




The Divine Game Versus the Demonic Game: The Fourth Copernican Revolution in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*

Brecht Govaerts

Journal of French and Francophone Philosophy - Revue de la philosophie française et de langue française, Vol XXXII, No 1/2 (2024) pp 121-143.

Vol XXXII, No 1/2 (2024)
ISSN 1936-6280 (print)
ISSN 2155-1162 (online)
DOI 10.5195/jffp.2024.1073
www.jffp.org

This  under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License.



This journal is operated by the University Library System of the University of Pittsburgh as part of its D-Scribe Digital Publishing Program, and is co-sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh Press

The Divine Game Versus the Demonic Game

The Fourth Copernican Revolution in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*

Brecht Govaerts

Independent Researcher

Introduction

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze sets out to critique the regime of representation and common sense by developing a new conception of difference and repetition in which difference and repetition become liberated from the coherence and continuity of a self or I.¹ *Difference in itself* means that difference has become independent not only from representation, but also from an enduring or coherent self. Difference in itself and repetition in itself are the becoming different and the repetition of a fractured or dissolved self, which Deleuze relates to both a *larval subject*² and to a *simulacrum*.³ In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze defines both the concepts of larval subject and simulacrum through the multiplicities and differential relations of the realm of the virtual.⁴ However, they are not the same. A simulacrum defines a condition in which an entity has become transformed into *pure appearance in which nothing appears*. A simulacrum is no longer an entity, but only the illusion of an entity.⁵ This is distinct from the larval subject because the larval subject is an embryonic entity, an entity in the process of formation.⁶ Through an analysis of the conceptual relation and distinction between larval subject and simulacrum in the first part of the essay, *I will reinterpret Deleuze as a philosopher of indifference and the impossibility of repetition*, which is a critique on the common idea that Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* is a philosophy of pure difference and pure repetition. Also, *I will argue that Deleuze did not just develop a transcendental empiricism (a metaphysics of process), but a philosophy of the universal in itself (which is the collapse of metaphysics)*. The universal in itself emerges when experience collapses and when the self-determination of entities has become impossible.

Within the second and third part of the essay I will examine how the transformation of an entity into a simulacrum can behave in two different ways: *a becoming demonic or a becoming divine*. Deleuze introduces the concept

of the *demon* in *Difference and Repetition* in order to theorize an entity that has become pure appearance, which means a pure theatrical creature that has the condition of a mask or costume without anything behind it.⁹ The divine or God cannot provide a counterforce to the demonic for Deleuze because the divine/God is based on the coherence of a Self or I.¹⁰ Such a coherence is impossible when we are dealing with the simulacrum because the simulacrum is based on the complete shattering of a coherent, enduring I. The transformation of reality into simulacra can therefore only mean the death of God.¹¹ However, *I will argue that we can indeed develop a conception of the divine in which the divine operates as simulacrum*. This requires thinking the *paradox of the divine without God*. I will theorize such a condition as a *divine aesthetics*, which is the divine as pure appearance. A divine aesthetics is indeed pure appearance as simulacrum, but with the difference that pure appearance now does not operate as a mask without anything behind it, but as *revelation*, the maximum appearance of an entity as it is in itself.

One of the best interpretations of Deleuze's philosophy and particularly of his work *Difference and Repetition* is *Difference and Givenness. Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence* (2008) by the philosopher Levi Bryant.¹² In this work Bryant sets out to clarify what Deleuze means by a transcendental empiricism. The excellence of this interpretation is situated in the fact that Bryant interprets Deleuze as a philosopher who acknowledges Kant's critical turn instead of being a philosopher who reverts to a pre-critical position.¹³ It means that Deleuze's overturning of the ontological primacy of the subject-position cannot be reduced to a pre-critical metaphysical position. Instead, Deleuze shows that Kant's transcendental subject cannot operate as ground or condition for experience because it is incapable of explaining how the subject itself is not a whole (because it is split by the form of time).¹⁴ Because the subject is not a whole it must itself be explained by a more fundamental ground that is productive of the subject. A transcendental empiricism means that the Kantian transcendental *a priori* condition of the mind becomes transformed into a transcendental field that consists of virtual problem-Ideas that operate as pure potentials for the determination of actual forms (both subjects and objects).¹⁵ It implies that neither the subject nor the empirical world/object can be accepted as given, but must itself be explained.¹⁶ Bryant defines transcendental empiricism as follows:

Deleuze's definition of transcendental empiricism is very simple: transcendental empiricism is that philosophical position which determines the conditions of real rather than possible experience.¹⁷

Transcendental empiricism as the condition of real experience means that the transcendental no longer operates as an abstract ground that defines the *a priori* condition of experience in general. A transcendental empiricism does not define a general condition of experience, but couples the condition of experience to the genesis of experience itself. It indicates that the

transcendental cannot be uncoupled from a problematic field and history of genesis through which an actual entity becomes produced.¹⁸ We move from possible experience to real experience when the empirical world is not accepted as given, but the outcome of a process of genesis, which means that the distinction between an experiencing subject and the experienced world falls apart.¹⁹

However, even though Bryant correctly interprets Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, I want to argue that a reduction of Deleuze's philosophy to a transcendental empiricism is nevertheless incorrect. I argue that a different reading of Deleuze is possible in which his philosophy is not a transcendental empiricism, but a philosophy of the *universal in itself*. With the universal in itself I mean the fact that there is a gap between the realm of virtual problem-Ideas and the realm of empirical, actual forms. Deleuze also calls this gap the *dark precursor* or the *pure connector*.²⁰ It is this gap that is responsible for the connection between virtual and actual, which allows the determination of a virtual potential into actual form. A pure connector therefore forms an integral part of a transcendental empiricism. However, we move beyond a transcendental empiricism when the pure connector between virtual and actual as such becomes explicit, which leads to a collapse of experience and a collapse of the virtual-actual relationship. A transcendental empiricism is then impossible because both the empirical world and the virtual transcendental field have collapsed. The reason why Deleuze's philosophy cannot be reduced to a transcendental empiricism is because the virtual transcendental field cannot be the fundamental ground of experience or reality. Virtual problem-Ideas are not ontologically fundamental. This is the mistake made in the interpretations of Deleuze that reduce his philosophy to a transcendental empiricism. Also Bryant makes the argument that virtual Ideas are ontologically prior.²¹ This is not true because there is something more fundamental than virtual Ideas, which is the pure connector between virtual and actual. A theorization of the pure connector as such transforms Deleuze's philosophy into a philosophy of the universal in itself. In this essay I want to argue that in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze implicitly argues against a transcendental empiricism (and in favour of the universal in itself) even though he puts forward in this work a transcendental empiricism.²²

