

DIFFERENCE AND REPETITION

Gilles Deleuze

Translated by Paul Patton



Continuum

The Tower Building 80 Maiden Lane
11 York Road, Suite 704
London, SE1 7NX New York, NY 10038

www.continuumbooks.com

First published in Great Britain 1994 by
The Athlone Press

Reprinted 1997, 2001

This edition 2004

Reprinted 2007 (twice), 2008, 2009, 2010

First published in France 1968 by
Presses Universitaires de France, Paris
as *Différence et Répétition*

© 1968, Presses Universitaires de France
English translation © 1994 The Athlone Press

Publisher's Note

The publishers wish to record their thanks to the French Ministry of
Culture for a grant towards the cost of translation.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from The British Library

ISBN-10: 0-8264-7715-1

ISBN-13: 978-0-8264-7715-6

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any
means, electronic or mechanical, photocopying or otherwise, without
prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Typeset by Interactive Sciences Ltd, Gloucester
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Antony Rowe, Chippenham, Wiltshire

Contents

<i>Translator's Preface</i>	vii
<i>Preface to the English Edition</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xvii
Introduction: Repetition and Difference	1
Chapter I Difference in Itself	36
Chapter II Repetition for Itself	90
Chapter III The Image of Thought	164
Chapter IV Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference	214
Chapter V Asymmetrical Synthesis of the Sensible	280
Conclusion	330
<i>Bibliography</i>	381
<i>Index</i>	393

CHAPTER III

The Image of Thought

Where to begin in philosophy has always—rightly—been regarded as a very delicate problem, for beginning means eliminating all presuppositions. However, whereas in science one is confronted by objective presuppositions which axiomatic rigour can eliminate, presuppositions in philosophy are as much subjective as objective. By objective presuppositions we mean concepts explicitly presupposed by a given concept. Descartes, for example, in the *Second Meditation*, does not want to define man as a rational animal because such a definition explicitly presupposes the concepts of rationality and animality: in presenting the *Cogito* as a definition, he therefore claims to avoid all the objective presuppositions which encumber those procedures that operate by genus and difference. It is clear, however, that he does not escape presuppositions of another kind—subjective or implicit presuppositions contained in opinions rather than concepts: it is presumed that everyone knows, independently of "think" thus appears to be a beginning only because it has referred all its presuppositions back to the empirical self. Moreover, while Hegel criticized Descartes for this, he does not seem, for his part, to proceed otherwise: pure being, in turn, is a beginning only by virtue of referring all its presuppositions back to sensible, concrete, empirical being. The same attitude of refusing objective presuppositions, but on condition of assuming just as many subjective presuppositions (which are perhaps the same ones in another form), appears when Heidegger invokes a pre-ontological understanding of Being. We may conclude that there is no true beginning in philosophy, or rather that the true philosophical beginning.

is in-itself already Repetition. However, this formula, and the evocation of the idea of philosophy as a Circle, are subject to so many interpretations that we cannot be too prudent. For if it is a question of rediscovering at the end what was there in the beginning, if it is a question of recognising, of bringing to light or into the conceptual or the explicit, what was simply known implicitly without concepts—whatever the complexity of this process, whatever the differences between the procedures of this or that author—the fact remains that all this is still too simple, and that this circle is truly not tortuous enough. The circle image would reveal instead that philosophy is powerless truly to begin, or indeed authentically to repeat. We would do better to ask what is a subjective or implicit presupposition: it has the form of "Everybody knows . . .". Everybody knows, in a pre-philosophical and pre-conceptual manner . . . everybody knows what it means to think and to be. . . . As a result, when the philosopher says "I think therefore I am", he can assume that the universality of his premises—namely, what it means to be and to think . . .—will be implicitly understood, and that no one can deny that to doubt is to think, and to think is to be. . . . *Everybody knows, no one can deny*, is the form of representation and the discourse of the representative. When philosophy rests its beginning upon such implicit or subjective presuppositions, it can claim innocence, since it has kept nothing back—except, of course, the essential—namely, the form of this discourse. It then opposes the "idiot" to the pedant, *Eudoxus to Epistemon*, good will to the overfull understanding, the individual man endowed only with his natural capacity for thought to the man perverted by the generalities of his time.¹ The philosopher takes the side of the idiot as though of a man without presuppositions. In fact, *Eudoxus* has no fewer presuppositions than *Epistemon*, he simply has them in another, implicit or subjective form, "private" and not "public"; in the form of a natural capacity for thought which allows philosophy to claim to begin, and to begin without presuppositions.

But here and there isolated and passionate cries are raised. How could they not be isolated when they deny what "everybody knows . . ." ? And passionate, since they deny that which, it is said, nobody can deny? Such protest does not take place in the name of aristocratic prejudices: it is not a question of saying what few think and knowing what it means to think. On the contrary, it is a question of someone—if only one—with the necessary modesty not managing to know what everybody knows, and modestly denying what everybody is supposed to recognise. Someone who neither allows himself to be represented nor wishes to represent anything.

Not an individual endowed with good will and a natural capacity for thought, but an individual full of ill will who does not manage to think, either naturally or conceptually. Only such an individual is without presuppositions. Only such an individual effectively begins and effectively repeats. For this individual the subjective presuppositions are no less prejudices than the objective presuppositions: *Eudoxus* and *Epistemon* are one and the same misleading figure who should be mistrusted. At the risk of playing the idiot, do so in the Russian manner: that of an underground man who recognises himself no more in the subjective presuppositions of a natural capacity for thought than in the objective presuppositions of a culture of the times, and lacks the compass with which to make a circle. Such a one is the Untimely, neither temporal nor eternal. Ah Shestov, with the questions he poses, the ill will he manifests, the powerlessness to think he puts into thought and the double dimension he develops in these demanding questions concerning at once both the most radical beginning and the most stubborn repetition.

Many people have an interest in saying that everybody knows "this", that everybody recognises this, or that nobody can deny it. (They triumph easily so long as no surly interlocutor appears to reply that he does not wish to be so represented, and that he denies or does not recognise those who speak in his name.) The philosopher, it is true, proceeds with greater disinterest: all that he proposes as universally recognised is what is meant by thinking, being and self—in other words, not a particular this or that but the form of representation or recognition in general. This element nevertheless, has a matter, but a pure matter or element. This element consists only of the supposition that thought is the natural exercise of a faculty; of the presupposition that there is a natural capacity for thought endowed with a talent for truth or an affinity with the true, under the double aspect of a *good will on the part of the thinker* and an *upright nature on the part of thought*. It is because everybody naturally thinks that everybody is supposed to know implicitly what it means to think. The most general form of representation is thus found in the element of a common sense understood as an upright nature and a good will (*Eudoxus* and orthodoxy). The implicit presupposition of philosophy may be found in the idea of a common sense as *Cogitatio natura universalis*. On this basis, philosophy is able to begin. There is no point in multiplying the declarations of philosophers, from "Everybody has by nature the desire to know" to "Good sense is of all things in the world the most equally distributed", in order to verify the existence of this presupposition, for its importance lies less in the

explicit declarations that it inspires than in its persistence among those philosophers who precisely leave it hidden. Postulates in philosophy are not propositions the acceptance of which the philosopher demands; but, on the contrary, propositional themes which remain implicit and are understood in a pre-philosophical manner. In this sense, conceptual philosophical thought has as its implicit presupposition a pre-philosophical and natural Image of thought, borrowed from the pure element of common sense. According to this image, thought has an affinity with the true; it formally possesses the true and materially wants the true. It is *in terms of* this image that everybody knows and is presumed to know what it means to think. Thereafter it matters little whether philosophy begins with the object or the subject, with Being or with beings; as long as thought remains subject to this Image which already prejudices everything: the distribution of the object and the subject as well as that of Being and beings.

We may call this image of thought a dogmatic, orthodox or moral image. It certainly has variant forms: "rationalists" and "empiricists" do not presume its construction in the same fashion. Moreover, as we shall see, philosophers often have second thoughts and do not accept this implicit image without adding further traits drawn from explicit reflection on conceptual thought which react against it and tend to overturn it. In the realm of the implicit, it nevertheless holds fast, even if the philosopher specifies that truth is not, after all, "an easy thing to achieve and within reach of all". For this reason, we do not speak of this or that image of thought, variable according to the philosophy in question, but of a single image in general which constitutes the subjective presupposition of philosophy as a whole. When Nietzsche questions the most general presuppositions of philosophy, he says that these are essentially moral, since Morality alone is capable of persuading us that thought has a good nature and the thinker a good will, and that only the good can ground the supposed affinity between thought and the True. Who else, in effect, but Morality, and this Good which gives thought to the true, and the true to thought? . . . As a result, the conditions of a philosophy which would be without any kind of presuppositions appear all the more clearly: instead of being supported by the moral Image of thought, it would take as its point of departure a radical critique of this Image and the "postulates" it implies. It would find its difference or its true beginning, not in an agreement with the pre-philosophical Image but in a rigorous struggle against this Image, which it would denounce as non-philosophical.² As a result, it would

discover its authentic repetition in a thought without Image, even at the cost of the greatest destructions and the greatest demoralisations, and a philosophical obstinacy with no ally but paradox, one which would have to renounce both the form of representation and the element of common sense. As though thought could begin to think, and continually begin again, only when liberated from the Image and its postulates. It is futile to again, only when liberated from the Image and its postulates. It is futile to claim to reformulate the doctrine of truth without first taking stock of the postulates which project this distorting image of thought.

