirmative dimension, and to mistrust any critical or negative reduction of philosophy" (Badiou and Žižek, 2009, 80-1.) But, in fact, there is nothing in Deleuze's

work to suggest that he regards critique and affirmation as essentially incompatible. In his early work on Nietzsche, for example, he writes that Kantian critique is “positive, affirmative, because it can not restrict the power of knowing without releasing other previously neglected powers” (1983, 89). If Deleuze regards Kant as an ‘enemy’ it is because he believes the latter to have betrayed the central critical principle, which is the idea that in order to liberate affirmative thought one must be able to think the power of limitation as a positivity in itself. Nietzsche’s contribution was to have shown that “affirmation would never be real or complete if it were not preceded and followed by the negative. Here we are concerned with negations, but with negations *as powers of affirming*” (Deleuze, 1983, 179). Rather than reject the critical principle, Deleuze suggests that we can pursue “a re-invention of the critique which Kant betrayed at the same time as he conceived it, a resumption of the critical project on a new basis and with new concepts” (1983, 52).

The centrality of this aim to Deleuze’s project appears to be borne out in the pages of *Anti-Oedipus*, in which Kant’s ‘critical revolution’ is cited as a primary resource for a practical conception of desire as a force directly constitutive of socio-political reality (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, 75). We should understand by ‘practical’ here not what is distinguished from theory but, rather, what is conditioning with respect to reality. Desire conceived as an immediately constitutive, which is to say *productive*, force provides Deleuze and Guattari with a means to think social, political and aesthetic phenomena of a remarkable variety. They also maintain, though, that the critical revolution “changes nothing” so long as this productive force is seen to constitute not the real as such but “superstitious beliefs, hallucinations, and fantasies” (75). The theme of Kant’s ‘betrayal’ of the critical enterprise can be seen quite clearly here: desire may be said to produce its objects, but as long as the objects proper to desire are said not to be ‘real’ but ‘imaginary’ objects, i.e. objects which ‘lack’ reality or substitute for it, then the emphasis on production means little. This is because the search for conditions, for a conditioning element, would then only be a search for what conditions our capacity to *represent* objects in the mind, and thus the properly constitutive or practical dimension is lost.

Kantian critique stemmed from a need to overcome what had, by his time, become an untenable opposition between rationalism and empiricism. The rationalism of Leibniz could operate freely, using geometry and mathematics to pursue philosophy on the basis of what is a priori, innate to reason. Empiricists such as Hume, on the other hand argued that the production of knowledge necessarily involves the input of experience, that knowledge is only produced through additions from experience, through a ‘synthesis’ of what is empirically given. Kant’s ingenious solution to this deadlock of an unlimited thought and a limited experience was to show that this is not an either/or situation, that a priori thought has a synthetic (productive) aspect all its own which is conditioning with respect to the sensible contents of experience. The activity of thought does not ‘transcend’ the outer world so much as condition it, and these conditions are present at every moment of our experience in the sense that they render experience possible. Critical philosophy, then, argues that the *criteria* by which we can evaluate the contents of experience are both distinct from the empirical *but also* internal, or ‘immanent’, and not transcendent, to it. This is why Deleuze and Guattari argue that the transcendental unconscious entails a practically (materially) constitutive conception of desire: “a transcendental unconscious defined by the immanence of its criteria, and a corresponding practice that we shall call schizoanalysis” (1983, 75).

Kant's betrayal, however, involved the re-introduction of a division, of exactly the kind pre-critical philosophy suffered from, between the phenomenality of what appears and the noumenality of things in themselves, and this allowed transcendence to re-establish itself within a subject whose power of thought consists in the formation of mental representations of the world. The relationship between the real object and its mental representation can then only be addressed within the terms set by a representational subjectivity. The absolute limit between what is conditioning and what is conditioned is displaced, or contained, within phenomenal subjectivity, in which the limit reappears but now as a limit relative to a subject. The limit is thus doubly articulated, as Nick Land points out, in line with a capitalistic "inhibited synthesis", in which the production of the new is allowed only on the condition of a reproduction of existing structures which regulate how we incorporate and receive the new (2011, 71).

