Toward a Trans-Local Encounter within Philosophy: Gilles Deleuze and Toshihiko Izutsu.

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——Summary

There have been until today numerous attempts to compare the philosophy of Gille Deleuze with Eastern or 'Oriental' philosophy and thought. However, rather than hastily positing an affinity between both threads of thought, this paper aims at presenting a possible interpretation or 'trans-local' comparison of the works of Deleuze (1925~1995) and Toshihiko Izutsu (1914~1993).

Following this interpretive approach, I will in this paper examine the three following points. First, this paper will open with an interpretation in terms of language of the difference or contradiction between immanence and transcendent in both philosophies of Deleuze and Izutsu. Second, I will explore the potentialities of the sentence 'One is always the index of a multiplicity' written by Deleuze in his last essay in light of Izutsu's philosophical discourses. Lastly, I will re-examine the series of notion of virtuality, singularity and void or nothingness in Deleuzian philosophy.

Introduction

In A Thousand Plateau, Deleuze & Guattari did not hesitate to express their interest and in fact affirmation of a scheme of 'oriental' thought (ATP:261). However, we should be wary of a too hasty reduction of this thought to 'Asia' or the 'Oriental'. In stressing this link with 'Oriental thoughts' within their philosophy, perhaps another point can be raised. For instance, in spite of his thoroughly atheistic and revolutionary posture, Guattari admitted a certain potentiality of archaic spiritualism, mysticism, and tribal shamanism in the production of subjectivity within emancipative politics. Even though Deleuze & Guattari never fell prey into 'Orientalism' in any sense, it is interesting to see how Deleuze expressed his interest in the philosophy of Zen Buddhism (LS:155,DC:67,WP:140). His conceptual preoccupation with Zen drew upon the surface of pure event and non-sense in itself.

In his monograph on Deleuze, Out of This World; Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation, Peter Hallward, undertook the project of a comparison of the philosophies of Deleuze and the Islamic thinker Al-Suhrawardi (1154~1191) regarding the question of ontological creation. Although Hallward is himself suspicious of this secret ontology of Deleuzian philosophy, his work does suggest the actual presence of a link of some sort between Islamic mystical thought and Deleuze's philosophy. We can see another trace of a link with mystic philosophy latent in Deleuze in his argument on the concept of chaos. Generally speaking, D&G have no relationship with the notion of a deterministic chaos as advocated in contemporary sciences; their notion of chaos is about the cosmogenic. However, it should be noted that Francisco Varela, a reknowned specialist of auto-poiesis theory to whom Guattari was very much indebted for his 'ecosophy', was himself a Buddhist. In addition the Italian activist thinker, Franco 'Bifo' Berardi, a friend of Guattari, was very interested in Zen Buddhism, although he considered Zen as a non-religion. He even identified Radio Alice (a free pirate radio station in Bologna in the late 1970's) with a strange mixture between futuristic Dadaism, general intellect (in Autonomist Marxism) and Zen Buddhism. Guattari himself was however somewhat skeptical of Bifo's involvement with Zen.

Izutsu Toshihiko (井筒俊彦 1914~1993) was a Japanese scholar of religious and linguistic philosophy, whose English (and sometimes, German) publications made him world-famous, as did his translation of the Koran into Japanese. He was an expert in Buddhism, Zen, Taoism and other mystical philosophies. Izutsu himself was very interested in the work of Deleuze&Guattari, especially the concepts of rhizome and nomadism, discussed in opposition to the arborescent system of thought of the West. He was also sympathetic with Derridian theory of deconstruction. In his one masterpiece, Psyche, Derrida himself wrote an essay on Izutsu and his philosophical works entitled 'The Letter to Japanese Friend.' But the issue is beyond the scope of this essay, which will exclusively propose a comparative and trans-local reading of Deleuze and Izutsu. Therefore this essay is not aimed at a mere introduction to Izutsu's life and philosophy in comparison with Deleuzian philosophy, but is rather juxtaposed with Deleuze's late works, especially the crucial — but strange or enigmatic — essay, 'Immanence: A Life', written nearly at the end of his life.

