

La part de l'immanence Or what Deleuze takes from Kant and Heidegger

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Like no other, Gilles Deleuze insisted that a philosopher's first task was to construct a plan of immanence. In contrast to religion, which is oriented towards transcendence, philosophy begins with an observation, with the opening of a problem that calls for reflection, that is, with the implicit prerequisite of immanence, which is immanent to itself.¹ „Procédons sommairement: nous considérons un champ d'expérience pris comme monde réel non plus par rapport à un moi, mais par rapport à un simple „il y a“. Il y a, à tel moment, un monde calme et reposant. Surgit soudain un visage effrayé [...].“² This draft of a sensual world populated by events which touch upon the subjective space of experience opens the chapter concerning concepts in Deleuze and Guattari's *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*³ Philosophical concepts relate to problems or inner conditions, and thus they relate to a background of latent presumptions or to an intuitive understanding of immanence. „Encore cette compréhension intuitive varie-t-elle suivant la manière dont le plan est tracé.“⁴ But how is the sheer variety of possible philosophical thoughts compatible with the assertion that „le plan d'immanence [...] constitue le sol absolu de la philosophie, sa Terre ou sa déterritorialisation“?⁵

The complexity at the heart of the concept of immanence has to do with an ambiguity. On the one hand, Deleuze defines the philosophy of immanence as a particular form of philosophy. In his voluminous book on Spinoza he writes: L'immanence s'oppose à toute éminence de la cause, à toute théologie négative, à toute méthode d'analogie, à toute conception hiérarchique du monde. Tout est affirmation dans l'immanence.“⁶ In *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, Deleuze and Guattari return to Spinoza, declaring him as a thinker who made “aucun compromis avec la transcendance“.⁷ But on the other hand, every philosophy is said to present a draft of the plan of immanence. And therefore where such a draft is lacking, the thinking behind it cannot be considered philosophy.

It may indeed be plausible that every philosophy contains an implicit understanding of what it means “to orient itself in thought”. But why do Deleuze and Guattari describe the “infinite movements” as an immanent characteristic of every philosophy? A first approach to this question leads one to state that Deleuze distinguishes two different

¹ „Il y a religion chaque fois qu'il y a transcendance, Etre vertical, Etat impérial au ciel ou sur la terre, et il y a Philosophie chaque fois qu'il y a immanence [...].“ Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari: *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* Paris 1991, p. 46. Abbreviated in what follows as Ph.

² Cf. Ph 22.

³ Deleuze and Guattari thus exemplify the creation of a concept from another as the expression of a possible world, which assumes as a condition the definition of a sensual world. Cf. Ph 21-23. „Autrui ne redonne pas de la transcendance à un autre moi, mais rend tout autre moi à l'immanence du champ survolé.“ Ph 49.

⁴ Ph 43.

⁵ Ph 44.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze: *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*. Paris 1968, 157.

⁷ Ph 49.

senses of immanence: the “non-philosophical” and the “pre-philosophical”. From a pre-philosophical perspective, the plan of immanence, as an image of thinking, is defined by the characteristic division between the rightful and the merely factual. But if this image of thinking can only grasp what it can rightfully claim, then, according to Deleuze and Guattari, it can only lay claim to the “infinite movement”.⁸ Immanence thus multiplies itself and becomes reflexive. In this sense, Deleuze speaks of the „immanence of immanence“ or of „LE plan d’immanence.“

The non-philosophical aspect of immanence relates to the idea that philosophy is irreducibly indebted to an outside, insofar as it refers to a non-conceptual understanding which can be marginalised *de facto* but not *de jure* as a merely temporary fact: the dreadful state of affairs at the centre of philosophy. This is why Deleuze holds the criterion by which to verify different philosophical systems according to whether they acknowledge a place for immanence or whether they are enslaved by transcendence. In *Difference and Repetition*, he criticises the moral image of thinking for holding on to transcendent instances, which is only possible when one imagines particular „truths“ to be unshiftable fixed. „Chaque fois qu’on interprète l’immanence comme „à“ quelque chose, il se produit une confusion du plan et du concept, telle que le concept devient un universel transcendant, et le plan, un attribut dans le concept.”⁹ Deleuze’s description of „metaphysical“ confusion (contemplation, reflection, communication) is to be understood against the background of his theoretical thinking of immanence. The diagrammatical characteristics of non-philosophical immanence in particular – i.e. the affects and percepts of radical empiricism¹⁰ – are essentially distinct from the intensive characteristics of concepts (such as *of* the affects, *of* the percepts).

The strategic approach that has led thinkers to insist upon immanence is easily characterised: it has always been a question of revealing the *theological motivations* that linger in outer-worldly experience. At the same time, emphasizing immanence means collapsing the hierarchical order – whether cosmological or political – which is traditionally rooted in the idea of the One. The thinking of immanence – as the counter-concept to transcendence – is thus connected in a particular and exemplary way to the project of Enlightenment. The thesis that I wish to develop here asserts the relevance and rightness of an immanent philosophy, a philosophy, therefore, that is critical of transcendence and metaphysics. First I will explain how the problem relates to Kant. His main concern is to separate the realm of transcendence from that of immanence. Yet the theoretical stability of the “immanent” – the objectivity of the apparent world – continues to rely on (concealed) aspects of transcendence. This will reveal that talk of a simple opposition between immanence and transcendence is not satisfactory because

⁸ Cf. Ph 39-40.