And yet, Kant maintains that it is reason's ultimate vocation to think the unconditioned as "a primal ground", which is to say, to think that which is not conditioned by pre-existing structures of reception (2007, 230). The most pressing issue introduced by Kant's critical revolution is that reason's *metaphysica naturalis*, its natural 'end' or tendency to attain to the unconditioned in thought, is always in danger of leading us into illusion by going beyond the limits set by the senses:

Plato abandoned the world of the senses because it set such narrow limits for the understanding, and dared to go beyond it on the wings of the ideas, in the empty space of pure understanding. He did not notice that he made no headway by his efforts, for he had no resistance, no support, as it were, by which he could stiffen himself, and to which he could apply his powers in order to put his understanding into motion. (Kant, 1998, 140)

Kant is suggesting that thought's apparently greatest power, its ability to speculate beyond what is given to the senses, is also its greatest powerlessness in that it outstrips our ability to understand, to evaluate and to *judge*. This is why the furnishing of immanent criteria is so important for Kant: "We will call the principles whose application stays wholly and completely within the limits of possible experience immanent, but those that would fly beyond these boundaries transcendent principles" (1998, 385). How are we to distinguish immanent criteria if thought's tendency towards transcendence (metaphysical illusion) is, as it were, part of its 'natural' operation? Kant says we must use experience, and the sensibility, as touchstones. But the problem which then emerges – as we shall see shortly – is that if experience is used to prove itself, it becomes self-verifying, and this holds regardless of the kind of experience we started out with. The problem ultimately has to do with how the nature of self-limitation is to be grasped. As Christian Kerslake points out, Kant's self-reflexive critique of reason ultimately leads us to a problem regarding the legitimacy of self-limitation: "reason is a faculty among others, yet is somehow able to criticise the use not only of the other faculties, but of itself among these faculties" (2009, 49). Kant's notion of a self-limiting structure of reason brings the question of right, and therefore of judgement, to the fore: by what right does one faculty of the mind have to limit the operation of the others? If there are limits to cognition, by what right do we, being necessarily subject to these limits, come to know them?

Deleuze says that Kant ultimately confused the "positivity of critique" with the "rights of the criticised"; in other words, Kant "saw critique as a force which should be brought to bear on all claims to knowledge and truth, but not on knowledge and truth themselves; a force which should be brought to bear on all claims to morality, but not

on morality itself" (1983, 89). Truth or morality may be posited as matters of "fact" (*quid facti*). We thus assume we already have access to truth or morality, and then proceed to enquire by what right we have to make this claim (*quid juris*). This is how Kant appears to proceed. In this way an element within the critical process is isolated (we assume in advance the existence of truth or morality) in order to provide a *ground* on which the process of criticism can ensue. For this reason something is left uncriticised and critique goes in a vicious circle in which it needs to prove, *ad infinitum*, what it presupposed. But Deleuze insists that critique must be total or it is nothing at all. It is not enough to say that critique must provide us with criteria by which to evaluate phenomena, we must also be able to evaluate the genesis of these criteria themselves, as Deleuze explains:

On the one hand, values appear or are given as principles: and evaluation presupposes values on the basis of which phenomena are appraised. But, on the other hand and more profoundly, it is values which presuppose evaluations, 'perspectives of appraisal', from which their own value is derived. The problem of critique is that of the value of values, of the evaluation from which their value arises, thus the problem of their *creation*. Evaluation is defined as the differential element of corresponding values, an element which is both critical and creative. Evaluations, in essence, are not values but ways of being, modes of existence of those who judge and evaluate. (1983, 1)

