

DELEUZE AND GUATTARI'S CONCEPTUAL PERSONA REVISITED: THE LIST OF CHARACTER TRAITS AS A TABLE OF CATEGORIES¹

Mathias Schönher

ABSTRACT: This article focuses on the distinction between psychosocial types and conceptual personae advanced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* The conceptual persona is the tool that a philosopher invents in order to create new concepts with which to bring forth new events. Although they present it as one of the three elements of philosophy, its nature and function and, above all, its conjunctions with psychosocial types have been overlooked by scholars. *What is Philosophy?* contains a list of character traits of which each conceptual persona is composed. The central argument of this article is that this list can well be regarded as a table of categories that enable the exercise and experience of philosophy's creative thinking. Since the character traits of a conceptual persona match the characteristics of the given psychosocial types, it is necessary to keep inventing new conceptual personae always starting from the historical presuppositions. The philosopher requires the conceptual persona to transfer his or her movements of thought to philosophy's plane of immanence and thereby transform them in such a manner that philosophy can unfold as a creative power. It emerges as the subject of creative thinking at the same time as the concepts that subject creates, with which it coincides in the moment of creation. With the conceptual persona in *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari determine the one element of philosophy that makes the transcendental empiricism a method of creation that appears as a precise operation with all its convincing and transparent results.

KEYWORDS: conceptual persona, Deleuze and Guattari, Descartes, philosophy, psychosocial types, transcendental empiricism, *What is Philosophy?*

¹ Supported by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): J 4206-G32.
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INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on the distinction between psychosocial types and conceptual personae as advanced by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *What is Philosophy?*, their last jointly authored book, published in 1991. They present the conceptual persona as one of the three elements of philosophy, besides the plane of consistency, which constitutes a plane of immanence of concepts, and the concepts themselves.² Nevertheless, scholars do not seem to have sufficiently and clearly elaborated its nature and function and, above all, its conjunctions to the psychosocial types. Deleuze and Guattari define philosophy as the activity that consists of creating concepts in order to bring forth new events (WP 5–7). I have previously characterised the conceptual persona, especially with regard to Plato as part of the democratic city-state of Athens, as a demon invented and animated by the philosopher in order to achieve a triple transformation.³ The triple transformation constitutes the crucial move that enables a philosopher to carry out the creative activity in the first place. In inventing his conceptual persona, Plato relies on a concrete person with a life story, which he impressively transforms into a conceptual persona and thus into a condition that remains inherent in Platonism: “he becomes Socrates at the same time that he makes Socrates become philosopher” (WP 65). Here, I go further by arguing that the list of character traits that make up conceptual personae must be regarded as a table of categories that render possible the exercise and experience of philosophy’s creative thinking.⁴ I thereby expand on Deleuze and Guattari’s assertion concerning the friend as a condition of possibility for philosophical thought, namely that the conceptual persona is a “living category” (WP 3).

The conceptual persona can be seen as the secret inner impulse of a philosophy that undermines or shatters our self-understanding until we surrender our movements of thought to it, and then displaces or replaces it with that self-understanding which the concepts and their concatenation on the plane of

² Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill, London, Verso, 1994, pp. 76–77. Hereafter cited as WP.

³ Mathias Schönher, “The Triple Transformation: The Emergence of Philosophy in Deleuze and Guattari,” in *Journal of Speculative Philosophy*, vol. 33, no. 4, 2019, pp. 610–627.

⁴ I have already pointed out that the list of traits must be regarded as a table of categories for the exercise and experience of philosophy’s creative thinking. See Mathias Schönher, “Gilles Deleuze’s Philosophy of Nature: System and Method in *What is Philosophy?*,” in *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 36, no. 7–8, 2019, pp. 89–107, pp. 101–103.

immanence call for. The movements of thought on every plane of immanence of concepts draw an image of thought, that is, “the image thought gives itself of what it means to think, to make use of thought, to find one’s bearings in thought” (WP 37). The conceptual persona answers the question of who exercises thought according to a certain image and what traits this character exhibits. It is a necessary element of philosophy because, for Deleuze and Guattari, the creative thinking of philosophy cannot be inscribed in an individual person, whose modes of existence are always shaped by the regimes of opinion, nor in a transcendent “I” of philosophical thought that is independent of, or indifferent to, its concepts. In order to take upon oneself the movements of a certain image of thought, one must shift into the conceptual persona as the subject anticipated by the image or, more precisely, by the points of view on the plane of immanence from which the various concepts are grasped and induced in the performance of the movements as a subject that is, thereby, not distinct from the thinking, perception and feeling of the concepts. The trajectory of thought onto philosophy’s plane of immanence leads along an abysmal path and signifies a self-destructive journey into the sphere of events formed by concepts. One must ascend to this sphere by way of a triple transformation; one must perform the infinite, wild movements from concept to concept; and one must descend again – perpetually – in order not to lose the connection to the formation of history and its psychosocial types.⁵

In their examination of conceptual personae, Deleuze and Guattari are primarily concerned with the one invented by Descartes, because it provides a lucid example: the idiot, who makes every effort to arrive by himself at indubitable truths. Descartes’ *Meditations*, Michel Foucault argues, imply the subject, which corresponds to the Cartesian image of thought and is “modifiable through the effect of the discursive events that take place.”⁶ For him, it is not sufficient to reveal the logic of Descartes’ system and to expound its truth; if one “wants to be the subject enunciating this truth on his own behalf,” it is also necessary to carry out a “set of modifications” and to participate in an experience

⁵ See Mathias Schönher, “The Late Masterwork of Gilles Deleuze: Linking Style to Method in *What Is Philosophy?*,” in *Qui Parle*, vol. 29, no. 1, 2020, pp. 25–63, pp. 44–50.

⁶ Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, James D. Faubion (ed.), trans. Robert Hurley and others, New York, The New Press, 1998, p. 406.

that was already, in a certain sense, that of Descartes himself.⁷ Through these modifications that occur in the process of doubting, in the transition to certainty over one's own existence, in the realisation that I am a thinking thing, in the awareness of the problem of a criterion of truth, in the proof of the existence of God, "the subject is ceaselessly altered by his own movement."⁸ The "I" of thinking that undergoes these modifications from concept to concept is, for Deleuze and Guattari, the idiot that serves as our mediator for exercising and experiencing Cartesian thought. As subjects of ordinary lived experience, we are not able to carry out the creative thinking of philosophy. To do so, rather, we must shift into the conceptual persona, ally ourselves with this intermediary instance with which we go beyond our standpoint in lived experience, transform our thought and our self-understanding by yielding to the conceptual persona and becoming indistinguishable from it. For Deleuze and Gutattari, philosophy is not one praxis among many that resist or directly confront the entanglements of power and the regimes of opinion, but an activity that consists of bringing forth novelties in a realm that is not the realm in which our daily life takes place, even if it is inextricably linked to it. By bringing forth new events, it creates the starting points for the change in historical relations.⁹

The idiot appears in stark detail and with exemplary lucidity because Descartes postulates the "I think" as a superior entity and thus installs transcendence in philosophy. Descartes conceives the plane of immanence with its infinite movements of thought as being immanent to the self that identifies itself as a thinking substance (WP 46). Although he invents the idiot in relation to his concepts, he succumbs to the illusion that accompanies the idealisation of the *cogito* as a thing that needs no other thing besides God to have certainty of itself and to exist. Descartes' operation on the philosophical plane is comparable to the use of the anecdote to build a portrait of a philosopher. As Kant's stocking-suspender is "appropriate to the system of Reason," the anecdotes show some aspects of the conceptual persona, but only insofar as the latter shines through in

⁷ Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, p. 406.

⁸ Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 2: Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, p. 406.

