

# ONE

## DELEUZE AND TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICISM

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### INTRODUCTION

In the first part of this book, the aim will be to determine the nature and limitations of representation. In characterizing the nature of representation, our focus will be on its place in the work of three thinkers: Kant, Aristotle, and Russell. Each of these thinkers provides an account of how we can characterize the world in terms of the concepts of identity and of judgment, although the details of how they go about this vary between cases. I want to outline the aporias that develop immanently from the formulation of a representational account of our relation to the world. Hegel and Deleuze both contend that these aporias are endemic in the history of philosophy and that they can only be overcome by a fundamental change in our approach to philosophical enquiry. By the conclusion of this section, I hope to have given an account of the impetus behind both philosophers' attempts to move beyond (finite) representation and to have shown that this impetus develops as a response to real philosophical problems. While the focus will be on representation, I will also begin to show the development and divergence of the approaches of Hegel and Deleuze themselves.

In this opening chapter, my aim will also be to begin to explicate what Deleuze means by his claim that he is attempting to create a form of transcendental empiricism. In doing so, we will see that Deleuze's philosophy can be placed firmly in the post-Kantian tradition. The radical difference between Deleuze's system and those of the post-Kantians who precede him is the attempt to construct a theory of the transcendental that maintains the differentiated structure of the transcendental field while removing the subject as the synthesizing agent. In the framework of Kant's system, the transcendental unity of apperception plays a central role in

structuring the empirical world for consciousness. The subject, on a transcendental level, is the center of a synthesis that produces the empirical world for the empirical subject. We shall see that this is made clear in the transcendental deduction, which sets up a relation of structural parallelism between the transcendental categories and the functions of judgment. For Kant, the categories provide the form of the empirical world, and judgment provides the form of our knowledge of the empirical world. Deleuze will argue that, traditionally, transcendental philosophy has been founded on this claim that “the conditions of the real object of knowledge must be the same as the conditions of knowledge” (*LS*, 105). Without the identity of these conditions, the subject is no longer able to account for its ability to understand the nature of the object as it appears to it. The thesis of the identity of conditions allows us to explain our ability to make statements about the nature of the world, since the synthesis of the empirical world is now a function of the subject, and secures a direct correspondence between the structure of knowledge and the structure of the world.<sup>1</sup> The alternative to this thesis would be to posit the synthesis of the world outside of the subject. It is the difficulties raised with just such a notion of an external synthesis that led Kant to construct the transcendental idealist framework in the first place.<sup>2</sup> If the synthesis of the world takes place outside of the subject, we have to account for the fact that the predicates that we use to describe the world correspond to the properties of the object within the world itself. The most obvious ways of doing this are either through a metaphysics of essences and preestablished harmonies, returning to the notion of God as guarantor of the isomorphism of the two structures, or through the rejection of essences and metaphysics and a move toward a raw empiricism. In both these cases, the formulation of synthetic a priori propositions becomes problematic, as they either rest on the presupposition of a benevolent God as guarantor or are simply put out of play by empiricist skepticism. For Deleuze, the difficulty with the debate between the metaphysical thinkers and those of a Kantian persuasion is that, for both, the necessity of an isomorphism between the two structures has been presupposed, whether through the Kantian notion of synthesis, or the metaphysical notion of essence.<sup>3</sup> Deleuze instead will posit a difference in kind between the transcendental and the empirical.

As we shall see, Deleuze argues that this presupposition is that either being is seen as differentiated, in which case it maintains the predicable structure, or else it is undifferentiated, in which case nothing can be said of it.<sup>4</sup> Deleuze instead proposes a third alternative, which is that the structure of the transcendental field is different in kind from the empirical. The implications of this approach would be that the transcendental field would become entirely preindividual, but still differentiated, removing the subject

from the role of synthesizing agent, and thus splitting the conditions of *knowledge* of the object, in the sense that our knowledge of the object is understood propositionally, or in terms of the structure of judgment, from the conditions of the *object*, which will now be given by what Deleuze calls a subrepresentational transcendental field. This will mean that while conditions of the object will be formulated in terms of the *difference* between the transcendental and empirical, conditions for knowledge of the object will be formulated in terms of a structural *identity* between the constituted object and judgment. In fact, knowledge of the object will require both sets of conditions to be fulfilled for Deleuze, since the first constitute the subject and the object (and hence the sphere of representation). Knowledge of the object requires in excess of the conditions of the object a further set of conditions—an isomorphism between judgment, as subject-predicate based, and the object, as substance-property based. It is in this sense that Deleuze's rejection of the identity of conditions of objects and conditions of knowledge of objects is to be understood. For Deleuze, this difference in kind between the empirical, which is governed by the structure of judgment and the transcendental allows the transcendental to be seen as properly generative. That is, rather than merely conditioning the object, it actually generates the objective structure of the empirical without itself possessing that structure. This is in contrast to Kant, who assumes the identity of the condition and the conditioned (that is, of the transcendental and the empirical).

