

Deleuze and the Meanings of Immanence

Paper for 'After 68', Jan van Eyck Academy, Maastricht, 16 June, 2009.

Christian Kerslake

Is there a single meaning of the term 'immanence' in the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze? Although the notion of immanence is frequently held to be central to Deleuze's philosophy, his use of the term can hardly be said to be transparently clear, and the coherence of his statements about what 'immanence' is, and what it relates to, can be questioned. One major problem is that the concept of immanence is thoroughly overdetermined in the history of philosophy. In the modern period alone – it will be argued here – there are three quite distinct notions of immanence at play. For Deleuze, Spinoza discovers the "best" and "purest" deployment of immanence (WP 60) by leading a long-standing 'pre-modern' conception of metaphysics to its logical conclusion. But a completely new conception of immanence emerges in Kant's philosophy, precisely as a result of his critique of metaphysical systems such as that of Spinoza. Kant's critique aimed to dispel speculation on entities that could not be related to experience, and to *restrict* the claims of knowledge to those authorised by the transcendental structures of cognition. For Kant, the *immanence* of cognition is secured by conforming to the transcendental structures of cognition uncovered by a critique of reason. With the emergence of German post-Kantian Idealist thought, however, a third conception of immanence emerges – the conception of an 'absolute' immanence, in which the activity of critique is itself grounded immanently, and in

which claims about the ‘transcendental’ conditions of cognition are themselves grounded and justified; Hegel and Schelling are philosophers of an ‘absolute’, post-Kantian immanence in this sense. Deleuze acknowledges the role played by all these figures in the history of philosophy, yet often obscures the fact that they have widely diverging conceptions of immanence, with very different sets of implications. In order to understand what Deleuze says about immanence, we need to be able to distinguish the different conceptions of immanence that precede him. Hence a genealogy of immanence is required. By isolating and distinguishing these three different strands in the history of the concept of immanence, we can guard against overdetermining the concept, and isolate more precisely Deleuze’s contribution to that history. It can be argued that although the first two meanings of the concept of immanence – Spinoza’s and Kant’s – appear to be inconsistent with each other, the third conception nevertheless succeeds in reformulating the significance of the first, in the light of the second. I will suggest that, to the extent that he engages with all of the philosophers in question – Spinoza, Kant and the post-Kantians – Deleuze situates himself within the field of the latter, ‘absolute’ approach to the conception of immanence. Deleuze’s conception of immanence has to be able to meet the requirements of the post-Kantian conception of absolute immanence.

After conducting a brief genealogy of the notion of immanence in the modern period of philosophy, the purpose of the second half of this paper will be to identify a series of twists in the course of Deleuze’s development of the concept in the period immediately following 1968. Deleuze’s most detailed early account of the concept of immanence is in a chapter of his 1968 thesis *Spinoza and the Problem of Expression*, ‘Immanence and the Historical Components of Expression’. But the fact is that his central works of 1968 and 1969, *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* contain

few references to the notion of immanence, and that it is only in the 1991 *What is Philosophy?* that one finally gets a relatively detailed analysis. Why is Deleuze reluctant to declare his philosophy as ‘immanentist’ in the period around 1968? There is a case to be made that a major factor in Deleuze’s stalling on this point concerns his encounter with the Lacanian-Althusserian thinking of the *Cahiers pour l’analyse* during 1966-69. The group behind the *Cahiers*, the ‘Circle of Epistemology’ (comprising Alain Badiou, Jacques-Alain Miller, Jean-Claude Milner and François Regnault among others), had devoted themselves to the project of producing a global ‘theory of discourse’ by appealing to ideas from the French epistemological tradition (Bachelard, Cavailles, Canguilhem and Koyré) and Lacanian psychoanalysis (in particular his conception of a ‘logic of the signifier’). One of their central arguments was that a ‘Doctrine of science’, a *Wissenschaftslehre*, whether in the sense of Fichte or Bolzano, was strictly speaking *impossible*, but that nevertheless this impossibility served as the condition for the possible location of the various ‘inoccupable points’ (Badiou’s term from his 1967 piece ‘Infinitesimal Subversion’), or ‘infinity points’ that can in principle orient the critique of ideological thought in the *de facto* history of science. The Circle of Epistemology’s contention that the Doctrine of Science is impossible, and that, following Lacan, “there is no metalanguage”, clashes head on with Deleuze’s attempt, outside of this circle, to defend the legitimacy of a philosophy of immanence. The references to key pieces in the *Cahiers pour l’analyse* in *Difference and Repetition* – along with Deleuze’s tendential structuralism in the late 60s – suggest that, for a short period at least, Deleuze was bothered enough by the Circle of Epistemology’s objections to the Doctrine of Science to postpone his realisation of a self-described philosophy of immanence.

So Deleuze's conception of immanence disappeared underground in the late 60s, absenting itself from the centre of *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*. However, Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* of 1972 reveals a violent about-turn with regard to Lacano-Althusserianism, condemning it as "a new terrorism, diverting Lacan's imperial discourse into a university discourse characterised by a pure scientificity", claiming that "even and especially in their manifestations of extreme force, neither capitalism, nor revolution, nor schizophrenia follows the paths of the signifier" (AO 244). And one of the central aspects of the capitalist system that has been missed, Deleuze and Guattari continue, is its *immanence*. Capitalism is a "modern immanent machine"; and it "has realised immanence" (AO 261) in the "flows on the full body of capital-money". And something odd appears to happen: the term 'immanence' that Deleuze takes as the "secret" of philosophy in his 1968 thesis on Spinoza now re-appears as *realised* within the movement of "capital-money" in advanced systems of *capitalism*. Immanence disappears as philosophy in order to return as the form proper to the most advanced capitalist social formations. Deleuze and Guattari relate this use of the term 'immanence' to Marx. In the third volume of Capital, Marx discusses the "immanent barriers" to the development of capitalism. "Capitalist production constantly strives to overcome these immanent barriers, but it overcomes them only by means that set up the barriers afresh and on a more powerful scale. The true barrier to capitalist production is capital itself" (Marx, *Capital*, vol. III, Penguin edition, 358). The immanence of capitalism thus refers prima facie to the internality of its contradictions as a system, or more precisely the fact that its generation of contradictions is essential to its continuation. Deleuze and Guattari are particularly interested in Marx's attempt to isolate the internal contradictions of the capitalist system in Volume III, both in the analysis of the tendency of the rate of

profit to fall (Part Three), and in the theory of credit (Part Five). The tendency of the rate of profit to fall is the motivation for “set[ting] up the barriers afresh and on a more powerful scale”: through the shifting of the location of centres of production to the developing world. But it is the system of credit in capitalism that is Deleuze and Guattari’s particular focus in the sections on capitalism in *Anti-Oedipus*. The immanence that emerges within capitalism is founded on a system of credit and debt at the heart of the capitalist system. Advanced capitalist social formations unfold on “an immense deterritorialized flow” constituting “the full body of capital”, “an instantaneous creative flow that the banks create simultaneously as a debt owing to themselves, a creation *ex nihilo*” (AO 237). If capitalism “has realised immanence” it is because its monetary system “has rendered concrete the abstract as such and has naturalised the artificial, replacing territorial codes and despotic overcoding with an axiomatic of decoded flows, and a regulation of these flows” (AO 261). Clearly, a violent redefinition of the applicability of the notion of immanence has taken place between 1968-72, and it appears to have occurred precisely through working through the innovations occurring in Lacano-Althusserianism, in such a way that immanence first of all makes its reappearance as the form of the tendentially all-encompassing capitalist system that Deleuze and Guattari suggest cannot be explained using Lacanian logic.