It cannot be regarded as a *fact* that thinking is the natural exercise of a faculty, and that this faculty is possessed of a good nature and a good will. "Everybody" knows very well that in fact men think rarely, and more often under the impulse of a shock than in the excitement of a taste for thinking. Moreover, Descartes's famous suggestion that good sense (the capacity for thought) is of all things in the world the most equally distributed³ rests upon no more than an old saying, since it amounts to reminding us that men are prepared to complain of lack of memory, imagination or even hearing, but they always find themselves well served with regard to intelligence and thought. What makes Descartes a philosopher is that he makes use of that saying in order to erect an image of thought as it is *in principle*: good nature and an affinity with the true belong in principle to thought, whatever the difficulty of translating this principle into fact or rediscovering it behind the facts. Natural good sense or common sense are thus taken to be determinations of pure thought. Sense is able to adjudicate with regard to its own universality, and to suppose itself universal and communicable in principle. In order to impose or rediscover this principle—in other words, to *apply* the mind so endowed—there must be an explicit method. There is no doubt, therefore, that in fact it is difficult to think, but the most difficult in fact may still be the easiest in principle. This is why the method itself is said to be easy from the point of view of the nature of thought (it is no exaggeration to say that this notion of ease poisons the whole of Cartesianism). When the presupposition of philosophy is found in an Image of thought which is claimed to hold in principle, we can no longer be content to oppose it with contrary facts. The discussion must be carried out on the level of principle itself, in order to see whether this image does not betray the very essence of thought as pure thought. To the extent that it holds in principle, this image presupposes a certain distribution of the empirical and the transcendental, and it is this distribution or transcendental model implied by the image that must be judged.

There is indeed a model, in effect: that of recognition. Recognition may be defined by the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object: the same object may be seen, touched, remembered, imagined or conceived. . . . As Descartes says of the piece of wax: "It is of course the same wax which I see, which I touch, which I picture in my imagination, in short the same wax which I thought it to be from the start."⁴ No doubt each faculty—perception, memory, imagination, understanding. . . .—has its own particular given and its own style, its peculiar ways of acting upon the given. An object is recognised, however, when one faculty locates it as identical to that of another, or rather when all the faculties together relate their given and relate themselves to a form of identity in the object. Recognition thus relies upon a subjective principle of collaboration of the faculties for "everybody"—in other words, a common sense as a *concordia facultatum*: while simultaneously, for the philosopher, the form of identity in objects relies upon a ground in the unity of a thinking subject, of which all the other faculties must be modalities. This is the meaning of the *Cogito* as a beginning: it expresses the unity of all the faculties in the subject; it thereby expresses the possibility that all the faculties will relate to a form of object which reflects the subjective identity: it provides a philosophical concept for the presupposition of a common sense: it is the common sense become philosophical. For Kant as for Descartes, it is the identity of the Self in the "I think" which grounds the harmony of all the faculties and their agreement on the form of a supposed same object. The objection will be raised that we never confront a formal, unspecified, universal object but only this or that object delimited and specified by a determinate contribution from the faculties. At this point, however, we must refer to the precise difference between these two complementary instances, *common sense* and *good sense*. For while common sense is the norm of identity from the point of view of the pure Self and the form of the unspecified object which corresponds to it, good sense is the norm of distribution from the point of view of the empirical selves and the objects qualified as this or that kind of thing (which is why it is considered to be universally distributed). Good sense determines the contribution of the faculties in each case, while common sense contributes the form of the Same. Furthermore, if the unspecified object exists only in so far as it is qualified in a particular way, then conversely, qualification operates only when the supposition of the unspecified object. We will see below how—in an entirely necessary manner—good sense and common sense complete each other in the image of thought: together they constitute the two halves

of the *doxa*. For the moment, it suffices to note the precipitation of the postulates themselves: the image of a naturally upright thought, which knows what it means to think; the pure element of common sense which follows from this "in principle"; and the model of recognition—or rather, the form of recognition—which follows in turn. Thought is supposed to be naturally upright because it is not a faculty like the others but the unity of all the other faculties which are only modes of the supposed subject, and which it aligns with the form of the Same in the model of recognition. The model of recognition is necessarily included in the image of thought, and whether one considers Plato's *Theaetetus*, Descartes's *Meditations* or Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, this model remains sovereign and defines the orientation of the philosophical analysis of what it means to think.

Such an orientation is a hindrance to philosophy. The supposed three levels—a naturally upright thought, an in principle natural common sense, and a transcendental model of recognition—can constitute only an ideal orthodoxy. Philosophy is left without means to realise its project of breaking with *doxa*. No doubt philosophy refuses every particular *doxa*; no doubt it upholds no particular propositions of good sense or common sense. No doubt it recognises nothing in particular. Nevertheless, it retains the essential aspect of *doxa*—namely, the form; and the essential aspect of common sense—namely, the element; and the essential aspect of recognition—namely, the model itself (harmony of the faculties grounded in the supposed universal thinking subject and exercised upon the unspecified object). The image of thought is only the figure in which *doxa* is universalised by being elevated to the rational level. However, so long as one only abstracts from the empirical content of *doxa*, while maintaining the operation of the faculties which corresponds to it and implicitly retains the essential aspect of the content, one remains imprisoned by it. We may well discover a supra-temporal form or even a sub-temporal primary matter, an underground or Ur-*doxa*: we have not advanced a single step, but remain imprisoned by the same cave or ideas of the times which we only flatter ourselves with having "rediscovered", by blessing them with the sign of philosophy. The form of recognition has never sanctioned anything but the recognisable and the recognised: form will never inspire anything but conformities. Moreover, while philosophy refers to a common sense as its implicit presupposition, what need has common sense of philosophy? Common sense shows every day—unfortunately—that it is capable of producing philosophy in its own way. Therein lies a costly double danger for philosophy. On the one hand, it is apparent that acts of

recognition exist and occupy a large part of our daily life: this is a table, this is an apple, this the piece of wax, Good morning Theaetetus. But who can believe that the destiny of thought is at stake in these acts, and that when we recognise, we are thinking? Like Bergson, we may well distinguish between two kinds of recognition—that of the cow in the presence of grass, and that of a man summoning his memories: the second can serve no more than the first as a model for what it means to think. We said above that the Image of thought must be judged on the basis of what it claims in principle, not on the basis of empirical objections. However, the criticism that must be addressed to this image of thought is precisely that it has based its supposed principle upon extrapolation from certain facts, particularly insignificant facts such as Recognition, everyday banality in person; as though thought should not seek its models among stranger and more compromising adventures. Take the example of Kant: of all philosophers, Kant is the one who discovers the prodigious domain of the transcendental. He is the analogue of a great explorer—not of another world, but of the upper or lower reaches of this one. However, what does he do? In the first edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* he describes in detail three syntheses which measure the respective contributions of the thinking faculties, all culminating in the third, that of recognition, which is expressed in the form of the unspecified object as correlate of the "I think" to which all the faculties are related. It is clear that, in this manner, Kant traces the so-called transcendental structures from the empirical acts of a psychological consciousness: the transcendental synthesis of apprehension is directly induced from an empirical apprehension, and so on. In order to hide this all too obvious procedure, Kant suppressed this text in the second edition. Although it is better hidden, the tracing method, with all its "psychologism", nevertheless subsists.

In the second place, recognition is insignificant only as a speculative model. It ceases to be so with regard to the ends which it serves and to which it leads us. What is recognised is not only an object but also the values attached to an object (values play a crucial role in the distributions undertaken by good sense). In so far as the practical finality of recognition lies in the "established values", then on this model the whole image of thought as *Cogitatio natura* bears witness to a disturbing complacency. As Nietzsche says, Truth may well seem to be "a more modest being from which no disorder and nothing extraordinary is to be feared: a self-contented and happy creature which is continually assuring all the powers that be that no one needs to be the least concerned on its account; for it is,

after all, only 'pure knowledge' . . .⁴⁵ What is a thought which harms no one, neither thinkers nor anyone else? Recognition is a sign of the celebration of monstrous nuptials, in which thought "rediscovers" the State, rediscovers "the Church" and rediscovers all the current values that it subtly presented in the pure form of an eternally blessed unspecified eternal object. Nietzsche's distinction between the creation of new values and the recognition of established values should not be understood in a historically relative manner, as though the established values were new in their time and the new values simply needed time to become established. In fact it concerns a difference which is both formal and in kind. The new, with its power of beginning and beginning again, remains forever new, just as the established was always established from the outset, even if a certain amount of empirical time was necessary for this to be recognised. What becomes established with the new is precisely not the new. For the new—in other words, difference—calls forth forces in thought which are not the forces of recognition, today or tomorrow, but the powers of a completely other model, from an unrecognised and unrecognisable *terra incognita*. What forces does this new bring to bear upon thought, from what central bad nature and ill will does it spring, from what central ungrounding which strips thought of its "immanence", and treats it every time as something which has not always existed, but begins, forced and under constraint? By contrast, how derisory are the voluntary struggles for recognition. Struggles occur only on the basis of a common sense and established values, for the attainment of current values (honours, wealth and power). A strange struggle among consciousnesses for the conquest of the trophy constituted by the *Cogitatio natura universalis*, the trophy of pure recognition and representation. Nietzsche laughed at the very idea that what he called will to power could be concerned with this. He called both Kant and Hegel "philosophical labourers" because their philosophy remained marked by this indelible model of recognition.