⁹ Deleuze and Foucault differ in their account of the connection between the historical situation and philosophical thought. See Mathias Schönher, "Deleuze, a Split with Foucault," in *Le foucauldien*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2015.

the everyday life of the philosopher who invents and animates it, that is, insofar as philosophy is rendered immanent in the philosopher himself or herself. This is the case when we assign the intense life of the conceptual persona directly to the philosopher as subject of lived experience, when we assume the subject of lived experience as the origin of philosophy's movements of thought, when we conceive of the subject as a transcendent unity (WP 72). This is why Deleuze and Guattari note that "even illusions of transcendence are useful to us and provide vital anecdotes" (WP 73). Similarly, the illusion to which Descartes succumbs during his philosophical endeavour, and which leads him to idealise the *cogito* as a firm and immovable point, serves us. But even though the conceptual persona is revealed so clearly in Descartes, "the conceptual persona has nothing to do with an abstract personification, a symbol or an allegory, because it lives, it insists."¹⁰ In my view, conceptual character would be a more appropriate translation for *personnage conceptuel* than conceptual persona.¹¹

In his third and final creative period, which begins with the completion of *A Thousand Plateaus*, published in 1980, Deleuze wants to redeem the concept of category, which is firmly anchored in philosophical tradition, to serve his own philosophy. In 1981, he points out that in his view a "table of categories" can be derived from *A Thousand Plateaus* – an incomplete table, to be sure, with very special categories: "Not like Kant but like Whitehead."¹² He also reveals that he wants to address the problem of categories in one of his two forthcoming projects, namely in a book entitled "*What is philosophy?*"¹³ The other project he mentions revolves around cinema. In the preface of the first volume on cinema from 1983, Deleuze begins by noting that he refers to Peirce, who, with his distinction of the categories of firstness, secondness and thirdness, invents an original theory of categories.¹⁴ In the second volume on cinema from 1985, for example, Deleuze

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 64 (sentence missing in the English translation).

¹¹ See Mathias Schönher, "The Friend as Conceptual Persona in Deleuze and Guattari," in *Rhizomes*, vol. 20, nr8

¹² Gilles Deleuze, *Letters and Other Texts*, trans. Ames Hodges, South Pasadena, Semiotext(e), 2020, p. 78.

¹³ Deleuze, *Letters and Other Texts*, p. 79.

¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, p. xiv. See Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Cinema*, New York,

writes that Godard's "table of montage" becomes a "table of categories" and he speaks in regard to Godard's films of "interceders who function as a category."¹⁵ As far as Whitehead is concerned, Deleuze deals with him extensively in *The Fold*, his 1988 monograph on Leibniz and the Baroque.¹⁶

One of the main strands of Deleuze's thought, developing throughout his final creative period and culminating in *What is Philosophy?*, comprises the exploration of the mutable conjunctions and possible transitions between the finite movements of history, which produce various regimes of opinion, and the infinite movements of becoming, which induce the creative thinking of philosophy.¹⁷ In an interview published in 1990, Deleuze himself indicated that he "became more and more aware of the possibility of distinguishing between becoming and history."¹⁸ In contrast to the preceding periods, Deleuze draws a sharp separation between opinion and its regimes, which shape the organisation of the social field and the lived experience of individual subjects, on the one hand, and a thought that brings forth something new and completely unknown, on the other. In view of this sharp separation, the problem of how it is possible to bring forth a creation in a specific form of thought at all has become even more pressing. It is precisely this problem, as it applies to philosophy in contrast to art or science, that Deleuze and Guattari respond to in *What is Philosophy?* by introducing the conceptual persona. Although there are "constant penetrations," the conceptual personae are, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise, "irreducible" to the psychosocial types because "psychosocial types belong to history, but conceptual personae belong to becoming" (WP 67, 96). It is only with the help of the conceptual persona that a philosopher, whose modes of existence are entangled in the formation of history just as in the case of any other psychosocial type, can succeed in creating

Routledge, 2003, pp. 65–106. See David Deamer, *Deleuze's Cinema Books: Three Introductions to the Taxonomy of Images*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2016, pp. 5–73.

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, pp. 184–86.

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley, London, Continuum, 2006. See Keith Robinson (ed.), *Deleuze, Whitehead, Bergson: Rhizomatic Connections*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. See Steven Shaviro, *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 2009.

¹⁷ See Schönher, "The Late Masterwork of Gilles Deleuze: Linking Style to Method in *What Is Philosophy?*," pp. 32–37

¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, New York, Columbia University Press, 1995, p. 170.

something new that does not belong directly to history, but still belongs to becoming.

The transitions from the psychosocial types to the conceptual personae, as well as the latter's nature and function, remain to be thoroughly examined. In his study of *What is Philosophy?*, Rodolphe Gasché, who deals at length with the three elements of philosophy, fails to mention both the characteristics of the psychosocial types and the traits of the conceptual personae.¹⁹ Rex Butler and Jeffrey Bell, for their part, completely disregard psychosocial types in their respective studies of Deleuze and Guattari's *What is Philosophy?*.²⁰ The most revealing discussion of the differences between psychosocial types and conceptual personae is executed by Isabelle Ginoux, even if she stops short of dealing with their characteristics and traits respectively.²¹ She shows succinctly that the former, in which the territorial movements of the social field are manifested, belong to history, while the latter, in which the movements of thought of the philosophical plane are crystallised, belong to becoming. Ginoux explains that the transition of the finite movements of history into the infinite movements of becoming is only possible if it presents itself as a "creative process" that is given the freedom of an experiment with an uncertain result.²² However, she resists an explanation of the approach that this process requires, and of its exact purpose, that is, the creation of concepts. In her discussion, the function of the conceptual persona is narrowed down to constituting an "I" of thinking on the philosophical plane, which differs essentially from the relative standpoint of a subject in the social field.

In contrast to Ginoux, Craig Lundy rejects Deleuze's binary opposition of history and becoming by revealing "the creative capacities of history", and thus dismisses the clear distinction between psychosocial types and conceptual

¹⁹ Rodolphe Gasché, *Geophilosophy: On Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's What Is Philosophy?*, Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 2014.

²⁰ In Butler, the psychosocial types appear in four quotations derived from *What is Philosophy?*, whereas in Bell, in one. See Rex Butler, *Deleuze and Guattari's "What Is Philosophy?": A Reader's Guide*, London, Bloomsbury, 2016, pp. 17, 93, 166, 176. See Jeffrey A. Bell, *Deleuze and Guattari's What is Philosophy?: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2016, p. 207.

²¹ Isabelle Ginoux, "Rapport entre des types psycho-sociaux et le personnage conceptuel," in Pierre Verstraeten and Isabelle Stengers (eds.), *Gilles Deleuze*, Paris, Vrin, 1998, pp. 89–104.

²² Ginoux, "Rapport entre des types psycho-sociaux et le personnage conceptuel," pp. 102–103 (translated).

personae.²³ He tries to show that conceptual personae are not “against or without history.”²⁴ For him, they even have a “historical nature,” and this is because they can recur in connection with different planes and concepts, thereby performing a historical movement “that zigzags between planes.”²⁵ In my view, Lundy rightly insists, when Deleuze and Guattari claim that “the history of philosophy must go through these personae,” they are arguing against a linear historiography (WP 62).²⁶ They propose a genealogy that arranges the conceptual personae into types and thus renders visible a variety of transversal lines of descent. They argue for a staging, also through the use of anecdotes, that proceeds from the external references of historical succession to provide insights into the universe of possible experiences that are linked to the accomplishment of the movements of thought by means of the corresponding conceptual personae on the philosophical planes. Nevertheless, the singular becoming to which everyone who undertakes the thought and experience of a philosophy is exposed, remains fundamentally different from any kind of history or historiography. Lundy holds that the creative capacities of history are from the outset an “integral part of conceptual personae,” which function as intermediaries for the transition from the movements of history to those of becoming, prepare with their zigzag movements for becoming and are also the “inspiration” for it.²⁷ With his understanding of the conceptual persona as an element of philosophy more closely tied to psychosocial types than to the concepts it creates, he disregards the fact that the conceptual persona is the element with which it is possible for Deleuze and Guattari to devise a method for the creative thinking of philosophy, the experience of which is to rely on acts of intuitive immersion.²⁸

²³ Craig Lundy, *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2012, p. 181.