It takes until his final work with Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, for Deleuze to arrive at the position he appears to have wanted to attain in 1968, where Spinozist immanence would be revived and reconciled with the demands of post-Kantian metacritique. In achieving this aim, Deleuze has to undo the identity he and Guattari appeared to establish between immanence and capitalism. The philosophy of immanence extracts immanence from capitalism, and establishes a utopian

perspective beyond capitalism: “philosophy takes the relative deterritorialization of capital to the absolute; it makes it pass over the plane of immanence as movement of the infinite and suppresses it as internal limit, *turns it back against itself so as to summon forth a new earth, a new people*” (WP 99). Whether this late move (and accompanying attempts to relate the notion of immanence to a notion of ‘life’ in Deleuze’s final text, ‘Immanence: A Life’ (1993)) is successful will have to remain in question. The main aims of this paper are, first, to shed light on the genealogy of the concept of immanence as it presents itself to Deleuze, and, secondly, to draw attention to the major ruptures in Deleuze’s thought about immanence, to speculate on their causes and implications, and to show how Deleuze nevertheless traverses a tortuous circle back to a redeemed philosophical notion of immanence in his final work. This approach implies that the major point of rupture occurs during 1968-72, with Deleuze’s encounter with the ideas of the Circle of Epistemology unleashing a volatile chemistry that will take twenty years to stabilise. An examination of the theoretical encounters between Deleuze and the Lacano-Althusserians in the period surrounding 1968 might shed some light on the forces at work in the socio-political ‘events’ of that period, as well as revealing some of the tensions at work – most still unresolved and even unperceived – in the fields of theory and philosophy during this brief revolutionary moment. Deleuze has to fight to retain the notion of immanence in the face of the new epistemological work emanating from the *Cahiers pour l’analyse*, and will only manage to re-install it, first, by showing that this approach cannot explain capitalism, schizophrenia, and their relation, and second, by making – against the *Cahiers*, who wish to overcome what has been termed ‘philosophy’ by transforming it into a ‘theory of discourse’ analysing the breaks and cuts in the course

of particular sciences – by making *philosophy* the singular condition for the apprehension of the dimensions of immanence.

So let us begin by conducting a brief genealogy of the three distinct concepts that inform Deleuze's approach to the notion of immanence in his writings up until 1968.

1. Immanence in Spinozism

In the chapter on 'Immanence and the Historical Components of Expression' in his 1968 book on Spinoza, Deleuze fashions a history of the philosophy of immanence, from the Neoplatonists through to Duns Scotus, that culminates in Spinoza. He presents the philosophical concept of immanence as a kind of 'destination' inherent in Christian theology. A secret tendency, says Deleuze, courses through the ruminations of theologians, a tendency that runs in the opposite direction to the negative theology of Meister Eckhart, which stresses the radical, unknowable transcendence of God, both in his nature and in his reasons for existence. It appears to originate in the Christian-inflected Neo-Platonism of third- and fourth- century Alexandria (Proclus and Dionysius the Areopagite). The Neo-Platonists did not see Platonism as a dualistic, 'two worlds' doctrine, but rather followed the lead of the *Timaeus*, where the pure forms or 'Ideas' are manifested or expressed hierarchically in material reality, with each being 'participating' more or less in the idea. Deleuze acknowledges the roots of the philosophical concept of immanence in neo-Platonism: "Everything may, it seems, be traced back to the Platonic problem of participation". The "difficulties" that emerged were always the same: "The principle of participation was always sought by Plato on the side of what participates..., [but] if participation consists in being a part, it is difficult to see how what is participated in suffers no

division or separation” (EPS 169; trans. modified). The primary task of the Neoplatonists was to “invert the problem”: “a principle that would make participation possible was sought, but one that would make it possible from the side of the participated itself. Neoplatonists no longer start from the characteristics of what participates (as multiple, sensible, and so on), asking by what violence participation becomes possible. They try rather to discover the internal principle and movement that grounds participation in the participated as such, from the side of the participated as such. Plotinus reproaches Plato for having seen participation from its lesser side” (EPS 170). According to Deleuze, Plotinus is already a kind of foreshadowing of the post-Kantian attempt to ground philosophy; he “subordinates ... imitation to a genesis or production” (ibid). His way of doing this, however, is through a theory of emanation. “True activity comes from what is participated in; what participates is only an effect, receiving what is given by its cause” (ibid). The problem is that the theory of emanation, once again as soon as it undergoes philosophical development, brings back the original problem of participation: how to conceive the principle of the self-differentiation of the One, the expression of the One in the material world.

In the course of the development of mediaeval theology, the radicality of this principle began to emerge, through a crack in the metaphysics of Being that had been inherited from Greek philosophy. The concept of ‘being’ had been shattered into a plurality of ‘senses’ by Aristotle. For Aristotle, there are ten or so basic ways in which something can ‘be’, which he calls ‘categories’; these include substance, quality, quantity, relation, place, date, action and passivity. But if something can have being in each of these different ways, then is there any overarching concept of ‘being’ that can subsume this disparate array of categories? Is the concept of ‘Being’ destined to be merely ‘equivocal’, or is there a way to establish a unified conception of being?

Deleuze identifies Duns Scotus as the Scholastic philosopher who developed this thought most radically. In the section on Scholastic ontology in Difference and Repetition, Deleuze notes that Aristotle cannot make ‘being’ into some global genus for logical reasons: “being cannot be supposed a common genus without destroying the reason for which it was supposed thus; that is, the possibility of being for specific differences” (DR 38/56). If being is to have a ‘univocal’ sense, therefore, it cannot be considered as a genus. Instead, the univocity of being can only be established through an identification of difference at its lowest level, that of individual difference, with Being itself. “With univocity ..., it is not the differences which are and must be: it is being itself which is Difference, in the sense that it is said of difference” (DR 39/57). Duns Scotus applied univocity to the concept of being; he did not allow it to erode the transcendence of God. Spinoza’s ontology, on the other hand, with its infinite array of really distinct substances, for the first time grants the possibility that being is expressed in the same way, across each individual.

It is in the idea of expression that the new principle of immanence asserts itself. Expression appears as the unity of the multiple, as the complication of the multiple, and as the explication of the One. God expresses himself in the world; the world is the expression, the explication, of a God-Being or a One who is. The world is carried into God in such a way that it loses its limits or finitude, and participates directly in divine infinity (EPS 176).

In the chapter on ‘Attributes and Divine Names’, Deleuze had already noted that “according to a long tradition, divine names relate to manifestations of God” (EPS 53). It was in the ideas of this obscure “tradition”, claims Deleuze, that Spinoza found the philosophical resources for a concept of expression that liberates the notion of ‘immanence’, redistributing the evanescent pulsations of the Cartesian cogito throughout the body of a God or Nature (*Deus sive natura*), in relation to which all our thoughts and actions are mere modes.

The idea that Spinoza's approach to grounding his system involves installing oneself in a 'higher mind' – the mind of God – persists throughout Deleuze's work, albeit in a discontinuous, tentative manner. In Spinoza and the Problem of Expression, Deleuze remarks that key to Spinoza's method is the idea that the philosopher must "quickly" install himself in an absolute principle, and unfold things from there. In theory, Spinoza makes the move of claiming to begin with an 'apodictic' principle, rather than a merely 'hypothetical' principle (as in Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, when it is taken as a theory of knowledge: if we assume that we know something, then we can search for the conditions of such knowledge). Deleuze cites a remark from Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect as the key to Spinoza's position: "In the beginning we must take the greatest care that we arrive at knowledge of such a Being as quickly as possible"¹, "so that its objective essence may also be the cause of all our ideas". For this, explains Deleuze in Spinoza: Practical Philosophy, we must have "an adequate idea", an idea which "expresses its cause ... and gives us a genetic definition" (SPP 84). This procedure is regressive, but also synthetic, since "one does not just determine a property of the cause in terms of a known property of the effect, but one reaches an essence as the genetic reason for all the knowable properties" (ibid). This special, adequate idea, says Spinoza, can only be the idea of God. "As soon as one arrives at the idea of God", Deleuze suggests "everything changes, and one is able to show the connections between things "according to their own autonomous order" (SPP 85).