I

The difference or contradiction between immanence and the transcendent since the

beginnings of modern philosophy must be re-examined in the un-conventional and unforeseen sense of a 'coming' philosophy, where immanence would not vanish in a synthesis effectuated by the transcendent or the transcendental. In Deleuze's analysis, the pure plane of immanence and the transcendental field are never equated each other. How or in what manner do both moments intersect with each other? In humanities after the linguistic turn, any language is treated as a self-consistent system in which nothing can be identified as transcendent(al) or defined as an ultimate determinant instance of reality. The same goes for Deleuzian thought. A language as a capacity or potency of for signifiance— a term used by D&G which means a generic emergent site of signification — does not consist in a collection of names that address the world as an object, but articulates the world through a process of differentiation in which it continuously re-articulates itself. Language as a self-referential system operates virtually in the plane of immanence, but its pragmatics always necessitates the duality of a meta/object level to be actualized in collective enunciations. This means that inter-subjectivity of speaking subjects or the grammatical code of a given language assumes a transcendent(al) position for the empirical or objective level of a speaking subject. This is a performative paradox latent in any language: the immanent assemblage of collective enunciation(s) is actualized in a transcendent(al)/empirical double, a process necessary for a human agency to be incarnated. The language can thus induce the emergence of a crystal between immanence and transcendence.

In Deleuze's philosophy, the collision between immanence and the transcendent is manifested-expressed in the form-shape of a crystal. The crystal manifests the radical encountering between the virtual and the actual. 'It is exactly on the plane of immanence that crystals appears' (DC:114). Unlike 'the archipelago or skeletal frame' of concepts, the plane of immanence is the wave that un/rolls them up (WP:36). For D&G, concepts are concrete assemblages, whereas the plane of immanence is both abstract (machine) and fractal (assemblage); it is the horizon of events that allows for the series of concepts to be incorporated and actualized in the transcendent-empirical level. On the plane of immanence, the actual and the virtual always coexist one with another as crystals.

Insofar as Izutsu was under the influence of continental philosophers such as Hegel or Heiddeger, of Japanese philosophers such as Nishida, and also of more contemporary philosophies such as existentialism or structuralism, there is neither cases of using such terms as the plane of immanence nor the division between the actual and the virtual, the transcendental and the immanent. But a detailed reading of Izutsu's philosophy can allow us to identify an argument that resembles Deleuzian philosophy. For this I will now propose a comparative analysis of their theory of language and signifiance

Following Deleuze&Guattari's notion of signifiance as well as a general understanding of language in structuralism, we can say that language does not have an outside. Its referential world coexists with itself or, more strictly, both are simultaneously co-generated. Certainly language addresses the outside world for signification, designation and communication. But the signification of language has its ground exclusively within the linguistic or semiological formation, itself dependent on a system of differentiation. How is it then possible to enact a signification or signifiance if language cannot rely on any exterior instance? Humans are provided with a capability of language but do not retain any articulated language in advance. This is because a potential for language emerges between two series constitutive of different planes of reality, the series of articulation/ differentiation/cosmos and the series of non-articulation/un-differentiation/chaos. Deleuze defines the latter triad is as 'the indefinite,' which he remarks is not a mere empirical indetermination but what he calls a contingent determination by immanence, or a transcendental determinability (PI:30). For the indefinite or indistinction that is not yet 'articulated semantically' — this is specific terminology to Izutsu's religious linguistic philosophy which I explained in my previous essay 'The Theory of Semantic Articulation in Izutsu Toshihiko's Philosophy' (The Bulletin of the Faculty of Representational Studies No.11) — is always under the operation of signification.

In Izutsu's semantic theory, as well as structuralism, the distinction between two states of articulation (semantic structuring) and non-articulation (non-semantic structuring) is a crucial moment for articulating the passage from Nature to Culture. The state of articulation is defined as a semantically or phonetically differentiated world. By the so-called double articulation of linguistics, a system of sign is constituted in a process of differentiation. This is similar to what D&G called a 'cosmic lobster' or 'a double pincer' (ATP: 40), when God stands as an agency of double binding of the world. On the other hand, the realm of non-articulation is, in most cultural theory, usually identified with that of chaos in cosmology and disorder in Victor Turner's type of anthropology. As Nietzsche carefully explained, this state of chaos is often defined as a Dionysian moment, while the world enabled by the linguistic articulation, usually called cosmos, is constituted as a symbolic and cultural order.