²⁴ Lundy, *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity*, p. 168.

²⁵ Lundy, *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity*, pp. 163, 165.

²⁶ “The history of philosophy is comparable to the art of the portrait.” See Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 55.

²⁷ Lundy, *History and Becoming: Deleuze's Philosophy of Creativity*, p. 168, 182.

²⁸ A fusion of conceptual personae with psychosocial types that abandons the conceptual persona as a tool for the creative activity of philosophy is also found in Gregg Lambert and Thomas Nail. The latter expands and explicitly politicises the conceptual persona to arrive at the conception of a revolutionary subject that “is rather a third person part of a consistent and participatory political body”. See Thomas Nail, *Returning to Revolution: Deleuze, Guattari and Zapatismo*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2012, p. 137. Lambert defines the conceptual persona, for example, “as a being that appears within the *socius*.” See Gregg Lambert,

In her comprehensive presentation of Deleuze's philosophy, Anne Sauvagnargues argues that he takes on the task of producing a theory of categories that is at odds with Kant's theory. She explains that Deleuze develops this theory "which is expressed in the categorical conclusion of *A Thousand Plateaus* and in the table of categories as a table of montage in *The Time-Image*."²⁹ Only in one article that offers an instructive overview of the function of conceptual personae does she insinuate that Deleuze, after dealing with cinema films in *The Time-Image* from 1985, also returns to the task of producing a theory of categories in *What is Philosophy?*, and does so through the elaboration of the conceptual persona.³⁰ However, Sauvagnargues does not link the traits of conceptual personae to the characteristics of psychosocial types.

EVENTS FORMED BY CONCEPTS

The philosophical system set out in *What is Philosophy?* is an open system appropriate for our modern world.³¹ In a conversation in 1980, Deleuze asserts that art and science are in the process of forming or engaging with open systems.³² He then turns to philosophy and explains that a philosophical system or a set of concepts counts as an open system "when the concepts relate to circumstances rather than essences."³³ In an open system, concepts are used not to define eternal and universal essences, nor to represent finite and particular individuals, but to bring forth virtual events that are conjoined with circumstances, that is, with historical entities, with actual individuals. "The concept speaks the event, not the essence or the thing" (WP 21). Deleuze and Guattari reject the assertion of a one-sided and rigid dependence of individuals on transcendent entities. Instead, they assume mutable transitions through which the movements of becoming and those of history intersect and conjoin, as well as unceasing circuits through which actual individuals exchange with virtual events.

Philosophy after Friendship: Deleuze's Conceptual Personae, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2017, p. 11.

²⁹ Anne Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze. L'empirisme transcendantal*, Paris, PUF, 2009, p. 46 (translated).

³⁰ Anne Sauvagnargues, *Artmachines: Deleuze, Guattari, Simondon*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2016, p. 36.

³¹ See Schönher, "Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Nature: System and Method in *What is Philosophy?*," pp. 91–95.

³² Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, pp. 31–32.

³³ Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, p. 32.

These transitions and circuits are established by the events themselves; they allow for the laying out of a system for our modern world, which is first and foremost no longer a world whose fundamental order is static and stable throughout all time, but a world that is undergoing processes of renewal and modification and is perpetually and irreversibly changing or reordering itself.

Events actualise themselves along with history, in existing individuals; however, they are in the process of becoming and as such do not have existence, but are still virtual and have consistency. The movements between events and between the components of a single event are the infinite movements of becoming, which stretch out a plane of consistency and thus constitute the realm of consistent events (WP 19–20, 42). This realm of reality allows the events to be formed as they undergo an infinite becoming. The forms that shape the virtual events in this manner are the concepts. They contour the events and delimit them from each other in such a way as to close off and condense into pre-individual intensities (WP 33–34). The specific power that the concepts express and the creative activity that consists of creating them, that is philosophy.

The events formed by concepts, condensed into intensities, form the starting points for the development of actual entities. They produce the transition from the infinite to the finite and ground the genesis of individuals in a realm of reality in which the components of events and their singular concatenations have not yet evolved into the extensive parts of which individuals are comprised and the particular qualities of these individuals.³⁴ Events always retain a virtual half of the entities in which they actualise, carrying it into an infinite becoming (WP 156). Actual entities engage in an unceasing process of exchange with the events that they integrate into the realm of the actual and thereby convert into concrete individuals.³⁵ This actualisation and individuation are determined by the finite movements of history. “What History grasps of the event is its effectuation in matters of fact or in lived experience; but the event in its becoming, in its own specific consistency, in its self-positing as concept, escapes History.”³⁶ In contrast to the movements of becoming, the movements between the actual entities,

³⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, New York, Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 210.

³⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, p. 70.

³⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 110 (translation modified).

between the various individuals as well as their parts are the finite movements of change, adaptation or fixation. These movements of history or reference constitute the realm of energy and mass, where each entity is bound to an extensive spatial order and continuous sequence in time (WP 122–23, 138–39). They produce various regimes of opinion with which they shape the historical formation, the organisation of the social milieu, and the lived experience of the individual subjects.³⁷ Accordingly, opinions are not simply beliefs or habits of thought that one follows as long as they correspond with one's own interests and needs, but rather modes of existence that one embodies and to which one adapts one's perception, affection and action as well as one's thinking.³⁸ All individuals are subordinated to the all-encompassing strategy of opinion and its regimes through which life functions.

PSYCHOSOCIAL TYPES

The modes of existence, for Deleuze and Guattari, can be assigned to certain psychosocial types, which change depending on the given collective and thus individual preconditions (WP 68). According to *What is Philosophy?*, the psychosocial types differ at least in terms of five different groups of characteristics: in terms of their physical and mental movements, their pathological symptoms, their legal status, their relational attitudes and their existential modes (WP 70–3). The types are derived first and foremost, at least since the Industrial Revolution, from an analysis of capitalism, which organises socio-political and economic processes by accelerating and controlling all the movements that are used to adapt or consolidate power structures within society and to integrate individuals' modes of existence into these structures. In so doing, capitalism also establishes the preconditions for how we shape our collective and individual lived experience, and it determines even the personal interests and needs of each individual.³⁹ In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari state that “social fields are inextricable knots” so that, in order to disentangle the movements which are mixed up in the fields, we have to diagnose psychosocial types (WP 68). Deleuze

³⁷ Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, p. 180.

³⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 257.

³⁹ Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, p. 180.

and Guattari take commodity trade in capitalism to exemplify the way in which various kinds of movements of change are entangled in these knots. Marx not only speaks of capital and labour, they write, but sees the need to draw up psychosocial types to do justice to the transformation from simple commodity production into capitalist production: “the capitalist, the proletarian” (WP 68).⁴⁰ In addition to this reference to the capitalist and the proletarian as types in Marx, there is also a reference to the stranger as a type in Simmel, as well as to the father as a psychosocial type and to the schizophrenic (WP 64, 67, 70).⁴¹

To my knowledge, there has been no further discussion of Deleuze and typology in general, nor of the psychosocial types, which are of great importance in *What is Philosophy?*. In connection with the aesthetic figures, Deleuze and Guattari underline in *What is Philosophy?* “Balzac’s greatness” (WP 171). Balzac’s *The Human Comedy*, in fact, stands “at the origin of the Marxist vision of society.”⁴² Therein, Balzac attempts to cover the great number of conspicuous types of his time and thus to provide a pathology of social life; “And not man alone, but the principal events of life, fall into classes by types.”⁴³ Balzac attempts to be a “historian,” to be a “painter of types of humanity, a narrator of the dramas of private life, an archaeologist of social furniture, a cataloguer of professions, a registrar of good and evil.”⁴⁴ But it is not Balzac, it is rather Spinoza, Nietzsche and Foucault who Deleuze identifies as the central thinkers who create a typology. In Spinoza, according to Deleuze, the modes of existence are linked to the common notions that render “a classification of beings by their power,” which leads to “types that are more or less general.”⁴⁵ In 1983, in the preface of the American edition of the monograph on Nietzsche from his early creative period, Deleuze explains Nietzsche’s understanding of the philosopher as physiologist

⁴⁰ See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Vol. I* (MECW, Vol. 35), London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1996, p. 10.