Beginning to clarify the grounds as well as the structure of this move will be the main task of this chapter, although this clarification will necessarily be schematic until we have looked at the material in chapters 4 and 6. In outlining the structure of Deleuze's development of this primary thesis, I will provide an analysis of the relevant sections of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, before evaluating Sartre's critique of the role of the subject within transcendental philosophy. This will allow us to see why Deleuze feels the necessity to move to a theory of the virtual and the actual and to highlight what he considers to be the two fundamental misunderstandings of the transcendental field: the "dogmatic confusion between event and essence" and the "empiricist confusion between event and accident" (*LS*, 54). I will conclude with some comments about the validity of this Deleuzian deduction of transcendental empiricism, given his reliance on Sartre's notion of the transcendental field, which turns out to be not so different from Kant's conception of the transcendental. By the conclusion of the chapter, we should, therefore, be in a position to understand Deleuze as attempting both to engage with and to overcome the limitations of Kant's philosophy. This will form the groundwork for the comparison of Deleuze's approach with Hegel's similar (at least in respect of the problematic from which their thought arises) project.

KANT AND THE *CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON*

Deleuze's break with Kant concerns the nature of the transcendental field and the isomorphism between the functions of judgment, which allow us to make judgments about the empirical world<sup>5</sup> and the categories, which as transcendental allow the synthesis of the empirical manifold. For Kant, this parallelism of the operations of the understanding is essential, as it is this that allows us to attribute to the subject the power to condition the empirical manifold and therefore to know with certainty that the understanding is able to apply its concepts to this manifold. Since our consciousness of the empirical manifold is generated through categories of the understanding (the same understanding that employs the functions in order to form judgments), then the structure of judgment will mirror that of the world, thus allowing certain synthetic propositions about that world to be guaranteed valid. By showing that the categories apply to the world, Kant is able to follow Hume in granting that all knowledge begins with experience, while at the same time allowing contentful propositions about the structure of that experience to remain necessarily true, since these fundamental structures are imposed on experience by the subject as the conditions under which experience is possible at all. The transcendental for Kant therefore contains those structures that concern the nonempirical determinations of the object, those that make experience of the object possible. For Deleuze, as a transcendental empiricist, what is of interest about the transcendental field is not its ability to guarantee knowledge, but rather the *generative* principles that it provides for the empirical world. In this change of emphasis, what is at stake is both the structure of the transcendental field and the rules that govern this structure and through this the structure of empirical experience, these rules being what Kant would call "transcendental logic" (*CPR*, A50/B74).

Kant specifies two conditions for a transcendental logic. First, that it must "contain solely the pure thought of an object, [and] exclude only those modes of knowledge which have an empirical content" (*CPR*, A55/B80). Second, that it must "also treat of the origin of the modes in which we know objects, in so far as this origin cannot be attributed to the objects" (*CPR*, A55/B80). Despite the differences of purpose in the employment of the transcendental by Kant and Deleuze, virtually identical conditions are accepted by both these thinkers as necessary conditions that must be fulfilled by any transcendental logic. For Deleuze to accept these conditions, however, the references to the subject need to be removed: he will argue that Kant has not shown the necessity of the transcendental field being generated in relation to a subject. Thus transcendental logic for Deleuze would first concern purely the Idea of an object, while still excluding those structures of the object as an empirical (actual) manifestation of that Idea, and second,

must concern itself with the origins of the object as experienced, insofar as this origin is not attributed to the object (or even of an objectival nature).<sup>6</sup> In order to see why Deleuze feels that this revision is necessary, we need to look primarily at two sections within the *Critique of Pure Reason*: “The Clue to the Discovery of all Pure Concepts of the Understanding,” or metaphysical deduction, where Kant lays out the relations between the functions of judgment and the categories (the pure concepts referred to in the section title), and “The Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding,” or transcendental deduction, where Kant attempts to show the necessity of the subject in the structuration of experience. My aim in this section will therefore be to outline the arguments that Kant puts forward in support of the notion of the subject. This will allow us to deal with the objections that Sartre will put to Kant. While the aim of this chapter is to outline the path from transcendental idealism to transcendental empiricism, this should not blind us to the fact that the insights provided by Kant within the transcendental deduction have been taken up even by his adversaries, so, Deleuze believes, by attacking the transcendental subject as found in the Kantian system, he is able to show the limitations of this notion of the subject in general.