It is on this issue of judgement that Deleuze appears to be most in conflict with Kant, who is said to have established "a fantastic subjective tribunal" (Deleuze, 1997, 126). Deleuze, speaking through Antonin Artaud, declares the wish "to have done with judgment", and while this may have become something of a slogan for Deleuzian philosophy, it is not at all clear what is meant by it. Certainly, judgement does not mean the same thing as evaluation since the latter is proposed as the existential and creative element *by which* judgements themselves are made possible. Whenever Deleuze denounces judgement, what is denounced is less the judgement itself as an *activity* of knowledge than the point of view on life, the mode of existence, that is presupposed by it. Every judgement of knowledge, in other words, presupposes a judgement of existence, "a prior moral and theological form" (Deleuze, 1997, 127). Ultimately, what judgement means for Deleuze is not some system of categorial knowledge, such as the one invoked by Kant, but a prior attitude or presupposition. What is denounced, then, is not judgement *per se* but the 'judgment of God' (Deleuze, 1997, 130) – which ultimately means a judgement "of life" (145) – the idea that we are always already, by way of some lived, existential mode, submitted to judgement so that new perspectives of evaluation are precluded. (This, we will remember, was precisely the condemnation of the oedipal model, according to which we are submitted ever more harshly to the law the more we transgress it.)

The relationship between Kantian judgement and Deleuzian evaluation may not, however, be as fraught as it appears. Kant, it is true, identifies thinking in general with a capacity to judge, arguing that we can

trace all actions of the understanding back to judgments [*Urteile*], so that the understanding in general can be represented as a faculty for judging [*Vermögen zu urteilen*]. For according to what has been said above it is a faculty for thinking [*Vermögen zu denken*]. Thinking is cognition through concepts. Concepts, however, as predicates of possible judgments, are related to some representation of a still undetermined object. The concept of body thus signifies something, e.g., metal, which can be cognized through that concept. It is therefore a concept only because other representations are contained under it by means of which it

can be related to objects. It is therefore the predicate for a possible judgment. (Kant 1998: 205-6)

To think is to create concepts, which is how Deleuze defines philosophy. But concepts, for Kant, are already the *predicates* of some judgement, even if the ‘object’ of it has not been determined by any experience or encounter in which the judgement could be applied in practice. We might say that the judgement is unactualized. If thinking is to create concepts, what grants this capacity (*Vermögen*)? It cannot be judgement as a *power* (*Urteilstkraft*) as such, as an already granted capacity or faculty – since that would presuppose that we already had the actual object providing the occasion to apply our concepts in an actual judgement – but, as Beatrice Longuenesse argues, “an as yet unactualized potentiality to form judgments” (2005, 19). What is this unactualized potentiality if not what Deleuze says conditions the judgement of knowledge (the actualization of judgement through experience) as the principle of creation as such?

Badiou argues that Deleuze dispenses with judgement altogether in favour of “narration”, in which truth would become a sort of depiction of the world rather than an evaluation of it (2000, 56.7). But we need to remember that Deleuze’s goal is to distinguish carefully between judgements made according to the actual or empirical as this appears in experience from that which gives us a *perspective* on the actual. It is true that experience involves the synthesis of an actual object upon which our judgements come to bear in practice, but this is only possible through the synthesis of a *different* kind of object, a virtual object that allows the actual to itself become an object of evaluation. Deleuze asks us to consider a child learning to walk. Certainly, no one learns to walk in the absence of the confirmations of experience, of “the supposition or the intentionality of an object, such as the mother, as the goal of an effort, the end to be actively reached “in reality” and in relation to which success and failure may be measured” (1994, 99). But it is equally true that a different type of object is synthesized, through a different type of effort, less active than passive:

[...] the child constructs for itself another object, a quite different kind of object which is a *virtual* object or centre and which then governs and compensates for the progresses and failures of its real activity: it puts several fingers in its mouth, wraps the other arm around this virtual centre, and appraises the whole situation from the point of view of this virtual mother. (Deleuze, 1994, 98)

This notion of switching perspectives is vital: there is a transcendental point of view on the empirical, a point of view by which criteria not present to experience are used to evaluate experience, but there is also an empirical point of view on the transcendental by which the evaluation itself may be evaluated. This is what immanent critique is. If Kant was unable to grasp this mobility between perspectives, and thus betrayed immanence, it was because he located the capacity for thought within a thinking subject whose constitution *as* a subject was in some sense already presupposed.