⁴¹ See Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. Kurt H. Wolff, New York, Free Press, 1950, pp. 402–408.

⁴² Sandy Petrey, “The Reality of Representation: Between Marx and Balzac,” in *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1988, pp. 448–468, p. 448.

⁴³ Honoré de Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket, and Other Stories*, trans. Clara Bell, London, J. M. Dent, 1910, p. 13.

⁴⁴ Balzac, *At the Sign of the Cat and Racket, and Other Stories*, pp. 5–6, 8.

⁴⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley, San Francisco, City Lights Books, 1988, pp. 45–46.

and doctor, pointing out that Nietzsche develops a whole “typology” that “distinguishes active forces from reactive forces” and analyses their variant relationships: “A mode of existence is a state of forces that constitutes a type expressible through signs or symptoms.”⁴⁶

There is every indication that Deleuze and Guattari, with their reference to psychosocial types, map Foucault’s analysis of power relations onto a grouping of territorial movements within the social field and mental landscape. Deleuze, in a review of *Discipline and Punish* included in *Foucault*, published in 1986, points out that Foucault’s analysis no longer assumes that power is something possessed by the ruling class, but rather something that is distributed according to an organisational strategy among different dispositives that permeate the whole of society. Foucault’s functional analysis corresponds, Deleuze then observes, to “a new topology” that refrains from tracing power back to particular and privileged centres.⁴⁷ In the 1988 lecture “What is a *dispositif*?” Deleuze explains that “the study of the variations in the processes of subjectivation seems to be one of the fundamental tasks Foucault left for those who came after him.”⁴⁸ After underlining the extreme fruitfulness of Foucault’s research, he ends with a list of some types with regard to Nietzsche by stating that this is about “an entire typology of subjective formations in moving dispositives.”⁴⁹ The assumption that Deleuze and Guattari, in *What is Philosophy?*, assign to us the task, taken over from Foucault, of examining subjective formations in moving dispositives anew at any given time, is underpinned by the fact that they themselves even adopt the choice of words from Deleuze’s lecture: “combinations to be untangled everywhere” [*mélanges à dé mêler*] in the lecture, and “inextricable knots in which the three movements are mixed up” [*se mêlent*] that one has to “disentangle” [*dé mêler*] in

⁴⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina, New York, *Semiotext(e)*, 2007, pp. 204–205. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Unpublished Fragments from the Period of Thus Spoke Zarathustra: Summer 1882–Winter 1885/84*, trans. Paul S. Loeb and David F. Tinsley, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2019, 24 [16]. While in his early creative period Deleuze still defines the philosopher with Nietzsche as a “genealogist,” the departure from this view becomes readily apparent, at the latest, with *A Thousand Plateaus*, where Deleuze and Guattari argue for an “anti-genealogy.” See Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, London, Continuum, 2002, p. 2. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1988, p. 26.

⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, p. 342 (translation modified).

⁴⁹ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, p. 342 (translation modified).

*What is Philosophy?*⁵⁰

One might suspect that Deleuze and Guattari shadow Foucault closely to determine the five groups of characteristics of the psychosocial types. The latter poses the question in a late afterword consisting of two texts, to which Deleuze refers more than ten times in *Foucault*: “How is one to analyze the power relationship?”⁵¹ For him, there are five points to be clarified in the analysis of these power relations, which are rooted “in the whole network of the social”.⁵² First comes the “various kinds of individual disparity,” which refer to a “*system of differentiations*” that both presupposes and produces a wide variety of juridical, economic, cultural and other differences.⁵³ Whether it is in fact productive to assign the five groups of characteristics of the psychosocial types in Deleuze and Guattari to the five points to be clarified for Foucault can only be elucidated by a detailed investigation. It would seem to me that the different existential modes of the psychosocial types, the corresponding possibilities of exercising power and the experiences that accompany it encompass Foucault’s first point.

The second point to be clarified for Foucault is “*the types of objectives*” pursued, such as the maintenance of privileges, the accumulation of profits or the exercise of authority.⁵⁴ The third of Foucault’s points is “*Instrumental modes*,” that is, the means, such as threats, economic inequality or surveillance systems, that are used to exercise power.⁵⁵ The fourth point is “*Forms of institutionalization*,” which result in differing, more or less far-reaching combinations of power relations, for example in the family, in school or in the state.⁵⁶ The final point is the “more or less deliberate organization” which leads to “*degrees of rationalization*” that depend on the processes employed, the effectiveness of their means, the certainty of their success and the costs incurred.⁵⁷ When it comes to assigning the five groups of characteristics of the psychosocial types in Deleuze and Guattari to the five points

⁵⁰ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, p. 342. Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 68.

⁵¹ Michel Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, James D. Faubion (ed.), trans. Robert Hurley and others, New York, The New Press, 2001, p. 342. See Deleuze, *Foucault*.

⁵² Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, p. 345.

⁵³ Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, pp. 344–345.

⁵⁴ Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, p. 344.

⁵⁵ Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, p. 344.

⁵⁶ Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, p. 344.

⁵⁷ Foucault, *Essential Works of Foucault, Vol. 3: Power*, pp. 344–345.

to be clarified for Foucault, I would relate the fifth point, degrees of rationalization, to the different legal statuses of the psychosocial types in Deleuze and Guattari, that is, the statuses that determine what the types can claim and rely on and what procedures are at their disposal.

THE TRANSFORMATION THROUGH CONCEPTUAL PERSONAE

The consistent events and the existing individuals belong to two kinds of reality that differ principally by the parts of which they are comprised and the way in which the parts relate to one another: on the one hand, virtual components that are connected to and condensed into pre-individual intensities by infinite movements of becoming; and, on the other, extensive parts, between which finite movements of change produce different correlations or references. Accordingly, Deleuze and Guattari characterise these two kinds of reality as two types of multiplicity: as an intensive multiplicity, which is of a supple, fluid order; and as an extensive multiplicity, which is of a rigid, solid organization (WP 127). In doing so, they draw on Bergson's distinction between a heterogeneous and continuous multiplicity of duration and a homogeneous and discontinuous multiplicity of space.⁵⁸ The exercise and experience of the creative activity of philosophy cannot be carried out by merely prolonging the thinking involved in ordinary lived experience to the plane of immanence and applied to concepts. For Deleuze and Guattari, creative thinking is never simply given and never simply acquired; it must itself first be generated, experimentally engendered, fought for under self-destructive conditions.⁵⁹ The creation of concepts requires passing through an operation of counter-effectuation from the extensive multiplicity to which we, as individuals with our subjective lived experience, belong, to the intensive multiplicity, which has no inkling of either objects or subjects that are not produced or evoked in the course of the infinite movements (WP 160–161). Thus, differing essentially from the use of opinion, the creative activity of philosophy requires a triple transformation. This triple transformation captures the subject

⁵⁸ See Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. Frank L. Pogson, Mineola, Dover, 2001, p. 104.