The “Clue to the Discovery of All Pure Concepts of the Understanding” (otherwise known as the metaphysical deduction) opens the “Transcendental Analytic” and deals with the second of the faculties, the understanding. Kant has attempted to show in the Aesthetic that the sensibility deals with a priori forms of intuition, that is, that space and time are ideal forms through which objects are presented to the subject. By attempting to show that intuition is a function of sensibility, Kant has laid the foundation for transcendental idealism, as these intuitions have been shown to have an a priori basis in the subject’s cognition. The sensibility may show how objects are presented to consciousness, but Kant has not yet established how objects can be thought by consciousness. Showing that the manifold can be conceptualized proves a far more complicated task than showing its a priori nature, as it requires showing both the a priori nature of concepts and their application to the manifold. Kant’s problem is therefore the problem of showing how it is possible for two faculties—the faculty of sensibility and the faculty of the understanding—to interact with one another. While it is in the transcendental deduction that the attempt to justify the application of categories to intuition is put forward, the metaphysical deduction sets forth the relation between the ordinary functions of the understanding and the categories. For Deleuze, this setting forth of the relation to the categories, even though the categories’ legitimate application has not yet been shown, is one of the most important sections of the first *Critique*, as it is here that the conditions for the possibility of objects are first equated with the condi-

tions for the possibility of knowledge of objects through their joint origin in the understanding.

The metaphysical deduction aims to analyze the structure of the understanding and in doing so to determine possible candidates for the pure concepts that as categories will relate the understanding to intuition. It proceeds by establishing an isomorphism between the functions of the understanding and the categories, as shown in the tables of functions and categories. Kant begins his analysis by showing that the faculty of the understanding deals essentially with representations. Through a particular function, it is able to bring these representations into relation with one another, and through these relations, representations are subsumed under other representations in order to create unities. As this act is performed by the faculty of the understanding, it is natural to equate this act with that of judgment. Following the prevailing understanding of logic at the time, Kant assumes that judgments are always of the subject-predicate form and equate to the relation of a general representation that may range over a large domain of entities, such as that of divisibility, and a specific representation, which relates itself directly to an object, such as that of a body. The unity formed by the operations of the understanding on these concepts is one of subsumption, and thus we can form the classical propositions that are the raw materials of syllogisms, as in, for example, the judgment, 'all bodies are divisible,' which operates through the subsumption of the specific term, body, under the general concept, divisibility. Kant will argue that all thought can be reduced to variations on this structure, and thus that all thinking is minimally judging. Thus, all thought requires synthesis, understood loosely,<sup>7</sup> since all judgments require the construction of a subject-predicate structure. Just as there are a variety of syllogisms, so there are a variety of possible functions through which a judgment can be formed. In the above case, the concepts of 'body' and of 'divisibility' could be synthesized into other unities, such as 'some bodies are divisible,' or 'this body is divisible'. When we abstract from particular judgments, we find that all judgments must deploy certain functions, or rather a particular function from each of four groups of functions. These four heads (quantity, quality, relation, and modality) each contain three moments, one of which will be present in every judgment. Therefore, all judgments must, for instance, either relate to all, some, or one of a particular class of subjects; thus one of these moments of quantity must be present in every judgment. The four heads of judgment, as they stand, are purely formal, however, as they define solely the possible relations between representations, and if we are to understand the nature of the pure *concepts* or categories of the understanding, as opposed to the functions, which Kant claims to have thus far discovered, we have to consider these functions in terms of transcendental logic.