⁹ Ph 47.

¹⁰ Cf. Max Kauffmann’s *Journal for Immanent Philosophy* (1896). According to Kauffman, the forefathers of immanent philosophy were the English empiricists Locke, Berkeley and Hume. Whilst Berkeley was to reduce Being to that which is perceived, in a further step, Hume sought to overcome the essentialism that remained in the assumption of a perceiving subject. “Hume became the first representative of a purely immanent vision of the world [Weltanschauung] when, in the first part of his major work, *A Treatise on Human Nature*, he expressed the idea that only so called ‘objects’ or ‘imaginings’ are actually real and that the subject is but a name for the way these objects connect.” Kauffmann, *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 8.

safeguarding the immanent use of reason necessarily requires excluding the unknowable realm of transcendence. The phenomenon whereby both concepts complement each other shows the complexity of what is at stake here. To put it in simple terms we might say: immanence is not thought radically enough as long as it remains necessary or possible to separate it from a realm of transcendence as a meaningful instance. In critical philosophy, immanence and transcendence are complementary insofar as experience fulfils a priori certain requirements of comprehensive rationality.¹¹ In contrast to this however, Gilles Deleuze presents a philosophical approach to immanence that uniquely does away with the traditional philosophical points of reference of transcendence. This thesis can be helpfully reconstructed by comparing Deleuze's radicality with Heidegger's effort to deconstruct metaphysics. Heidegger's reflections on the transcendence of Dasein, as well as his later criticism of the suspension of transcendence in the system of reason, will be discussed in the second part. According to Heidegger, insofar as it provides "representative thinking" [*vorstellendes Denken*] with a grounding support saturated in transcendence, "onto-theology" proves not only to be the founding figure of occidental history, it is also embodied in the phenomenological figure of intentionality.¹² Deleuze takes this up when, in *Difference and Repetition*, he develops an immanent concept of structure that leaves behind the logic of representation. The third part shows what conceptual manoeuvres are required to think with Deleuze Being as Immanence. Whilst Heidegger creates a new mystery surrounding the experience of being, Deleuze succeeds in locating every postulate of transcendence "on the level of immanence", i.e. on the level of our concrete involvement in the world. The thesis, argued by Badiou and others, according to which Deleuze's ontology levels out the „real“ differences in the univocity of Being, is thus contradicted.

I. KANT

It is generally assumed that with Kant and the critical turn he brought about in philosophy, the end of the ontological-contemplative era is announced and a new era of reflective philosophy begun. Kant's project, described in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, to bring metaphysics to face its own limitations so that the incessant and fierce disputes between scholastic followers can finally be settled by a higher judge, this project is

¹¹ More generally stated, the autonomous self-limitation of reason to (immanent) scientific objects can be seen to agree with extensions into transcendence, whether these be aesthetic, religious or ethical in nature. This complementarity is not necessarily limited to opposite tendencies within a certain philosophy – e.g. Kantian – but can include different philosophical orientations or disciplines: Kierkegaard thoughts on transcendence in his "Concept of Anxiety" thus counter Hegel's notion of "immanent" Logic. Cf. Kierkegaard: *The Concept of Anxiety*. Princeton UP 1981.

¹² In his so called „Humanism Letter“, Heidegger opposes in exemplary fashion Sartre's Existentialism. Sartre's book *L'imaginaire. Psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination* (1940) interprets the "intentionality" of consciousness as a transcendent phenomenon and plays it against the empiricist "illusion of immanence". Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre: *Das Imaginäre*, transl. by H. Schöneberg. Hamburg 1980, p. 44sq. (chap. 1.2., section 1,2). According to Sartre, the empiricists failed to acknowledge the fundamental characteristic of experience which is that consciousness overcomes itself towards something outside of itself.