Kant, however, seemed equipped to overturn the Image of thought. For the concept of error, he substituted that of illusion: internal illusions, the interior to reason, instead of errors from without which were merely the effects of bodily causes. For the substantial self, he substituted a self profoundly fractured by a line of time; while in the same movement God and the self encountered a kind of speculative death. However, in spite of everything, and at the risk of compromising the conceptual apparatus of the three Critiques, Kant did not want to renounce the implicit presuppositions. Thought had to continue to enjoy an upright nature, and philosophy

could go no further than—not in directions other than those taken by—common sense or "common popular reason". At most, therefore, Critique amounts to giving civil rights to thought considered from the point of view of its *natural law*: Kant's enterprise multiplies common senses, making as many of them as there are natural interests of rational thought. For while it is true that in general common sense always implies a collaboration of the faculties upon a form of the Same or a model of recognition, it is no less true that, depending upon the case, one active faculty among others is charged with the task of providing that form or that model, along with the contribution of the other faculties subjected to it. Thus, imagination, reason and the understanding collaborate in the case of knowledge and form a "logical common sense". Here, understanding is the legislative faculty which provides the speculative model on which the other two are summoned to collaborate. In the case of the practical model of recognition, by contrast, reason legislates with regard to the moral common sense. There remains a third model involving a properly aesthetic common sense in which the faculties attain a free accord. While it is true that in general all the faculties collaborate in recognition, the formulae of that collaboration differ according to the nature of that which is to be recognised: object of knowledge, moral value, aesthetic effect. . . . Far from overturning the form of common sense, Kant merely multiplied it. (Must not the same be said of phenomenology? Does it not discover a fourth common sense, this time grounded upon sensibility as a passive synthesis—one which, even though it constitutes an *Ur-doxa*, remains no less prisoner of the form of *doxa*?) We see to what degree the Kantian Critique is ultimately respectful: knowledge, morality, reflection and faith are supposed to correspond to natural interests of reason, and are never themselves called into question; only the use of the faculties is declared legitimate or not in relation to one or other of these interests. Throughout, the variable model of recognition fixes good usage in the form of a harmony between the faculties determined by a dominant faculty under a given common sense. For this reason, illegitimate usage (illusion) is explained solely in the following manner: in its natural state, thought conflates its interests and allows its various domains to encroach upon one another. This does not prevent thought from having at its base a good natural law, on which Critique bestows its civil sanction; nor does it mean that the domains, interests, limits and properties are not sacred and grounded upon inalienable right. Critique has everything—a tribunal of justices of the peace, a registration room, a register—except the power of

a new politics which would overturn the image of thought. Even the dead God and the fractured I are no more than a passing bad moment, the speculative moment: they are resuscitated in a more integrated and certain form than ever, more sure of themselves, but with other, practical or moral, interests.

Such is the world of *representation* in general. We said above that representation was defined by certain elements: identity with regard to concepts, opposition with regard to the determination of concepts, analogy with regard to judgement, resemblance with regard to objects. The identity of the unspecified concept constitutes the form of the Same with regard to recognition. The determination of the concept implies the comparison between possible predicates and their opposites in a regressive and progressive double series, traversed on the one side by remembrance and on the other by an imagination the aim of which is to rediscover or re-create (memorial-imaginative reproduction). Analogy bears either upon the highest determinable concepts or on the relations between determinate concepts and their respective objects. It calls upon the power of distribution present in judgement. As for the object of the concept, in itself or in relation to other objects, it relies upon resemblance as a requirement of perceptual continuity. Each element thus appeals to one particular faculty, but is also established across different faculties within the context of a given common sense (for example, the resemblance between a perception and a remembrance). The "I think" is the most general principle of representation—in other words, the source of these elements and of the unity of all these faculties: I conceive, I judge, I imagine, I remember and I perceive—as though these were the four branches of the Cogito. On precisely these branches, difference is crucified. They form quadripartite fetters under which only that which is identical, similar, analogous or opposed can be considered different: *difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition or a perceived similitude*.⁷ Under these four coincident figures, difference acquires a sufficient reason in the form of a *principium comparationis*. For this reason, the world of representation is characterised by its inability to conceive of difference in itself, and by the same token, its inability to conceive of repetition for itself, since the latter is grasped only by means of recognition, distribution, reproduction and resemblance in so far as these alienate the prefix RE in simple generalities of representation. The postulate of recognition was therefore a first step towards a much more general postulate of representation.

"... some reports of our perceptions do not provoke thought to reconsideration because the judgment of them by sensation seems adequate, while others always invite the intellect to reflection because the sensation yields nothing that can be trusted.—You obviously mean distant appearances, or things drawn in perspective.—You have quite missed my meaning . . ."⁸ This text distinguishes two kinds of things: those which do not disturb thought and (as Plato will later say) those which *force* us to think. The first are objects of recognition: thought and all its faculties may be fully employed therein, thought may busy itself thereby, but such employment and such activity have nothing to do with thinking. Thought is thereby filled with no more than an image of itself, one in which it recognises itself the more it recognises things: this is a finger, this is a table, Good morning Theaetetus. Whence the question of Socrates' interlocutor: is it when we do not recognise, when we have difficulty in recognising, that we truly think? The interlocutor seems already Cartesian. It is clear, however, that the dubitable will not allow us to escape from the point of view of recognition. Moreover, it will only give rise to a local scepticism—or, indeed, to a generalised method—on condition that thought already has the will to recognise what essentially distinguishes doubt from certitude. The same goes for dubitable as for certain things: they presuppose the good will of the thinker along with the good nature of thought, where these are understood to include an ideal form of recognition as well as a claimed affinity with the true, that *philia* which predetermines at once both the image of thought and the concept of philosophy. Certainities force us to think no more than doubts. To realise that three angles of a triangle should be equal to two right angles does suppose thought, it supposes the will to think, to think of triangles and even to think of their angles: Descartes remarked that we cannot deny this equality should we think of it, but we can indeed think, even of triangles, without thinking of that equality. All truths of that kind are hypothetical, since they presuppose all that is in question and are incapable of giving birth in thought to the act of thinking. In fact, concepts only ever designate possibilities. They lack the claws of absolute necessity—in other words, of an original violence inflicted upon thought: the claws of a strangeness or eternal possibility: there is only involuntary thought, aroused but constrained within thought, and all the more absolutely necessary for being born, illegitimately, of fortuitousness in the world. Thought is primarily trespass and violence, the enemy, and nothing presupposes philosophy:

everything begins with misosophy. Do not count upon thought to ensure the relative necessity of what it thinks. Rather, count upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think. The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself.

Something in the world forces us to think. This something is an object not of recognition but of a fundamental *encounter*. What is encountered may be Socrates, a temple or a demon. It may be grasped in a range of affective tones: wonder, love, hatred, suffering. In whichever tone, its primary characteristic is that it can only be sensed. In this sense it is opposed to recognition. In recognition, the sensible is not at all that which can only be sensed, but that which bears directly upon the senses in an object which can be recalled, imagined or conceived. The sensible is referred to an object which may not only be experienced other than by sense, but may itself be attained by other faculties. It therefore presupposes the exercise of the senses and the exercise of the other faculties in a common sense. The object of encounter, on the other hand, really gives rise to sensibility with regard to a given sense. It is not an *aisthêton* but an *aisthêtion*. It is not a quality but a sign. It is not a sensible being but the being of the sensible. It is not the given but that by which the given is given. It is therefore in a certain sense the imperceptible [*insensibel*]. It is imperceptible precisely from the point of view of recognition—in other words, from the point of view of an empirical exercise of the senses in which sensibility grasps only that which also could be grasped by other faculties, and is related within the context of a common sense to an object which also must be apprehended by other faculties. Sensibility, in the presence of that which can only be sensed (and is at the same time imperceptible) finds itself before its own limit, the sign, and raises itself to the level of a transcendental exercise: to the "nth" power. Common sense is there only in order to limit the specific contribution of sensibility to its conditions of a joint labour: it thereby enters into a discordant play, its organs become metaphysical.