Rather than opting for the conventional dichotomy between cosmos and chaos, Deleuze stressed the twofold nature of Chinese and Japanese cinema, defined in terms of two definition of void as an opposition of in/articulation or in/differentiation. He thus wrote in his Cinema 1, Image/Movement:

'Chinese and Japanese painting invoke two fundamental principles: on one hand the

primordial void and the breath of life which permeates all things in One, unites them in a whole, and transforms them according to the movement of a great circle or an organic spiral; on the other hand, the median void and the skeleton, the articulation, the joints, the wrinkle or broken stroke which moves from one being to another by taking them at the summit of their presence, following a line of the universe' (CI:191)

It is clear that Deleuze's philosophy was also based on a theory of semantic articulation though one slightly different from Izutsu's. Deleuze, despite of his respect to Nietzsche, did not make use of the term "Dionysian" to explain the obscure side of culture, that is, its non-articulated stratum of signification. He opted instead for a radical contrast between the primordial void and the central void (empty place or sign zero), the latter leading to skeleton, joints and articulation in the continuum of meaning. Izutsu as well never neglected this secret truth of so-called 'oriental' philosophy, which is that philosophical conceptions are bound to an encounter with the void, non-articulation, indefiniteness and indifference. His belief in this 'truth' is thus clearly in line with D&G when they argue that 'thinking provokes general indifference' (WP:41).

In his famous preface of the works of Marcel Mauss, Lévy-Strauss remarked that a system of signification comes to term by way of the asymmetric gap and indefinite dynamics constituted within a couple of signifier/signified. For him, the signifier is always in excess of the signified. Meaning in a sign system would be given all at once, as the signifier flows freely, thus conveying a zero value without ascribing it to any particular signified. He called this zero value signifier a 'floating signifier', and linked it with what Mauss defined as mana in the incentive of gift economies (symbolic exchange) in Melanesian tribal language.

By contrast, Izutsu ascribed the excessive part of signification to the signified. In his view, the signified retains the infinite range of meaning in relation to phonetics (as the side of a stream of sounds). The infinite series of sense/meaning unfolds in the transversal depth of consciousness where an amorphous flow of potentiality for signification is floating as a nebula. This formless potency of signified in excess would seek its correspondent signifier. Rather than a 'floating signifier', Izutsu seems to posit the notion of a 'sunk signified'. In any case, what is at stake for both Deleuze and Izutsu is that there is 'always already' a constitutive gap of constant inadequacy between the signifier and the signified. In this manner the effect of signification holds the nature of absolute immanence, through which the transcendental field as a meta-level of communication is retroactively enabled.

Although Deleuze sometimes borrowed the notion of "floating signifier" defined by Lévy–Strauss, in A Thousand Plateau, Deleuze & Guattari propose a similar understanding of signification to Izutsu's and locate excess on the side of the signified.

'All signs are signs of signs. The question is not yet what a given sign signifies but to which other signs it refers, or which signs add themselves to it to form a network without beginning or end that projects its shadow onto an amorphous atmospheric continuum. It is this amorphous continuum that for the moment plays the role of "signified", but it continually glides beneath the signifier, for which it serves only as medium or wall: the specific forms of all contents dissolve in it.' (ATP:112)

It is striking that both philosophers emphasized the idea of a 'sunk signified' defined as an amorphous nebula, over a 'floating signifier.' They tried in this way to present the paradoxical status of immanence, that is of the autonomy of language.

II

Deleuze's declarative sentence 'One is always the index of a multiplicity' (PI:30) is very close to an idea of Izutsu's philosophy. In his comparative understanding of Islamic philosophy (Ibn Arabi) or Sufism, Taoism and Zen philosophy, Izutsu also analyzed the phenomenal world, the multiplicity of empirical things, as a form of a self-manifestation of the Absolute and the One. In the conclusion to his masterpiece of comparative study entitled Sufism and Taoism, Izutsu argues that:

'It is a Unity because all the things that constitute Multiplicity are, after all, so many different phenomenal forms assumed by the Absolute (the Truth and the Way respectively). The phenomenal process by which the original One diversifies itself into Many is considered by Ibn Arabi as the tajalli, 'self-manifestation' of the One, and by Lao-tzû and Chuang-tzû as Shêng 'producing'. And Chuang-tzû, in particular, further elaborates this idea into that of the universal Transmutation, wu fua, lit.' things-transforming' (ST:473).