⁵⁹ "Thinking is neither innate nor acquired. It is not the innate exercise of a faculty, but neither is it a learning process constituted in the external world." See Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco, London, Verso, 1988, p. 117. See Antonin Artaud, "Correspondence with Jacques Riviere," in *Collected Works: Vol. 1*, trans. Victor Corti, London, John Calder, 1968, p. 19.

of lived experience, the objects to which it refers, and the relations between the subject and the objects, and carries this triad of ordinary experience into the conceptual persona as the subject of creative thinking of philosophy, into the desired objects, or more precisely, to events formed by concepts, as well as into the corresponding relations. The realm of consistent events is constituted by infinite movements of becoming, which entail relations of a different modality as well as related terms of a different nature, than the finite movements from which our ordinary lived experience derives. While lived experience rests on references that presuppose correlations between a pre-given subject and pre-existing objects, experience on the plane of philosophy relies on acts of intuitive immersion.

Irrespective of the character traits a conceptual persona is composed of, it is the persona alone who says “I” in place of his or her (WP 64–65). In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise the difference between the case where “the schizophrenic is a conceptual persona who lives intensely within the thinker and forces him to think” and the case where “the schizophrenic is a psychosocial type who represses the living being and robs him of his thought” (WP 70). Whereas in the second case there is a mental illness characterised by different disorders relating to one’s lived experience, in the first it is a nonpathological schizophrenia, to which the philosopher always succumbs when the movements on the plane of immanence of concepts carry away his thought and his conceptual persona draws him into an infinite becoming. “I am no longer myself but thought’s aptitude for finding itself and spreading across a plane that passes through me at several places” (WP 64).⁶⁰

The “I” of thinking that does not limit the movements of thought to a certain standpoint of a subject of lived experience, is not to be confused with a completely different kind of person who aligns the I of thinking to the prevailing power relations and normative forms of knowledge and who engenders an individuation or a subjectivation in different spheres of life in accordance with the relevant psychosocial types. “In everyday life speech-acts refer back to psychosocial types who actually attest to a subjacent third person,” we read in *What is Philosophy?*

⁶⁰ The conceptual persona is the philosopher’s double: “But the double is never a projection of the interior; on the contrary, it is an interiorization of the outside. [...] It is not the emanation of an ‘I,’ but something that places in immanence an always other or a Non-self. It is never the other who is a double in the doubling process, it is a self that lives me as the double of the other: I do not encounter myself on the outside, I find the other in me.” See Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 98.

(WP 64). For in a statement like “I speak to you as father,” there is, as Deleuze and Guattari explain in *A Thousand Plateaus*, also a distinction between two subjects and a “recoiling of one into the other.”⁶¹ With this statement, the subject of enunciation claims the general power of the father. There are therefore two kinds of the third person: the persons of the first kind draw us into a becoming-subject on the plane of philosophy, while those of the second kind form us as social individuals and personal subjects.⁶² Deleuze and Guattari explain the two kinds in relation to the difference between the enunciation made by the conceptual persona in performing the movements of thought on Descartes’ plane of immanence and in connecting the components of his concept of the *cogito* – “myself who doubts, I think, I am, I am a thinking thing” – and a statement like “I speak to you as father,” that is made by an individual subject in the course of lived experience.⁶³

Since the philosopher, with his or her modes of existence, is entangled in the formation of history just like any other psychosocial type, his ordinary thinking seems to be too unwieldy for “the infinite movements in which thought is lost and gained” (WP 52). Deleuze and Guattari mention Henri Michaux no less than four times in *What is Philosophy?* and refer to the reports of his drug experiments because he submits himself, his thought, his perception and his affection to an operation that is also a necessary condition for the exercise and experience of the creative thinking of philosophy.⁶⁴ He anticipates – albeit by other means – the experimental approach. Moreover, he provides the record of an experience that is close to, and thus attunes to, the experience linked with the creative thinking of philosophy, the “infinite, wild movements” (WP 41). Mescaline subjects him to

⁶¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 129.

⁶² See Ginoux, “Rapport entre des types psycho-sociaux et le personnage conceptuel,” pp. 91–98.

⁶³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 128. Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 64. In both *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari refer to the shifter of linguistics in connection with the third person. See Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 128. See Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 64. In this context, they also point to “the third person indefinite” in Blanchot. See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 264. See Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2003, pp. 379–387.

⁶⁴ See Raymond Bellour, “The Image of Thought: Art or Philosophy, or Beyond?,” trans. Alina Opreanu with Michael Sanchez, in David N. Rodowick (ed.), *Afterimages of Gilles Deleuze’s Film Philosophy*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 2009, pp. 3–14.

the experience that drives his consciousness, perception and affection beyond their ordinary thresholds.⁶⁵ In *Infinite Turbulence* he states: “You had to cast off the moorings of your previous, comfortable, everyday state, which was your support, and you had to abandon its excellent nooks and crannies which protected you from the infinite. [...] You have lost your habitation. You have become remote from yourself”.⁶⁶ While Michaux resorts to hallucinogenic drugs in his operations, philosophers have to invent their own comparable tool, the conceptual personae.⁶⁷

In the course of the triple transformation, the philosopher must shift into a conceptual persona that enables him to carry out the movements of becoming. The conceptual persona is itself the tool for achieving this transformation, which the philosopher must undergo according to the traits of the conceptual persona. The intuitive method, with which a philosopher might succeed in creating concepts, comprises an ascent executed in thinking into the realm of the virtual, a transgression into the conceptual persona forced by creation, a leap to the philosophical movements of thought (WP 140). The conceptual persona is used by the philosopher to transfer his or her movements of thought to the plane of immanence of concepts, on which the movements of becoming spread out to infinity, and thereby transform them in such a manner that it is possible to unfold philosophy as a creative power. Concerning the painter Francis Bacon, Deleuze, in his engagement with the act of creation, outlines a comparable transfer: “It is as if the hand assumed an independence and began to be guided by other forces, making marks that no longer depend on either our will or our sight.”⁶⁸ Getting

⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 283.

⁶⁶ Henri Michaux, *Infinite Turbulence*, trans. Michael Fineberg, London, Calder and Boyars, 1975, p. 8.

⁶⁷ In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari explicitly reject the psychotropic substances used to drug one’s body, even though they may give him or her a preliminary impression of the kind of experience associated with the accomplishment of the infinite, wild movements. These substances, in fact, make the individual’s thought just too cumbersome for the leap to the movements of thought of philosophy. With a formulation reminiscent of the very last proposition of the *Ethics*, in which Spinoza opposes lust to blessedness that accompanies intuitive knowledge, Deleuze and Guattari state: “Drugs do not guarantee immanence; rather, the immanence of drugs allows one to forgo them.” See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 286. See Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics: Proved in Geometrical Order*, trans. Matthew J. Kisner and Michael Silverthorne, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2018, VP42.

⁶⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith, London, Continuum, 2003, pp. 100–101.

rid of our will and our sight means breaking up “the sovereign optical organization” of the affections and perceptions from which the lived experience results. This is also what the transgression into the conceptual persona requires, which, like the painter’s hand that “intervenes in order to shake its own dependence,” serves as a tool with which it is possible to create something new that still belongs to becoming.⁶⁹

THE CHARACTER TRAITS OF CONCEPTUAL PERSONAE

The psychosocial types belong to history whereas the conceptual personae pertain to becoming; and yet, they refer to each other and join together. As Deleuze and Guattari observe, the “features of conceptual personae have relationships with the epoch or historical milieu in which they appear that only psychosocial types enable us to assess” (WP 70). Since the historical preconditions change continually, conceptual personae with new traits or features must be invented over and over again. The traits must always correspond to the characteristics of the psychosocial types that enable a sorting of the confusion of movements in the social field. Deleuze and Guattari mention the physical and mental movements of the psychosocial types, their pathological symptoms, their legal status, their relational attitudes and their existential modes, indicating that the conceptual persona necessarily exhibits traits corresponding to these five groups of characteristics of each psychosocial type. They thus distinguish five classes of traits of conceptual personae: the dynamic, the pathic, the juridical, the relational and the existential traits (WP 70–73). Each conceptual persona is at least composed of traits of these five classes.⁷⁰

The dynamic traits determine the manner in which the infinite movements of thought are performed: “leaping like Kierkegaard, dancing like Nietzsche” (WP 71). The pathic traits, meanwhile, determine the will of thought, the desire that is inherent to the conceptual personae and the violence or danger that they expose us to when forcing us to think. Thus, the idiot evoked by Descartes’ philosophy strives for truth. This is why he puts all truths in doubt, exposes thought to the threat of error that arises from the deception of sensory

⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, p. 101.