Second character: that which can only be sensed (the *sentientium* or the being of the sensible) moves the soul, "perplexes" it—in other words, forces it to pose a problem: as though the object of encounter, the sign, were the bearer of a problem—as though it were a problem.⁹ Must

problems or questions be identified with singular objects of a transcendental Memory, as other texts of Plato suggest, so that there is the possibility of a training aimed at grasping what can only be recalled? Everything points in this direction: it is indeed true that Platonic reminiscence claims to grasp the immemorial being of the past, the *memorandum* which is at the same time afflicted with an essential forgetting, in accordance with that law of transcendental exercise which insists that what can only be recalled should also be empirically impossible to recall. There is a considerable difference between this essential forgetting and an empirical forgetting. Empirical memory is addressed to those things which can and even must be grasped: what is recalled must have been seen, heard, imagined or thought. That which is forgotten, in the empirical sense, is that which cannot be grasped a second time by the memory which searches for it (it is too far removed; forgetting has effaced or separated us from the memory). Transcendental memory, by contrast, grasps that which from the outset can only be recalled, even the first time: not a contingent past, but the being of the past as such and the past of every time. In this manner, the *forgotten* thing *appears* in person to the memory which essentially apprehends it. It does not address memory without addressing the forgetting within memory. The *memorandum* here is both unrememberable and immemorial. Forgetting is no longer a contingent incapacity separating us from a memory which is itself contingent: it exists within essential memory as though it were the "nth" power of memory with regard to its own limit or to that which can only be recalled. It was the same with sensibility: the contingently imperceptible, that which is too small or too far for the empirical exercise of our senses, stands opposed to an essentially imperceptible which is indistinguishable from that which can be sensed only from the point of view of a transcendental exercise. Thus sensibility, forced by the encounter to sense the *sentientium*, forces memory in its turn to remember the *memorandum*, that which can only be recalled. Finally, the third characteristic of transcendental memory is that, in turn, it forces thought to grasp that which can only be thought, the *cogitandum* or *noêtion*, the Essence: not the intelligible, for this is still no more than the mode in which we think that which might be something other than thought, but the being of the intelligible as though this were both the final power of thought and the unthinkable. The violence of that which forces thought but what are the hinges if not the form of a common sense which causes all the faculties to function and converge? Each one, in its own order and

on its own account, has broken the form of common sense which kept it within the empirical element of *doxa*, in order to attain both its "nth" power and the paradoxical element within transcendental exercise. Rather than all the faculties converging and contributing to a common project of recognising an object, we see divergent projects in which, with regard to what concerns it essentially, each faculty is in the presence of that which is its "own". Discord of the faculties, chain of force and fuse along which each confronts its limit, receiving from (or communicating to) the other only a violence which brings it face to face with its own element, as though with its disappearance or its perfection.

Let us pause, however, at the manner in which Plato determines the nature of the limits in each case. The text of *The Republic* defines that which is essentially encountered, and must be distinguished from all recognition as the object of a "contradictory perception". Whereas a finger always calls for recognition and is never more than a finger, that which is hard is never hard without also being soft, since it is inseparable from a becoming or a relation which includes the opposite within it (the same is true of the large and the small, the one and the many). The sign or point of departure for that which forces thought is thus the coexistence of contraries, the coexistence of more and less in an unlimited qualitative becoming. Recognition, by contrast, measures and limits the quality by relating it to something, thereby interrupting the mad-becoming. In defining the first instance by that *form of qualitative opposition or contrary*, however, does not Plato already confuse the being of the sensible with a simple sensible being, with a pure qualitative being [*l'instance*]? The suspicion is reinforced when we consider the second instance, reminiscence. For reminiscence only appears to break with the recognition model when in fact it is content to complicate the schema: whereas recognition bears upon a perceptible or perceived object reminiscence bears upon another object supposed to be associated with or rather enveloped within the first, which demands to be recognised for itself independently of any distinct perception. This other thing, enveloped within the sign, must be at once never-seen and yet already-recognised, a disturbing unfamiliarity. It is then tempting to say poetically that this has been seen, but in another life, in a mythical present. You are the image of By this means, however, everything is betrayed: first, the nature of the encounter in so far as this does not merely propose a particularly difficult test for recognition, an envelopment that is particularly difficult to unfold, but instead opposes all possible recognition; second, the nature of the transcendental memory and of that which can

only be recalled. For this second instance is only conceived in the *form of similitude in the reminiscence*, to the point where the same objection arises: reminiscence confuses the being of the past with a past being, and since it is unable to assign an empirical moment at which this past was present, it invokes an original or mythical present. The importance of the concept of reminiscence (and the reason why it must be radically distinguished from the Cartesian concept of innateness) consists in its manner of introducing time or the duration of time into thought as such. By this means, it establishes an opacity peculiar to thought, and testifies to the existence of both a bad nature and an ill will which must be shaken by signs from without. As we have seen, however, because time is introduced here only in the form of a physical cycle, and not in its pure or essential form, thought is still supposed to possess a good nature and a resplendent clarity which are merely obscured or waylaid amidst the misadventures of the natural cycle. Reminiscence is still a refuge for the recognition model, and Plato no less than Kant traces the operation of the transcendental memory from the outlines of its empirical exercise (we see this clearly in the account of the *Phaedo*).

As for the third instance, that of pure thought or that which can only be thought, Plato determines this instance in terms of separated contraries. Thus, under the pressure of reminiscence, we are forced to think such things as Largeness which is nothing but large, Smallness which is nothing but small, Heaviness which is nothing but heavy, or Unity which is nothing but one. According to Plato, therefore, the essence is defined by the *form of real identity* (the Same understood as *auto kath' hauto*). Everything culminates in the great principle: that there is—before all else, and despite everything—an affinity or a filiation—or perhaps it should be called a philiation—of thought with the true; in short, a good nature and a good desire, grounded in the last instance upon the *form of analogy in the Good*. As a result, the Plato who wrote the passage from *The Republic* cited above was also the first to erect the dogmatic and moralising image of thought which neutralises that text and allows it to function only as a "repentance". Having discovered the superior or transcendent exercise of the faculties, Plato subordinated this to the forms of opposition in the sensible, similitude in reminiscence, identity in the essence and analogy in the Good. In this manner he prepared the way for the world of representation, carrying out a first distribution of its elements and already covering the exercise of thought with a dogmatic image which both presupposes and betrays it.

The transcendental form of a faculty is indistinguishable from its disjointed, superior or transcendent exercise. Transcendent in no way means that the faculty addresses itself to objects outside the world but, on the contrary, that it grasps that in the world which concerns it exclusively and brings it into the world. The transcendent exercise must not be traced from the empirical exercise precisely because it apprehends that which cannot be grasped from the point of view of common sense, that which measures the empirical operation of all the faculties according to that which pertains to each, given the form of their collaboration. That is why the transcendental is answerable to a superior empiricism which alone is capable of exploring its domain and its regions. Contrary to Kant's belief, it cannot be induced from the ordinary empirical forms in the manner in which these appear under the determination of common sense. Despite the fact that it has become discredited today, the doctrine of the faculties is an entirely necessary component of the system of philosophy. Its discredit may be explained by the misrecognition of this properly transcendental empiricism, for which was substituted in vain a tracing of the transcendental from the empirical. Each faculty must be borne to the extreme point of its dissolution, at which it falls prey to triple violence: the violence of that which forces it to be exercised, of that which it is forced to grasp and which it alone is able to grasp, yet also that of the ungraspable (from the point of view of its empirical exercise). This is the threefold limit of the final power. Each faculty discovers at this point its own unique passion—in other words, its radical difference and its eternal repetition, its differential and repeating element along with the instantaneous engendering of its action and the eternal replay of its object, its manner of coming into the world already repeating. We ask, for example: What forces sensibility to sense? What is it that can only be sensed, yet is imperceptible at the same time? We must pose this question not only for memory and thought, but also for the imagination—is there an *imaginandum*, a *phantasteion*, which would also be the limit, that which is impossible to imagine?; for language—is there a *loquendum*, that which would be silence at the same time?; and for the other faculties which would find their place in a complete doctrine—vitality, the transcendent object of which would include anarchy—and sociability, the transcendent object of which would include anarchy—and even for faculties yet to be discovered, whose existence is not yet suspected.¹⁰ For nothing can be said in advance, one cannot prejudice the outcome of research: it may be that some well-known faculties—too well known—turn out to have no proper limit, no verbal adjective, because

they are imposed and have an exercise only under the form of common sense. It may turn out, on the other hand, that new faculties arise, faculties which were repressed by that form of common sense. For a doctrine in general, there is nothing regrettable in this uncertainty about the outcome of research, this complexity in the study of the particular case of each faculty: on the contrary, transcendental empiricism is the only way to avoid tracing the transcendental from the outlines of the empirical.

Our concern here is not to establish such a doctrine of the faculties. We seek only to determine the nature of its requirements. In this regard, the Platonic determinations cannot be satisfactory. For it is not figures already mediated and related to representation that are capable of carrying the faculties to their respective limits but, on the contrary, free or untamed states of difference in itself; not qualitative opposition within the sensible, but an element which is in itself difference, and creates at once both the quality in the sensible and the transcendent exercise within sensibility. This element is intensity, understood as pure difference in itself, as that which is at once both imperceptible for empirical sensibility which grasps intensity only already covered or mediated by the quality to which it gives rise, and at the same time that which can be perceived only from the point of view of a transcendental sensibility which apprehends it immediately in the encounter. Moreover, when sensibility transmits its constraint to the imagination, when the imagination in turn is raised to the level of transcendental exercise, it is the phantasm, the disparity within the phantasm, which constitutes the *phantasteion*, which is both that which can only be imagined and the empirically unimaginable. With regard to memory, it is not similitude in the reminiscence but, on the contrary, the dissimilar in the pure form of time which constitutes the immemorial of a transcendent memory. Finally, it is an I fractured by this form of time which finds itself constrained to think that which can only be thought; not the Same, but that transcendent "aleatory point", always Other by nature, in which all the essences are enveloped like so many differentials of thought, and which signifies the highest power of thought only by virtue of also designating the unthinkable or the inability to think at the empirical level. We recall Heidegger's profound texts showing that as long as thought continues to presuppose its own good nature and good will, in the form of a common sense, a *ratio*, a *Cogitatio natura universalis*, it will think nothing at all but remain a prisoner to opinion, frozen in an abstract possibility. . . . "Man can think in the sense that he possesses the possibility to do so. This possibility alone, however, is no guarantee to us that we are capable of