But can an appeal to the idea of God successfully ground Spinoza's system? As Deleuze notes, according to Gueroult, "reasons are nonetheless quite different according to whether they are simple reasons of knowledge or genuine reasons of

¹ Spinoza, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* [posthumously published], trans. A. Boyle in G.H.R. Parkinson edition of Spinoza's *Ethics* (London, Everyman, 1993); Gebhardt's pagination cited first: 49/237; cf. EPS 136.

being – in other words, according to whether their order is analytic or synthetic, an order of knowledge [*connaître*] versus an order of production. It is only in the second case that the genesis of the system is also a genesis of things through and in the system” (DI 146). A ‘system’ of knowledge alone is without value; there could be any amount of such systems, linking things up according to every conceivable framework. A genuine system is grounded in “things themselves”. Deleuze continues: “When reasons are reasons of knowledge, it is true that the method of invention is essentially analytical; synthesis, however, is integrated within it, either as a method of exposition, or more profoundly, because reasons of being are encountered in the order of reasons, in precisely that place assigned to them by the relation among elements of knowledge (eg. Descartes’s ontological proof)”.

In fact it is not clear how seriously Deleuze intends his account of Spinoza genuinely to compete on its own terms with Hegel and post-Kantianism. Given the amount of work that is done explicitly engaging with Kant and Hegel in Difference and Repetition, it is clear that Deleuze is putting himself in a difficult position. Kant and the post-Kantians made some fundamental critiques of Spinoza and metaphysical rationalism, especially on the point of the Ontological Argument. Kant puts significant obstacles in the way of arriving “as quickly as possible” at first principles; after Kant, Spinozist immanence falls under the bar, as it were, of a primary repression; and the only possibility of rediscovering it will be by virtue of long and uncertain detours through a *critique* that will assign *limits* to knowledge.

3. Immanence in Kant’s Critique

Kant’s use of the term immanence is quite opposed to that of Spinoza. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari say that the question of “what is by right due to

thought” changes with Kant, who “shows that thought is threatened less by error than by inevitable illusions that come from within reason, as if from an internal arctic zone where the needle of every compass goes mad” (WP 52). The whole approach taken by Spinoza and Leibniz is revealed by Kant to be based on one of these illusions: the thought that one can get from *apriori* speculation about the origin of the universe, about God or the *ens realissimum*, or about the noumenal nature of the human soul to claims regarding the *existence* of such entities. Kant’s critique of the Ontological Argument for the Existence of God – that existence cannot be one of God’s attributes, since without a reference to sensation, the concept of existence neither adds nor subtracts anything to a concept – undermined the edifice of traditional metaphysics, including the currents of Neoplatonic, Renaissance and pantheist metaphysics that lead to Spinoza. In the place of the ‘tradition’ of metaphysical thought about immanence, a new conception of ‘immanence’ emerges in Kant’s work. The untrammelled immanence of *reason (Vernunft)* leads to transcendence, and must be restrained by a new awareness of the concepts of the *understanding (Verstand)* or categories, which have a much more restricted role, as rules for synthesizing the data of sensation. “The objective use of the pure concepts of reason is always **transcendent**, while that of the pure concepts of understanding must by its nature always be **immanent**, since it is limited solely to possible experience” (CPR A327/B383).

Yet the very title of the *Critique of Pure Reason* has a certain opacity. Is it a critique of reason (objective genitive), or is it a critique *on the part of* reason (subjective genitive)? Does he have a consistent view about the realisation of this critique? This is the question that will be posed, almost immediately after the publication of the *Critique*, by younger philosophers such as Reinhold, Schulze and

Fichte, and which leads to the specifically ‘metacritical’ dimensions of thought opened up and developed by Schelling and Hegel.

For the fact is that Kant does not often use the word ‘immanence’ in connection with the problem of critique itself. Predominantly, he uses ‘immanent’ in contradistinction to ‘transcendent’, with reference to the *use* of the principles of pure understanding and the principles of pure reason (cf. CPR A297/B313, A308/B365). This use of ‘immanence’ does not directly map onto the issue of the immanence of critique itself. In Kant, the word ‘immanent’ refers to the *correctness* of the application of pure concepts and ideas; it is not itself a criterion for their discovery or justification. For the post-Kantians, there remained an implicit gap in the critical project: Kant had neglected to guarantee the very critique by which the immanence of cognition was supposedly guaranteed. The critical project lacked the *method* it deserved if it really was to provide the ‘highest principles’.

4. Absolute Immanence in Post-Kantian Philosophy

Three fundamental steps are taken by the post-Kantians; taken together they can be said to comprise the project of metacritique.

First it had to be questioned whether the critique itself was as pure as it could have been; whether the materials, form and technique of the critique itself had been *sufficiently* justified. In Kant’s case, examples of materials and forms would include the distinction between sensibility and understanding, and the form of intuition, while examples of techniques would include procedures drawn from the theory of judgment and the presupposition of *apriori* facts about cognition. Such elements could only be sufficiently justified if the justification was *immanent* to the critique itself.

But such a requirement leads to the issue of how critique itself can possibly be conceived. What kind of philosophical activity is critique? Is it even possible to conceive a distinctive notion of critique? If, for instance, Kant aims to show the necessary conditions of possible experience, then how can he show the validity of his own procedure if he is within the experience for which he is accounting? That is, the activity of critique entails being both necessarily ‘in’ the experience as conditioned, and ‘out’ of it in order to conceive the conditions of that experience. Lewis White Beck characterises metacritique in terms of an analogy with the notion of metalanguage. As each language will have a metalanguage in which its rules can be spelled out, so Kant can be characterised as a “transcendental grammarian”.² However, as Beck acknowledges, if the critique is the attempt to ground knowledge then there occur problems particular to the ‘meta’ status of critique. For how can we justify *with* our cognitive faculties that the very elements Kant uses for his critique *of* the cognitive faculties are the correct elements for such a critique? Beck states that Kant is caught between two equally vicious alternatives – an infinite regress, or an intrinsically artificial halting of a regress by means of an appeal to *facts*, for instance ‘facts of reason’.

There seem to be two elementary paths leading off from this issue. On the one hand, it can be argued that, as one cannot gain insight into the very conditions that allow one to have any insight at all, the status of critique itself is *nonsense*. Such was Wittgenstein’s solution to a similar issue, and it is echoed by many contemporary anti-foundationalist philosophers who find themselves having to deal with this kind of problem. However, even here there is room for manoeuvre, as it is possible to construct a theory of nonsense which, if it does not contribute to the construction of a

² L.W. Beck, ‘Toward a Meta-Critique of Pure Reason’, in Essays on Kant and Hume (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 26ff.

metalanguage, then serves as a means to show the ‘grounds’ of the symbolic order in general. In his discussion of meaning or sense [*sens*] in his twelfth Seminar, *On the Crucial Problems in Psychoanalysis*, Lacan suggests that Chomsky’s presentation in *Syntactic Structures* of sentences that are syntactically correct, yet without meaning (such as ‘colourless green ideas sleep furiously’) is not entirely adequate, as there is a fundamental level at which the subject’s relation to the Other involves an apprehension that it generates ‘more’ meaning than it intends, that it generates an *excess* of sense; and that the ‘nonsensical’ statement can in fact serve as a pure model of how meaning, in its intrinsic excessiveness, is possible. Hence it is the very lack of a metalanguage that allows the relation between subject and Other to be established, and for symbolic discourse to emerge. As we will see below, Deleuze himself turns to these Lacanian ideas about sense and nonsense in his 1969 *Logic of Sense*, once the limitations of his early approach to immanence come to light.