In order to clarify the argument of the essay I want to put forward the following three distinctions:

1. Experience is dependent upon the subject. This is the Kantian universal transcendental subject (*second Copernican revolution*).
2. The subject is dependent on (produced by) experience. This is the Deleuzian subject of a transcendental empiricism. Deleuze calls this a (*third*) *Copernican revolution* because it reverses Kant's argument that experience is dependent upon the subject into the subject as dependent upon experience.²³

3. The becoming independent of experience from the subject. Experience starts to operate autonomously without needing any subject. This is the condition experience takes up when it no longer operates as a process of genesis, but becomes equated with the pure connector between virtual and actual. This is the condition of the inhuman subject, which I will define as a demonic or divine subject.²⁴ We can call this the *fourth Copernican revolution*.²⁵

I will argue that in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze not only puts forward a third Copernican revolution, but also a fourth Copernican revolution. It is this fourth Copernican revolution that is neglected in Bryant's interpretation of Deleuze and in the secondary literature in general. It completely changes *Difference and Repetition* because it means that it is not a philosophy of pure difference and pure repetition (which is the difference and repetition of the Deleuzian subject), but a philosophy of indifference and the impossibility of repetition. Also, it means that *Difference and Repetition* is not a transcendental empiricism, but a philosophy of the universal in itself, which means the collapse of both the transcendental and empirical world. Whereas Deleuze argues against the primacy of the subject-position (instead proposing the transcendental field as fundamental)²⁶ I will argue that the condition of the pure connector, although based on the becoming independent of experience from the subject, can be interpreted as a new subject-position in which the subject has become inhuman.

Distinguishing between Pure Difference and Repetition (Third Copernican Revolution) and the Collapse of Difference and Repetition (Fourth Copernican Revolution)

Before I will analyze how the fourth Copernican revolution is present in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, I first want to make a reference to his work *The Logic of Sense*²⁷. In this work Deleuze proposes the concept of the *Möbius strip*.²⁸ The Möbius strip defines a paradoxical condition because *it simultaneously consists of two opposed sides that never meet and of only one side*. I want to argue that this condition of simultaneous detachment and equation between two sides can be used to theorize the condition of the pure connector or the universal in itself. The pure connector has a paradoxical condition because it goes in two directions at once (connecting virtual and actual) without having any identity or place of its own.²⁹ It is in the condition of pure connector that virtual and actual meet, but also where virtual and actual are opposed to one another. Virtual and actual must meet as otherwise no connection between them would be possible, no determination of pure potential into actual form could occur. However, virtual and actual must also be opposed as otherwise we would have a conflation of the two series, which would make it impossible for the realm of virtuality to operate as pure potentiality and for the realm of actual reality to operate as determined forms.

The pure connector can be defined through this paradoxical condition of simultaneous opposition and equation between two series. Through this condition we can rethink the relation between virtual and actual from a process of determination/genesis (transcendental empiricism) into a simultaneous detachment and equation between virtual and actual, which is the condition of the pure connector or universal in itself.

The simultaneous detachment and equation between virtual and actual is the transformation of reality into *shine*. The Möbius strip defines the condition of shine because it reduces everything to one surface (complete visibility) while at the same time the one surface also has another side from which it is completely detached.³⁰ What this means is that the other side of the Möbius strip can never be unmasked. We can never look behind the one surface because the surface has no other side, its other side is in fact the one surface itself. The one surface could in this sense be defined as a mask behind which nothing is hidden.³¹ There is nothing hidden because the other side of the mask is the mask itself. *The condition of the Möbius strip is the condition of shine because it defines a reality in which everything is completely visible and precisely through this maximal visibility is a reality in which everything remains hidden.* Nothing can be unmasked, no deception can be countered when a mask has nothing behind it.³² The throwing down of the mask does not reveal a truth behind it, but simply another mask. The collapse of the virtual-actual relation is the transformation of reality into pure theater in which everything takes up the condition of a theater prop, becomes a mask or costume. This is a mask or costume that has become independent from the actors wearing them.³³ There are no actors anymore because there is not and cannot be anything behind the mask. Instead of shine we could also speak about *pure appearance*. A pure appearance is an appearance in which nothing appears, it is appearance as such. This is structurally related to the becoming autonomous of experience from the subject, which is how I defined the fourth Copernican revolution. It means that experience becomes transformed into a pure act, a pure performance without any entity being behind it. Whereas Deleuze argues that an event is not subordinated to a subject, but that a subject belongs to (is produced by) the logic of an event³⁴, we are dealing here with a different kind of event. The event has become autonomous of subjects completely, we can call it a pure event.³⁵ It is a condition in which nothing is real, in which there are not only no actual, determined forms, but also no virtual processes of genesis anymore.

In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze does not put forward the concept of the Möbius strip, but proposes the concept of the *simulacrum*.³⁶ I want to argue that both concepts mean in fact the same thing, namely, the becoming independent of experience of the subject, which is the becoming pure of appearance. Following my argument above, if a pure appearance is defined by the simultaneous detachment and equation between virtual and actual, then *Difference and Repetition* cannot be reduced to a transcendental

empiricism in which a virtual potential is productive of actual form. The difficulty with the concept of the simulacrum is that in one way Deleuze theorizes it through pure difference and pure repetition (which is the difference and repetition of transcendental empiricism)³⁷, but in another way he defines the simulacrum through the demonic (which is the condition of the fourth Copernican revolution).³⁸ In order to understand why Deleuze does this, we first need to define what he means by pure difference and pure repetition.