thinking."¹¹ It is true that on the path which leads to that which is to be thought, all begins with sensibility. Between the intensive and thought, it is always by means of an intensity that thought comes to us. The privilege of sensibility as origin appears in the fact that, in an encounter, what forces sensation and that which can only be sensed are one and the same thing, whereas in other cases the two instances are distinct. In effect, the intensive or difference in intensity is at once both the object of the encounter and the object to which the encounter raises sensibility. It is not the gods which we encounter: even hidden, the gods are only the forms of recognition. What we encounter are the demons, the sign-bearers: powers of the leap, the interval, the intensive and the instant; powers which only cover difference with more difference. What is most important, however, is that—between sensibility and imagination, between imagination and memory, between memory and thought—when each disjointed faculty communicates to another the violence which carries it to its own limit, every time it is a free form of difference which awakens the faculty, and awakens it as the different within that difference. So it is with difference in intensity, disparity in the phantasm, dissemblance in the form of time, the differential in thought. *Opposition, resemblance, identity and even analogy are only effects produced by these presentations of difference*, rather than being conditions which subordinate difference and make it something represented. There is no *philia* which testifies to a desire, love, good nature or good will by virtue of which the faculties already possess or tend towards the object to which they are raised by violence, and by virtue of which they would enjoy an analogy with it or a homology among themselves. Each faculty, including thought, has only involuntary adventures: involuntary operation remains embedded in the empirical. The Logos breaks up into hieroglyphics, each one of which speaks the transcendent language of a faculty. Even the point of departure—namely, sensibility in the encounter with that which forces sensation—presupposes neither affinity nor predestination. On the contrary, it is the fortuitousness or the contingency of the encounter which guarantees the necessity of that which it forces to be thought. There is no *amicability*, such as that between the similar and the Same or even that which unites opposites, to link sensibility to a *sentendum*. The dark precursor is sufficient to enable communication between difference as such, and to make the different communicate with difference: the dark precursor is not a friend. President Schreber reformulates Plato's three moments, in his own way and in restoring them to their original communicative violence: the nerves and the annexation of nerves

examined souls and the murder of souls, constrained thought and the constraint to think.

The very principle of communication, even if this should be violence, seems to maintain the form of a common sense. However, it is nothing of the sort. There is indeed a serial connection between the faculties and an order in that series. But neither the order nor the series implies any collaboration with regard to the form of a supposed same object or to a subjective unity in the nature of an "I think". It is a forced and broken connection which traverses the fragments of a dissolved self as it does the borders of a fractured I. The transcendental operation of the faculties is a properly paradoxical operation, opposed to their exercise under the rule of a common sense. In consequence, the harmony between the faculties can appear only in the form of a *discordant harmony*, since each communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and its divergence from the others.¹² Kant was the first to provide the example of such a discordant harmony, the relation between imagination and thought which occurs in the case of the sublime. There is, therefore, something which is communicated from one faculty to another, but it is metamorphosed and does not form a common sense. We could just as well say that there are Ideas which traverse all the faculties, but are the object of none in particular. Perhaps in effect, as we shall see, it will be necessary to reserve the name of Ideas not for pure *cogitanda* but rather for those instances which go from sensibility to thought and from thought to sensibility, capable of engendering in each case, according to their own order, the limit- or transcendent-object of each faculty. Ideas are problems, but problems only furnish the conditions under which the faculties attain their superior exercise. Considered in this light, Ideas, far from having as their milieu a good sense or a common sense, refer to a para-sense which determines only the communication between disjointed faculties. Neither are they illuminated by a natural light: rather, they shine like differential flashes which leap and metamorphose. The very conception of a natural light is inseparable from a certain value supposedly attached to the *Idea*—namely, "clarity and distinctness", and from a certain supposed origin—namely, "immanence". Immanence, however, only represents the good nature of thought from the point of view of a Christian theology or, more generally, the requirements of creation (which is why Plato opposed reminiscence to innateness, criticising the latter for ignoring the role of a form of time in the soul as a consequence of pure thought, or the necessity of a formal distinction between a Before and an After capable of grounding

forgetting in that which forces thought). The "clear and distinct" itself is inseparable from the model of recognition which serves as the instrument of every orthodoxy, even when it is rational. Clarity and distinctness form the logic of recognition, just as innateness is the theology of common sense: both have already pushed the Idea over into representation. The restitution of the Idea in the doctrine of the faculties requires the explosion of the clear and distinct, and the discovery of a Dionysian value according to which *the Idea is necessarily obscure in so far as it is distinct*, all the more obscure the more it is distinct. Distinction-obscurity becomes here the true tone of philosophy, the symphony of the discordant Idea.

Nothing is more exemplary in this respect than the exchange of letters between Jacques Rivière and Antonin Artaud. Rivière defended the image of an autonomous thinking function, endowed in principle with its own nature and will. In fact, we are confronted with great difficulties in thinking: lack of method, technique or application, and even lack of health. These, however, are fortunate difficulties: not only because they prevent the nature of thought from devouring our own nature, not only because they bring thought into relation with obstacles which are so many "facts" without which it would not manage to orientate itself, but also because our efforts to overcome these obstacles allow us to maintain an ideal of the self as it exists in pure thought, like a "superior degree of identity with ourselves", which persists through the factual variations, differences and inequalities which constantly affect us. The reader notes with astonishment that the more Rivière believes himself to be close to an understanding of Artaud, the further away he is, and the more he speaks of something altogether different. Rarely has there been such misunderstanding. Artaud does not simply talk about his own "case", but already in his youthful letters shows an awareness that his case brings him into contact with a generalised thought process which can no longer be covered by the reassuring dogmatic image but which, on the contrary, amounts to the complete destruction of that image. The difficulties he describes himself as experiencing must therefore be understood as not merely in fact but as difficulties in principle, concerning and affecting the essence of what it means to think. Artaud said that the problem (for him) was not to orientate his thought, or to perfect the expression of what he thought, or to acquire application and method or to perfect his poems, but simply to manage to think something. For him, this was the only conceivable "work": it presupposes an impulse, a compulsion to think which passes through all sorts of bifurcations, spreading from the nerves

and being communicated to the soul in order to arrive at thought. Henceforth, thought is also forced to think its central collapse, its fracture, its own natural "powerlessness" which is indistinguishable from the greatest power—in other words, from those unformulated forces, the *cogitanda*, as though from so many thefts or trespasses in thought. Artaud pursues in all this the terrible revelation of a thought without image, and the conquest of a new principle which does not allow itself to be represented. He knows that *difficulty* as such, along with its cortège of problems and questions, is not a *de facto* state of affairs but a *de jure* structure of thought; that there is an acephalism in thought just as there is an amnesia in memory, an aphasia in language and an agnosia in thought. He knows that thinking is not innate, but must be engendered in thought. He knows that the problem is not to direct or methodically apply a thought which pre-exists in principle and in nature, but to bring into being that which does not yet exist (there is no other work, all the rest arbitrary, mere decoration). To think is to create—there is no other creation—but to create is first of all to engender "thinking" in thought. For this reason Artaud opposes *geniality* to innateness in thought, but equally to reminiscence, and thereby proposes the principle of a transcendental empiricism:

I am innately genial. . . . There are some fools who think of themselves as beings, as innately being; I am he who, in order to be, must whip his innateness. One who innately must be a being, that is always whipping this sort of non-existent kernel, O bitches of impossibility! . . . Undereath grammar there lies thought, an infamy harder to conquer, an infinitely more shrewdish maid, rougher to overcome when taken as an innate fact. For thought is a matron who has not always existed.¹³

It is not a question of opposing to the dogmatic image of thought another image borrowed, for example, from schizophrenia, but rather of remembering that schizophrenia is not only a human fact but also a possibility for thought—one, moreover, which can only be revealed as such can through the abolition of that image. It is noteworthy that the dogmatic image, for its part, recognises only *error* as a possible misadventure of thought, and reduces everything to the form of error. This, indeed, is the fifth postulate that we should take into account: taking error to be the sole "negative" of thought. Without doubt this postulate belongs to the others as much as they belong to it: what can befall a *Cogitatio natura universalis* which presupposes a good will on the part of the thinker along with a good nature

on the part of thought except that it be mistaken—in other words, that it take the false for the true (the false according to nature for the true according to the will)? Does not error itself testify to the form of a common sense, since one faculty alone cannot be mistaken but two faculties can be, at least from the point of view of their collaboration, when an object of one is confused with *another* object of the other? What is error if not always false recognition? Whence does it come if not from a false distribution of the elements of representation, from a false evaluation of opposition, analogy, resemblance and identity? Error is only the reverse of a rational orthodoxy, still testifying on behalf of that from which it is distanced—in other words, on behalf of an honesty, a good nature and a good will on the part of the one who is said to be mistaken. Error, therefore, pays homage to the "truth" to the extent that, lacking a form of its own, it gives the form of the true to the false. It is in this sense that in the *Theaetetus*, under the sway of an apparently quite different inspiration from that in *The Republic*, Plato presents simultaneously both a positive model of recognition or common sense, and a negative model of error. Not only does thought appropriate the ideal of an "orthodoxy", not only does common sense find its object in the categories of opposition, similitude, analogy and identity, but error itself implies this transcendence of a common sense with regard to sensations, and of a soul with regard to all the faculties whose collaboration [*sylogismos*] in relation to the form of the Same it determines. For if I cannot confuse two things that I perceive or conceive, I can always confuse something I see with something I conceive or remember—when, for example, I slip the present object of my sensation into the engram of *another* object of my memory—as in the case of "Good morning Theodoros" when it is Theaetetus who passes by. Error in all its misery therefore, still testifies to the transcendence of the *Cogitatio natura*. It is as though error were a kind of failure of good sense within the form of a common sense which remains integral and intact. It thereby confirms the preceding postulates of the dogmatic image as much as it derives from them, proving them by *reductio ad absurdum*.