⁷⁰ For a much different understanding of the character traits of the conceptual personae, see Butler, *Deleuze and Guattari’s “What Is Philosophy?”: A Reader’s Guide*, pp. 100–101.

experience, the possibility of madness or the fiction of the dream, and makes every effort to reach indubitable truths at which he can arrive by himself (WP 52, 61–62).⁷¹

The juridical traits determine the orientation of thinking, or more precisely, the selection of what belongs fundamentally to thought, when we follow the orientation of thinking with the conceptual persona. “There are *juridical features* insofar as thought constantly lays claim to what belongs to it by right” (WP 72). Thereby, the movements of thought on the plane of immanence “relegates other determinations to the status of mere facts, characteristics of matters of fact, or lived contents”.⁷² On Descartes’ plane of immanence, a fundamental trait of thought is that it is related to truth, and so the idiot’s thinking is oriented towards truth. Error pertains by right to Descartes’ plane of immanence; in the image of thought in Descartes, it is, as Deleuze und Guattari put it, “the infinite movement that gathers together the whole of the negative” (WP 52). The deception of sensory experience, the possibility of madness or the fiction of the dream threaten thought, “but all these determinations will be considered as facts that in principle have only a single effect immanent in thought – error, always error” (WP 52).⁷³

The relational traits of the conceptual personae determine the relation between a conceptual persona and the concepts created with the help of this persona, and they specify how one is attracted by these concepts and how one approaches them with the conceptual persona. “Friend, lover, claimant and rival are,” write Deleuze and Guattari in connection with the emergence of philosophy in ancient Greece, “transcendental determinations that do not for that reason lose their intense and animated existence, in one persona or in several” (WP 4).⁷⁴ Socrates, as a condition inherent in Platonism, is not a claimant who debates with rivals in the city-state, for example, about who are the true shepherds or friends of men, but he is the friend or lover of eternal and universal ideas copied by the

⁷¹ See René Descartes, “The Search for Truth by means of the Natural Light,” in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol. II*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 400–420.

⁷² Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 52 (translation modified). See Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 37.

⁷³ See René Descartes, “Principles of Philosophy,” in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol. I*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 179–291, I, 35.

⁷⁴ See Schönher, “The Friend as Conceptual Persona in Deleuze and Guattari.”

qualities with which the claimants justify their claims (WP 3).⁷⁵ The very special kind of experience associated with the creative activity of philosophy is what Deleuze and Guattari also call “philosophical *Einführung*” (WP 64). The relational traits of the conceptual personae determine the way in which such personae place themselves inside the concepts, coincide with them and think, perceive and feel them through an internal co-presence.

The existential traits of the conceptual personae determine the intensive existence on a plane of immanence, that is to say, the way in which we experience the exercise of thinking through a conceptual persona, and the possibilities offered to us thereby (WP 70–71). Thus, the idiot whom Descartes’ philosophy evokes recognises in the analytic method, which guides him on his way to truth, the possibility of arriving by himself at an indubitable certainty that is necessarily true.⁷⁶ The intensive existence, or rather the insistence, of the idiot can only be evaluated according to whether it seems compelling from the idiot’s point of view and whether the idiot is able to perform the infinite movements of thinking on the plane of immanence of Descartes, to put all truths in doubt and to expose thinking to the threat of error in order to create the concept of doubt, of thought, of being.

A philosopher can only transfer his movements of thought to the plane of immanence of concepts by shifting into a conceptual persona that is able to transform the movements of history, which organise the regimes of opinion and thus the lived experience of individual subjects and psychosocial types, and to transfer them into the movements of becoming on the plane of consistency. The conceptual persona serves to free the philosopher’s movements of thought from “their psychological, as well as their sociological adhesions” that have saturated lived experience (WP 140). The fact that the conceptual personae relate to and conjoin with the psychosocial types is probably one of the reasons why Deleuze, up to the “Postscript on Control Societies” of 1990 and thereafter, not least in his continued engagement with the thinking of Foucault, explores the factors that

⁷⁵ See Plato, “Statesman,” trans. Christopher J. Rowe, in John M. Cooper (ed.), *Complete Works*, Indianapolis, Hackett, 1997, pp. 294–358, 267e–268a.

⁷⁶ René Descartes, “Mediations on First Philosophy,” in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, Vol. II*, trans. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Dugald Murdoch, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 1–62, AT VII, 155.

shape our communication society.⁷⁷

In the “Postscript on Control Societies,” Deleuze elaborates on the modifications resulting from the reconfiguration of capitalist society. Proceeding from Foucault, he divides this reconfiguration into three phases: following the late medieval and early modern sovereign societies, the disciplinary societies of the 18th and 19th centuries emerged, which were superseded after the Second World War when a new form of domination began to become more and more evident by the control societies. For Deleuze, the modifications of capitalism that manifest themselves through the new control mechanisms – for example, continuing education replaces classical schooling and business activity replaces factory work – is a transition “not just in the system we live under but in the way we live and in our relations with other people too.”⁷⁸ Together with the system, all the factors that shape our lived experience change. Deleuze avers in this context: “Disciplinary man produced energy in discrete amounts, while control man undulates, moving among a continuous range of different orbits. *Surfing* has taken over from all the old *sports*.”⁷⁹

For Deleuze, the man of control is undulating, wave-like, and surfing is his characteristic movement, not only in sports. Just as different kinds of machines “express the social forms capable of producing them and making use of them,” the characteristic sports practiced by young people express the corresponding social forms.⁸⁰ The sovereign societies “worked with simple machines, levers, pulleys, clocks,” the disciplinary societies “were equipped with thermodynamic machines” like steam engines and other heat engines, while the control societies now “function with a third generation of machines, with information technology and computers.”⁸¹

Sovereign societies correspond to an “energetic conception of motion,” which is based on both the simple or dynamic machines and the societies’ characteristic sports: “There’s a point of contact, or we are the source of movement. Running, putting the shot, and so on: effort, resistance, with a starting point, a lever.”⁸² It

⁷⁷ Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, pp. 177–182.

⁷⁸ Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, p. 180.

⁷⁹ Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, p. 180.

⁸⁰ Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, p. 180.

⁸¹ Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, p. 180.

⁸² Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, p. 121.

is precisely under such preconditions that Descartes invents the idiot as a conceptual persona, who relates the movements of thought to the self of the doubting thinker, so that the thinker, pursuing his doubt, can identify himself or herself as the origin of the movements of thought. Depending on the historical preconditions of the first half of the 17th century, Descartes accomplishes the foundation of modern metaphysics in the *cogito*: “Archimedes used to demand just one firm and immovable point in order to shift the entire earth.”⁸³

Deleuze explains that a different kind of movement is peculiar to our control societies today by virtue of our “entering into an existing wave.”⁸⁴ The types of our business culture are shaped by marketing. To correspond to these types, whose characteristic movement is surfing, we need a conceptual persona who can transfer this characteristic movement to the philosophical plane of consistency in the course of a triple transformation. “For example, if we say that a conceptual persona stammers, it is no longer a type who stammers in a particular language but a thinker who makes the whole of language stammer and who makes that very stammering the trait of thought itself as language.”⁸⁵ Stammering in language in this case is thus not ascribed to a particular subject of lived experience or a particular psychosocial type; rather, stammering refers to the movements of thought as such, which only evoke the thinker who performs them in stammering and thus draws them to stammer. The conceptual persona is thus a surfer when it makes the movements of thought steepen, spill forward and break, and then rolls out from them in long sweeps, carried along or ripped from one to the next.