Pure difference and pure repetition is transcendental difference/repetition or internal difference/repetition, which is difference/repetition as a virtual process of genesis that is generative of a determined actual form.³⁹ It means that difference and repetition is no longer subordinated to an actual determined entity (subject or object), but becomes to operate in itself. We have to be careful here because the becoming independent of difference and repetition from subject and object does not mean that the condition of subject and object disappears completely. If this would be the case, we would be dealing with the fourth Copernican revolution. Pure difference and pure repetition on the other hand must be understood through the third and not the fourth Copernican revolution. It means that difference becomes the difference of an entity in the process of formation, that difference becomes the transcendental condition of experience on which the subject/object is dependent instead of difference being dependent upon the subject or object.⁴⁰ Pure repetition means that repetition becomes liberated from the repetition of the same (a stable identity or representational concept) and becomes the repetition of a process of genesis in which repetition is not dependent upon a given subject or object, but produces it.⁴¹ Pure difference and repetition cannot be thought without a process of genesis that produces an actual entity.⁴² When difference and repetition become completely liberated from subjects and objects (therefore uncoupled from a process of genesis), pure difference and repetition collapse. They become transformed into indifference and the impossibility of repetition because without a process of genesis the relation between virtual and actual is impossible. Whereas Deleuze opposes the idea of indifference explicitly in *Difference and Repetition* (as a too Hegelian idea, a night in which all cows are black)⁴³ I want to argue that he does theorize (implicitly) in *Difference and Repetition* a condition of indifference and the impossibility of repetition. Deleuze opposes indifference because the virtual transcendental field is based on the differentiation of virtual problem-Ideas. This differentiation operates through the relations of movement and rest, of speed and slowness, between unformed multiplicities.⁴⁴ However, the becoming explicit of the pure connector between virtual and actual leads to a collapse of the virtual transcendental field, which means that differentiation (pure difference) is no longer possible.

The reason why the simulacrum can be related to pure difference and repetition is because Deleuze discusses both the simulacrum and pure difference/repetition in relation to a pure virtuality in which reality is reduced to a constellation of multiplicities that are only differentiated on the basis of speed and slowness, movement and rest.⁴⁵ This is a reality in which actual, determined form has been completely overturned by the virtual field of genesis beneath it. Deleuze theorizes such a condition in order to highlight that true difference is situated on the side of the virtual and not the actual. True difference is the difference of ideal events, the differentiation between virtual Ideas and not the external differences between actual empirical forms.⁴⁶ However, the idea of pure virtuality is contradictory to transcendental empiricism as the virtual is then no longer the *a priori* condition of experience that is productive of empirical reality. A pure virtuality is incapable to determine experience. This is why a pure virtuality can only lead to a collapse of the virtual-actual relationship, which is a collapse of experience. This is the condition of the simulacrum. This is why the simulacrum can indeed be related to pure difference and repetition (as difference and repetition of the virtual realm) yet is nevertheless distinct from it. It means that through the concept of the simulacrum we can understand how Deleuze implicitly shifts in *Difference and Repetition* from a third Copernican revolution to a fourth Copernican revolution. The shift happens when representation is overturned completely. The critique on representation should be limited to the acknowledgement that representation is the outcome of a virtual process of genesis in order to remain within a transcendental empiricism. When representation as such is critiqued and replaced completely with the pure differences and repetitions of the virtual transcendental field, transcendental empiricism collapses. We then enter the condition of the universal in itself, of pure appearances.

The concept of the simulacrum is not only distinct from pure difference/repetition, but also from the *larval subject*.⁴⁷ Deleuze introduces both the concept of the simulacrum and of the larval subject in *Difference and Repetition* as a way to overturn the Kantian transcendental subject. The larval subject overcomes the Kantian subject because it is a subject that is larval, that is in the process of formation, that is dependent upon experience.⁴⁸ However, even though the larval subject is not pre-given, but the product of experience, Deleuze calls it a passive self (that is related to the passive syntheses of time).⁴⁹ It is passive because it is a subject that is shaped through *habit*: it is based on the experiencing of habitual affects, which leads to contractions and the anticipations of these same affects and contractions in the future.⁵⁰ Even though such a subject is the outcome of a process of genesis, and in this sense can be related to pure difference and repetition, it is also opposed to pure difference and repetition because it remains within the habitual logic of a world.

Such a subject is not forced to think, does not radically overturn empirical reality in order to open up to the virtual transcendental field because such an opening up requires a shock of thought, a shattering of one's normal expectations and affects.⁵¹ Deleuze speaks in this sense of experience as *encounter*⁵², which poses a challenge, a violence to experience because it confronts experience with a problem to which it has no ready-made answer. Pure difference and repetition in their true form only manifest themselves in the encounter and not in the habitual affects and contractions of the larval subject. If *Difference and Repetition* is a philosophy of pure difference and repetition, it can therefore not be limited to the larval subject. This is why Deleuze also puts forward the concept of the simulacrum. The simulacrum is not based on habit, but upon the shattering of any form of continuity or anticipation of the same.⁵³ The paradoxical aspect of pure difference and repetition is that they can only become explicit when they destroy their own condition. The becoming explicit of pure difference and repetition through the encounter violates a transcendental empiricism because it overturns empirical reality completely in favour of the pure differences and repetitions of the virtual. However, the pure virtual as such, and pure difference and repetition as such, cannot exist. They then transform into their opposite, which is the pure connector as indifference and the impossibility of repetition. This is why *Difference and Repetition*, precisely because it is a philosophy of pure difference and repetition, must simultaneously contain a third and fourth Copernican revolution.

The fourth Copernican revolution as the becoming explicit of the gap between virtual and actual is the transformation of experience into shine. I have explained above that Deleuze theorizes it through the idea of a pure theater without actors. However, there is also a different way in which the simulacrum or pure appearance can operate, which is as the becoming superior of form:

If the eternal return reduces qualities to the status of pure signs, and retains of extensities only what combines with the original depth, even at the cost of our coherence and in favour of a superior coherence, then the most beautiful qualities will appear, the most brilliant colours, the most precious stones and the most vibrant extensions. Having broken all relation with the negativity, these will remain forever affixed in the intensive space of positive differences. To the sensibility disconnected from its empirical exercise, temples, stars and gods such as had never before been seen, will emerge.⁵⁴

The paradox of pure appearances is that they define both a condition in which no appearance is possible (appearance without entity as the condition of pure theater) and a condition in which appearance reaches its highest form, which is the becoming completely self-transparent of appearance. This is the maximal appearance of an entity as it is in itself. We are here not dealing with an appearance without entity, but with the maximal equation of entity and

appearance. Such a maximal equation is normally impossible because of the gap between virtual and actual. However, when experience enters the realm of the in itself, both the highest and lowest type of appearance emerges. The highest appearance is coupled to the lowest because it can only operate as revelation, which means that it can only occur through the overcoming of a condition in which no appearance is possible. This is why a reality of pure theater must precede a reality of self-transparent forms.