Deleuze denounces the vicious circularity which thus results from Kantian critique: “for Kant the possibility of experience serves as the proof of its own proof” (1994, 274). We begin with the given of the sensible manifold, but the given is not yet experience, it needs to be synthesized into something which we can understand *as* experience. Synthesis proceeds according to rules which are *not* given. Our going beyond experience, to discover its possibility, is confirmed *by* our experience, whose possibility is confirmed by going beyond it. This is why Deleuze says that, for Kant, it

is not enough simply to say that we have subjective principles which order our knowledge, but that these principles are only realized or actualized in experience, in the manner by which our experience becomes subject to these principles on a practical basis. We have a transcendental principle insofar as we apply it to an empirical domain of experience, and even though we do not derive the principle from the experience, experience is itself the thing which demonstrates that the principle holds for the domain. In other words, we have a conditioned empirical field given in experience, and a conditioning non-empirical transcendental principle which grounds this experience. But what necessitates or confirms that the principle holds for the field, by what *right* is the field submitted to the principle? On what is the ground grounded? Experience, even though it requires a non-experiential ground, appears in this sense to be self-verifying and the *practical* dimension – which would relate not to the empirical as such but to the difference between the transcendental and the empirical – is occluded.

The real danger is not judgement *per se*, much less evaluation, but this manner in which a subject find itself verified by its own experience despite the fact that subjectivity is nothing *other* than the synthetic construction of itself. Many commentators claim that Deleuze's primary contribution was to have proposed some sort of radically new form of subjectivity, but it would be far more accurate to say that Deleuze provides us with a new means to evaluate 'normal', everyday subjectivity itself. Deleuze and Guattari's commitment to schizophrenic experience does not mean that they believe we should abandon normal subjectivity in favour of madness. Rather, schizophrenia may become a philosophical perspective by which subjectivity in general may be apprehended according to a new set of evaluative terms.

Deleuze's central issue with Kant, then, is that the latter presupposes a form of self-apprehension of the subject as a unity, and that all multiplicity is determined accordingly. Kant, for example, writes that:

[...] if I divide a whole that is given in intuition, then I go from a conditioned to the conditions of its possibility. The division of the parts (*subdivisio* or *decompositio*) is a regress in the series of these conditions. The absolute totality of this series would be given only when and if the regress could attain to simple parts. But if each of the parts in a continuously progressing decomposition is once again divisible, then the division, i.e., the regress from the conditioned to its condition, goes *in infinitum*

The subject, as a finite being, may encounter multiplicity in terms of its empirical constitution. This multiplicity may be susceptible to infinite divisibility, but Kant continues that this is an infinity nevertheless limited to a subject's apprehension of itself, contained in the subject, to the extent that the subject is self-conditioning:

[...] the conditions (the parts) are contained in the conditioned itself, and since this conditioned is given as a whole in an intuition enclosed within its boundaries, the conditions are all given along with it. [...] Now since this regress is infinite, all its members (parts) to which it has attained are of course contained in the whole as an aggregate, but the whole series of the division is not, since it is infinite successively and never is as a whole; consequently, the regress cannot exhibit any infinite multiplicity or the taking together of this multiplicity into one whole. (1998, 528)

Kant says that the finite subject may encounter a multiplicity, but it is never a true multiplicity, since it is always routed through an always already conditioned finitude delimited by intuition. But Deleuze asks, what if intuition were not a unity, first and

foremost? Schizophrenics often experience the world directly as a multiplicity, without first presupposing their own subjective and personal unity.