But on the other hand, there is also the sincere attempt to find a coherent and consistent way to justify critique itself, undertaken by the post-Kantians and whose failure is still held by many not to have yet been decisively demonstrated. Hence we turn to the third fundamental step taken by the post-Kantians.

The two first steps taken by the post-Kantians led to the threshold of a third, complicated issue that would provide the defining problematic within which post-Kantian philosophy moved. If metacritique was successful, then it would attain a *self-grounding* apriority that would surely no longer simply be critique, but *philosophy* itself.³ The true attainment of first principles could then be achieved through a *genetic* approach, rather than through the procedure of finding *conditions*. But what, then, was

³ Fichte’s second preface (1798) to ‘Concerning the Concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre*’, *Early Philosophical Writings*, 98. The text gives a clear example of the vacillation that continued to beset Fichte concerning the true distinction of critique and philosophy (but note that he calls philosophy ‘metaphysics’ here, in contradistinction to Reinhold who carefully distinguishes philosophy and metaphysics.).

the true relation of critique to philosophy? How was critical method to be related to philosophical method? Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, and other less well-known figures like Solomon Maïmon and Jòzef-Maria Hoëne Wronski, are all distinguished by their different solutions to this problem of the relation of method and genesis.

As his 1794 piece ‘Concerning the Concept of the *Wissenschaftslehre*’ shows, Fichte was from the beginning immersed in the issue of metacritique. The critique of pure reason demanded a metacritical component that would serve as the foundation stone for a ‘doctrine of science’ – a *Wissenschaftslehre* – capable of grounding and justifying the claims of cognition. But “it will not become easy to render a systematic and comprehensive account of the procedure of the *Wissenschaftlehre* until it is possible to provide a pure exposition of this science itself” (*Early Philosophical Writings*, ed. Breazeale, 98). The *Wissenschaftslehre* itself requires a preliminary investigation into its possibility. Fichte’s early attempt to conquer the Scylla and Charybdis of regress and circularity that threatens to swallow up metacritical thought is to isolate the structure of the ‘I think’ of self-consciousness that he claims is the unconditioned principle of cognition. For Fichte, the act of self-consciousness itself provides the dynamic template for a genesis of the further conditions of knowledge. However, he will change his approach to the articulation of self-consciousness a number of times, due to the problems of regression and circularity that emerge. Fichte’s Second Introduction to the *Wissenschaftslehre* (1797) marks a turning-point in his thought, and he begins to argue that the original Act [*Tathandlung*] of consciousness (which the philosopher merely rediscovers as a ‘fact’ [*Tatsache*]), is “not a sensory intuition relating to a material, static existent, but an intuition of pure activity, not static but dynamic, not a matter of an existence, but of a life”⁴. It is a

⁴ Fichte, ‘Second Introduction to the Science of Knowledge’, 40; cited in TRF 386.

striking fact that the late Deleuze returns to the ideas of the late Fichte, the first and ‘rawest’ of the metacritical thinkers, to articulate his final version of the metacritical problematic – which he designates as the search for the “immanence of immanence”, for a “transcendental field” that would be equivalent to immanence itself (cf. ‘Immanence: A Life’).

For the early Schelling of the *System of Transcendental Idealism* (1800), self-consciousness presupposed a more profound identity of subject and object, the genesis of the articulations of which had to be *constructed* by the philosopher. In his early work, Schelling was particularly focused on locating the ‘indifference-point’ that must connect the genesis of the subjective conditions of experience of the objective world with the ‘objective’ genesis of the subject in nature. But in 1809, with the *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom*, Schelling changes trajectory, as a result of encountering classical Neoplatonic problems about the relation of the finite and the infinite (of finite cognition to the infinite subject-object or One-All of the Absolute). Schelling becomes the first to insist (about a hundred years before Heidegger, who explicitly takes Schelling up on this point) on a fundamental modal distinction between *Seyn* and *seiendes*, Being and being. Against Hegel, he will argue that there is a way of thinking being *as* being that grasps its own fundamental duality: where Being is taken as an ontological *That*, in an intrinsically modal sense, in its status prior to Being as a *What*, as an entity with a nature that can be represented. Unlike acts of empirical knowledge, which express the ‘whatness’ of things, Schelling contends that acts of what he will call “metaphysical empiricism” are in principle capable of discerning the absolutely contingent ‘thatness’ that lies at the heart of things. If this strategy were to work, then Kant’s animadversions against the Ontological Argument would be crucially restricted. It would be possible to make

an internal relation between thought and being, as long as one did it modally: thought would grasp a modal, ontologically contingent *Dass* of Being, the unveiling of which would simultaneously degrade into an apprehension of a particular *Was*. In his 1842 Berlin lectures on *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, Schelling argues that since ‘positive’ (as opposed to ‘negative’, merely logicist) philosophy begins “with a being that is *absolutely* external to thought”, it “has no *necessity* to move itself into being”, and consequently “if it passes over into being, then this can only be the consequence of a free act”.⁵ As it stands, this is a fallacious argument – the most one can talk about is an absolutely *contingent* event, not a ‘free act’. Nevertheless, we can see how Schelling’s argument is waiting to be stripped down and de-anthropomorphised by existentialist thought. The presumption of the spontaneity of Being in its absolute Otherness is the basis, by virtue of the intrinsic doubling that follows between the levels of the *Seyn* and *seiendes*, for the attribution of a series of ‘powers’ [*Potenzen*] to Being. Metaphysical empiricism will involve the intensive generation and replication of relations of ‘powers’, from which the greater ‘mundus’ of supersensible Ideas will in principle be able to be derived. In the *Stuttgart Lectures*, Schelling outlined the shift he envisaged from a dialectic of contradiction to a dialectic of powers. He stated that the ‘transition from identity to difference has often been understood as a *cancellation of identity*; yet that is not at all the case ... Much rather it is a doubling of the essence, and thus an intensification of the unity [*Steigerung der Einheit*]’ (in *Idealism and the Endgame of Theory*; German pagination, 425). For Schelling, the notion of powers can help formulate how unity can be maintained throughout differentiation without being lost. Unity can be ‘intensified’; ‘power’ is the key to the *Steigerung der Einheit*. The merely negative relations of the concept

⁵ Schelling, *The Grounding of Positive Philosophy*, trans. B. Matthews, 79. This volume contains a chapter on ‘Metaphysical Empiricism’ (pp. 171-91).

will now be undergirded by metaphysical use of the mathematics of power. Using the notion of power, differentiation no longer implies a cancellation of identity, but a doubling, an intensification, formally expressed through the mathematical notion of power. Here Schelling too is taking up Boehme's idea that the cosmos is to be understood as an *involution* (cf. 440-441) of ideality into matter, followed by progressive *evolution* back upward to ideality. This movement of intensive doubling through power appears to provide a new model of dialectical transformation, capable of incorporating what Hegel calls *Aufhebung* into a vertical, progressive, bifurcating hierarchy of developments. This is something like the final shape taken by Schelling's system of immanence, where Spinozism and pantheism have been incorporated into a fundamentally temporal, developmental, theosophical approach to the Absolute. Again, we find appeals to Schelling's dialectic of potencies and his theory of metaphysical empiricism in Deleuze, and it is possible to argue that Deleuze's theory of difference and repetition in the book of the same title proceeds on the same terrain – metacritical, not metaphysical – that Schelling enters in his later thinking. (The problem will be that it is not really possible to appeal at the same time to both Fichte and Schelling to ground a theory of immanence, as they have totally opposing solutions to the issue of metacritique; in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze is closer to Schelling; the turn to Fichte comes later, in 'Immanence: A Life'; but whether the more concrete, Schellingean approach needs to be abandoned remains in question).