It is true that this proof is completely ineffectual, since it operates in the same element as the postulates themselves. Yet it is perhaps easier to reconcile the *Theaetetus* and the text from the *Republic* than it may at first seem. It is not by chance that the *Theaetetus* is an aporetic dialogue, and the aporia on which it closes is that of difference or *diaphora* (to the same extent that thought requires that difference transcend "opinion", opinion requires for itself an immanence of difference). *Theaetetus* is the first great

theory of common sense, of recognition, representation and error as their correlate. However, the aporia of difference exposes its failure from the outset, along with the need to search in a quite different direction for a doctrine of thought: perhaps the one indicated by Book VII of the *Republic*? . . . Always with the reservation that the *Theaetetus* model continues to act in a subterranean manner, and that the persistent elements of representation still compromise the new vision of the *Republic*.

According to the hypothesis of the *Cogitatio natura universalis*, error is the "negative" which develops naturally. Nevertheless, the dogmatic image does not ignore the fact that thought has other misadventures besides error: humiliations more difficult to overcome, negatives much more difficult to unravel. It does not overlook the fact that the terrible Trinity of madness, stupidity and malevolence can no more be reduced to error than they can be reduced to any form of the same. Once again, however, these are no more than *facts* for the dogmatic image. Stupidity, malevolence and madness are regarded as facts occasioned by external causes, which bring into play external forces capable of subverting the honest character of thought from without—all this to the extent that we are not only thinkers. The sole effect of these forces in thought is then assimilated precisely to error, which is supposed in principle to include all the effects of factual external causes. The reduction of stupidity, malevolence and madness to the single figure of error must therefore be understood to occur in principle—whence the hybrid character of this weak concept which would not have a place within pure thought if thought were not diverted from without, and would not be occasioned by this outside if the outside were not within pure thought. For this reason, we cannot be content to invoke certain facts against the in-principle dogmatic image of thought. As in the case of recognition, we must pursue the discussion at the level of principle itself, by questioning the legitimacy of the distribution of the empirical and the transcendental carried out by the dogmatic image. For it rather seems to us that there are facts with regard to error, but which facts? Who says "Good morning Theodoros" when Theaetetus passes, "It is three o'clock" when it is three-thirty, and that $7 + 5 = 13$? Answer: the myopic, the distracted and the young child at school. These are effective examples of errors, but examples which, like the majority of such "facts", refer to thoroughly artificial or puerile situations, and offer a grotesque image of thought because they relate it to very simple questions to which one can and must respond by independent propositions.¹⁴ Error acquires a sense only once the play of thought ceases to be speculative and becomes a kind

of radio quiz. Everything must therefore be inverted: error is a fact which is then arbitrarily extrapolated and arbitrarily projected into the transcendental. As for the true transcendental structures of thought and the "negative" in which these are enveloped, perhaps these must be sought elsewhere, and in figures other than those of error?

In one way or another, philosophers have always had a lively awareness of this necessity. There are few who did not feel the need to enrich the concept of error by means of determinations of a quite different kind. (To cite some examples: the notion of superstition as this is elaborated by Lucretius, Spinoza and the eighteenth-century *philosophes*, in particular Fontanelle. It is clear that the "absurdity" of a superstition cannot be reduced to its kernel of error. Similarly, Plato's ignorance or forgetting are distinguished from error as much as from imatence and reminiscence itself. The Stoic notion of *stultitia* involves at once both madness and stupidity. The Kantian idea of inner illusion, internal to reason, is radically different from the extrinsic mechanism of error. The Hegelian idea of alienation supposes a profound restructuring of the true-false relation. The Schopenhauerian notions of vulgarity and stupidity imply a complete reversal of the will-understanding relation.) What prevents these richer determinations from being developed on their own account, however, is the maintenance, despite everything, of the dogmatic image, along with the postulates of common sense, recognition and representation which comprise its corège. The correctives can thus appear only as "repentances" which complicate or inconvenience the image without overturning its implicit principle.

Stupidity [*bêtise*] is not animality. The animal is protected by specific forms which prevent it from being "stupid" [*bête*]. Formal correspondences between the human face and the heads of animals have often been composed; in other words, correspondences between individual differences peculiar to humans and the specific differences of animals. Such correspondences, however, take no account of stupidity as a specifically human form of bestiality. When satirical poets proceed through the various degrees of insult, they do not stop with animal forms but continue on to more profound regressions, passing from carnivores to herbivores and ending with cloaca as though with a universal leguminous and digestive ground. The internal process of digestion is more profound than the external gesture of attack or voracious movement: stupidity with peristaltic movements. This is why tyrants have the heads not only of beasts but also of pears, cauliflowers or potatoes. One is neither superior nor external to

that from which one benefits: a tyrant institutionalises stupidity, but he is the first servant of his own system and the first to be installed within it. Slaves are always commanded by another slave. Here too, how could the concept of error account for this unity of stupidity and cruelty, of the grotesque and the terrifying, which doubles the way of the world? Cowardice, cruelty, baseness and stupidity are not simply corporeal capacities or traits of character or society; they are structures of thought as such. The transcendental landscape comes to life: places for the tyrant, the slave and the imbecile must be found within it—without the place resembling the figure who occupies it, and without the transcendental ever being traced from the empirical figures which it makes possible. It is always our belief in the postulates of the *Cogitatio* which prevents us from making stupidity a transcendental problem. Stupidity can then be no more than an empirical determination, referring back to psychology or to the anecdotal—or worse, to polemic and insults—and to the especially atrocious pseudo-literary genre of the *soffister*. But whose fault is this? Does not the fault lie first with philosophy, which has allowed itself to be convinced by the concept of error even though this concept is itself borrowed from facts, relatively insignificant and arbitrary facts? The worst literature produces *soffisters*, while the best (Flaubert, Baudelaire, Bloy) was haunted by the problem of stupidity. By giving this problem all its cosmic, encyclopaedic and gnoseological dimensions, such literature was able to carry it as far as the entrance to philosophy itself. Philosophy could have taken up the problem with its own means and with the necessary modesty, by considering the fact that stupidity is never that of others but the object of a properly transcendental question: how is stupidity (not error) possible?

It is possible by virtue of the link between thought and individuation. This link is much more profound than that which appears in the "I think": it is established in a field of intensity which already constitutes the sensibility of the thinking subject. For the I and the Self are perhaps no more than indices of the species: of humanness as a species with divisions. The species has undoubtedly reached an implicit state in man. As a result, the form of the I can serve as a universal principle for recognition and representation, whereas the specific explicit forms are recognised only by means of this I, and the determination of species is only the rule of one of the elements of representation. The I is therefore not a species; rather since it implicitly contains what the species and kinds explicitly develop, in particular the represented becoming of the form—they have a common

fate, *Endoxus* and *Epistemon*. Individuation, by contrast, has nothing to do with even the continued process of determining species. Not only does it differ in kind from all determination of species but, as we shall see, it precedes and renders the latter possible. It involves fields of fluid intensive factors which no more take the form of an I than of a Self. Individuation as such, as it operates beneath all forms, is inseparable from a pure ground that it brings to the surface and trails with it. It is difficult to describe this ground, or the terror and attraction it excites. Turning over the ground is the most dangerous occupation, but also the most tempting, in the stupefied moments of an obtuse will. For this ground, along with the individual, rises to the surface yet assumes neither form nor figure. It is there, staring at us, but without eyes. The individual distinguishes itself from it, but it does not distinguish itself, continuing rather to cohabit with that which divorces itself from it. It is the indeterminate, but the indeterminate in so far as it continues to embrace determination, as the ground does the shoe. Animals are in a sense forewarned against this ground, protected by their explicit forms. Not so for the I and the Self, undermined by the fields of individuation which work beneath them, defenceless against a rising of the ground which holds up to them a distorted or distorting mirror in which all presently thought forms dissolve. Stupidity is neither the ground nor the individual, but rather this relation in which individuation brings the ground to the surface without being able to give it form (this ground rises by means of the I, penetrating deeply into the possibility of thought and constituting the unrecognized in every recognition). All determinations become bad and cruel when they are grasped only by a thought which invents and contemplates them, flayed and separated from their living form, adrift upon this barren ground. Everything becomes violence on this passive ground. Here the Sabbath of stupidity and malevolence takes place. Perhaps this is the origin of that melancholy which weighs upon the most beautiful human faces: the presentiment of a hideousness peculiar to the human face, of a rising tide of stupidity, an evil deformity or a thought governed by madness. For from the point of view of a philosophy of nature, madness arises at the point at which the individual contemplates itself in this free ground—and, as a result, stupidity in stupidity and cruelty in cruelty—to the point that it can no longer stand itself. "A pitiful faculty then emerges in their minds, that of being able to see stupidity and no longer tolerate it . . ." ¹⁵ It is true that this most pitiful faculty also becomes the royal faculty when it animates philosophy as a

philosophy of mind—in other words, when it leads all the other faculties to that transcendent exercise which renders possible a violent reconciliation between the individual, the ground and thought. At this point, the intensive factors of individuation take themselves as objects in such a manner as to constitute the highest element of a transcendent sensibility, the *sentendum*; and from faculty to faculty, the ground is borne within thought—still as the unthought and unthinking, but this unthought has become the necessary empirical form in which, in the fractured I (Bouvard and Pécuchet), thought at last thinks the *cogitandum*; in other words, the transcendent element which can only be thought ("the fact that we do not yet think" or "What is stupidity?").