Interestingly, Deleuze pursues this critique of Kant's "transcendental aesthetic" (the forms of intuition) through Freud, specifically Freud's concept of the death instinct as this is elaborated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. The importance of this irreducibly complex work for Deleuze can be summarized as follows: the pleasure principle is a psychological principle which orders our experience of the empirical world in the sense that, quite simply, we seek pleasure and avoid pain; pain and pleasure are meaningfully "bound" (Freud's term for synthesis) within a subject. While this basic fact of self-preservation is empirically verified, the pleasure principle itself does not explain its own dominance over our psychic life, it does not explain *why* pleasure is pleasurable or why pain is painful. There is nothing in the empirical itself that would explain our submission to it. The fact that there could be something "beyond" the pleasure principle was suggested to Freud by patients suffering from traumatic neurosis, or what we would now call post-traumatic stress disorder, who would repeat memories of a traumatic event in dreams and involuntary memories. This repetition of something unpleasurable appears to contradict the pleasure principle, but Freud in fact argues that it suggests that the pleasure principle is itself subordinated to some other principle. It may thus be supposed that while the pleasure principle holds universally for our empirical experience, there must be another, second-order principle which would show why this is necessarily the case. Thus, the empirical may be said to be a rule governed domain, we may even say that there is nothing as such *beyond* the empirical, but the principle which would grant us the right to say this cannot itself be an empirical principle, it must be a transcendental one. In other words, the empirical is all there is, but the empirical is not self-conditioning, and thus empirical experience cannot be self-verifying. As Deleuze puts it, "the transcendental principle does not govern any domain but gives the domain to be governed to a given empirical principle; it accounts for the subjection of a domain to a principle" (1994, 241).

Now, the *difference* between the empirical and the transcendental is of utmost importance here since it would be conditioning with respect to our "subjection": what kind of a difference is this, how is it to be ascertained? Is it an empirical or transcendental difference? It would, for Deleuze, be an *immanent* one, meaning both transcendental and empirical at once. It follows that the power or capacity of thought is to be identified with immanence – and not with a subject constituted *in* immanence – since this power is the ability to shift perspectives between the empirical and the transcendental. Kant's mistake, then, was to have limited thought as a power to a finite subject – even when it needs to be acknowledged that the power of thought is in excess of such limitations – and to have identified the transcendental conditions of subjectivity with its empirical result, effectively cancelling the difference between the transcendental and the empirical. Hegel's solution, for Deleuze, is no better because while Hegel opts for an infinite subject this is still an infinity *of* a limited subject who is interminably surpassing those limits only to discover them anew.

We need to return to the central issue: how do we evaluate that which enables evaluation? The name Freud gives to the second-order principle governing the empirical life drives of synthetic subjectivity is the death instinct. It is death which allows us to separate ourselves from immediate empirical subjection, to establish mediation (representation) as a means by which to evaluate and judge ourselves "from above", as it were. What Deleuze is interested in is how this operation of separation, which invents

the judgement of God, may itself become subject to evaluation. In other words, if death grants us the power to judge, how might death itself be judged? The meaning of Deleuze's "life philosophy" hinges on this essential question because death only becomes judgeable as such from the point of view of life: "death is judged from the point of view of life, and not the reverse, as we like to believe" (Deleuze, 2001, 44). Life is certainly not infinite, and thought is not identified with some infinite power to think (intellectual intuition) as it is in both Spinoza and Hegel. But the finitude of life *is* endlessly constructive, and so "unlimited". Deleuze and Guattari's notion of desiring production is intended to grasp this "unlimited finite" aspect. As they explain in *Anti-Oedipus*, we always begin with a desiring machine, but this beginning is always conditional upon the operation of a prior machine: "there is always a flow-producing machine, and another machine connected to it that interrupts or draws off part of this flow (the breast—the mouth). [...] The first machine is in turn connected to another whose flow it interrupts or partially drains off" (6). We begin in the middle because of our necessary subjection to the first-order principle of empirical synthesis. The fact that this beginning is always conditional upon something prior does not prevent it from being *originary*, a genuine beginning, a point from which the construction (of the new, of empirical difference) proceeds.