The categories turn out to be these functions considered from this standpoint of transcendental logic. The ground for their discovery is the synthetic nature of judgment, its ability to form unities, and the necessity of a synthetic function within the transcendental field in order to synthesize the sensuous manifold. The architectonics of the *Critique of Pure Reason* require that if intuition is to be understood, it must take on an objectival form, since judgments relate to objects, understood as substances with properties. Thinking cannot take place within intuition alone, as Kant claims to have proved in the transcendental aesthetic that pure space and time are not conceptual, and therefore nonobjectival. While the attempted proof of the thesis that objectival judgments can be related to the empirical manifold must wait until the transcendental deduction, the metaphysical deduction gives us the structural relation that will hold between the transcendental and the empirical, providing this proof is carried through successfully. As the understanding is capable of the subsumption of representations according to a subject-predicate structure into judgments, it becomes necessary that a prior synthesis generate the objectival structure that provides the foundation for these judgments, that is, to synthesize intuition so as to allow it to become the subject of judgments. The functions of judgment, being purely logical forms, will, however, prove to be insufficient for the unification of the manifold, as they deal only with judgments. This unity must therefore be provided by concepts other than, but compatible with, the functions of judgment, if judgment is to be validly applicable to intuition at all. Therefore, the unification of the manifold will be carried out by categories, which correspond to the functions, while also containing a *conceptual*<sup>8</sup> reference to intuition. Thus, for instance, the hypothetical function, if *A* then *B*, will be mirrored in the category of causality and dependence, which takes the form, *if . . . then*, and relates it to a manifold ("The schema of cause or causality of a thing in general, is the real upon which, whenever posited, something else always follows. It consists, therefore, in the succession of the manifold, in so far as that succession is subject to a rule" [CPR, A144/B183]). Thus we develop the second table, the table of the categories, divided into four heads of three moments, paralleling the table of functions. This of course has to be the case, as the functions constitute the primitive rules by which unities of judgment are synthesized. To each of these primitive functions, there must be a corresponding category in order that the possibility that the object may be fully comprehended is realized. More categories would make the object incomprehensible, as it would contain determinations not capable of being captured by judgment, and fewer would show that some of the functions were not in themselves primitive, but in turn derived from a subset of more powerful functions.

The metaphysical deduction presents a series of problems. The standard criticism of Kant is that he employs a method of deriving the categories

just as arbitrary as that which he criticizes Aristotle for using.<sup>9</sup> While this objection may call for a restructuring of the table of categories, our purpose in outlining the metaphysical deduction is rather to illustrate the main Kantian thesis that two of the functions that the understanding fulfills are the synthesis of objects and the subsumption of representations of objects.<sup>10</sup> This connection extends to the fact that the table of judgments is already fundamentally intertwined with the transcendental functions that are derived from it.<sup>11</sup> We can now see why for Kant the transcendental field is structured according to the model of classical logic, as this will allow Kant to explain the synthetic nature of the transcendental and to provide it with a differentiated structure. Deleuze's own metaphysical deduction will rest not on classical logic, but on the differential calculus, and will thus attempt to overthrow the double nature of the understanding as both synthesizing the manifold and formulating judgments upon which the Kantian model relies. We must now move on to the transcendental deduction itself, as the metaphysical deduction merely shows the conditions that Kant believes must be fulfilled by the transcendental category in order that it may fulfill its role. The metaphysical deduction is not a proof of the categories' actual application to the manifold, but rather of their relation to the understanding. It is in the transcendental deduction that we will see that this isomorphism rests on the presupposition of an 'I' that provides a point in the transcendental field around which the empirical field is unified. Kant believes himself to have shown "the subjective conditions of thought" (CPR, A89/B122) and must now show how these conditions have objective validity, in other words, show how these conditions are also the conditions of objects of experience.

The transcendental deduction extends the results of the metaphysical deduction, which claims to have shown the structure of the understanding, by attempting to show the application of the understanding to objects. This new move amounts to attempting to meet the Humean challenge; one may be willing to accept that the concept of causality is indeed present within the understanding, but given that concepts such as causality are "not grounded in experience"—that is, cannot themselves be discovered within the manifold of intuition—they must "arouse suspicion" (CPR, A88/B120). Thus Hume will argue that the concept of causality is not justified by our actual experience of nature, which only warrants the much weaker idea of *constant conjunction*. The actual concept of causality is instead a function of habit, which makes the inductive leap from particular instances of concordance to a general law-governed conception of the relations between objects. Thus Hume's deduction shows the pragmatic, rather than logical, grounds for our application of the category of causality. While Hume's notion may explain how the concept comes to be recognized by the understanding, such a derivation obviously cannot show us whether its application is justified (hence

Hume's skepticism). The alternative to this form of empirical deduction, which could only provide Kant with contingent truths, is a transcendental deduction, which moves to the necessary preconditions of experience. If we are to attempt this for the understanding, we must ask whether there are any conditions that need to be met in order to "*know anything as an object*" (CPR, A92/B125). While intuition is necessary for the experience of an object, it is not sufficient. Experience also requires the concept of an object in general, and intuition itself cannot furnish this notion, as the transcendental aesthetic has already shown that intuition is nonconceptual. Thus, the task that Kant faces is to show whether the concept of an object in general itself requires certain other a priori concepts in order to be comprehensible. As the concept of an object in general is a necessary (and therefore transcendental) condition for experience, any concepts that it itself presupposes must also be of a transcendental nature, as any contingency in these conditions would infect the concept of an object itself. We are therefore to search for concepts that themselves determine the concept of an object. Here we see why the metaphysical deduction is a clue, as the analysis of the faculty of judgment gave us a complete table of the functions necessary for any judgment to be formed. Kant claims that the categories, as deduced from the functions of judgment and related to intuition, provide just those concepts for which we are now searching: the necessary and sufficient conditions for the determination of an object in general.<sup>12</sup>