Izutsu's philosophical attitude can be summarized by the expression 'to see the One in the Many and the Many in the One, or rather to envision the Many as One and the One as Many (ST:68). This attitude induces what Ibn Arabi called 'perplexity' (hayrah), a concept that resonates with the Deleuzian series in notion of fold (folding/unfolding/refolding). For

Izutsu as well, it is a matter of finding a way to propose an ontological interpretation of multiplicity. As he says:

'Multiplicity is not a static 'differentiation' of things that are rigidly fixed once for all, but is a constant life process which contains within itself the ontological tension of Unity in Multiplicity.' (ST:366)

In Deleuze's understanding, the One is not necessarily the transcendent that subsumes or comprehends immanence as content. Rather, immanence is compiled and folded within a transcendental field. This is why it is possible for him to argue that 'One is always the index of a multiplicity'. The transcendental field embracing the One is defined as a pure plane of immanence, an absolute immanence, denying all transcendence of subject and object (PI:26). In fact, a life, for Deleuze, is immanence of immanence, absolute immanence (PI:27), while the transcendent field turns out to be a field of actualization.

In a similar way, Izutsu's perfect man, by realizing the purification of Mind, defines the One as Nothing, operative within a metaphysical Void, forgetting the distinction between inside and outside, self and non-self. S/he can now perceive what Taoist sages call illumination (ming) and also what Ibn Arabi called 'unveiling' (kashf) or 'immediate tasting' (dhawq) S/he is one with the constant flux or stream of transmutation. From Izutsu's view, the whole philosophical horizon of an Ibn Arabi, a Lao-tzu, or a Chuang-tzu (ancient Chinese philosophers) is the result of an altered state of mind, an ecstatic spiritual state of consciousness (ST:478).

'The man in perplexity draws the circle' says Izutsu quoting Ibn Arabi (ST:70), a circle that follows and draws for a cognitive subject the very circle of the self-manifestation of the primordial One, the Divine, or Absolute void. Man in perplexity as the subject of philosophical speculation is on the way toward the (ultimate) enlightenment, if it exists. At least, we can say that having carefully evaluated the possible falsifiability of a given argument, it is on the way toward the putative truth. It is quite interesting that Izutsu uses the term 'plane' in this context to explain how phenomenal concrete beings can diversify themselves into myriads of things and events. It is a process of 'descent' that is necessary to subsequently 'ascend back into the original non-differentiation' (ST:70).

In Izutsu's scheme of non-articulation and non-distinction (what is called in semiology), everything is at the level of the infinite considered as a total manifestation of reality in its entire development. 'Bird is becoming flower and conversely flower is becoming bird.' 'When one sees flower, one would become flower as well'; this is the very

moment of pure experience in Zen's ultimate enlightenment (Satori) and Izutsu's philosophy, or 'transmutation'. Transmutation in both ancient Chinese philosophy and Zen thought is to be treated as a certain kind of indiscernability and non-articulation (Zen:109). This is not a process of alienation, nor an emanation from one substance to another. It is rather a kind of transfiguration within a dynamic interaction between plural stages of articulation. In this sense, the One with which both Deleuze and Izutsu grappled is slightly different from Plotinus's.

Following Deleuze, we can say that 'immanence is immanent only to itself and consequently captures everything, absorbs All-One, and leaves nothing remaining to which it could be immanent.' (WP:45). The One is immanent to the empirical and phenomenal world, which is completely beyond and in excess of any general human attempt at linguistic formalization, verbal conceptualization and semantic articulation. But it bears repetition that the One is neither merely transcendent nor is alteration or negation of a living milieu, but instead provides by itself a positivity for all empirical beings. For both Deleuze and Izutsu, the One is by and itself anterior to and independent from any categorical or conceptual definition of articulation. The One constitutes a full of dynamic energy flow rather than consisting in a mere series of negations. The One emerges as indefinite, indivision and non-articulation, while nevertheless functioning as the integrative moment of definition: it is an archi-articulation. As I explained above, this moment of the indefinite and non-articulated has usually been understood as the plane of Dionysus or chaos within culture/civilization in contrast to the plane of Apollon, the moment of cosmos as order.