The problem Deleuze faces is how to think this construction when, from the empirical point of view, we are involved in an infinite regress. In other words, the problem is how we are to think (or evaluate) our given environment when we are always already in it and constituted by it. The centrality of this question to Deleuze's thought is indicated by the fact it is the problem which motivated his first book, a monograph on Hume, in which he states that the "critical problem of subjectivity" concerns how "a subject transcending the given [can] be constituted in the given" (1991, 86). That we do indeed transcend the given on a habitual basis is confirmed by the fact that we have evaluations and judgements and form beliefs regarding things we have never directly experienced: "from what is given, I affirm the existence of that which is not given: I believe. Caesar is dead, Rome did exist, the sun will rise, and bread is nourishing" (85). Going beyond the given is the central operation that founds *subjectivity proper*, since it is precisely the ability to assemble knowledge in the mind to form inferences that confers on us the ability to separate ourselves from the immediate world. "While transcending the given, I judge and posit myself as subject. I affirm more than I know" (85-6). This problem thus becomes the point of departure for Deleuze's whole philosophy:

We embark on a transcendental critique when, having situated ourselves on a methodologically reduced plane that provides an essential certainty – a certainty of essence – we ask: how can there be a given, how can something be given to a subject, and how can the subject give something to itself? Here, the critical requirement is that of a constructivist logic ... The construction of the given makes room for the construction of the subject. The given is no longer given to a subject; rather, the subject constitutes itself in the given. (87)

The resources of transcendental critique allow us to switch positions from that of a subject installed within the given world to another point of view from which we can say, with certainty, that this subject constructs itself as an aspect of the self-construction of the world. But what grants us this certainty? What is this "certainty of essence" which we acquire via a "methodologically reduced plane"?

We can now bring out the full importance of Deleuze's theory of right. Whereas Kant sought a principle of the right to some knowledge (truth, morality, etc.) Deleuze says that thought has a right to nothing other than its own stupidity, its quintessential *bêtise* which is not only its "peculiar animality" but also its unique principle of emergence or genesis: "the genitivity of thought: not this or that animal form, but stupidity [*bêtise*]" (1994, 275). The advantage of this position is that we can still pose the problem of transcendental conditions, in the Kantian sense, but by making stupidity and not knowledge the necessary condition we are able to escape the infinite regress of conditions. We are able to put a stop to the regress precisely through an effect of our own animality, which is to be found in the given as such and not, in fact, in any "beyond" transcending the given. Total critique leaves us with no ground, but this non-ground may still function as a condition once it is seen as a submerged aspect of the grounded: "something of the ground rises to the surface, without assuming any form but, rather, insinuating itself between the forms; a formless base, an autonomous and faceless existence. This ground which is now on the surface is called depth or groundlessness" (1994, 275).

Deleuze and Guattari discover in schizophrenic depersonalization the experience of this groundlessness in which one may find oneself engulfed; when discussing the experience of its emergence, they use the name Antonin Artaud gave to it: the body without organs (BwO). In his radio play "To Have Done With the Judgement of God", Artaud wrote that

[...] nobody believes in god any more everybody believes more and more in man./ So it is man whom we must now make up our minds to emasculate.// ... By placing him again, for the last time, on the autopsy table to remake his anatomy./ I say, remake his anatomy./ Man is sick because he is badly constructed./ We must make up our minds to strip him bare in order to scrape off that animalcule that itches him mortally,// god,/ and with god/ his organs. (1988, 570-1).

Artaud is suggesting that man has replaced God as the transcendent ground of experience. We may even identify Kant with this turning point: it was he, after all, who denied the dogma of ontological entities existing beyond the reach of the senses. But in re-establishing transcendence within subjectivity, in presupposing the subjective unity of intuition, we might echo Deleuze and say that no practical change has been achieved. As Deleuze and Guattari write: "God dead or not dead, the father dead or not dead, it amounts to the same thing, since the same psychic repression [*refoulement*] and the same social repression [*repression*] continue unabated, here in the name of God or a living father, there in the name of man or the dead father" (1983, 106). The reference is not simply to Nietzsche's pronouncement that "God is dead", but to Freud's assertion that one symbolically "kills" the father by internalizing the authority he represents. In other words, it is not enough to replace the transcendent ground provided by God with that of an atheistic subjectivity; it is necessary to free subjectivity from its subjection to itself. Using the language of Artaud, if the "organs" are the means by which we "construct" ourselves and our world in the absence of the organizing presence of God, these organs inevitably come to replace God's authority, and our ability to construct the world anew is itself compromised by our own constructions. Artaud thus offers the BwO as a conception of existence freed from its own self-colonization, its self-infection by its "organs" or organizing principles.