In the B deduction, Kant begins his analysis of the conditions for the application of the categories with the premise that "it must be possible for the 'I think' to accompany all my representations" (CPR, B131). For my representations to belong to me, it is a minimal requirement that I be able to assert of them that it is I who thinks them. If this were not the case, there would be thoughts that both belonged to me (as they are my representations) and did not belong to me (I could not lay claim to them). This 'I' has the further function of unifying my experience, for it allows perceptions at various moments to be integrated together, as the unity of the 'I' grants a unity to the various moments of experience, tying them together as they share a relation to the self-identical structure of the ego. This allows the subject to conceive of the manifold as *a* manifold. As everything empirical is itself within time, and thus is also affected by change, an empirical entity is unable to provide the identity that is required to effect this unification of the manifold. For Kant, this therefore excludes the empirical ego, which is the self of which the subject is conscious, from fulfilling this function. "No fixed and abiding self can present itself in this flux of inner appearances" (CPR, A107). Kant believes, therefore, that the unity of apperception must be instead a transcendental structure, the source of Sartre and Deleuze's opposition. Such a self cannot itself be intuited, but instead must

be posited as a presupposition of our having successive representations. We should note that this ego, which is presupposed, is a mere formal unity and cannot be thought (justifiably) as substantial. Substance is a category, and therefore, since this unity is the foundation of the categories, it must itself be pre-categorical. It amounts simply to the correlate of the unity of experience to which it must be possible to attach the 'I think'. It is known simply as a necessary identity, a 'that' that, as it precedes the categories, cannot admit of further determinations (as it is the categories that are at the root of the determination of objects). Although my knowledge of this unity (the "I think" with which Kant begins his deduction) is of the unity as analytic, "the analytical unity of apperception is only possible under the presupposition of some synthetic one" (*CPR* B133–34). This is because experience, at its simplest, must necessarily consist of a multiplicity of elements. Even the simplest perception, such as the perception of a colored dot, can only show itself against a differently colored background. In view of this complexity, the manifold is represented as a single complex thought, which in turn requires a singular subject, as "a set of distinct thoughts of the elements of the whole can never be equivalent to the thought of the whole itself."<sup>13</sup> Through this recognition of the unity of the manifold, the subject also comes to know the manifold as a synthetic unity. That is, regardless of whether the manifold is already structured, in order to be taken up by the subject, the subject must be able to compose the manifold himself to recognize this structure. This in turn requires that the subject bring these different elements of the manifold together as a synthetic unity and that he is conscious of this synthesis.

As well as the concept of a subject, Kant argues that we also need a concept of an object as the foundation of the categories. Such a concept has been shown to be necessary for experience, as the manifold of intuition cannot itself be presented in such a way as to allow us to know it without it. As with the categories, this object is a precondition for experience and as such cannot show up within experience without generating an infinite regress. Like the transcendental unity of apperception, it is the foundation of the categories and therefore cannot itself be categorical for the same reason. In fact the nature of the object at this stage of the deduction is left indeterminate; it is simply the correlate of the subject. The function it fulfils is related to the faculty of judgment, to the extent that it is simply a posited unity that allows judgments to be formed and perceptions to hold to a unified structure. Such a concept of an object, which makes all judgment possible, must, for this reason, be completely free from all content. It is the concept of an object insofar as judgments require a relation to an objective structure. As we have seen, Kant claims that this concept of an object in general must be free from the manifold in any case, so it

cannot contain anything given by experience. The transcendental object must therefore be conceived, like the transcendental unity of apperception, as a self-identical, singular transcendental condition for the unity of the manifold for the understanding. As it does not have its origin in intuition, the transcendental object cannot be conceived of as temporal. The freedom from content must mean that its function is purely one of providing a unity, and this it does, unifying representations in such a way as to guarantee a distance between our representations of objects and the transcendental unity of the object itself that underlies these representations.