It so happens that the surfer is mentioned in *What is Philosophy?* among the dynamic traits, which define how the movements of philosophical thought are carried out. “And if today our sports are completely changing [...], this is not just a change in the type but yet other dynamic features that enter a thought that ‘slides’ with new substances of being, with wave or snow, and turn the thinker into a sort of surfer as conceptual persona” (WP 71). The psychosocial types belong to the realm of extensive entities which is constituted by the finite movements of history, whereas the conceptual personae belong to the realm of

⁸³ Descartes, “Mediations on First Philosophy,” AT VII, 24.

⁸⁴ Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, p. 121.

⁸⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 69 (translation modified). See Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, p. 107.

consistent events or intensities which is constituted by the infinite movements of becoming. However, when inventing and animating a conceptual personae, one must, as Deleuze and Guattari elucidate, “renounce then the energetic value of the sporting type in order to pick out the pure dynamic difference expressed in a new conceptual persona” (WP 71). Any energetic value refers to a movement of an existing individual to a determined and determinable energetic potential and thus to an extensive movement. In order to arrive at the specific perceptions and affections of philosophy, which are not to be confused with the perceptions and affections embodied by individuated states and experienced passages in the physical practice of surfing, one must advance or ascend from the energetic value of extensive movements precisely to the dynamic difference of intensive movements on the plane of immanence.

In my view, inventing the character traits of the conceptual persona calls for a sort of transcendental deduction, carried out experimentally. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant, so as to find the categories that the Understanding contains in itself *a priori*, turns to the functions of thought that are constitutive of all judgements.⁸⁶ In contrast, the deduction that Deleuze and Guattari call for must first follow an examination of the historical presuppositions or the prevailing regimes of opinion to be taken into account for the deduction itself. They deduce the dynamic trait of surfing, which pertains to the conceptual persona, from the sports that manifest the characteristic movements of psychosocial types. Because of the transformation required, however, the deduction cannot consist in reflecting on the functioning of opinion or in abstracting an ideology or a transcendent logic from historical formation and social relations. In my view, the deduction must be carried out experimentally, that is to say, by means of a step-by-step construction which is immediately being tested. This seems to be the only way to find out whether the derived categories can enable the transformation required for the transition to creative thinking.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, B 104–105.

⁸⁷ Deleuze scholars have not yet addressed the question of an innovative deduction of new categories for the exercise and experience of philosophy as creative thinking. Edward Willatt, however, following an analysis of Kant’s categories, points out the need for a metaphysical deduction in Deleuze. See Edward Willatt, *Kant, Deleuze and Architectonics*, London, Continuum, 2010, p. 113. In determining Deleuze’s own categories, he relies on a 1967 talk, in which Deleuze explains: “It is not enough to ask the question: ‘what

THE SUBJECT OF PHILOSOPHICAL THINKING

In a letter of 1990, Deleuze stresses once again that he understands the method of his philosophy as a transcendental empiricism.⁸⁸ By this he means an empiricism that does not reduce experience to the lived experience of individual subjects but instead assumes a fundamentally different kind of experience that neither belongs to a predefined subject of lived experience nor points to already constituted objects. This very special kind of experience is associated with the performance of the movements of thought on the philosophical plane of immanence and the creation of concepts. *What is Philosophy?* explicitly states that every philosophy depends on an intuition in the Bergsonian sense (WP 40). According to Deleuze, Bergson's method of intuition goes beyond experience, in all its peculiarities, that accompanies the course of ordinary life, to comprise the conditions on which these peculiarities depend. This method seeks the ground of lived experience, or of things and living beings, to reach a concept "modeled on the thing itself, which only suits that thing, and which, in this sense, is no broader than what it must account for."⁸⁹

The creation of concepts is tied to a specific way of thinking, one that cannot be prescribed by any rigid categories and has no general use. The exercise and experience of creative thinking are made possible by the conceptual persona, which for Deleuze and Guattari, as they write regarding the friend as a condition of possibility of philosophical thought, is "a living category, a transcendental lived experience."⁹⁰ The ensemble of character traits of which the conceptual persona is composed cannot simply be traced back to the use of the thought of opinion. Kant arrives at his categories, universal and unchangeable conditions of possibility of the experience that any subject of lived experience will have, through reflection on the functioning of opinion.⁹¹ Philosophy must in no way be

is the true?'. As soon as we ask *who wants the true, when and where, how and how much?*, we have the task of assigning larval subjects (the jealous man, for example) and pure spatio-temporal dynamisms'. See Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953–1974*, trans. Michael Taormina, Los Angeles, Semiotext(e), p. 98. Willatt deals with the jealous man in Proust and states that a metaphysical deduction must proceed along the lines of these five questions raised by Deleuze. See Willatt, *Kant, Deleuze and Architectonics*, p. 136.

⁸⁸ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, p. 362.

⁸⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, New York, Zone Books, 1991, p. 28.

⁹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 3 (translation modified).

⁹¹ Deleuze, *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, p. 362.

equated with opinion or with a reflection on the functioning of opinion. Deleuze's philosophical effort during his late creative period to make the concept of category, firmly anchored in philosophical tradition, fruitful for his own philosophy – not like Kant but like Whitehead – leads to a table of categories which, as Sauvagnargues writes with reference to Deleuze's engagement with cinema, "must be understood in terms of its dynamic operativity, not as an outline of a frozen architecture, but rather as a plane of action, a plane of montage, a list of pragmatic instructions, or as an ephemeral and transitory succession of mental acts staging a guerrilla operation within thought."⁹² Creative thinking requires new categories in order to draw up, with the movements on the plane of immanence, a new image of thought that leads to new concepts.

The traits of the conceptual persona constitute categories for the exercise and experience of the creative thinking of philosophy. The conceptual persona serves the philosopher for the achievement of a triple transformation. It arises as the subject of creative thinking at the same time as the concepts that subject creates, and with which it coincides in the moment of creation. "The conceptual persona is the becoming or the subject of a philosophy, which holds value for the philosopher," according to Deleuze and Guattari.⁹³ Thus, Plato has a becoming-Socrates, insofar as Socrates turns into the conceptual persona of Platonism. Socrates, who as a conceptual persona is no longer a concrete person with a life story, rather a condition inherent in Platonism, does not undergo a becoming-Plato as such, but a becoming with the movements of thought of Plato's philosophy, a continuous variation with each concept as well as from one concept to another.⁹⁴

The philosopher can only explore the pre-individual and subjectless transcendental field, which results from the movements of thought of the plane of consistency, with the help of a conceptual persona. The performance of the

⁹² Sauvagnargues, *Artmachines: Deleuze, Guattari, Simondon*, p. 112.

⁹³ Deleuze and Guattari, WP, p. 64 (translation modified).