However, the fact that pure appearance can operate in two opposed ways is never made explicit by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* or in his later work. With the exception of the above quotation, he limits the condition of the simulacrum to a pure theater without actors. In the two sections below I will demonstrate how pure appearance as theater without actors cannot be understood without its opposite, which is pure appearance as the becoming completely self-transparent of form. This is related to two new types of subjectivity: the *demonic subject* versus the *divine subject*. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze introduces the concept of the demon in relation to the simulacrum.⁵⁵ He also discusses the concept of the divine subject (the man-God), but in a critical way because it is opposed *for him* to the condition of the simulacrum.⁵⁶ The divine and the demonic subject point towards the fact that the condition of the in itself as absolute ground of reality is not opposed to the subject-position. Whereas Deleuze argues against the ontological primacy of the subject-position (the Kantian transcendental subject), I argue that the fourth Copernican revolution means that the subject-position is indeed what is fundamental. We are then not dealing with the universal transcendental subject, but with the *inhuman subject*. Within the secondary literature, Deleuze's philosophy is often interpreted as a post-humanism because experience as process of genesis is both applicable to humans and non-humans (in their process of formation) and therefore not specific to the subject-position.⁵⁷ In this way one could say that Deleuze's transcendental empiricism overturns the ontological dualism between subject and object, human and non-human.⁵⁸ However, I want to argue that the inhuman means something completely different. *The inhuman is not the overturning of the ontological distinction between the human and non-human, but the equation of experience with the absolute condition of reality, which is the in itself or pure connector.* The absolute ground of reality is not opposed to the subject-position, but defines a new subject-position that is inhuman. It is a type of subjectivity that has overcome both the limitations of virtual and actual. It means that an inhuman subject has neither an empirical body nor a transcendental mind, which is necessary in order to see and know the in itself. The loss of subjectivity therefore gives rise to the most ultimate form of subjectivity. This is the transformation of the subject from an individual I into a universal.

The Faith of a Divine Subject Versus the Unfaith of a Demonic Subject

Above I distinguished between pure difference and repetition as the condition of the third Copernican revolution (transcendental empiricism) and the loss of difference and the impossibility of repetition as the condition of the fourth Copernican revolution (the collapse of the transcendental and empirical). By making explicit the fourth Copernican revolution in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, it becomes transformed into a philosophy of the universal in itself. The concept of the simulacrum becomes then uncoupled from pure difference and repetition, instead defining the transformation of entities into pure appearance or shine. This is associated with a new subject-position, which is the inhuman subject as the demonic or divine subject. In this section I will more closely examine how the demonic and divine subject fit within Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*. I will focus on the fact that Deleuze proposes the concept of the demon, but critiques the concept of the divine subject. Whereas Deleuze opposes the divine subject to the concept of the simulacrum, I will demonstrate that the divine subject is indeed a simulacrum because it is pure appearance as revelation.

Deleuze's critique on the divine subject is related to his critique on faith.⁵⁹ A simulacrum poses a problem that cannot be solved by faith because a simulacrum is supposed to be a movement that directly touches the soul.⁶⁰ It is not a matter of empirical movement in space and time or of movement as the determination of form, but rather of a movement that is situated on the level of spirit—a movement of the soul itself. Such a movement is without mediation: neither the world in which it occurs, nor its transcendental background, nor a body, mediates it. This is consistent with the fourth Copernican revolution as the collapse of experience, in which the relation between virtual and actual, and therefore the determination of actual form, has become impossible. A movement that directly touches the soul implies the collapse of the subject as individual I and therefore cannot be for Deleuze a form of faith.⁶¹ Deleuze considers faith to be tied to a concept of God as well as of the self, while a simulacrum requires the dissolution of the self and the death of God.⁶² Therefore, Deleuze identifies the spiritual movement of simulacra as a "theater of humor"—not faith.⁶³ In this regard, he undertakes a critical analysis of Kierkegaard's concept of the "theater of faith," contrasting this with the real movement of simulacra.⁶⁴ A theater of faith is based on the idea of the man-God, the divine subject, in which God is equated with the human self. Such faith is flawed, by Deleuze's lights, because the man-God leaves the self and God intact whereas simulacra dissolve the unity of the self and require the death of God.⁶⁵ The concept of God is opposed to the concept of a simulacrum because the existence of God implies the existence of law, which makes the order within reality possible, the determination of form and allows entities to exist in a common world.⁶⁶ A simulacrum, on the other hand, implies the loss of form, the loss of the common; there is nothing in the

simulacrum but a pure appearance that does not behave in accordance with any law because it has no model.

This line of reasoning, however, can be countered with reference to the fact that formlessness and lawlessness are not the conditions only of pure appearance as theater, but also of a completely self-transparent appearance. The divine subject is precisely such an appearance. From this perspective, the divine and the death of God are not opposed to one another, as both can be defined through the condition of the simulacrum/pure appearance. Simulacra indeed *require* the death of God because they are based on the collapse of the transcendental, and the world. God can exist only within an ordered world in which the determination of form is based on law. The death of God, however, reveals the universal in itself. The virtual-actual relation is then transformed into the universal in itself (in which virtual and actual are simultaneously detached from, and identical to, one another). The collapse of the virtual-actual relation takes the form of pure appearance, which is both the condition of pure theater and of the revelation of the divine. The reason why the divine and the death of God are not opposed to one another is because the condition of the divine (universal in itself) can only become explicit when the relation between virtual and actual collapses, which is coupled to the death of God because it means the end of creation as actual, determined form.