Although Christian philosophies have envisioned the presence of God beyond the notion of the One, both Deleuze and Izutsu were particularly careful about the common identification, equation and confusion of God with the One. In the traditional theological view, God was conceived as a divine unity embracing all existence. However the One to which both philosophers refer cannot be equated with an individual creator of the world, for it is by unfolding itself as absolute autonomy that the One undertakes a creation in an auto-producing process. The One is an agency that always precedes before it exists in reality and is the effect of articulated structure which allows for the existence of the empirical world.

In their What is Philosophy?, Deleuze & Guattari do not use the term the One directly. Instead, they adopt the expression 'One-All'. The One permeates and subsumes everything insofar as the One is immanent to itself. In order to articulate their comprehension of immanence in a pure or ultimate mode, they invented a new terminology with the 'plane of immanence' indicating that all existence is an expression and development of the same

mode of agency. As such, there is no gap between transcendence and immanence or form and matter. Herein the Deleuzian thesis of the 'univocity of being,' completely distinct from the understanding of the One in the tradition of metaphysics, but resonating with Izutsu's notion of the manifestation of the One and Absolute being in his interpretation of the philosophy of Ibn Arabi. Yet of course, Deleuze(&Guattari) never celebrated nor idealized the notion of the absolute, unlike a genealogy of religious philosophy.

The One, for Deleuze, is ontologically and radically indifferent to the question of Unity in a conventional philosophical sense. The One in Deleuze is called the univocity or the One of immanence, that is an omnipotent ability of binding and connecting what has traditionally been considered as divided: immanence and transcendence, the divided and the indivisible, articulation and non-articulation. In Izutsu's view as well, the One is defined as a potency of unfolding of reality, a radical or archi-articulation. Its logic of self-articulation of/within an ultimate reality passing through the process of non-articulation, is, in Izutsu's view, conceptually crucial for both Sufism and Taoism (Zen philosophy can also be included). Despite the notion of absolute non-articulation (anti-cosmos), the One presents at the same time a tendency to constitute an empirical world by a process of self-articulation in its every moment. Non-articulation itself is a moment of self-articulating dynamics realized by orienting all its flows of energy toward empirical reality. It is thus no longer possible to presuppose a distinction between articulation and non-articulation, transcendence and immanence, ideality and materiality.

It is the very theoretical context of understanding of the One that forced Deleuze (and Guattari) to invent a series of concepts such as the 'plane of immanence' and the 'univocity of being'. Deleuze called this moment a kind of flash, a 'singular event' and 'flourishing of iron' (LS:155) in which both the articulated and the non-articulated constantly coincide with each other.

If the One is really immanent to itself, it must be devoid of transcendence as such, although it, as a 'cosmic lobster' (ATP:39) or radical potency for connecting and differing, can articulate and fold within itself both immanence and transcendence. The One permeates, subsumes and mutates the total multiplicity of existences through an infinite process of alternation between articulation and non-articulation.

When Izutsu addressed the mode of 'the Many in the One and the One in the Many' in his argument, he potentially raised the ontological question of counting. In the manifestation and development of the One, to exist is to belong to a certain condition or situation. Any given lived condition must ontologically be envisioned as a posited multiplicity, articulated along with a set of counting-as-one and through a singular

formation of counting, binding, grouping and belonging of multiple beings in the empirical and living world. The element of a set is understood to be an entity that is counted as part of it through the weaving of subsets for belonging and inclusion to meta/sets. A living situation of the world is defined as an articulated presentation of multiple-beings. Here the articulated means to be presented through the immanent process of one-ification, in which multiplicity is consistently counted as one. After all, the positivity of multiplicity itself cannot be guaranteed without addressing the One.

'Nothing-ness' however always resists the operation of counting as there is 'nothing' that cannot be posited as one. Certainly the nothing cannot be grasped in a situation or condition, because it cannot belong to a situation defined as above, as an element of conditionality of the phenomenal/cognitive world. It cannot therefore be counted as one by itself.

In Izutsu's view, the One is sometimes presented as the nothing or void. The existential mode characteristic of the manifestation or unfolding of the One is defined by nothing-ness or void. Nothing-ness is not opposed to Being, which Izutsu defines as the absolute or the One. Rather, by aligning with Being as such, nothing-ness makes the cognitive and actual world existent as a relentless generic emerging in which the non-existent becomes existent being in a process of alternation between appearing and vanishing. Now the question becomes how the primordial One and nothingness can be reconciled on the same conceptual plane? Nothing-ness is as it exists. It is not mere nonbeing. It should be distinguished from void, although it is also true that in both Deleuze and Izutsu's philosophy, the notion of nothingness, sometimes, is strangely identified with that of void.