We saw above how Deleuze and Guattari's concept of desiring production rests on an apparent paradox in which desiring machines are always connected to pre-existing machines, but that this does not deny them their genuinely productive character. It is necessary to avert the infinite regress of conditions, since this (as we saw with Kant) occasions the re-introduction of transcendence. This is done by asserting the paradoxical fact that the ground emerges from the grounded as a type of groundlessness or non-ground. Thus, the BwO is first of all defined by Deleuze and Guattari as a kind of "stasis", a "stopping dead" of the desiring machines that sets free their "unorganized mass" (1983, 8). The machines always operate in terms of some pre-existing organization by means of which they sustain their collective functionality. But they cannot function in this way without also being productive in themselves and thus distinct from any pre-existing organization. The machines are dependent on a ground they collectively constitute, but this dependence involves, equally and simultaneously, a radical independence. The desiring machines are capable of genuine novelty, then, *only* through a suspension of their functional organization. This is why Deleuze and Guattari maintain that "it all works by breaking down" (1983, 330). This suspension or stasis is, as it were, released from the midst of the functional process, a piece of non-functionality or non-productivity is itself *produced*.

This is why Deleuze and Guattari say that the BwO is "the experience of death" (1983, 330). In the case of a catatonic schizophrenic, the desiring machines stop dead and throw off their own functionality, and what is produced is the frozen or rigid postures characteristic of certain schizophrenic patients. The experience of the catatonic is one of pure dread, in that it is a "zero intensity" state, a "living dead" or "zombie" state. Death, in this sense, is not a "being-toward" but is produced as a "part" of the machines whenever they malfunction or break down, and, to the extent that they must continually cut into one another in order to function, they work only *by* breaking down: "death then is a part of the desiring-machine, a part that must itself be judged" (1983, 365). But, for death to be judged in this way, the BwO must cease to be an experience of engulfment or depersonalization of a pathological order; the experience of depersonalization must itself be depersonalized by a thought which is no longer that of a personalized consciousness. This is why Deleuze and Guattari need a second, more abstract name for the BwO: the plane (or plan) of immanence. Once installed on this plane/plan we can both construct ourselves *and* map – evaluate – these constructions. The distinction between figure and ground no longer holds because the ground has risen to the surface, and as we diagram it we construct it anew, with the attitude proper to those who, like Kafka, create their own precursors.

Deleuze's engagement with the Kantian tradition is of central importance to understanding his philosophical achievement. We must resist the temptation to define him as a wild metaphysician of virtual modes of subjectivity with little regard to their actualization in reality. Rather, we should emphasize how he, working both alone and with Guattari, was interested how we can evaluate our experience of the world in such a way that does not presume anything about this experience or what it should be like. In this sense, Deleuze intends for us to realize some of the revolutionary promise of Kant's critical philosophy.

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Deleuze, critica și problema judecății

Filosofia lui Gilles Deleuze este adesea considerată ca un fel de pre-critică ce urmărește o metafizică pură în sensul clasic (pre-Kantian). Totuși, o mai atentă examinare a operei lui Deleuze arată angajarea acestuia în tradiția criticii. Articolul examinează acest angajament și sugerează că, acolo unde Kant nu a reușit să-și asume consecințele proprii sale "revoluții critice", Deleuze ne îndrumă să continuăm demersul critic prin forța afirmării, către realizarea sa deplină. Din acest punct de vedere, articolul susține că afirmarea și critica nu sunt compatibile, și că ar fi o greșeală ca noi să interpretăm intervenția politică a lui Anti-Oedip ca fiind pur afirmaționistă. Aceasta ar ignora faptul că Deleuze și Guattari doresc să sugereze, prin noțiunea de 'producție dezirantă' (*production désirante*), un nou mijloc de evaluare dincolo de sistemul capitalist de schimb de care psihanaliza a eșuat să se degajeze. Aceasta presupune eliberarea judecății ca putere de gândire de acele constrângeri care sunt în întregime nelegitime din punctul de vedere al unei critici realizate convenabil.