For Hegel, by commencing with a *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the critique of philosophy was itself articulated as a genesis which, by its eventual attainment of completeness, would achieve the status of philosophy. After having passed through the *Phenomenology* – a process that is anything but 'quick', as Spinoza wished – the reader is then free to ascend to the level of the Absolute envisaged by Spinoza, and to

follow, through a *Science of Logic* – a *Wissenschaft der Logik* – “the exposition of God as he is in his eternal essence before the creation of nature and a finite mind” (*Science of Logic*, 50); and henceforth to generate systems of nature and spirit (the *Philosophy of Nature* and *Philosophy of Spirit*, the second and third components of Hegel’s putative *Encyclopedia*). In Hegel, method is finally integrated with a *system* in which the grounds for the method can be accessed by the philosopher by means of principle. Deleuze is closest to Hegel in his early writings (for instance, his 1954 review of Hyppolite, and the ‘What is Grounding?’ lectures from 1956), but he soon begins to take Hegel’s approach to the resolution of method and system to task for its reduction of intuition and cognition to conceptual representation, and for the linearity of his phenomenological dialectic. It is therefore possible to see Deleuze as appealing to other post-Kantian thinkers like Schelling and Fichte (and others again like Maïmon and Wronski) in order to hold off and dispel the Hegelian vision of the shape taken by absolute immanence.

For the post-Kantians, since methodological and systematic reflection, thoroughgoing reflexivity, and techniques of ideal genesis are of such primary importance, the term ‘immanence’, when it used by them at all, tends to take on the status of an adverb, so that, in Hegel for instance, the notions of ‘absolute subject’ or ‘identity-in-difference’ are more important than ‘immanence’, because they give an indication as to *how* immanence is achieved. There is nothing substantial about immanence: immanence is instead something one does, something one demonstrates; a critique, for instance, can be performed immanently, or not. Although it is usually considered to be Hegel who takes the notion of the immanent self-critique of reason the furthest, through creating a system of reason that is both fully self-reflecting and self-expressive – so that Hegel remains for many *the* philosopher of immanence, the

great, successful philosopher of the self-expression of the absolute – the existence of other conceptions of the Absolute in post-Kantian philosophy shows that the problem of immanence still remains at work *within* the turn to metacritique: we have mentioned the existence of at least four or five post-Kantian metacritical systems. I would suggest that Deleuze’s approach in *Difference and Repetition* is precisely to critically analyse the various ‘transcendental fields’ opened up by post-Kantianism from the perspective of the open, absolute system of difference first revealed in Spinozism. Although Spinozism itself cannot be justified *tout court*, for Deleuze it continues to present the ‘best’ plane of immanence. Why is this? Is it because Deleuze thinks there is something apriori unerasable about the dream of a pantheistic union of living being and God? That even in its very impossibility, Spinozism allows us an ideal vantage point on the various systems of Fichte, Maimon, Schelling, Hegel and Wronski? However, as we will now see, the consequences of accepting the ‘impossibility’ of Spinozism lead Deleuze out of his early problematic about immanence, and into an intense engagement with the most radical and contemporary theories of the time. It is 1968, and the theme of immanence is about to be violently put to the test.

5. 1968: Immanence and the Doctrine of Science

With 40 years distance, it should be possible to look at the different currents that run in parallel through the landscape of theory and philosophy in Paris in 1968. Doing this may even assist our understanding of the precise forces leading to the political explosions of that year. If we try now to lock 1968 in freeze-frame, and isolate one of the dominant parallel currents of thought that develops alongside Deleuze’s work during the mid-sixties, and with which he comes into a direct encounter in the period

of rupture, then it might be possible to reconstruct the space of a theoretical conflict that mirrors the internal political conflicts taking place on the ground. Let us now turn to Deleuze's encounter with one of the most radical and innovative tendencies in 1960s French thought, the Lacano-Althusserianism that finds its voice in the pages of the journal the *Cahiers pour l'analyse*.

Between 1966-1970, Deleuze finally and belatedly came under the influence of Lacanian psychoanalysis, and began to engage with the work being done by Lacan and Lacanians in psychoanalysis, philosophy, and social and political theory. The theory of difference and repetition expounded in Deleuze's 1968 opus is constructed in the light of work into the same concepts conducted in pages of the *Cahiers pour l'analyse*. The writings of Jacques-Alain Miller, Jean-Claude Milner and Serge Leclair in the *Cahiers* all develop the explicit themes of 'difference' and 'repetition'. For instance, in 'The Point of the Signifier', Jean-Claude Milner identifies a logic of signification in which "the only laws are production and repetition" (*Cahiers pour l'analyse*, vol. 3, p. 77). Deleuze began to attempt to connect his theory of difference and repetition with the structuralist theory of serial displacement, and with the Lacanians' attempt to correlate structure with human ontogenesis. He took up a theory of an 'object=x' that operates as an empty place, in relation to which it is possible to occupy different places in signifying chains. Deleuze's 1967 essay 'How do we Recognise Structuralism?' unfolds in exactly the same space as that occupied by Jacques-Alain Miller in his key *Cahiers pour l'analyse* piece 'Action of the Structure'. But, as we have suggested, there are significant differences.

The thinkers of the *Cahiers pour l'analyse* (the self-designated 'Circle of Epistemology') following Lacan's interdiction of the idea of a single metalanguage, claim that the very notion of a 'Doctrine of Science' is impossible to realise. As

Miller puts it, “the project of a Doctrine of Science is impossible, it has the name of the unnameable: the *Anonymous Doctrine*” (‘Action of the Structure’, *Cahiers pour l’analyse*, vol. 9, p. 103). Instead, the Circle of Epistemology subscribe to a Bachelardian conception of epistemology, understood strictly as a theory of science; or more precisely, they take the object of epistemological thought to be the developments, ruptures and self-criticisms that constitute the history of particular, ‘regional’ sciences. In the *Cahiers pour l’analyse*, the main discussions of science concern: (1) Galilean physics, (2) chemistry and (3) mathematics. The only norms available to a general epistemology beyond the regional epistemologies proper to the individual sciences are the ideals of what Canguilhem (speaking of Bachelard) called a ‘militant mathematicism’, and perpetual scientific experimentation. If mathematics ends up being a privileged model of science for thinkers in the *Cahiers* such as Alain Badiou and François Regnault, this is in part due to the influence of the work of Jean Cavailles, notably his ‘epistemological’ work *On the Logic and Theory of Science*, and his *Remarks on the Formation of Abstract Set Theory*. In the latter work, Cavailles showed how set theory precisely had to produce breaks and ruptures whenever it encountered philosophical problems in grounding the axioms that were deemed necessary at various points in its proof-structure; for instance, the axiom that stated the existence of at least one infinite set, or the axiom of choice. In *On the Logic and Theory of Science* he claims that this piecemeal, self-critical work of an individual science such as mathematics can nevertheless, as a by-product – and only as such – “reveal” truths that appear to testify to the existence of a unified, single, dialectical ‘doctrine’ of science unfolding in the course of scientific progress. The history of the sciences and mathematics serves as a “revealer of essential connections” [*révélateur d’enchaînements essentiels*] (*Sur la logique et la théorie de la science*,

Vrin: 1988, p. 88), but only through the particular self-critical development of the sciences. The Doctrine of Science can only be revealed indirectly through the particular work of the sciences. A dialectic can be discerned at work through the history of science, but it is not a dialectic of consciousness, rather a “dialectic of the concept” alone (ibid, 90). There is a movement of concepts in the development of a science, but it does not require the support of a consciousness, and is only discovered retrospectively. As Cavailles puts it, “history is revelatory of authentic meanings to the extent that it permits the rediscovery of lost connections, the identification of automatisms and sedimentations as such, and their subsequent revival through contemporary consciousness” (ibid, 88). In his ‘Infinitesimal Subversion’ in *Cahiers pour l’analyse*, vol. 9, Badiou deploys a similar logic to suggest that what is excluded from view at a particular point in the development of a science can become the foundation stone for new developments in that science. The transition reveals the status of the excluded element to be an “infinity-point” whose “impossibility” within the outmoded framework serves as the condition for its deployment in the process of transformation of that framework (*Cahiers*, vol. 9, p. 122). For Badiou, it is very “impossibility” of certain “inoccupable points” that allows science (and politics) to isolate the experiments that need to be conducted to transform a field.