realised by the fixing of boundaries of knowledge that can only be unlawfully trespassed. Reason is thus prevented from slipping into the supernatural. It is forced to subordinate itself to the scientific request of empirical verifiability and must therefore lower its expectations to the intellectual satisfaction of its naturally valid metaphysical needs. In fact Kant's critical development towards a metaphysics of nature, which reveals itself as a science, aims to dissolve the unavoidable task of pure reason whose field of inquiry goes beyond the limitation of experience. "These unavoidable problems of mere pure reason are God, freedom (of will), and immortality. The science which, with all its preliminaries, has for its especial object the *dissolution* [Auflösung] of these problems is named metaphysics – a science which is at the very outset dogmatical, that is, it confidently takes upon itself the execution of this task without any previous investigation of the ability or inability of reason for such an undertaking." (Transl. modified)¹³ "Dissolution" in this context can mean two things: on the one hand, that tasks are resolved or questions answered, on the other hand, that the tasks are revealed to be false or the questions wrongly posed. Kant chooses a middle way when in the transcendental dialectic he declares that there can be both a legitimate and illegitimate use of ideas. In fact, reason becomes tangled up in paralogisms and antinomies when it "confidently" sets off to recognize the absolute. In accordance with their dogmatically conceived nature, the ideas do not belong to an *immanent* but to a *transcendent* usage; they amount therefore to false or incorrectly grounded problems. Thus in the appendix to the *transcendental dialectics* Kant writes: "For it is not the idea itself, but only the employment of the idea in relation to possible experience, that is transcendent or immanent. An idea is employed transcendentally, when it is applied to an object falsely believed to be adequate with and to correspond to it; immanently, when it is applied solely to the employment of the understanding in the sphere of experience."¹⁴ Reason cannot relate immediately to its object, but by way of understanding, by bringing its pre-determined knowledge into a systematic and at the same time *problematic* order.¹⁵ Although reason cannot be prevented from bringing up transcendental ideas, in its regulative scientific use, it must be careful not to overstep the boundaries of the *mundus sensibilis*.

Of course, theoretical reason's duty to operate within the boundaries of possible experience is based on the assumption that reason is capable of defining those boundaries. According to Kant, reason proves itself up to this task by being able to pass a synthetic judgement *a priori*, which defines the *subjective* legalities that function as the necessary conditions for any possible experience of things. By emphasizing subjectivity as a foundational instance, Kant refers to his own critical innovation of metaphysics as transcendental philosophy – albeit at the cost of the *synthetic* and *singular* character of theoretical judgements of reason. And a high price it is because it comes with the progressive independence of different rationality complexes so that

¹³ I. Kant: *The Critique of Pure Reason*, transl. by J.M.D. Meiklejohn. Chicago 1952, p. 15 (B 7).

¹⁴ I. Kant: *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 193 (A 643/B 671).

¹⁵ Cf. I. Kant: *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 117 (A 326/B 383) The concept of reason is only legitimately used in relation to a concept of understanding. Reversely however, experimental concepts of understanding can only be explained in relation to transcendental ideas which grant systematic unity to the individual operations of understanding.

reason is reduced to being a capacity amongst others and furthermore can only save its autonomy by withdrawing from the world of experience. As a result, in the context of the first critique, reason transfers its power to understanding, which as the “originator” of experience only recognizes what corresponds to its own constitution and the subjective pure forms of contemplation. For Kant this is indeed a curtailing “only”, because under such critical conditions it is no longer possible to recognize or classify the being of a being in itself. Transcendental philosophy thus proves itself as a limitative or immanent theory insofar as it established boundaries of experience beyond which no reasonable judgements were to be possible.

What remains problematic however (and already was so for first generation readers) is the way in which the boundary between the realms of immanence and transcendence is drawn, for instance the way in which the world of experience is reduced to a world of appearance which cannot be defined ontologically. What will emerge is that the judgement of the metaphysical element within critical philosophy essentially depends on whether Kant’s positive explication of experience as empirical knowledge – which he carries out in his transcendental aesthetics and analytics – can itself getaway without relating to transcendent assumptions, in other words, whether it proceeds purely immanently. In order to clarify this problem of Kant’s boundary drawing, in what follows I will first refer to some thoughts by Heidegger.

II. HEIDEGGER

Heidegger’s continuation of Kant’s critical enterprise stands under the sign of a forced metaphysics of *finitude*. In his book entitled *Kant and the problem of Metaphysics* (1929), Heidegger explains how profound sketches of a metaphysics of Dasein founded in time are to be found within transcendental analytics, especially in the context of the A-deduction and the chapter on schematism. Heidegger suggests that behind the school-like metaphysical façade of the epistemological consolidation of the natural sciences harbours a new attempt to found ontology.¹⁶ He recognizes in the Kantian teaching of transcendental imagination the temporal structures of human being-in-the-world, albeit at a preliminary stage.¹⁷ In order to infiltrate (not to suspend) Kant’s dualism, following Husserl’s method of reduction, Heidegger adopts a strategy of radical finalization of the understanding of being. In other words: he relies on an ontologisation of the experience of phenomena. Heidegger thus goes both beyond and behind Kant. His placing of finitude at the centre of critical philosophy in the passivity of the subject, leads him back to ontology on the one hand, and away from the postulation of things being-in-themselves on the other. In his book on Kant, Heidegger interprets the *transcendental*

¹⁶ „Kant’s laying of the ground for metaphysics, as unprecedented, resolute questioning about the inner possibility of the manifestness of the Being of beings [*des Seins von Seiendem*], must come up against time as the basic determination of finite transcendence, if in fact the understanding of Being in Dasein projects Being from itself upon time.” M. Heidegger: *Kant and the problem of metaphysics*, transl. by R. Taft. Indiana UP, Bloomington 1990, p. 166.

¹⁷ Cf. Heidegger: *Kant and the problem of metaphysics*, p. 166.

syntheses developed in the Analytics as syntheses of time, which define the ontological background of experience.