Teachers already know that errors or falsehoods are rarely found in homework (except in those exercises where a fixed result must be produced, or propositions must be translated one by one). Rather, what is more frequently found—and worse—are nonsensical sentences, remarks without interest or importance, banalities mistaken for profundities, ordinary "points" confused with singular points, badly posed or distorted problems—all heavy with dangers, yet the fate of us all. We doubt whether, when mathematicians engage in polemic, they criticize one another for being mistaken in the results of their calculations. Rather, they criticize one another for having produced an insignificant theorem or a problem devoid of sense. Philosophy must draw the conclusions which follow from this. The element of sense is well known to philosophy; it has even become very familiar to philosophers. Nevertheless, this is perhaps not enough. Sense is defined as the condition of the true, but since it is supposed that the condition must retain an extension larger than that which is conditioned, sense does not ground truth without also allowing the possibility of error. A false proposition remains no less a proposition endowed with sense. Non-sense would then be the characteristic of that which can be neither true nor false. Two dimensions may be distinguished in a proposition: *expression*, in which a proposition says or expresses some idea; and *designation*, in which it indicates or designates the objects to which what is said or expressed applies. One of these would then be the dimension of sense, the other the dimension of truth and falsity. However, in this manner sense would only found the truth of a proposition while remaining indifferent to what it founds. Truth and falsity would be matters of designation (as Russell says: "The question of truth and falsehood has to do with what words and sentences indicate, not with what they express."¹⁶). We are then in a strange situation: having discovered the

domain of sense, we refer it only to a psychological trait or a logical formalism. If need be, a new value, that of the nonsensical or the absurd, is added to the classical values of truth and falsity. However, the true and the false are supposed to continue in the same state as before—in other words, as if they were independent of the condition assigned to them or of the new value which is added to them. Either too much is said, or not enough: too much, because the search for a ground forms the essential step of a "critique" which should inspire in us new ways of thinking; not enough, because so long as the ground remains larger than the grounded, this critique serves only to justify traditional ways of thinking. The true and the false are supposed to remain unaffected by the condition which grounds the one only by rendering the other possible. By referring the true and the false back to the relation of designation within the proposition, we acquire a sixth postulate: the postulate of designation or of the proposition itself, which both incorporates and follows from the preceding postulates (the relation of designation is only the logical form of recognition).

In fact, the condition must be a condition of real experience, not of possible experience. It forms an intrinsic genesis, not an extrinsic conditioning. In every respect, truth is a matter of production, not of adequation. It is a matter of generality, not of immanence or reminiscence. We cannot accept that the grounded remains the same as it was before, the same as when it was not grounded, when it had not passed the test of grounding. If sufficient reason or the ground has a "twist", this is because it relates what it grounds to that which is truly groundless. At this point, it must be said, there is no longer recognition. To ground is to metamorphose. Truth and falsity do not concern a simple designation, rendered possible by a sense which remains indifferent to it. The relation between a proposition and what it designates must be established within sense itself: the nature of ideal sense is to point beyond itself towards the object designated. Designation, in so far as it is achieved in the case of a true proposition, would never be grounded unless it were understood as the limit of the genetic series or the ideal connections which constitute sense. If sense points beyond itself towards the object, the latter can no longer be posited in reality exterior to sense, but only at the limit of its process. Moreover, the proposition's relation to what it designates, in so far as this relation is established, is constituted within the unity of sense, along with the object which realises this unity. There is only a single case where the designated stands alone and remains external to sense: precisely the case of those singular propositions arbitrarily detached from their context

and employed as examples.¹⁷ Here too, however, how can we accept that such puerile and artificial textbook examples justify an image of thought? Every time a proposition is replaced in the context of living thought, it is apparent that it has exactly the truth it deserves according to its sense, and the falsity appropriate to the non-sense that it implies. We always have as much truth as we deserve in accordance with the sense of what we say. Sense is the genesis or the production of the true, and truth is only the empirical result of sense. We rediscover in all the postulates of the dogmatic image the same confusion: elevating a simple empirical figure to the status of a transcendental, at the risk of allowing the real structures of the transcendental to fall into the empirical.

Sense is what is expressed by a proposition, but what is this *expressed*? It cannot be reduced either to the object designated or to the lived state of the speaker. Indeed, we must distinguish sense and signification in the following manner: signification refers only to concepts and the manner in which they relate to the objects conditioned by a given field of representation; whereas sense is like the Idea which is developed in the substantive determinations. It is not surprising that it should be easier to say what sense is not than to say what it is. In effect, we can never formulate simultaneously both a proposition and its sense: we can never say what is the sense of what we say. From this point of view, sense is the veritable *loquendum*, that which in its empirical operation cannot be said, even though it can be said only in its transcendental operation. The Idea which runs throughout all the faculties nevertheless cannot be reduced to sense, since in turn it is also non-sense. Nor is there any difficulty in reconciling this double aspect by means of which the Idea is constituted of structural elements which have no sense themselves, while it constitutes the sense of all that it produces (structure and genesis). There is only one kind of word which expresses both itself and its sense—precisely the nonsense word: *abraxas*, *snark* or *blituri*. If sense is necessarily a nonsense for the empirical function of the faculties, then conversely, the nonsenses so frequent in the empirical operation are like the secret of sense for the conscientious observer, all of whose faculties point towards a transcendent limit. As so many authors have recognised in diverse ways (Flaubert, Lewis Carroll), the mechanism of nonsense is the highest finality of sense, just as the mechanism of stupidity is the highest finality of thought. While it is true that we cannot express the sense of what we say, we can at least take the sense of a proposition—in other words, the *expressed*, as the *designated* of another proposition—of which in turn we cannot express the sense, and

so on to infinity. As a result, if we call each proposition of consciousness a "name", it is caught in an indefinite nominal regress, each name referring to another name which designates the sense of the preceding. However, the inability of empirical consciousness here corresponds to the "nth" power of the language and its transcendent repetition to be able to speak infinitely of or about words themselves. In any case, thought is betrayed by the dogmatic image and by the postulate of propositions according to which philosophy would find a beginning in a first proposition of consciousness: *Cogito*. But perhaps *Cogito* is the name which has no sense and no object other than the power of reiteration in indefinite regress (I think that I think that I think . . .). Every proposition of consciousness implies an unconscious of pure thought which constitutes the sphere of sense in which there is infinite regress.

The first paradox of sense, therefore, is that of proliferation, in which that which is expressed by one "name" is designated by another name which doubles the first. No doubt this paradox may be avoided, but at the risk of falling into another: this time, the proposition is suspended, immobilised, just long enough to extract from it a double which retains only the ideal content, the immanent given. The paradoxical repetition essential to language then no longer consists in a redoubling but in a doubling; no longer in a precipitation but in a suspension. This double of the proposition appears distinct at once from the proposition itself, the formulator of the proposition and the object which it concerns. It is distinguished from the subject and the object because it does not exist outside of the proposition which expresses it. It is distinguished from the proposition itself because it relates to the object as though it were its logical attribute, its "stable" or "expressible". It is the *complex theme* of the proposition and, as such, the first term of knowledge. In order to distinguish it at once both from the object (God or the sky, for example) and from the proposition (God is, the sky is blue), it is stated in infinitive or participial form: to-be-God or God-being, the being-blue of the sky. This complex is an ideal event. It is an objective entity, but one of which we cannot say that it exists in itself: it insists or subsists, possessing a quasi-being or an extra-being, that minimum of being common to real, possible and even impossible objects. In this way, however, we fall into a nest of secondary difficulties, for how are we to avoid the consequence that contradictory propositions have the same sense, given that affirmation and negation are only propositional modes? Or how are we to avoid the consequence that an impossible object, one which is self-contradictory, has

a sense even though it has no "signification" (the being-square of a circle)? Or again, how are we to reconcile the transience of an object with the eternity of its sense? Finally, how are we to avoid the following play of mirrors: a proposition must be true because its expressible is true, while the expressible is true only when the proposition itself is true? All these difficulties stem from a common source: in extracting a double from the proposition we have evoked a simple phantom. Sense so defined is only a vapour which plays at the limit of things and words. Sense appears here as the outcome of the most powerful logical effort, but as ineffectual, a sterile incorporeal deprived of its generative power.¹⁸ Lewis Carroll gave a marvellous account of all these paradoxes: that of the neutralising doubling appears in the form of the smile without a cat, while that of the proliferating redoubling appears in the form of the knight who always gives a new name to the name of the song—and between these two extremes lie all the secondary paradoxes which form Alice's adventures.¹⁹