III

The entire world for Izutsu is nothing other than the 'I' emerging from the depth of mystic or 'oriental' philosophy. Of course this 'I' can never be identified with an empirical ego nor with the Cartesian subject. The 'I' here emerges as a crystallization of the entire immanent field into both the cognitive subject and empirical object. To describe this condition, Izutsu adopts the term crystallization. The point-instant of 'I' as a field is constituted by a set of interactions, also called the 'interpenetration of the ontological energies' and 'the mutual penetration' of the three temporary modes of the past, present and future (SOP:93). Only when the 'essence' of things in the living world is annihilated and the articulated empirical structure decomposed, humans can awake to, in a more mystical

language, the 'zero point of consciousness'. At the moment of encounter with this depth stratum of consciousness, a singular event takes place. Izutsu opted for the term 'event' rather than 'things'. D&G also share a similar view. For them, 'the event is not the state of affairs' (WP:156). In other words, while the proposition in the sense of analytical philosophy deals with the state of affairs, only philosophical concepts, or conceptual thinking, can retroactively draw on the event, if not at time, grasping it in its movement of emergence.

By the term event, Izutsu intended to mean 'an ontological "event" as one of the innumerable momentary happenings' (SOP:165). A singular event, by definition a rare occurrence, weaves together and constitutes 'the cosmic process of the network of all ontological relations' (ibid). Everything at the every moment, in his view, is a singular ontological event sanctioned by a pure contingency. For Izutsu, this is the critical image of thought, which would be called the plane of immanence by Deleuze. Not only persons like shamans or religious masters but also ordinary people encounter this dimension of the event, at least unconsciously if not in the full consciousness of the 'perfect human'. In such a singular event Izutsu thinks, all and all interpenetrates each other and interfuses with one another as if happening in the darkness of non-being and non-image. It opens the depth structure of (un)consciousness which is 'always already' there in an ordinary cognitive process. In his understanding of the notion of nihil (nihilisation) in Ibn Arabi's philosophy, the event is defined as the dimension of pure potential, of the possible (mumkin) which actualizes and enables the surface of common consciousness and existential world. Izutsu explain this pure horizon of potential by recurring to the idea of Alãya consciousness (ãlaya-vijñãna, 阿頼耶識, 蔵識) in 'Only Ideation schools' of Buddhism (唯識学派). Alãya consciousness can be grasped as the depth stratum of un/sub consciousness, folding itself into the surface level of common ordinary consciousness. The Sanskrit term (ãlaya) conveys the meaning of storage, storehouse, and depository. It is a sort of archive that stocks potential modes of signification. These potential moments stocked as a non-articulated chaotic continuum are virtually 'reserved' in this symbolic storehouse of semantic seeds called bija. Semantic seeds are thus here virtually stored in order to eventually assume a variety of significations and articulations. In Izutsu's philosophy, the pure potential of the archi-articulation appears as the storehouse (un- or sub-) of consciousness. In other word, for Izutsu, virtual unconsciousness is structured as a different type of language from the ordinary one.

It is possible to recognize a parallel with Deleuze & Guattari's philosophical schema. For them, concepts already constitute the plane of horizon of events, also called 'the reservoir or reserve of purely conceptual events' (WP:36). It is interesting to see their use of terms like reservoir and reserve to signify a form of storehouse. As they argue, 'the event is

immaterial, incorporeal, unlivable: pure reserve (WP:156). The event is a pure immanence because it contains by itself what is not yet actualized and/or what resists actualization. It is thus very interesting that both thinkers, Izutsu, and D&G seek to unearth the dimension of virtuality or pure potential which is built within a shadowy storehouse or reserve. We should however be wary of a too easy conflation and confusion of Izutsu's potential with D&G's concept of the virtual.

The possible or the potential is traditionally understood as an equivalent of the concept of 'dynamis' in the lineage of Greek philosophy. Aristotle thus considered 'dynamis' to be a primal material potentiality waiting for its deployment into reality, into 'energeia' as a form of embodiment in/of this world. Among a number of possibilities embedded in this pure potentiality, one is opted as the reality for random choices, choices that are nevertheless retroactively conceived as a destiny for human agency.