In reliance on the notions of a transcendental subject and a transcendental object as the grounds for the categories, Kant has not at this point in the transcendental deduction succeeded in providing a basis for the application of the categories. The conditions for the possibility of the subject and the conditions for the possibility of the object need to be given in such a way as to avoid a potentially infinite explanatory regress, as each precondition in turn requires its own preconditions. Furthermore, Kant has not yet provided a justification as to *why* the thought of these transcendental structures allows the categories to relate to intuition. We shall begin by exploring the conditions for the possibility of the subject and the object, before moving on to their connection with the categories. It turns out that the subject and the object determine each other reciprocally. First, the subject makes the object possible. For representations to stand in relation to objects, it is necessary that the representations themselves have a certain unity. This unity is provided by the transcendental unity of apperception, which allows the 'I think' to accompany all of our representations. As subjects unify representations, they consequently ground the transcendental object, which is simply this formal unity of representations. The subject in turn is grounded by the object, since through the synthetic nature of the manifold it comes to know itself as a subject and as that which synthesizes the manifold. As we have argued, Kant cannot know the self as substantive, since it is not given in intuition, being a bare unity. Therefore, it is necessary for the subject to ground itself through some other means. In this case, the manifold, which is a synthetic unity, gives us this grounding, since it appears as the result of an act of the subject. If the subject were passive in relation to the representations that come before it, the subject would find itself unable to draw apart from those representations. Without the notion of an object, there can be no distinction between a representation and an object, and without this distinction, the subject would be unable to know representations as representations. They would simply "crowd in upon the soul" (CPR, A111). The concept of an object allows the subject to recognize representations as representations of the object and thus to distinguish itself from them. Thus the subject becomes aware of himself through the

unification of representations into an object, through his recognition of himself as a spontaneous consciousness. The subject therefore makes the object possible for Kant, and the object makes the subject possible. This means that the subject necessarily relates to something beyond its own empirical representations, to a world of objects, even though the form of these objects must be generated by the subject itself. The challenge for Deleuze will therefore be to provide an analysis of the transcendental field, which contains neither subjectival nor objectival elements, as the intimacy of these two terms means that the presence of one leads inexorably to the other. This in turn will allow Deleuze to conceive of the transcendental field as generative, rather than merely conditioning, as the transcendental will no longer be structured analogously to the empirical but will instead give rise to the objectival from a nonobjectival field. Instead of the transcendental having the form of the empirical, therefore providing the merely *formal* conditions of the empirical, the structure of the object in general, we will be able to understand the transcendental as actually generating the empirical. This is the ground for Deleuze's ultimate rejection of Sartre, who does not go far enough with the pure rejection of the transcendental subject. We can furthermore see that the rejection of the transcendental subject may have implications for the transcendental logic, as it is the concept of an object that makes the classical forms of judgment possible.

The question of the legitimation of the categories can now be answered. We can see that it is the subject that makes the object possible through a process of synthesis and that this synthesis must be conducted according to a priori rules, for otherwise, it would rely on empirical concepts, thereby begging the question at issue, namely, the preempirical conditions for the possibility of experience (the use of empirical concepts would give us a purely physiological derivation).<sup>14</sup> The categories, as concepts which apply to an object in general and are transcendental, seem to be the only choice for the rules of this synthesis. The categories are therefore legitimated through the role they play in allowing the subject to actively synthesize the object. In actual fact, it is not the categories alone which play the role of conditioning intuition, as the deduction attempts to show in general terms the relation of the faculty of sensibility to the understanding, thus allowing for the possibility of the conceptualization of intuitions unlike our own. The manifold is in fact synthesized by the schemata, which play the role of intermediaries between the conceptual and the intuitional, thus allowing the two heterogeneous matters to be brought into relation. They perform this role by sharing characteristics of both, and since time governs all empirical phenomena (whereas space only governs those external to the subject), the schemata can be considered as temporalized categories. For the purposes of explicating Deleuze's move to a transcendental empiricism, these

final moves, which concern the specific implementation of the results of the two deductions within the Kantian system of transcendental idealism, can be left to one side.

We now see how Kant conceives of the understanding as both being responsible for synthesizing objects through the categories and uniting representations through judgments. We can also see how the transcendental subject is thus generated through the synthesis of objects and is also its precondition, through the reciprocal determination of the subject and the object. The subject's role in actively synthesizing the object is not given directly but rather is established through our knowledge of the subject's spontaneity, gathered through its ability to perform analogous acts of unification in the domain of judgment. These two threads reinforce each other, as the isomorphism of the categories and judgments guarantees the subject-object structure of the transcendental, because the categories extend the objectival logic of judgment into the transcendental domain, and the subject-object structure makes possible the isomorphism between transcendental logic and the logic of judgment, as it allows the analogous structures to operate in both domains. As we shall see, Deleuze will attempt to refute both theses simultaneously in order to move away from Kantianism while maintaining the concepts of the transcendental and the empirical, redesignated as the virtual and the actual. This would allow him to propose a transcendental philosophy that was generative, rather than just conditioning. We are now ready to analyze Sartre's critique of the transcendental ego, which is a transitional point on the journey to transcendental empiricism.