The divine that arises upon the death of God can only be a divine *aesthetics*. It is an aesthetics because the universal in itself is pure appearance, or shine. While shine as the simultaneous detachment and equation of virtual and actual is definitive of the condition of pure theater, it also defines the condition of *revelation*. Revelation occurs when the condition of pure theater comes to an end—as it must eventually do—and transforms into its opposite, namely complete self-transparency. It is this self-transparent appearance that we could define as divine aesthetics. The divine is revelation, and it can occur only by overcoming the condition in which there are only appearances but nothing that appears.²⁷ By defining the divine as a divine aesthetics (which is the divine without God), it becomes possible to conceive of the divine as a simulacrum. The divine subject is not the transformation of the human being into God, but the becoming-divine of experience as a divine aesthetics.

In this way, we can get past Deleuze's critique of a new sense of faith based on the divine subject. Deleuze had argued against the becoming-divine of the subject in his critique of Kierkegaard's "theater of faith," which he replaced by a "theater of humor." A theater of humor is the (un)faith of the demons; it is faith's becoming absurd:

Kierkegaard offers us a theatre of faith: he opposes spiritual movement, the movement of faith, to logical movement. He can thus invite us to go beyond all aesthetic repetition, beyond irony/humour. With Nietzsche it is a theatre of unbelief, of cruelty. Nietzsche's leading idea is to

ground the repetition in eternal return on both the death of God and the dissolution of the self. In the theatre of faith Kierkegaard dreams of an alliance between a God and a self rediscovered.⁶⁸

Deleuze favors Nietzsche's theater of cruelty because Kierkegaard's theater of faith remains limited to the boundaries of the self while Nietzsche transforms the self into a simulacrum, enabling the becoming-pure of difference and repetition. Deleuze considers faith a limitation, something that must be overcome on account of its inability to transcend the boundaries of representation, identity, and common sense.⁶⁹ In the passage just quoted, Deleuze also indicates that Kierkegaardian faith stands in opposition to aesthetic repetition—that is, to irony and humor. This insight is important because aesthetic repetition is the repetition (and difference) of pure appearances or simulacra (which is the loss of repetition and difference). A simulacrum's repetition is *aesthetic* because it continuously transforms its appearances; it is continuously becoming other without this transformation being based on a law or model.⁷⁰ The only criterion for this repetition is the fact that there is no criterion, only appearances without models.⁷¹

We can define aesthetic repetition through the logic of the “and,” which is opposed to the logic of the “either/or.”⁷² This is a distinction made by Kierkegaard. The “and” is the (non-)choice of the aesthetic, while the “either/or” is the choice of choice itself, which serves as the foundation of ethics.⁷³ In such choosing, choice is not conditioned by one's desire for some object, but is completely unconditional. One makes the choice not because it will yield some benefit, but because choosing is inherently virtuous.⁷⁴ Deleuze opposes the “either/or” because a simulacrum is not bound by the moral law—it is beyond good and evil, to use Nietzsche's words.⁷⁵ This is why Deleuze develops the logic of the “and” through the metaphor of the rhizome, something that connects an unlimited multiplicity of things to one another without hierarchy.⁷⁶ Any form can be created: the only criterion is that the determination of form is not based on law. The logic of the “and” therefore cannot give rise to an actual determined form, but only to theatrical creatures. The logic of “and” is aesthetic repetition and cannot be faith precisely because it is without law.

However, the opposition that Deleuze sets up between Kierkegaard's “either/or” and Nietzsche's “and” is not entirely correct, because the “either/or” can also behave as a choice without law. A moral law (in the Kantian sense) is based on the transcendental *a priori* condition of the mind (practical reason) that makes human action possible and guides it within a world.⁷⁷ However, when the transcendental and the world collapse, choice can no longer behave in this way. The choice of choice itself cannot only operate through the moral law (then it is a choice out of duty), but also through drive or yearning. The highest form of freedom emerges when an unconditional choice becomes uncoupled from the (moral) law. The choice of choice without law is choice as the drive for sense or creation.⁷⁸ This drive is not equivalent to

lawful moral action but defined, rather, by the inability to act. In the *drive* for sense and creation, creation (or action) is not yet possible.⁷⁹ As Schelling said, this is what defines the divine in its absolute sense: it is the *yearning* for creation.⁸⁰ The universal in itself is, then, the yearning for the union of virtual and actual, the determination of actual form and the creation of a world. Whereas Kierkegaard's "either/or" and Kant's categorical imperative bind choice to duty and moral law (according to Deleuze, but see note 81 for a critique of this view)⁸¹, here action is based on yearning. We might say that the absolute choice is one made by what Kant calls a "holy will."⁸² This is a will that is no longer human but divine. Instead of action based on the moral law, choice as choice now operates as the faith in revelation. The collapse of experience (collapse of the virtual-actual relation) as the becoming pure of appearance explains why a divine subject cannot act, but only can have faith in revelation, in the becoming completely self-transparent of appearance. The "either/or" then takes up the logic of "and" because pure appearance as the becoming completely self-transparent of appearance means that anything becomes possible. Entities can now overcome the limitations of both actual form and virtual Idea and appear as they are in themselves. It means that one becomes transformed into a universal. Everything has become possible. The divine can now reveal itself without any limitation.

This idea of a divine will enables one to rethink Deleuze's critique of Kierkegaard and explain how the identification of the human being with the divine is possible. The equation between the two presupposes that the human become inhuman. Such a becoming occurs when experience collapses—that is, when it is no longer based on the virtual-actual relation but rather on the universal in itself, which is the simultaneous detachment and equation of virtual and actual. To occupy this position is to cease to be human and to take up the condition of the gap or pure connection between virtual and actual, which is the position of God.