Heidegger conceives temporality as the decisive dimension of the transcendental, because it is what constitutes the pre-existent structures of the possible givenness of something, the letting-be-present of being. That anything affects us, that we encounter anything at all which we are not, this fundamental characteristic of human existence is what Heidegger calls transcendence – in the sense of an openness of existence towards otherness. On this point Heidegger's terminology differs from Kant's in a remarkable way. For whilst Heidegger endeavours to define the transcendental (*qua* ontological) structures of the transcendence (of Dasein), Kant identifies a qualitative difference between the realms of transcendence and the transcendental.¹⁸ But does this mean that Kant is a thinker of immanence and Heidegger a thinker of transcendence? This question cannot be answered so simply because both thinkers do not use the concepts in the same way. In my view, Heidegger complies with a request for real immanence when he insists on the finitude of human faculties and extends the primacy of finitude to the understanding of being as such. The temporal condition is an irreducible factor of all experience – and it is indeed problematic how, on the basis of reason's unlimited claim to truth, Kant distinguishes a realm of immanence as a world of appearance from another realm that stands under the sign of transcendence. This distinction relates to his maintaining the traditional position of reason as the protector of truth by means of its autonomously carried out self-limitation. This means that implicit premises are involved in the Kantian concept of experience which relate to metaphysical transcendence relations – understood as relations that are not identifiable as being within the immanence of experience (and that therefore expose Kant's concept of experience to a forced immanent critique).

These connections can be easily misunderstood in the context of Heidegger's concept of transcendence. First of all, it can generally be said that Heidegger's Kant-critique culminates in his critique of "representative thinking". Although already in the 1920s Heidegger had turned away from the abstract idea of a pure subject that confronts a world of given things, it is only in the course of his general rejection of the tradition of metaphysics at the end of the 1930s that the destruction of "subjectivism" is really effective. Whereas in his book on Kant, Heidegger was still trying to detect between the

¹⁸ „Hence, transcendental knowledge does not investigate the being [*das Seiende*] itself, but rather the possibility of the preliminary understanding of Being [*des Seinsverständnisses*], i. e., at one and the same time: the constitution of the Being of the being [*die Seinsverfassung des Seienden*]. It concerns the stepping-over (transcendence) of pure reason to the being [*zum Seienden*], so that it can first and foremost be adequate to its possible object." M. Heidegger: *Kant and the problem of metaphysics*, p. 10. Kant writes in the first Critique differently: „We shall term those principles the application of which is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience, *immanent*; those, on the other hand, which transgress these limits, we shall call *transcendent* principles. But by these latter I do not understand principles of the *transcendental* use or misuse of categories [...]; but real principles which exhort us to break down all those barriers, and to lay claim to a perfectly new field of cognition, which recognizes no line of demarcation. Thus *transcendental* and *transcendent* are not identical terms. The principles of the pure understanding [...] ought to be of empirical and not of transcendental use [...]. A principle which removes these limits, nay, which authorizes us to overstep them, is called *transcendent*." I. Kant: *The Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 108-109 (A 296, B 352-353).

lines of particular passages of the *Critique of Pure Reason* philosophical preliminaries to his fundamental ontology, later on he becomes more sceptical. To put it bluntly: Whilst in 1929 Heidegger still believed he could interpret transcendental imagination as an inscrutable capacity of temporality, later on, his readings bring Kant's primacy of understanding clearly to the foreground. In the eyes of the later Heidegger, the idea of Being as that which develops within syntheses of time, independently of hasty patterns of interpretation, seems to be totally missing in Kant's thought. This is clearly apparent in the fact that Heidegger – for instance in his 1940 *Nietzsche Lectures* on modern European nihilism – considers subject and object to be necessary starting conditions for Kant's understanding of experience, and therefore no longer the results of pre-existent synthetic processes of time.¹⁹

Briefly, when it comes to Heidegger's later critique, it is important to mention his ontology criticism. This refers to the fact that Heidegger also criticises Kant for holding on to theological surrogates in his transcendental philosophy. The most important of these surrogates is the logic of grounding which "provides a reason" for experience, i.e. stipulates categorial possibilities for experience, which manifest themselves *per se* in the unified subjective act of apperception. Experience is thus assigned to conditions which restrictively regulate its possibilities and at the same time dissimulate the genetic process of experience that is not subjectively controllable with regard to a priori unchanging entities, such as subject, object, concepts, and pure forms of perception. According to Heidegger this cements the forgetting of Being.

Historically speaking, the concept of immanence is coined by Kant's idea of an immanent experience that is not contaminated by a transcendent use of reason. At the same time however, Heidegger's Kant readings show that Kant himself does not remain faithful to this principle. It is indeed impossible to confirm Kant's idea of experience from the theoretical position of immanence.²⁰ However, towards the end of the 1930s, Heidegger distances himself not only from the project of metaphysics, from subjectivism and also from Kant: he also distances himself from his own earlier opinions that were still largely oriented along Kantian lines.²¹ In accordance with the idea of an immanent approach to the process-character of being, the positing of an "I" as the centre of activity which must overcome itself to reach the other constitutes in itself a transcendent position. For it presumes the existence of an already given subject that relates to other already constituted objects, and the way in which this occurs is conceived as a secondary phenomenon (that can be reconstructed in a subject-object relation). But Heidegger argues precisely *against* this kind of assumption in his *Onto-*

¹⁹ Cf. Heidegger: *Nietzsche. Zweiter Band*. Pfullingen 1961, p. 230-232, 141sqq.