#### SARTRE AND *THE TRANSCENDENCE OF THE EGO*

Sartre's early essay, *The Transcendence of the Ego*, provides the raw material for Deleuze's critique of the transcendental subject as the constituting principle that allows the isomorphism between the transcendental categories and empirical judgments. It is Sartre who provides the new direction for philosophy in the face of the established philosophical thinkers and was "the breath of fresh air from the backyard" (N, 12). In reconstructing a move from transcendental idealism to transcendental empiricism through Sartre's critique of the transcendental ego,<sup>15</sup> there are three difficulties that must be overcome. First, there is the schematic nature of the references to Sartre in Deleuze's writings. While Deleuze credits Sartre with developing the notion of an "impersonal transcendental field, not having the form of a synthetic personal consciousness or a subjective identity" (LS, 98), and with providing a "decisive" (LS, 103) critique of the notion of a transcendental subject, Deleuze provides almost no commentary on the text itself. This presents difficulties as the text, as it stands, is not overtly critical of Kant,

its target rather being the transcendental ego of Husserl. Second, although Sartre's essay is clearly aimed at a Husserlian conception of the ego, Sartre's intention in this essay is not to criticize phenomenology itself, but rather to save phenomenology from certain notions that in fact place the phenomenological project in jeopardy through their illegitimate application in the post-phenomenological world. His statement that "all the results of phenomenology begin to crumble if the *I* is not, by the same title as the world, a relative existent" (*TE*, 42) is followed by an attempt to reconfigure the ego in order to give it such a nature, and in the process to preserve the results in question. Given Deleuze's hostility to the phenomenological project in general (*WP*, 145–50), we must ask how he is able to make use of this essay by the self-proclaimed savior of the phenomenological tradition. Third, Deleuze takes it for granted that Sartre's essay ends in failure, that "it is no more possible to preserve for [the transcendental field] the form of consciousness" (*LS*, 105) than it is to preserve the *I*. These difficulties can be resolved if we assume that the argument that Sartre deploys against the transcendental ego in fact cuts deeper than he had anticipated, and finally undermines the foundations of even the reinforced phenomenology he himself proposes. We thereby accept Sartre's argument for the revised specification of the transcendental field without accepting the formulation developed by Sartre to meet this specification. We accept the schematics provided by Sartre while arguing that phenomenology cannot itself provide a solution to the difficulties raised. Thus Sartre's argument would provide the negative critique that leads positively to Deleuze's transcendental empiricism. In order for Deleuze to put the argument to his own use it must also, therefore, be the case that what Sartre discovers is not a problem specific to the structure of phenomenology, but a general problem, or at least a problem that is applicable to other systems containing certain functional analogs.

From a purely phenomenological angle, Kant cannot be the target of Sartre's critique, as the fundamental structures discovered by Kant in the deduction have no place in a philosophy of description such as phenomenology, and it is for this reason that Kant is excluded from Sartre's criticism. Indeed, at various points in the essay, he seems to turn to Kant to provide the resources to oppose Husserl. While Sartre may claim that the standard interpretation of Kant, as positing an existent transcendental ego, comes from the failure of the neo-Kantian movement to separate questions of validity from those of fact (*TE*, 34), claims that the transcendental ego "does not bind up the unity of phenomena" (*TE*, 100) would be very difficult to reconcile with any reading of the transcendental deduction.<sup>16</sup> Here Kant seems to suggest that the formality of the transcendental ego stems not from its purely hypothetical nature, but rather from the fact that its position as precategorical means that it must be *understood* as an indetermi-

nate existent. While the argument itself stands or falls regardless of these phenomenological considerations, and thus is equally applicable to Kant, I will discuss briefly the differences between the transcendental ego and transcendental apperception. The radicalized argument will therefore rely more upon Sartre's Bergsonian heritage than his phenomenological roots, as in fact it is probably Sartre's proximity to Bergson on many points that draws Deleuze to him.<sup>17</sup>