Deleuze & Guattari rather define this pure potentiality as the virtual or virtuality. They say,

'The virtual is no longer the chaotic virtual but rather virtuality that has become consistent, that has become an entity formed on a plane of immanence that sections the chaos. This is what we call the Event, the part that eludes its own actualization in everything that happens' (WP:156).

D&G thus carefully avoid the linear understanding or segmentation of the series of possible, potential and virtual (virtuality) in addressing the (singular) event.

Is it possible to see a point of conjunction between Deleuze and Izutsu in terms of the event and virtuality? For both, the possible and the potential are radically distinct. The possible would have a very predictable effect in the way it combines a multiplicity of discrete beings. But the potential is singular by being situated with the virtual, its lingering reservoir immanent to every actualization and phenomenal unfolding. Although Izutsu never used the binary couple actual - virtual, his use of the term potential already implies the layer of meaning of the concept of virtuality. 'Existence which is actus, thus spreading itself out far and wide, goes on producing the ten thousand things' (ST:483). For Izutsu, the articulated essences of things do exist, but only in potentia not in actus, they are neither actual nor real in the fullest sense.

Conclusion

Since The Machinic Unconscious to Chaosmosis, that is from his early thought to his last work, Guattari had undertaken his own 'conceptual confusion'. This intentional misleading fusion claimed by Guattari is exactly the confusion that Deleuze had subtly tried to avoid between the virtual and the possible. In other words, Guattari, be it intentionally or unconsciously, ended up sometimes replacing the term virtual by the term possible or the potential in his works. To a certain extent, the same holds for Izutsu's philosophical discourse (discourse or schema?).

The concept of nothingness is particularly productive concept for bringing together D&G's philosophy of the virtual with Izutsu's 'oriental' thought. Nothingness is not defined as mere wholeness, nor as emptiness in the sense of absolute negativity, but is rather treated as a creative or vital void, which is philosophically compatible with the notion of chaos. For them, the plane of immanence constitutes a section of chaos that seems to function as a 'sieve' (WP:42). This sieve stretches over chaos. This definition of the plane of immanence is an adequate way to grasp nothingness as an active rhizome driven from the void. Within this operative use of the notion of chaos in terms of a sieve as well as a chaosmosis, both void and fullness are related to a double dimension of intensity. In D&G's ontological view, a void can function as an index of multiplicity by embracing all moments of the existential world. It is thus never reduced to the source of emanation of the One as in Plotinus. A concept is made of a chaoid as it is passing through the a multiplicity of planes, in particular the triad of art, science, and philosophy (WP:208).

Deleuze and Guattari claim that 'chaos makes chaotic and undoes every consistency in the infinite' (WP:42). The void in D&G's philosophy, as in Izutsu's (Orient thought?), is the very site of self-manifestation of multiples, a virtual no-thing on which any countable is actualized. They however prefer to mobilize the expression "plane of immanence" instead of nothingness or void.

For both Deleuze and Izutsu, chaos does not so much mean disorder as infinite speed, for all forms of things continuously take shape, emerge and vanish through chaos as reservoir. 'It (chaos) is a void that is not a nothingness but a virtual containing all possible particles and drawing out all possible forms, which spring up only to disappear immediately, without consistency or reference, without consequences (WP:118). Certainly there is no chaos in the One, but there is the One that permeates reality through the potential of chaos. In other word, the one operation of the One can be defined as 'chaotifying'. If things ordinarily look as if essentially distinct from each other, it is simply because ordinary men are not yet awake. If they were, they would chaotify these things and see them in their original state of undifferentiation (ST:484). This is precisely the point of conjunction which Izutsu found in his comparative analysis of Sufism and Taoism. I believe

a similar comparison is possible between Deleuze(& Guattari) and Izutsu. Of course, this is still an ongoing process of trans-local comparative philosophy, which is not necessary called 'oriental' in a historical or geo-philosophical sense.

—— References and Abbreviation
Gilles Deleuze
CI: Cinema1, The Movement-Image, continuum, 1986
DC: Dialogues II (with Claire Parnet), including 'The Actual and the Virtual,' Continuum, 2004
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