In some ways, Deleuze’s approaches to mathematics bear similarities with the position adopted by Cavailles and Badiou. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze puts forward what he calls a new “dialectic of problems” that he claims can appeal to differential calculus as a tool. He says “differential calculus obviously belongs to mathematics, it is an entirely mathematical instrument” (DR 179), nevertheless, it can find its “sense” or “meaning” in a dialectic that points beyond mathematics. Moreover, we have indicated that aspects of Deleuze’s *Logic of Sense* come very

close to the Lacanianism of the *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, presenting a purely structuralist model of the unconscious. Jacques Nassif gave a presentation on the *Logic of Sense* in Lacan's 16th Seminar, from 1968-69 (in the session of 19 March 1969), stating that Deleuze's theory of language "explains the Lacanian axiom that there is no metalanguage in a new way, by introducing the notion of meaning".⁶ In effect, Deleuze takes up Lacan's suggestion about the generation of meaning through nonsense, arguing in effect that if metalanguage is nonsense, that is, if it is nonsensical for a statement to "say its own sense" (LS 67), then sense itself in turn should also be taken as a "surface effect" produced by the abstract movement of an "object = x" or "floating signifier" through the places allotted by structure and language, with this 'object' itself always appearing as nonsensical and out-of-place. François Regnault remarked at the 2009 Middlesex conference on the *Cahiers pour l'analyse* that the editorial board were about to invite Deleuze to contribute something from his studies around the *Logic of Sense*, but that it did not happen, due to the journal's implosion in 1969.

Nevertheless, there are crucial differences between Deleuze's whole approach and that of the Lacanians. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze's account of the 'movement' of the 'object = x' in structuralism is conditioned by his account of the structure of time, where it is "the pure past" that "causes the present to pass" (DR 102). Deleuze retains the emphasis on temporality that was important for Lacan in his early studies on psychosis, and which occasionally comes to the surface in his later work – as in Lacan's suggestion in the 'Responses to the Students of Philosophy' published in the third volume of the *Cahiers*, where he claims that "the subject of the 'I think' reveals what it is: the being of a fall", simply by "being sustained within

⁶ Copy of Seminar 16 held at the École Freudienne in Paris; Nassif's commentary is not included in Cormac Gallagher's unofficial translation of the seminar.

time” (*Cahiers*, vol. 3, p. 6). If ‘time’ is involved in the constitution of subjectivity, then it is legitimate for Deleuze to hold on to the analyses of time, intuition, space, intensity, déjà vu that characterised the work of Bergson, Janet, Minkowski and Binswanger. Second, in *Logic of Sense*, where the theory of temporal synthesis tends to drop away, there is no ‘Other’ required for the production of nonsense; indeed, the liberation of nonsense in signification tends to evacuate any appeal to a single ‘Other’, instead opening up the subject to a nomadic existence across a plurality of ‘worlds’ (LS 109-125). The subject moves “from one singularity to another”, throwing the dice at every turn, “a Dionysian sense-producing machine, in which nonsense and sense are no longer found in simple opposition, but are rather co-present to one another in a new discourse” (LS 109). But perhaps most importantly, Deleuze retains a commitment to what he calls ‘philosophy’, as the discipline of thought that can articulate the relations between sense and nonsense in the “chaosmos” of this “new discourse”. For the Circle of Epistemology, on the other hand, ‘philosophy’ is an ideological exercise in stitching up the gaps in discourse (as Miller says in ‘Suture’) and should be replaced by epistemology and the ‘theory of discourse’. Why this commitment to philosophy in the case of Deleuze? For Deleuze, philosophy does something that neither science nor psychoanalysis can do. It is able to radically interrogate the Other, to put its otherness in question, to find every means possible for questioning its always potentially simulacral, inherently demonic nature. Against Milner’s reading of Plato’s *Sophist* in ‘The Point of the Signifier’ (*Cahiers pour l’analyse*, vol. 3), which aims to assert the primacy of ‘non-being’ in order to save discourse from the falsifications of the Sophist, Deleuze argues that the *Sophist* allows us to “glimpse the possibility of the triumph of simulacra”, and that if Socrates manages to distinguish himself from the Sophist, “the Sophist does not distinguish

himself from Socrates” (DR 128). For Deleuze, philosophy is the discipline of thought that rises to the most sovereign questioning possible of what Lacan calls the ‘Other’.⁷ Lacan himself acknowledged that the Cartesian cogito comes into being as a response to radical doubt; for Deleuze, only philosophy – by appealing to ideas such as the eternal return – is in a position to attempt to confront the simulacral nature of Other.

But philosophy as such does not yet help Deleuze to save the idea of immanence for modern philosophy in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*. The polemical message of the Circle of Epistemology remains: there is no metalanguage and the Doctrine of Science is impossible. It is possible to read Deleuze in these two books as attempting to control the effects these propositions introduce into modern philosophy, by reorienting the “Dionysian sense-producing machine” towards a destination in the speculative and practical vision of life according to the eternal return (both books have extensive material on the notion of eternal return). But this is not yet immanence. It will take until the 1991 *What is Philosophy?* for Deleuze to be able to say that philosophy’s basic ‘right’ is indeed to think and to realise the thought of immanence.

In fact, the next thing to happen is Deleuze’s radical rejection of the whole approach of Lacano-Althusserianism in his work with Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. In a sense, the Circle of Epistemology had stolen the possibility of immanence from Deleuze in the late 60s. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze turned on the proponents of Lacano-Althusserianism, arguing that their whole approach constituted a scotomization of the mental and social transformations underway in advanced capitalist systems. But Deleuze has still not recovered immanence at this point, and indeed one of the disturbing messages of *Anti-Oedipus*,

⁷ In the version of the given in Lacan’s seminar, Milner appears to state (although the transcription is corrupt) that “it remains impossible ... for us to welcome the concept of simulacrum into analytic discourse” (Seminar XII, 2/6/65).

as we have seen, is its suggestion that what is “realised” in the advanced capitalist system is nothing else than “immanence”. In the following section we give a brief sketch of some of the key innovations in the theory of capitalism in *Anti-Oedipus*, indicating how Deleuze only manages to regain immanence in his later work by working through the logic of the capitalist system as a system of immanence.

7. Capitalism and Immanence in *Anti-Oedipus*

There is very little about capitalism as a social formation in the *Cahiers pour l'analyse*, and its Marxism is focused on Althusser's model of structural causality, which concerns the sequence of modes of production, and the question of ideology. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari insist that this whole approach is inadequate for dealing with capitalism as a social formation. They criticise those who wish

to establish a new terrorism, diverting Lacan's imperial discourse into a university discourse characterised by a pure scientificity, a ‘scientificity’ perfectly suited to resupplying our neuroses, for strangling the process once again, and for overcoding Oedipus with castration, while chaining us to the current structural functions of a vanished archaic despot. For it is certain that, even and especially in their manifestations of extreme force, neither capitalism nor revolution nor schizophrenia follows the paths of the signifier (AO 244).