²⁰ This is not the place to carry out the necessary critique to reveal a logical inconsistency in Kant's demonstration, i.e. in his deductive steps. Kant's concept of experience is conceived tautologically – and Kant definitely reflects upon this structure. Nevertheless Kant's assumed fact of experience certainly lacks phenomenological plausibility. Indeed, in Kant's eyes the empirical fact of an experience that is not categorially formed is impossible. All kinds of clinical, aesthetic, religious or minority-group experiences are thus systematically excluded.

²¹ This is most apparent in the *Introduction* (1949) and *Epilogue* (1943) that are included in later editions of the lecture *What is Metaphysics* (1929). Cf. Heidegger: *Was ist Metaphysik?* Frankfurt a. M. 1949, p. 7-21, p. 39-47.

theology-Critique in which he characterizes the realm *in between* (i.e. the “belonging together of Being and Thought”) as the primary phenomenon, which is to be conceived as existing before its possibility which is retrospectively anchored in the subject.²²

III. DELEUZE

In the name of immanence, Deleuze opposes the subtle violence of dogmatic forms of thinking, which determine possibilities of experience from the outset. In doing so he follows Heidegger’s extreme radicality whereby within general „representative thinking“ a fundamentally onto-theological trait is revealed: the ground of (possible) things, categorially differentiated and anchored once and for all within the subject. Insofar as it is external to the immanent processes of becoming and from outside – as an abstract entity – allows these to move into an order of representation, this ground functions as an instance of transcendence. Deleuze thus takes Kant’s thinking of immanence and strengthens it by means of Heidegger’s critique of onto-theology.

“Immanence can be said to be the burning issue of all philosophy because it takes on all the dangers that philosophy must confront, all the condemnations, persecutions, and repudiations that it undergoes. This at least persuades us that the problem of immanence is not abstract or merely theoretical. It is not immediately clear why immanence is so dangerous, but it is. It engulfs sages and gods. What singles out the philosophers is the part played by immanence or fire [*la part de l’immanence, ou la part du feu*]. Immanence is immanent only to itself and consequently captures everything, absorbs All-One, and leaves nothing remaining to which it could be immanent. In any case, whenever immanence is interpreted as immanent *to* Something, we can be sure that this Something reintroduces the transcendent.”²³

Immanence is understood as the differencing of difference without any mediating instances. This becoming which occurs immanently, that is, which structures itself, is for Deleuze nothing other than time: every differentiation thus proves to be a concrete individuation.²⁴ Immanence is thus conceived philosophically as a concept which in its structural consistency preserves the infinite movement of becoming. Indeed, the concept preserves this movement, because it internalises the difference between understanding, feeling, perceiving etc. in the immanent and non-harmonious exertion of different capacities: the object of thought is only thought, and not, for instance, the sensual occurrences within the virtual course of time, which, by being immanent, are blocked from conceptual mediation or communication. Yet concepts which structurally repeat this fact within themselves – e.g. the concept of “affect” – are adequately defined in terms of the theory of difference. They have thrown overboard the essentialist prejudice.

²² Cf. Heidegger: *Identität und Differenz*. Pfullingen 1957, p. 68-69

²³ G. Deleuze, F. Guattari: *What is Philosophy ?*, transl. by H. Tomlinson, G. Burchell. Columbia UP 1994, p. 45 Cf. G. Deleuze, F. Guattari: *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie*. Paris 1991, p. 47.

²⁴ Cf. G. Deleuze: *Différence et répétition*. Paris 1968, p. 316sq.

Herein lays the field of tension or problem in relation to which Deleuze's philosophical constructions draw their meaning.²⁵

This problem fails to be recognized whenever an abyss of indifference, or "Metaphysics of the One", is suspected to reside behind immanence. Being disintegrates into a multitude of differences – and the concepts with which difference is thought are unsuited to quash the pre-philosophical transcendental field in which their problematic conditions in fact reside.

The ontology that Deleuze sets to work is conceived in temporal terms, in the sense of a radical empiricism of subsequent moments of experience which lie in layers virtually, in a transcendental unconsciousness. And although the singular points that reside on the level of immanence are constantly actualised, they merge in a passive synthesis and give rise to relatively stable entities, such as forms of subjectification or experience (habits). But as soon as these entities are conceived as independently existing unities, they are detached from the realm of immanence. They then stand as transcendent instances above the processual character of being and are separated from their own genetic conditions. A philosophy that is based on transcendent instances considers these instances to be fundamental, i.e. pre-existent, to the realm of immanence, so that in the end immanence can no longer be thought as something that is self-structured, but as something that is subordinate to the presumed necessary poles of transcendence. Experience is thus conceived as immanent when it is no longer geared to a transcendent instance, neither with regard to a stable subject, nor with regard to an outer-worldly being that is determined from above by the fate of the world.