Is anything gained by expressing sense in the interrogative rather than the infinitive or participial form ("Is God?" rather than to-be-God or the being of God)? At first glance the gain is slight. It is slight because a question is always traced from givable, probable or possible responses. It is therefore itself the neutralised double of a supposedly pre-existent proposition which may or must serve as response. All the orator's art goes into constructing questions in accordance with the responses he wishes to evoke or the propositions of which he wants to convince us. Even when we do not know the answer, we question only in supposing that in principle it is already given, or that it already exists in another consciousness. That is why—in accordance with its etymology—interrogation always takes place within the framework of a community: to interrogate implies not only a common sense but a good-sense, a distribution of knowledge and of the given with respect to empirical consciousness in accordance with their situations, their points of view, their positions and their skills, in such a way that a given consciousness is supposed to know already what the other does not (What time is it?—You who have a watch or are close to a clock. When was Caesar born?—You who know Roman history). Despite this weakness, the interrogative formula has at least one advantage: at the same time as it invites us to consider the corresponding proposition as a response, it opens up a new path for us. A proposition conceived as a response is always a particular solution, a case considered for itself, abstractly and apart from the superior synthesis which relates it,

along with other cases, to a problem as problem. Therefore interrogation, in turn, expresses the manner in which a problem is dismembered, cashed out and revealed, in experience and for consciousness, according to its diversely apprehended cases of solution. Even though it gives us an insufficient idea, it thereby inspires in us the presentiment of that which it dismembers.

Sense is located in the problem itself. Sense is constituted in the complex theme, but the complex theme is that set of problems and questions in relation to which the propositions serve as elements of response and cases of solution. This definition, however, requires us to rid ourselves of an illusion which belongs to the dogmatic image of thought: problems and questions must no longer be traced from the corresponding propositions which serve, or can serve, as responses. We know the agent of this illusion: it is interrogation which, within the framework of a community, dismembers problems and questions, and reconstitutes them in accordance with the propositions of the common empirical consciousness—in other words, according to the probable truths of a simple *doxa*. The great logical dream of a combinatory or calculus of problems is compromised as a result. It was believed that problems or questions were only the neutralisation of a corresponding proposition. Consequently, how could it not be believed that the theme or sense is only an ineffectual double, traced from the type of proposition that it subsumes or even from an element supposed to be common to all propositions (the indicative thesis)? The failure to see that sense or the problem is extra-propositional, that it differs in kind from every proposition, leads us to miss the essential: the genesis of the act of thought, the operation of the faculties. Dialectic is the art of problems and questions, the combinatory or calculus of problems as such. However, dialectic loses its peculiar power when it remains content to trace problems from propositions: thus begins the history of the long perversion which places it under the power of the negative. Aristotle writes:

The difference between a problem and a proposition is a difference in the turn of phrase. For if it be put in this way, "Is two-footed terrestrial animal the definition of man?" or "Is animal the genus of man?" the result is a proposition; but if thus, "Is two-footed terrestrial animal the definition of man or not?" and "Is animal the genus of man or not?" the result is a problem. Similarly too in other cases. Naturally, then, problems and propositions are equal in number, for out of every proposition you will make a problem if you change the turn of phrase.

(The illusion wends its way into contemporary logic where the calculus of problems is presented as extra-mathematical, which is true, since it is essentially logical or dialectical. It is still inferred, however, from a simple calculus of propositions, copied or traced from the propositions themselves.)²⁰

We are led to believe that problems are given ready-made, and that they disappear in the responses or the solution. Already, under this double aspect, they can be no more than phantoms. We are led to believe that the activity of thinking, along with truth and falsehood in relation to that activity, begins only with the search for solutions, that both of these concern only solutions. This belief probably has the same origin as the other postulates of the dogmatic image: puerile examples taken out of context and arbitrarily erected into models. According to this infantile prejudice, the master sets a problem, our task is to solve it, and the result is accredited true or false by a powerful authority. It is also a social prejudice with the visible interest of maintaining us in an infantile state, which calls upon us to solve problems that come from elsewhere, consoling or distracting us by telling us that we have won simply by being able to respond: the problem as obstacle and the respondent as Hercules. Such is the origin of the grotesque image of culture that we find in examinations and government referenda as well as in newspaper competitions (where everyone is called upon to choose according to his or her taste, on condition that this taste coincides with that of everyone else). Be yourselves—it being understood that this self must be that of others. As if we would not remain slaves so long as we do not control the problems themselves, so long as we do not possess a right to the problems, to a participation in and management of the problems. The dogmatic image of thought supports itself with psychologically puerile and socially reactionary examples (cases of recognition, error, simple propositions and solutions or responses) in order to prejudice what should be the most valued in regard to thought—namely, the genesis of the act of thinking and the *sense* of truth and falsehood. There is, therefore, a seventh postulate to add to the others: the postulate of responses and solutions according to which truth and falsehood only begin with solutions or only qualify responses. When, however, a false problem is "set" in a science examination, this propitious scandal serves only to remind families that problems are not ready-made but must be constituted and invested in their proper symbolic fields; and that the master text necessarily requires a (necessarily fallible) master in order to be written. Pedagogic experiments are proposed

in order to allow pupils, even very young pupils, to participate in the fabrication of problems, in their constitution and their being posed as problems. Moreover, everyone "recognises" after a fashion that problems are the most important thing. Yet it is not enough to recognise this in fact, as though problems were only provisional and contingent movements destined to disappear in the formation of knowledge, which owed their importance only to the negative empirical conditions imposed upon the knowing subject. On the contrary, this discovery must be raised to the transcendental level, and problems must be considered not as "givens" (data) but as ideal "objectivities" possessing their own sufficiency and implying acts of constitution and investment in their respective symbolic fields. Far from being concerned with solutions, truth and falsehood primarily affect problems. A solution always has the truth it deserves according to the problem to which it is a response, and the problem always has the solution it deserves in proportion to *its own* truth or falsity—in other words, in proportion to its sense. This is what is meant by such famous formulae as: "The really great problems are posed only once they are solved" or "Mankind always sets itself only such tasks as it can solve"—not because practical or speculative problems are only the shadow of pre-existing solutions but, on the contrary, because the solution necessarily follows from the complete conditions under which the problem is determined as a problem, from the means and the terms which are employed in order to pose it. The problem or sense is at once both the site of an originary truth and the genesis of a derived truth. The notions of nonsense, false sense and misconstrual [*contraires*] must be related to problems themselves (there are problems which are false through indeterminations, others through overdetermination, while stupidity, finally, is the faculty for false problems; it is evidence of an inability to constitute, comprehend or determine a problem as such). Philosophers and savants dream of applying the test of truth and falsity to problems: this is the aim of dialectics as a superior calculus or combinatory. However, as long as the transcendental consequences are not explicitly drawn and the dogmatic image of thought subsists in principle, this dream also functions as no more than a "repentance".

The natural illusion (which involves tracing problems from propositions) is in effect extended into a philosophical illusion. The critical requirement is recognised, and the attempt is made to apply the test of truth and falsity to problems themselves, but it is maintained that the truth of a problem consists only in the possibility that it receive a solution. The new form of

the illusion and its technical character comes this time from the fact that the form of problems is modelled upon the *form of possibility* of propositions. This is already the case with Aristotle. Aristotle assigned the dialectic its real task, its only effective task: the art of problems and questions. Whereas Analytics gives us the means to solve a problem already given, or to respond to a question, Dialectics shows how to pose a question legitimately. Analytics studies the process by which the syllogism necessarily leads to a conclusion, while Dialectics invents the subjects of syllogisms (precisely what Aristotle calls "problems") and engenders the elements of syllogisms concerning a given subject ("propositions"). However, in order to judge a problem, Aristotle invites us to consider "the opinions accepted by all men or by the majority among them, or by the wise" in order to relate these to general (predicable) points of view, and thereby form the *places* which allow them to be established or refuted in discussion. The common places are thus the test of common sense itself: every problem the corresponding proposition of which contains a logical fault in regard to accident, genus, property or definition will be considered a false proposition. If the dialectic appears devalued in Aristotle, reduced to the simple probabilities of opinion or the *doxa*, this is not because he misunderstood the essential task but, on the contrary, because he conceived the realisation of that task badly. In the grip of the natural illusion, he traced problems from the propositions of common sense: in the grip of the philosophical illusion, he made the truth of problems depend upon the common places—in other words, upon the logical possibility of finding a solution (the propositions themselves designate cases of possible solutions).

At most, the form of possibility varies throughout the history of philosophy. Thus, while the partisans of a mathematical method claim to be opposed to the dialectic, they nevertheless retain the essential—namely, the ideal of a combinatory or a calculus of problems. Instead of having recourse to the logical form of the possible, however, they separate out another, properly mathematical form of possibility—be it geometric or algebraic. Problems, therefore, continue to be traced from the corresponding propositions, and to be evaluated according to the possibility of their finding a solution. More precisely, from a geometric and synthetic point of view, problems are inferred from a particular type of proposition known as theorems. Greek geometry has a general tendency on the one hand to limit problems to the benefit of theorems, on the other to subordinate problems to theorems themselves. The reason is that theorems seem to express and