Capitalism must instead be understood systematically, they claim, as a system of flows of money and credit. If one does not understand the new conditions that prevail in advanced capitalism, in which human ends have become subordinate to the “axiomatic of the world capitalist market” (AO 234), then one will be unable to seek a way out of it. That way out cannot be guaranteed by a commitment to science and a critique of ideology. If sciences progress through axiomatisation, as Badiou claims, following Cavailles, then with what tools will one be able to analyse the axiomatic developed by capitalism itself? Instead, it is necessary to understand the immanent axiomatics of capitalism as a system of money, and to situate it within a longer history

of debt. It is not that capitalism covers over any original ‘lack’ proper to subjectivity; capitalism rather moves beyond the creditor-debtor relations of early human societies, beyond the systems of infinite debt maintained by feudal societies within the period of monotheism, and into a new space where the entire system of production and circulation of commodities is regulated by specific financial institutions – banks – that “create a debt spontaneously to themselves” that releases “a flow possessing a power of mutation” (AO 237) permitting the planning of investment in technology and labour. There is no longer an infinite debt *to* a despot or a deity, but rather an infinite flow of credit-debt that provides the basis for radical ‘investments’ and ‘re-investments’ – in both senses of economic investment (financial and libidinal) – of social fields. The effect of the tendential global implementation of the axiomatic of capitalism is what Deleuze and Guattari *detrterritorialization*: the capitalist market rips up and reinvests social fields with the sole end of extracting surplus value.

Deleuze and Guattari’s reading of Marx is based on the work of French economists Suzanne de Brunhoff (specifically her books *La monnaie chez Marx* [1967; translated as *Marx on Money*] and *L’offre de monnaie* [1971]) and Bernard Schmitt (*Monnaie, salaries et profits* [1966]) Brunhoff claims that the opening arguments of Marx’s *Capital* have been misunderstood. Marx, she argues, conducts his analysis from the beginning from within a “general theory of money”. The crucial arguments about the commodity in the first part of Part 1 of Volume I of Marx’s *Capital* is entitled ‘Commodities and Money’ need to be read in the context of the theory of credit expounded in Part 5 of Volume III of *Capital*.

Marx’s opening analysis is an account of what a commodity is, something that has both use-value and an exchange-value. The value of something depends on the human labour put into extracting it or making it. In any society, there an amount of

“socially necessary labour time” required to produce a commodity (I, 129). Commodities become representatives of “specific quantities of simple labour” (I, 135). The value of commodities is determined by “abstract human labour”. In chapter 2, Marx analyses ‘The Process of Exchange’, quickly arriving at chapter 3 on ‘Money, or the Circulation of Commodities’. He thus shows how abstract human labour makes the process of exchange possible, and how this is done through a ‘general equivalent’ – money. Then, having shown that money is the form taken by abstract labour, Marx is able to describe the process of the extraction of surplus value from the labour put in by workers (absolute surplus value: lengthening the working day, and relative surplus value: curtailment of necessary labour time through mechanization). Brunhoff’s point is that the ‘general’ theory of money with which Marx begins does not exist in reality, but only appears in the capitalist mode of production under the ‘special’ conditions of a system of credit.

Marx considers it necessary to begin [the book *Capital*] with a study of money *in its general aspect, independent of the capitalist form of production* in order, among other things, to determine its role *in the capitalist form of production*. This method can be disconcerting if one has misunderstood the purpose of the theory of money and does not see that to start with money as it functions in the capitalist form of production is, while seeming faithful to Marxism, to misinterpret Marx’s theory of money as a description of a ‘monetary relationship’ separate from the capitalist relation of production, and to make the relation between money and credit incomprehensible. Thus it is wrong to regard the first section of *Capital* as the elaboration of a hypothetical structure [Author’s note: As Roger Establet does in *Reading Capital*] in which common sense views or vulgar concepts of money and commodities become elements of a theoretical analysis, leaving the problem of money to be resolved elsewhere by a theory of production. This makes Section 1 represent a sort of theory of the non-theory of money. Such an interpretation is erroneous; in the first section of *Capital*, Marx gives a general theory of the circulation of commodities and money. The causes of this error lie in a poor understanding of the structure of the capitalist form of production, which combines economic elements differing in nature, origin, and manner of action; its consequence is to aggravate this misunderstanding. One becomes unable to see how the *general* laws of monetary circulation continue to function in the capitalist mode of production where there is a *special* monetary circulation, that of credit (Suzanne de Brunhoff, *Marx on Money*, trans. M.J. Goldbloom, 19-20).

Once the system of credit is taken into account, one realises that the worker's wage is in no sense derivable from some putative original operation of extraction of surplus value, but is rather extracted from an original 'flow' of credit. As Deleuze and Guattari put it:

It is not the same money that goes into the pocket of the wage-earner and is entered on the balance sheet of a commercial enterprise. In the one case, they are impotent money signs of exchange value, a flow of *means of payment* relative to consumer goods and use value, and a one-to-one relation between money and an imposed range of products ('which I have a right to, which are due to me, so they're mine'); in the other case, signs of the power of capital, *flows of financing*, a system of differential quotients of production that bear witness to a prospective force or to a long-term evaluation, not realizable *hic et nunc*, and functioning as an axiomatic of abstract quantities. In the one case, money represents a possible break-deduction [*coupure-prélèvement*] in a flow of consumption; in the other case, it represents a break-detachment [*coupure-détachement*] and a rearticulation of economic chains directed toward the adaptation of flows of production to the disjunctions of capital. The extreme importance in the capitalist system of the dualism that exists in banking between the formation of means of payment and the structure of financing, between the management of money and financing of capitalist accumulation, between exchange money and credit money [A footnote here references Brunhoff's *Marx on Money*]. The fact that banks participate in both, that they are situated at the pivotal point between financing and payment only demonstrates their multiple interactions. Thus, in credit money, which comprises all the commercial and bank credits, purely commercial credit has its roots in simple circulation where money develops as a means of payment (bills of exchange falling due on a fixed date, which constitute a monetary form of finite debt). Inversely, bank credit effects a demonetization or dematerialization of money, and is based on the circulation of drafts [*traites*] instead of the circulation of money. This credit money traverses a particular circuit where it assumes, then loses, its value as an instrument of exchange, and where the conditions of flux imply conditions of reflux, giving to the infinite debt its capitalist form; but the State as a regulator ensures a principle of convertibility of this credit money, either directly by tying it to gold, or indirectly through a mode of centralization that comprises a guarantor [*répondant*] of the credit, a uniform interest rate, a unity of capital markets, etc.

Hence once is correct in speaking of a profound *dissimulation* between the two forms of money, payment and financing – the two aspects of banking practice. But this dissimulation does not depend on a misrecognition [*méconnaissance*] so much as express the capitalist field of immanence, the apparent objective movement where the lower or subordinate form is no less necessary than the other (it is necessary for money to play on both boards), and where no integration of the dominated classes could occur without the shadow of this unapplied principle of convertibility [*ce principe de convertibilité non appliqué*] – which is enough, however, to ensure that the

Desire of the most disadvantaged creature will invest with all its forces, independently of all consciousness and economic misrecognitions, the social field of capitalism as a whole [...] (AO 228).