Alternatively, we can define the condition of gap or pure connector as the position of the abyss or black hole, which is the home of theatrical creatures. The paradox of the universal in itself is that it is based on a condition—shine—that behaves in two contrary ways. This is why pure appearance as theater and the becoming-divine of appearance are related to each other while also being opposites. Deleuze introduces the concept of the "demon" to refer to the simulacrum as theatrical creature.⁸³ A demon is no longer human but pure appearance. In *The Logic of Sense* and *Cinema I*, Deleuze further elaborates on the concept while never discussing the idea of a divine subject.⁸⁴ However, the demon and the divine subject both involve a becoming-inhuman of the human being. If we acknowledge that the divine is not opposed to the simulacrum, there is no reason why Deleuze's concern with the inhuman should be limited to demons. To become divine is to become pure spirit, which has no body or form. This marks the collapse of experience and therefore the end of metaphysics. Even though Deleuze

presents his philosophy as a transcendental empiricism (a metaphysics based on the ontological primacy of experience), it is in fact closer to Heidegger's rejection of metaphysics.⁵⁵ The revelation of pure being in Heidegger is equivalent to the revelation of the universal in itself as the becoming pure of appearance. Heidegger defines it as the end of metaphysics because it is the uncoupling of pure being from beings, a being without entities.⁵⁶

Deleuze's theorization of a theater of humor and my proposal of a universal faith based on a divine subject can respectively be characterized as absolute unfaith and as the becoming-absolute of faith. Faith and unfaith become absolute when experience is equated with the gap between virtual and actual, i.e., the universal in itself. This gap is the sense that underlies all faith: it is the pure connection between virtual and actual, which is responsible for the order within reality and the particular form taken by this order.⁵⁷ When sense as the connection between virtual and actual becomes itself visible, a world based on the absolute order emerges, which is a world in which the universal in itself appears. This is why the faith of a divine subject is the becoming absolute of faith: it allows the pure connection between virtual and actual, which gives every faith its sense, to reveal itself maximally. However, precisely because the universal in itself operates as pure connection, it is itself without identity or place. This is why the revelation of the gap, pure connector, does not only reveal sense in its absolute form, but also gives rise to sense as nonsense. This is absolute unfaith. The equation of experience with the gap does not only allow a world based on absolute faith, but also an absurd world in which sense behaves as nonsense.⁵⁸ This happens when faith is reduced to its aesthetic properties (the performances, rituals, myths, etc., that accompany religion) without these aesthetic properties having any content or meaning.⁵⁹ Unfaith—as in the theater of humor—occurs when we detach the aesthetic forms of religion from their deeper meaning. Without any deeper sense, they become risible—that is, humor.⁶⁰ The absolute faith of a divine subject is faith based on the revelation of sense as such, the universal in itself as the becoming-self-transparent of form, whereas the unfaith of the demons is based on sense as nonsense, the gap as black hole in which all value and form disappear.

Although Deleuze proclaims the death of God, he also proposes a concept of God that is related to pure difference and repetition:

God makes the world by calculating, but his calculations never work out exactly, and this inexactitude in the result, this irreducible inequality, forms the condition of the world. The world happens while God calculates, if the calculation were exact, there would be no world. The world can be regarded as a remainder. Every phenomenon refers to an inequality/difference by which it is conditioned.⁶¹

This inexactitude in God's creation is pure difference (as the difference of a larval subject) —a resistance to that logic of representation or recognition in

which reality is reduced to a concept.⁹² As Deleuze conceives him, God is aligned with a world devoid of any common order based on law or representation, and therefore also with a fractured, dissolved self (the larval subject).⁹³

Does this mean that Deleuze ultimately argues in favor of God's existence? Are what he calls "simulacra" God's inexact calculations? Such an interpretation would be incorrect for two reasons. First, one cannot hold God responsible for the existence of theatrical creatures living in the abyss. A pure appearance without virtual Idea or actual form is a monstrous spirit, a creature that violates everything God stands for. Second, an inexactly calculating God is different from pure appearance as the revelation of the universal in itself. As it becomes divine, the subject is dissolved, yet this dissolution gives rise to the becoming completely self-transparent of form, which is the absolute subject-position. Far from being the result of inexact calculations, such a form is perfect because the limitations of both virtual Idea and actual form are overcome, which makes it possible for an entity to appear maximally as it is in itself. Deleuze's inexactly calculating God is only the creator of problem-Ideas, which can be determined in various ways.⁹⁴ Rather than an inexactly calculating God we are dealing with the transformation of God into a divine aesthetics, which is the divine as revelation. Such revelation can emerge only after the making of an absolute choice, which as I argued is an unconditional choice as a yearning for a creation that is not theater. The paradox of such an absolute choice is that, because it is lawless, it is based on chance.⁹⁵ Revelation rests on the radicalization of chance. To make a choice based on radical chance is to play what Deleuze terms "the divine game."⁹⁶

The Divine Game Versus the Demonic Game

When reality is transformed from a constellation of experiences into the universal in itself, it becomes a game.⁹⁷ But whereas a game normally adheres to certain rules on which all players have agreed, the condition of the universal in itself liberates the game from any rules.⁹⁸ The formation of actual entities is no longer bound by those laws that inhere in virtual Ideas. The laws of metaphysics are violated as anything becomes possible. An entity can take up any form, become anything it wants to be. This also amounts to a liberation of the virtual Ideas, which no longer need to solve the problem of how to translate their potentialities into actual forms. We have entered the realm of the simulacrum in which humans can become animals; in which stupidity takes the form of genius; in which every man is an artist. Reality has become Alice's wonderland, where one is always too early and at the same time too late; where to grow taller is simultaneously to become smaller.⁹⁹

One might call such a world contradictory, yet it is also *non-contradictory*. We can speak of contradiction only when a law is violated; where there are no laws, contradiction is impossible.¹⁰⁰ Simulacra are thus not

contradictory forms but no forms at all. They are pure appearances that cannot be unmasked as contradictory precisely because there is nothing behind them.¹⁰¹ We are dealing here with a game in which everyone is a fictional character.¹⁰² And yet it is not a game, because we can speak of a game only when there are rules to which everybody must adhere. The play of simulacra could therefore be described as *pure play*.¹⁰³ Not being subject to rules, one cannot lose this game.¹⁰⁴ That also means that the game never ends—it is what we might call *the ultimate game*. This is the demon's game.