Ontology generally seems to be a discipline of the past. This is because according to Kant, every attempt to define being objectively is suspect of being uncritical or "pre-critical". The problem of ontology is further complicated by Heidegger. In his thinking, it is precisely ontological access that being eludes – and it is just this elusive character of being that calls for a different kind of thinking and a different ontology. Being is considered as an instance that cannot be grasped with the means of the spirit.²⁶ This realm which cannot be defined ontologically can take a number of different names. It is the non-identical, the very other, Being as transcendence etc. But for Deleuze this alternative realm belongs to the same schema of thought that was described at the beginning. It belongs to it insofar as it is but the negative thereof. The situation only begins to change when immanent thinking renounces its belief in oppositions and manages to grasp the processes of difference and repetition which exist in a virtual sense even before their representation. Deleuze operates with an immanent ontology that differs from the classical project of a *metaphysica generalis*, which was to define being in essential and conceptual terms. It is precisely this programme that makes his book *Difference and Repetition* (1968) an event in the history of philosophy. Two

²⁵ My book: Gilles Deleuze. *Philosophie des transzendentalen Empirismus*. Wien 2003 (English translation currently underway) offers a detailed presentation.

²⁶ I mentioned earlier the idea of a complementary phenomenon. On the one hand there are the scientists, functionalists and constructors who formulate their ideas without an ontological claim. On the other hand, there are the mystics, romantics and utopists who consider a pragmatic view of the world to be unsatisfactory and remain unswayed by rational or logical means.

unusual conceptions surface at once: first, that the concept of Being which is ungraspable by traditional conceptual means is not defined as transcendence but as immanence; secondly, that a totally different notion of concept begins to emerge, one that is able to think “being”, albeit not in terms of categorial generalities.

This positive interpretation of the inner brokenness of philosophical ontology defines Deleuze’s fundamental move. It is the novelty of this idea (anticipated perhaps only by Nietzsche), that has led to many a misunderstanding in readings of Deleuze’s philosophy. For indeed: what is this so called differential process of becoming if it is not an anonymous event that occurs behind our backs, a naked life, a romantic chaos, another male fantasy? These are some of the insinuations held against Deleuze that are uttered in the name of a kind of “neoconservatism”.²⁷ The concept of being that suggests stability, unity, grounding and order evaporates *as difference* into the plurality of becoming. It is therefore understandable but in no way justified when, with reference to *univocity*, Alain Badiou denies an orientation towards the concrete within Deleuze’s thinking of immanence. He subsumes into “One” that which evades categorial ambiguity – whereas Deleuze not only denies the abstract (categorial) character of genuine philosophical concepts, he also establishes a differential relation between concept and being (immanence). The univocity of being turns out to be a condition for an ontology of immanence within which being is not communicated conceptually: only then does it become possible to think difference in itself and make space for the real virtual ambiguities of life. In terms of the philosophy of immanence, small differences can be defined, as shall now be elucidated with regard to notions of time and power.²⁸

²⁷ Cf. M. Frank: *What is Neostructuralism?* Univ. of Minnesota Press 1989. Manfred Frank, who has dedicated an extensive series of lectures to the so called “new French”, largely follows the decisive rhetoric introduced by Jürgen Habermas for the German academic reception of recent French philosophy. Cf. J. Habermas: *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*. Polity Press 1988. In contrast to this attitude of general disapproval, within the context of German phenomenology, a philosophical discussion has nevertheless developed, which, whilst at first limited to Derrida and Foucault, in the 1990s extended to encompass almost all „poststructuralist“ authors. The increasingly intensive consideration of Deleuze is apparent, for instance, in Bernhard Waldenfels’s book: *Bruchlinien der Erfahrung*. Frankfurt a. M. 2002.

²⁸ It is revealing that for Badiou the division between the virtual and the actual – which is at the very origin of Deleuze’s thinking of difference – remains a “riddle”. He seems to overlook the actual problem or cause of disturbance at the core of Deleuzian philosophy: on the one hand the immanent process that makes differences; on the other hand the thinking of immanence, which can only succeed when it takes into account the difference between thinking and that which is exterior to it, that is, immanence as a realm of affects and percepts, that can only be felt or perceived but cannot be thought (or can only be thought *as such*). According to Badiou the introduction of difference signifies the introduction of equivocity and therefore the – apparently Bergsonian – problem of dualism. In stating this he fails to see that the virtual (which is differentially defined) can determine the actual (which is differentiated in terms of the logic of representation) precisely because it forms its basis: difference marks the distinguishability between the two sides; indistinguishability is simply the result of the fundamental inseparability (only factually crossed) of the movement of actualization from its result. In this sense the image of time that Badiou fleetingly refers to in fact describes the ideal mode of exchange relations between the virtual and the actual: in the normal case of representation the actual prevails in such a way that its relation to the virtual is largely lost. This is why for Deleuze the main problem of representation resides in the fact that it marginalises its essential and implicit (moral, amoral, micropolitical, pragmatic, power-relative etc.) conditions, and thus establishes itself more strongly. Cf. Badiou: *Deleuze. The Clamor of Being*, transl. by Louise Burchill. Minnesota UP 2000, p. 47-52. Actual multiplicities are mere empirical differences in a previously gridded „carved space“. Badiou prides himself by presenting his position as one that contradicts Deleuze.