The “capitalist field of immanence” is thus sustained by the circulation of credit money, which is managed mathematically by specific financial institutions:

While it is true that capitalism is industrial in its essence or mode of production, it functions only as merchant capitalism. While it is true that it is filiative industrial capital in its essence, it functions only through its alliance with commercial and financial capital. In a sense, it is the bank that controls the whole system and the investment of desire. One of Keynes’s contributions was the reintroduction of desire into the problem of money; it is this that must be subjected to the requirements of Marxist analysis. That is why it is unfortunate that Marxist economists too often dwell on considerations concerning the mode of production, and on the theory of money as the general equivalent as found in the first section of *Capital*, without attaching enough importance to banking practice, to financial operations, and to the specific circulation of credit money – which would be the meaning of a return to Marx, to the Marxist theory of money (AO 230).

In his 1967 essay ‘Keynes and the Capitalist State’⁸ Antonio Negri argues that the period after 1929 was marked by the construction of a “production of consumption”, and that (following Marx’s remarks in the Appendices to *Capital*), we are entering a phase where the “real subsumption” of labour within the system of capitalism takes over from the merely “formal subsumption” that occurred at the origins of capitalism; for Negri, Keynes is the architect of the contemporary State-form through which the production of consumption is achieved. But Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the production of consumption in capitalism occurs relatively independently of the State, and the State is rather a reaction to it. There is a polarity between deterritorializing Capital and the reterritorializing State in Deleuze and Guattari that is not present in Negri. Their respective approaches to what has happened in the world economy from

⁸ Later reprinted in Negri’s 1994 volume with Michael Hardt, *Labour of Dionysus*. Hardt notes that this particular essay served in the 1970s and 80s as a “fundamental reference point for the various political groups in Italy and elsewhere in Europe” (Hardt & Negri 1994: 23).

the 1970s onward are correspondingly different. From Negri's perspective, the deregulation of the capitalist economy over the last 30 years is the means by which the modern capitalist State sustains its goal of producing consumption. A Negrian autonomist would be expected to say that there is no free market capitalism, and that the State always intervenes. If one takes Negri's line, one might think that Deleuze and Guattari show an unnecessary concern with money and the market in *Anti-Oedipus*, when really all that has happened in since the mid-70s is that the State-form has become more integrated with the production of consumption. But in fact Deleuze and Guattari's perspective is quite different, and confusing it with Negri's could lead to a fundamental misinterpretation of recent events in the global economy. *Anti-Oedipus* was published in 1972, at the moment when the phase of State regulation of capitalism was at its height in Europe. The Bretton Woods agreement, put in place after the Depression, had collapsed, as had the gold standard as a standard of convertibility.⁹ But *Anti-Oedipus* points towards the future, and towards a change in the capitalist framework. The period directly after 1972 is marked by a gradual deregulation of capitalism. In the 1980s, the principles of free market economics were embraced by the British and American governments, and have been ever since. From the perspective of *Anti-Oedipus*, what has occurred over the last 30 years – the period usually assigned in historiography to a generation – is a deregulation of capitalism and a *retreat* from the State form. Following Maurice Dobb, Deleuze and Guattari note that “state controls and regulations tend to disappear or diminish ... in situations where there is an abundant labour supply and an unusual expansion of markets” (AO 253). The current division of the world economy rests on an abundant labour supply, largely located in Asia, and an unusual expansion of financial markets in the West. Is

⁹ Herman Van Der Wee, *Prosperity and Upheaval: The World Economy, 1945-1980* (Penguin 1986), 474.

Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, with its ominous subtitle, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, therefore a 'prophetic book', predicting in its own way the consequences of the radical deregulation of capitalism and the re-founding of the economy on the generation of credit? Up until 1972, capitalism may well have been following the path laid out by Negri, but in the period after it, and leading up to the great financial crisis of 2008, it may be that the logic of capitalism indeed becomes "schizophrenic" in Deleuze and Guattari's sense.

So why do Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the "solution" or the "revolutionary path" is "to go still further, that is, in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialization?": to "accelerate the process" (AO 239-40)? They say that "perhaps the flows are not yet deterritorialized enough, not decoded enough". But that was 1972 – are the flows deterritorialized and decoded enough now? What precisely is the logic in "going still further"? If the capitalist system, when tendentially universalised, produces 'deterritorialization' and the destruction of the values of transcendence, then capitalism would indeed seem to be "realisation" and fulfilment of immanence. But that would appear to result in the kind of nightmare of a pure, all-encompassing immanence of the market anticipated with dread by Frankfurt School Marxists like Adorno and Horkheimer.

Anti-Oedipus is a book of crisis, hurtling towards a terminal horizon in which immanence and capitalism combine to produce an "absolute deterritorialization" of human desire, labour and thought. It is a book that spells out an apocalyptic scenario, and in order to impress its urgency upon us, offers no reassurance whatsoever. No social formation appears to be possible beyond capitalism, which realises in parodic form the immanence that was blocked from realisation in philosophy. If immanence is

impossible in philosophy (as the Lacanian-Althusserians maintained), then it realises itself, almost in revenge, in the ravaging deterritorializations of advanced capitalism.

Without being able to analyse the reasons for the shift here, it is clear that *What is Philosophy?* is an attempt to reclaim the theme of immanence from capitalism and restore it to philosophy. Rather than *realising* immanence, capitalism is now said to be a *condition* for its emergence: “Modern philosophy’s link with capitalism”, Deleuze and Guattari contend, “is of the same kind as that of ancient philosophy with Greece: the connection of an absolute plane of immanence with a relative social milieu that also functions through immanence” (WP 98). Acknowledging Negri’s thesis in his 1981 book on Spinoza, *The Savage Anomaly*, they suggest that it is no accident that Spinoza’s philosophy emerges in the ‘Golden Age’ of Dutch Capitalism. Nevertheless they now hold the means of capitalist deterritorialization – money and credit – to be completely distinct from the fabrication of concepts that they take to be essential to the construction of the ‘plane of immanence’. We return to a philosophical account of immanence: “*Philosophy* takes the relative deterritorialization of capital to the absolute; it makes it pass over the plane of immanence as movement of the infinite and suppresses it as internal limit, *turns it back against itself so as to summon forth a new earth, a new people*” (WP 99; first italic added). The dream of Spinozist immanence returns in all its autonomy: “Deterritorialization is *absolute* when the earth passes into the pure plane of immanence of a Being-thought, of a Nature-thought of infinite diagrammatic movements” (WP 88). Philosophy now assumes an explicit role in the construction of a *utopia* of immanence that can lead beyond capitalism, precisely by returning to and holding to principles and the work of the concept: “it is with utopia that philosophy becomes political and takes the criticism of its own time to its highest point” (WP 99).

It is easy to see why Deleuze and Guattari want to defend this position, after the trauma of abolishing immanence and reincarnating it in capitalism – but, in the light of the questions raised at the beginning of this paper, the problem of precisely how to defend Spinozist immanence still remains for readers of Deleuze today. If Spinozism is the “best” plane of immanence, then how is it defensible against other philosophies of immanence? Just because it is the best and most desirable does not mean that it is possible. According to Deleuze in his 1968 reading of Spinoza, in the ‘intuitive’ kind of knowledge, “we think as God thinks, we experience the very feelings of God” (EPS 308). How far is this pantheistic, quasi-mystical element in Spinozism – with its promises of identity with the mind of God – responsible for its utopian dimensions in the late re-affirmation of Spinoza in *What is Philosophy?* If there is a connection, how could such a renewed pantheism provide a genuine counterpoint to the deterritorializations of the capitalist form of immanence? Many questions still remain, but we stand no chance of answering them unless we lay out the full dimensions of the problem, and this requires an ongoing interrogation of the possible meanings of immanence, and its possible forms of realisation.