However, a demon can indeed be unmasked because of the paradoxical condition of the universal in itself. While it makes unmasking impossible, the universal in itself also provides the condition for transforming the impossibility of unmasking into complete unmasking, which is revelation. This paradox of pure appearances is such that, although the demon's existence is pure theater, he does not in fact play. He only *plays at playing*. True playing, for Deleuze, does not consist in theatricalization but in the radical affirmation of chance:

The system of the future must be called a divine game since there is no pre-existing rule, since the game bears upon its own rules and since the child player can only win, all of chance being affirmed each time and for all times.¹⁰⁵

In this passage Deleuze introduces the notion of a *divine game*, which must be distinguished from the demonic game. The demonic game is not actually a game because the demon does not affirm but rather *eliminates* chance and, specifically, the risk of being unmasked (i.e., of losing).¹⁰⁶ The demon is not confronted with any tasks that need to be solved, such as the task of actualizing virtual Ideas. He thus expends no effort or time. He must simply wish to be something in order to already be it. Yet whatever the demon becomes is not real. In this sense, he seems after all to have to respect one rule: namely, the rule that he must play at playing. The possibility of the real determination of form is excluded from the demonic game. One can be anything, the only condition being that it will not be real.¹⁰⁷

By contrast, the divine game, as we saw, is the radical affirmation of chance.¹⁰⁸ This consists in making an absolute choice, a choice that has no purpose other than itself. Only when choice is thus liberated from law—when it issues from a drive or yearning—is it entirely free, a radical act of freedom. No human subject can make such a choice, because it requires that experience be identical with the universal in itself. Yet insofar as creatures like us are dissolved into the universal in itself, experience collapses so that there are no subjects or entities anymore, but only pure appearances. Experience will now be identical to the divine; it will consist in the subject—and their will—becoming divine. The making of an absolute choice as the playing of the divine game now becomes possible. The divine game in this sense yields a

new and absolute form of faith, one based on faith in the paradoxical logic of the universal in itself: namely, that the divine will eventually reveal itself.

Such revelation, being impossible under normal conditions, could be understood as a *divine gift* or *grace*.¹⁰⁹ To become completely self-transparent is to shine maximally as what one is in oneself. This divine gift should not be understood teleologically, as an entity's realizing its predestined form. Rather, this divine gift is the radicalization of chance, because the form that will appear with complete self-transparency is not predestined nor prefigured in any virtual Idea. The becoming completely self-transparent of form implies that the limitations of both virtual Idea and actual form are overcome. We should speak of it as the becoming universal or the becoming in itself of form. The divine gift is that an entity is free to be anything it wants to be; it becomes itself not by actualizing some essence, but rather by making a radical choice. The universal in itself resides in the choices that one makes, in pure connection. The overcoming of the limitations of virtual and actual is not a becoming-other than one is (the "anything" of the demons), but rather complete identity with who one is in oneself, and a radical equation with the universal in itself.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have developed a new interpretation of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* by distinguishing between pure difference and repetition as the third Copernican revolution in which a subject is dependent on (produced by) experience (transcendental empiricism) and the impossibility of difference and repetition as the fourth Copernican revolution in which experience becomes completely independent of the subject. The becoming independent of experience means a collapse of experience through a complete equation with the universal in itself (the pure connector between virtual and actual). Instead of the determination of a virtual potential into actual form, we are now dealing with a simultaneous detachment and equation between virtual and actual. Deleuze illustrates this condition by the paradoxical Möbius strip, which consists of two opposing sides and yet has one side only. This could be reformulated as the condition of *shine*: a pure appearance in which nothing appears. I have defined the fourth Copernican revolution as a new subject-position in which the subject becomes an inhuman subject. This is the becoming demonic or divine of the subject.

The demonic subject is a pure appearance in which nothing appears, a mask with nothing behind it, whereas a divine subject is pure appearance as revelation, the complete self-transparency of form. Whereas Deleuze opposes the simulacrum (pure appearance) to the divine, I have argued that the divine in its most absolute form *is* a simulacrum. This is the divine as *divine aesthetics*. Such a conception of the divine requires thinking the paradox of the divine without God. Deleuze is right in his claim that we can speak about God only

as long as the coherence and endurance of the self are maintained. However, the complete shattering of the self is not incompatible with a divinity without God. The complete shattering of the self occurs through the collapse of experience (the collapse of the virtual-actual relation), which leads to the equation of experience with the universal in itself, a becoming pure appearance. It means that one takes up the condition of the divine so that the becoming completely self-transparent of appearance becomes possible. In this way, the subject becomes identical with the divine, which is therefore a divinity without God. The becoming-divine is not a becoming-God, but a modification of experience in which it takes up the condition of simultaneous detachment from, and equation of, virtual and actual. This modification occurs when experience collapses—when one is placed in a situation in which the virtual can no longer become actual, making appearance impossible. It is only by going through this state of the impossibility of appearance that pure appearance—appearance as revelation—will emerge.

Through this theorization of the divine without God, it becomes visible that Deleuze does not only critique the ontological primacy of the subject-position (third Copernican revolution), but also proposes a new subject-position in which the subject as inhuman subject is in fact the absolute condition of reality (fourth Copernican revolution). It means that the subject-position is ontologically primitive after all. This changes Deleuze's philosophy completely. Paradoxically, the complete fracturing of the self is what makes the self's maximal coherence and appearance possible—something Deleuze could not have envisioned given his reduction of a coherent self to representation and common sense. I ended the essay by distinguishing between the divine and the demonic game. The demon's play is only a pretense to play, because the demon eliminates rather than affirms chance. One plays the divine game when, out of a yearning for creation, one makes an absolute choice.

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014).

² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 71, 73.

³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 103.

⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 162.

⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 139, 252, 284-285, 326.

⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 136.

⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 326.

⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 47.

⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 20-21.

¹⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 73, 113.

¹¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 73, 113.

¹² Levi R. Bryant, *Difference and Givenness. Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2008).

For other secondary literature in which Deleuze's philosophy is interpreted as a transcendental empiricism or immanent metaphysics in which entities determine themselves through experience, consider for example: Alain Beaulieu, Edward Kazarian and Julia Sushytska (eds.), *Gilles Deleuze and Metaphysics* (London: Lexington Books, 2014); Anne Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze: L'empirisme transcendantal* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2010); Steven Shaviro, *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2012).

¹³ Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 195-197.

¹⁴ Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 217.

¹⁵ Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 199, 210.

¹⁶ Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 11.

¹⁷ Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 3.

¹⁸ Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 40-41, 61-62.

¹⁹ Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 38.

²⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 152, 191.

²¹ Bryant argues that Ideas are the sufficient reason of experience and therefore that there can be no reason beyond them (Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 206). This is not true because it is only the absolute ground of reality that has no reason beyond itself (because it is its own reason). A reason that is itself without reason is what Heidegger calls the complete equation of being and reason, which means that pure being is equivalent to reason, but is itself without a reason (Martin Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991) 50-51). Reason no longer operates here as the principle of sufficient reason, but as pure connector, which is what gives sense to everything, but is itself without sense.

²² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 71.

²³ Deleuze uses the concept of *Copernican revolution* in the following passage of *Difference and Repetition*: "That identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle become; that it revolve around the Different: such would be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical. Nietzsche meant nothing more than this by eternal return." (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 52). The calling of Deleuze's Copernican revolution a *third Copernican revolution* is an idea by Levi Bryant (Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 181).

- ²⁴ Deleuze puts forward the concept of the demon in *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 47), but critiques the Kierkegaardian concept of the alliance between a God and a self (divine subject) (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 13, 73).
- ²⁵ The term *fourth Copernican revolution* requires explanation. We can only speak of a ‘Copernican revolution’ when there is a radical reversal between two terms in which they take up each other’s position. What is the reversal that justifies the term *fourth Copernican revolution*? I will argue in this article that the collapse of experience leads to a becoming pure of appearance, to the transformation of reality into the one surface. We could interpret this as the becoming visible of the transcendental (which is normally impossible because the transcendental is by definition an *a priori* condition and therefore cannot be experienced). The becoming visible of the transcendental could be seen as a reversal of the positions of the transcendental and empirical so that the empirical world disappears in favour of a spiritual world in which Ideas are maximally visible.
- ²⁶ Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, 47-48.
- ²⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).
- ²⁸ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 11.
- ²⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 152, 248.
- ³⁰ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 9, 11.
- ³¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 20-21, 136.
- ³² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 136.
- ³³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 284.
- ³⁴ Bryant, *Difference and Givenness*, x.
- ³⁵ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 63, 136.
- ³⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 162.
- ³⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 162.
- ³⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 162; Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 258.
- ³⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 49.
- ⁴⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 71.
- ⁴¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 147.
- ⁴² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 366.
- ⁴³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 66.
- ⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 269-270.
- ⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 272.
- ⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 212.
- ⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 103.
- ⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 98.

- ⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 94, 103.
- ⁵⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 96-98.
- ⁵¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 183.
- ⁵² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 183.
- ⁵³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 162-163.
- ⁵⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 139.
- ⁵⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 162.
- ⁵⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 13, 73.
- ⁵⁷ This is particularly visible in the current philosophical strain of New Materialism and Speculative Realism that draws inspiration from Deleuzian philosophy in order to overcome the limitations of the human perspective and reach towards the non-human.
- ⁵⁸ Deleuze speaks in this regard of the univocity of being (Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 45-46).
- ⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 123.
- ⁶⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 9-12, 38.
- ⁶¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 9-12, 38.
- ⁶² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 123.
- ⁶³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 123-124.
- ⁶⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 13.
- ⁶⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 73.
- ⁶⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 113.
- ⁶⁷ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 262-263, 276.
- ⁶⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 13.
- ⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 123.
- ⁷⁰ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 258.
- ⁷¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 284; Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 2.
- ⁷² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 26; Søren Kierkegaard, *Of/Of*, trans. Jan Marquart Scholtz (Amsterdam: Boom, 2007), 573.
- ⁷³ Kierkegaard, *Of/Of*, 581.
- ⁷⁴ Kierkegaard, *Of/Of*, 574.
- ⁷⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 5, 7.
- ⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 5-15.
- ⁷⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason and Other Writings*, trans. and ed. Allen Wood and George di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 39.

- ⁷⁸ The choice of choice as drive implies that the drive has no object to which it strives. How can we understand a drive or yearning that has no object? We must understand it through the equation of experience with the condition of the in itself or pure connector. Both virtual Ideas and actual forms have then collapsed, only the condition of pure connector remains. This defines a paradoxical condition because it means that the connector between virtual and actual is revealed, but now is incapable to connect virtual and actual. This is structurally similar to the becoming explicit of the condition of choice as such (absolute choice) as a choice that is without object, that cannot choose anything but itself.
- ⁷⁹ See Brecht Govaerts. 'The Becoming Schizophrenic of Aesthetic Experience: A Comparative Analysis between Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and Latour's Empirical Metaphysics.' *Process Studies Supplement*, Issue 26 (2022), 1-55, for a more detailed discussion of how Deleuze's philosophy can be interpreted as drive/yearning for creation.
- ⁸⁰ Friedrich W. J. Schelling, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2006), 8, 9.
- ⁸¹ However, we could say that Deleuze misinterprets Kierkegaard's conception of ethics (as a choice based on duty, moral law) because *ethics for Kierkegaard is not limited by the moral law*. This is particularly visible in Kierkegaard's statement that the choice for choice itself is not a choice between good or evil, but a choice for the will to make a choice. The distinction between ethics and aesthetics is not the distinction between good versus evil, but the distinction between the choice for choice and a becoming indifferent (the inability to make a choice) (Kierkegaard, *Of/Of*, 575). This is why a Kierkegaardian choice is also beyond good and evil in the same way that Deleuze says that simulacra are beyond good and evil. What this means is that Deleuze's critique on Kierkegaard's concept of faith and the divine subject is unjustified. Kierkegaard's faith is not a faith based on law, but on an absolute choice as the most radical act of freedom, which is a choice not out of duty, but as inner drive that gives shape to the personality (Kierkegaard, *Of/Of*, 573).
- ⁸² Kant, *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason*, 97.
- ⁸³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 47, 162.
- ⁸⁴ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 258, 262; Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 103.
- ⁸⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 71.
- ⁸⁶ Heidegger, *The Principle of Reason*, 50-51; Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh and Dennis J. Schmidt (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 5, 11, 12.
- ⁸⁷ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 49-50.
- ⁸⁸ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 35, 60, 75, 77, 133.
- ⁸⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 123.
- ⁹⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 123-124.
- ⁹¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 293.
- ⁹² Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 235.
- ⁹³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 259.
- ⁹⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 366.
- ⁹⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 259.

⁹⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 147-148.

⁹⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 47.

⁹⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 369-370; Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 58-59.

⁹⁹ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 1, 78.

¹⁰⁰ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 74-75.

¹⁰¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 136.

¹⁰² Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 276.

¹⁰³ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 59.

¹⁰⁴ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 262.

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 147-148.

¹⁰⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 147-148.

¹⁰⁷ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 3.

¹⁰⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 259, 370.

¹⁰⁹ Kant, *Religion*, 147-148, 169.