Just like Heidegger before him, Deleuze posits a synthesis of time as the process of subjectification that lies at the foundation of the subject. If the subject is not able to grasp these processes of time it is because it is subordinate to them. “I think” cannot coincide with “I am”. In a way, it is as if Deleuze had transferred Heidegger’s late insights into his earlier interpretation of the three syntheses which in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* were united as *one whole* experience. He thus succeeds in introducing a series of dissonances into the harmonious background music of “representative thinking”, which rests on the third synthesis of recognition, as the highest synthesis which cancels the other two syntheses out. Recognition means that a subject identifies or re-identifies perceived phenomena on the basis of pre-given conceptual possibilities. Against this vision of harmonious collaboration Deleuze defines the communication of individual capacities by means of their difference. Experience thus organizes itself “this side of consciousness” (as Hegel would say) and is actualized each time by a particular subjectification effect, which depends on a phenomenological body, and its threshold of perception and affection.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze works through the three syntheses of time, conceiving them as three forms of *répétition pour elle-même*.²⁹ In this Deleuze follows Heidegger: the synthesis of the present is conceived following the Kantian synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of the past following the Kantian synthesis of reproduction. Deleuze differs however from Heidegger’s interpretation of Kant with regard to the third synthesis of the future, which Heidegger associates with the synthesis of recognition.³⁰ The consequences of this divergence are substantial. With it time is thrown out of joint. According to Kant, the two “pre-apperceptive” syntheses are oriented teleologically towards recognition. As syntheses of the imagination [*Einbildungskraft*], their purpose is only to be found in understanding. If this purpose is lost, the paradox of inner sense collapses: the passive and active sides of existence are no longer communicable as a unity under the banner of identity. Only as a transcendent instance does this subjective unity guarantee the correspondence of being and thinking – within the frame of a present, which can be remembered and represented on the basis of categorial possibilities. Deleuze explains the transition from the second to the third synthesis of time with reference to the criticism of onto-theology. By drawing on this criticism, the misinterpretation, which, based on the logic of representation, conceives

²⁹ Cf. Deleuze: *Différence et répétition*, p. 96-128.

³⁰ This division is very schematic and simplified. In fact Deleuze deals with the first synthesis in the name of Hume, the second in the name of Bergson and the third in the name of Nietzsche. Furthermore, the paragraph on time syntheses also touches upon problems relating to Husserl’s phenomenology as well as to Freud and Lacan’s psychoanalysis. Despite the multitude of problems that are dealt with in this part of Deleuze’s text, it is evident that in his teachings on syntheses, he had in mind the genealogical line from Kant to Heidegger. This is particularly clear in the vitality of his use of the idiom of self-affection which is of Kantian origin and interpreted by Heidegger in the light of his reflections on the philosophy of time in his book on Kant. Cf. M. Rölli: Gilles Deleuze. Philosophie des transzendentalen Empirismus. Wien 2003, chap. IV.3.1., p. 333-371. Jean-Pierre Faye describes reading Heidegger’s book “Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics” with Deleuze: „Dès l’an 50 nous évoquions ensemble le grand profond livre heideggerien de 1929, Kant et le problème de la métaphysique”, alors non traduit, - et ses trois ‘ek-stases’ du temps.“ Jean-Pierre Faye: „Philosophe le plus ironique“, in: Yannick Beaubatie (Ed.): *Tombeau de Gilles Deleuze*. Paris 2000, p. 91-99, p. 91.

the virtual dimension of the past as a ground, can be avoided. It is in this sense that Deleuze speaks of the “ambiguity of mnemosyne”.³¹ Time thus takes on a new kind of autonomy. It constantly deploys the before and the after and is not subordinate to any substantial crux. Time itself runs out, not something in time. Time modifies and affects itself by submitting its course and duration to a continuous variation. Immanent structures are thus constantly actualised and drawn into a process of change that encompasses everything: a process of subjectification *per se*, which consists in the self-organisation of time processes, in the resulting resonances, in their reflexive affections – or indeed, in the very becoming of an experience.

Deleuze connects the sensual realm, the realm of desire with the ontological status of temporality. Time is defined in terms of “vulgarity”: it is what throbs at the heart of our lives in passive, self-abandoned syntheses. And precisely because it continues to flow independently of its active synthesis, it corresponds to the differential use of our faculties which cannot be regulated subjectively and harmoniously. The being of immanence, which could not be grasped by traditional ontological means, thus expresses itself in the “lower regions” of physical life. By no means does Deleuze continue to follow the model of representation in carrying out analytical reconstructions. Rather, it is as a result of the definition of immanent structures that the actual planes of given empirical relations begin to become visible. Immanence can be considered as a profane source of experience that only makes sense in the context of temporal subjectification processes.