⁹⁴ In this context, the distinction, on the one hand, between the "medium of becoming," which as such is nothing but becoming itself, and, on the other hand, the "subject of becoming," which enters into an alliance with the medium of becoming and is thereby drawn into becoming, is revealing: "There is no subject of the becoming except as a deterritorialized variable of the majority; there is no medium of becoming except as a deterritorialized variable of a minority." See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 291.

infinite movements entails an experience that differs fundamentally from lived experience of individual subjects. For in order to traverse the plane of consistency from one concept to another and thereby express the creative power of philosophy, one must refrain from referring the prepared concepts to a certain standpoint of personal lived experience. Rather, one has to think, perceive, and feel concepts from the points of view of the plane of consistency, condensing their objects by way of an intuition that accompanies the performance of the infinite movements on the plane. For Deleuze and Guattari, philosophy is dependent on an intuition in the Bergsonian sense, that is to say, dependent on a particular kind of experience that corresponds to the multiplicity of duration – an experience in which the mind does not relate to an object from the outside, but rather immediately grasps it by placing itself inside the object in order to coincide with the object's singularities (WP 40).⁹⁵

The subject of lived experience always remains bound to the individual standpoint that it adopts, and remains subordinate to opinion, to ordinary thinking, perceiving and feeling. The subject of philosophical creation, in contrast, is, as Deleuze and Guattari propose with reference to Whitehead, a "superject" (WP 211).⁹⁶ This subject is only anticipated by the points of view belonging to single concepts, that is to say, only by the points on the plane from which the single concepts are thought, perceived and felt (WP 75).⁹⁷ Events as objects formed by concepts as they undergo an infinite becoming, require a subject who can carry out the infinite movements on the plane from one point of view belonging to a single concept to the point of view belonging to another. This subject is only evoked precisely when performing those movements. It is only evoked as the "I" of thinking in this execution itself, in which it is exposed to continuous variation not only with the components or variations of a single concept, but also from one concept to another. It arises as the subject of intuition, which, in the moment of the creation of a concept, is nothing other than the concept in question as it grasps itself or the event as its object, when it is

⁹⁵ See Henri Bergson, "Introduction to Metaphysics," trans. Mabelle L. Andison, in *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, Mineola, Dover, 2007, pp. 133–169, pp. 135–136.

⁹⁶ See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, New York, The Free Press, 1978, p. 151.

⁹⁷ Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, p. 21.

condensed into an intensity by the movements of becoming that traverse it just like the other events formed by concepts on the same plane. It is the internal unity of the continuous variations that combines the thought, perception and affection of the different concepts on the plane of immanence and thus establishes a correspondence between the concepts. Bell stresses that the conceptual personae “provide the dynamic unity that regulates the creative process and synthesis of elements that becomes the internal consistency of the concept.”⁹⁸ At this point, he takes up the view that philosophy, according to *What is Philosophy?*, creates concepts in a division of labour with science and art, which interact like Reason, Understanding and Imagination in Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*. I have thoroughly explored this division of labour elsewhere, suffice to say here that I hold that conceptual personae, which at the moment of creation are precisely the perceptions and affections of the concepts themselves, are based on the intrinsic interference of the plane of consistency of philosophy with the plane of composition of art through which the power of feeling unfolds by creating sensations (WP 212, 217).⁹⁹

In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari point to Melville’s remark that every novel includes “one original Figure like the single sun of a constellation of a universe, like the beginning of things, or like the beam of light that draws a hidden universe out of the shadow” (WP 65–66).¹⁰⁰ Like Captain Ahab, Melville’s great aesthetic figure, conceptual personae, they add, must be “Originals, Unique” (WP 83). Captain Ahab enters into a monstrous alliance with Moby Dick and is subjected to a becoming that lets him enter ever more deeply into the world of the white whale, thereby enabling him to capture the invisible forces of the ocean that cannot otherwise be perceived or felt, and providing him with a vision (WP 169). Inasmuch as the different traits collectively contribute to the experience that accompanies the performance of the infinite movements of becoming on the plane of immanence, they yield a single person who continually accompanies, entails and determines the experience that varies with each concept as well as

⁹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari’s *What is Philosophy?: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, p. 104.

⁹⁹ Mathias Schönher, “The Creation of the Concept through the Interaction of Philosophy with Science and Art,” in *Deleuze Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2013, pp. 26–52.

¹⁰⁰ See Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1989, chap.

from one concept to the other. It is, like Moby Dick, like every such demon, “a position or set of positions in relation to a multiplicity.”¹⁰¹ It thus assembles the full range of points of view of the different concepts, which it approaches one by one as it traverses the plane of immanence and draws the concepts to communicate with each other. The conceptual persona is, as Deleuze describes the character in an article from his last creative period on *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by T. E. Lawrence, “a center of gravity” that displaces from one concept to the next: “*Character* is the *Beast*: mind, will, desire, a desert-desire that brings together heterogenous entities.”¹⁰²

CONCLUSION

The list of traits of conceptual personae presents a kind of table of categories for the exercise and experience of the creative thinking of philosophy. This table of categories serves as a pivot between the individual subjects and the possibilities of these subjects to create concepts and to form events with them that do not belong directly to history, but are still in the process of becoming. The conceptual persona is the one element of philosophy that Deleuze and Guattari only clearly present in *What is Philosophy?*. It is the element through which it becomes possible to devise a method for the creative thinking of philosophy that starts from the individual subject and accommodates the fact that a philosopher with his modes of existence is, just like any other psychosocial type, entangled in the formation of history, itself shaped by the regimes of opinion. The conceptual personae establish the conjunctions and transitions between opinion and its regimes, which shape the organisation of the social field and the lived experience of individual subjects, on the one hand, and a thinking that, starting from this, may succeed in bringing forth something new and completely unknown, on the other, which Deleuze sharply separates in his late creative period. The conceptual persona as a category for the exercise and experience of creative thinking makes Deleuze’s transcendental empiricism “a fully developed method,” as Deleuze himself understands Bergson’s intuition, with “strict rules” that form the basis of the precise operations of philosophy with their convincing and transparent results.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, p. 244.

¹⁰² Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, pp. 120, 124. See Thomas Edward Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom: A Triumph*, Garden City, Doran, 1935, p. 563.

¹⁰³ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p. 13.

The table of categories does not contain universally valid and unchangeable categories, but must be invented over and over again with the ongoing change of history itself. It is necessary to keep testing anew which categories we have to invent for our society shaped by capitalism. “No list of the features of conceptual personae can be exhaustive, since they are constantly arising and vary with planes of immanence” (WP 70). In *What is Philosophy?*, the examination of the conceptual personae and their traits mainly refers to Descartes’ idiot. As the historical preconditions have changed since the first half of the 17th century, it is no longer possible, with the help of Descartes’ conceptual persona, simply to go beyond the prevailing opinion and to unfold Cartesianism as a creative philosophy. Moreover, in his search for a firm and immovable point, Descartes was tempted to project this point into philosophy in such a way that it results in a superior and independent unity to which the plane of immanence with its infinite movements of thought is inscribed. In any case, we must face the problem of what categories we require today for the exercise and experience of the creative thinking of philosophy. To do this, we must first take upon ourselves the task of diagnosing the psychosocial types that can be used to disentangle the territorial movements within our social field and mental landscape.

On Descartes’ plane of immanence, several traits make up the idiot, which is Descartes’ conceptual persona. “On a given plane, different kinds of features are mixed together to make up a persona” (WP 70). When the movements of thought are carried out on a plane of immanence, a conceptual persona always arises; it seizes us just as we leave the movements of thought to it, and transfers them with it to the plane of immanence. The conceptual persona is a character, or rather a centre of gravity or beam of light, that draws a hidden universe out of the shadow, to which the different features or traits contribute, and insofar as it is evoked in the carrying out of the movements of thought on the plane of immanence as the subject of the experience of philosophical thought. The various traits all contribute to the intuition entailed by passing through the plane of immanence from the point of view of one concept to that of another, to the experience in which one immediately perceives and feels the concepts or events by placing oneself inside the object in order to coincide with the object’s singularities. In accordance with its traits, the conceptual persona is ultimately nothing other than the manner in which the movements of thought are performed, the will or desire

that is inherent to such movements and the risks that they pose, along with the fundamental orientation of movements of thought, the nature of their relation to the concepts to which they lead, and the mode of existence or insistence that they produce.

Department of Philosophy
University of Vienna
mathias.schoenher@univie.ac.at