Deleuze and Guattari’s request for „pragmatics“, as put forward in *Mille Plateaux*, defines these processes of actualization more precisely as processes that are situated in a collective structure [*agencement collectif*] which distinguishes two virtually definable regions: the immanent relations of fugitive lines [*lignes de fuite*] on the one hand, the already segmented and stratified (layered) relations of power, on the other.³² These regulate the factual exchange between actions and statements and thereby supply the essential conditions for the formation of the world of representation.³³ In fact our self and worldly relations are always determined by relations of power. But only on the basis of a scheme of immanent thinking is it possible to really begin to see these determining factors. Otherwise an empirical state of affairs, an empirical normality is hypostatized as a transcendent norm, in such a way that its genetic background and conditions can be considered mere byproducts and ignored. Against established power structures that benefit the rich (majority) to the detriment of the many (minority), a kind of thinking emerges that relies on immanence and thus is qualified to inquire into the implicit strategies that motivate all representative forms of life production and

³¹ Cf. Deleuze: *Différence et répétition*, p. 119.

³² Cf. Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari: *Mille Plateaux*. Paris 1980, p. 95-184.

³³ The critique of structuralism, as formulated in *Mille Plateaux*, draws its motif from here. Its main gist is that it does not suffice to think structure in order to think the power relations that regulate the actual relations of reference between content and expression, signifier and signified. Cf. Deleuze: *Foucault*. Paris 1986 (see primarily the last chapter). See also Ronald Bogue: „Word, image and sound: the non-representational semiotics of Gilles Deleuze“, in: Gary Genosko (Ed.): *Deleuze and Guattari. Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, vol. 1. London, New York 2001, p. 81-98.

empowerment. Such a thinking does not solely aim to unveil the orders of life that are otherwise presumed to be natural, but is directed towards a model of free associations and free action.

Immanent perceptions, sensations and concepts are just as much immediately determined by social conditions as are the micrological regions of the political as immanent processes of being. Deleuze's temporal ontology of immanence thus reveals itself as excluding *de iure* concentrations of power and thereby making them comprehensible as structural effects that correspond to a logical, representational order with which to grasp immanent actions. It is therefore impossible to tacitly insert transcendence into the corresponding level of immanence, where it can play out its power. Impossible because the structural characteristic of immanence is a constant transport of difference, so that the syntheses of differential singularities always refer to a particular level of actualization of immanent structures – and according to Deleuze, it is only on this level that densities and consolidations of power relations are situated. In contrast to this, by relying on natural orders and homologies, the postulates of transcendence conceal the power-drenched determination of forms of thinking and action. Although in his early lectures on Kant, Heidegger drew on the dimension of time to expand critical philosophy – and in this regard he was a source of inspiration for Deleuze – his orientation towards the origin of imagination as a medium between understanding and contemplation testifies to a certain natural accordance which in fact renders superfluous any profound analysis of conditioning power relations. Central to Heidegger's discourse is an act of transcendence which assigns the level of temporal immanence to a self-identical Dasein which overcomes itself. The same problem can be identified in the context of the critique of ontotheology. Here the difficulty has to do with the presumed philosophical „unity“ of being and thinking which, according to Heidegger, pre-exists any spontaneous activity of thinking and is but the task of thinking to heed.³⁴

When in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* Deleuze and Guattari speak of immanence as the „power of the all-one“, they are referring to the infinite movement which is double insofar as it is „defined by a to and fro“: „Si « se tourner vers... » est le mouvement de la pensée vers le vrai, comment le vrai ne se tournerait-il pas aussi vers la pensée? [...] Le mouvement infini est double, et il n'y a qu'un pli de l'un à l'autre. C'est un ce sens qu'on dit que penser et être sont une seule et même chose.“³⁵ As Epikur wrote, the atom moves at the speed of thought. In this paradoxical form, immanence evades the transcendent instance of a thinking that is placed before things (spirit, nous, subject) or of a being that is placed before thought (nature, physis, object). It is not a privileged

³⁴ In this regard Deleuze can be seen to play Nietzsche against Heidegger. For whilst with the “will to power” Nietzsche presents a concept of immanence that leaves modern nihilism behind because it radically questions the value of value, in his criticism of Nietzsche, Heidegger relies on the „proper“ (eigentliche) value of a dedicated “experience of being” (Seinserfahrung) which backs away from the escalating nihilism of the times. Insofar as in the face of the decay of modernity, he holds on to a thinking of transcendence, Heidegger's diagnosis of the present thus remains stuck in resentment. For instead of taking fate (“Geschick”) into our own hands, we are to let fate follow its course and obey the order that comes from the highest ruler: being itself.

³⁵ Ph 40-41.

position that connects each side with the other. Their concrete relation depends rather on immanently proceeding structures, which are determined in the context of a theory of time and power.