While Husserl on occasion labeled his philosophy a transcendental idealism, there are fundamental differences between the two philosophical positions that are pertinent to our inquiry. While both systems attempt to provide a description of the a priori laws of objects, the emphasis on the intentional character of consciousness within Husserlian phenomenology creates a radical divergence between the domains of what counts as thought within these two systems. For Kant, as we have seen, in the end, the search for the conditions for the possibility of experience leads to the identity of the conditions for the object and the conditions for knowledge of the object. The identity of these two conditions is guaranteed by the fact that it is the transcendental unity of apperception that allows the categories to condition the object such that the understanding can know it *as* an object. Thus, the rules governing consciousness necessarily also cover the objects for consciousness. From a transcendental perspective, what consciousness 'knows' is already within consciousness. Intentionality changes this situation, as intentionality is the property of being toward the world. As Ricoeur notes, the fundamental preoccupation of the *Critique* is with the epistemological question, "How are synthetic *a priori* propositions possible?"<sup>18</sup> This means that Kant's emphasis is on the representation of objects, and in particular, the representation of objects given to us by already constituted sciences. Kant's main preoccupation is therefore with the validity of propositions given in advance of our enquiry, rather than with a genuine description of subjective life. Once intentionality is seen as one of the primary characteristics of consciousness, consciousness becomes essentially "consciousness of" the object, rather than the Kantian consciousness that deals with representations of objects. The focus instead on intentionality allows us to explore not simply our representation of the object, but also our mode of relation to it. "Knowledge, or pure 'representation,' is only one of the possible forms of my consciousness 'of' this tree; I can also love it, fear it, hate it, and this surpassing of consciousness by itself that is called 'intentionality' finds itself again in fear, hatred, and love."<sup>19</sup> One of the central ideas of moving to this conception of consciousness is that if consciousness refers to an object outside of itself, then the question of how the elements are to be synthesized together into a representation within consciousness does not arise. "It is possible that those believing 'two and two make four' to be the

*content* of my representation may be obliged to appeal to a transcendental and subjective principle of unification, which will then be the *I*" (TE, 38). On this conception of consciousness, it is therefore possible to study the object in its own right. The object stands transcendent to consciousness and is thereby governed by its own conditions, which are the subject matter of the phenomenological method.<sup>20</sup> A further implication of this is that the methodology by which these phenomena are analyzed also requires alteration. Kantian philosophy proceeds by a critical method, using transcendental arguments to clarify the preconditions underlying a particular existent state (thus space is an a priori condition for experience in general because it is impossible to conceive of an object outside of a spatial milieu). As Husserlian phenomenology does not presuppose that the object is a function of the understanding, the transcendental analysis is replaced by a pure description, free from all assumptions, of the object. The setting aside of assumptions also includes the assumption of the existence or nonexistence of the object, thus allowing phenomenology to deal with all intentional objects, including phantasms and safeguarding its role as the foundation for the sciences, which can proceed to an analysis of the actual facts of the world once the structure of objects has been disclosed. The point at issue between Sartre and Husserl in this essay is whether a Husserlian phenomenology presupposes the presence of the transcendental ego for the same reasons that it is required within the Kantian system, namely, to create a point from which various consciousnesses can engage in various acts of apprehension yet still maintain a coherent unity. If this function is necessary, then phenomenology once again returns to the situation of an internal synthesis. If consciousness emanated from a transcendental ego, we would need to explain how it would be possible for such a consciousness to make contact with an object that is fundamentally transcendent to it. Husserl's solution to this seemingly intractable problem is to presuppose a medium that shares the properties of both consciousness and the object, which can thereby communicate between the object and the consciousness. Such a medium, or *hyle*, according to Sartre, undercuts the fundamental doctrine of phenomenology, "to the things themselves," as now consciousness is consciousness not of an object, but instead of the representation of the object through the *hyle*. Furthermore, in the work of Husserl, the *hyle* is a function of consciousness, returning us precisely to the theory of contained representations as put forward by Kant.

Despite this final convergence between Husserl and Kant, we must recognize a difference that results from the difference of methodology referred to earlier. Whereas Kant's critical philosophy raises the question of the transcendental ego as a question of validity, for Husserl, this is a question of fact. The Kantian transcendental ego is a critical precondition for the possibility of knowledge of objects. It is not as such actually given to empiri-

cal consciousness. For Husserl, the project of philosophy is fundamentally descriptive, however, and as such, the notion of a transcendental ego as presupposed, but not actually present to empirical consciousness, would be invalid and would necessarily fall before the *epoché* that suspends all such theoretical considerations. The difficulty is that it seems possible on the face of it that empirical consciousness could exist without an *I* while still requiring the transcendental field to be organized by a transcendental ego. Sartre seems to support something like this position at various points within the essay.<sup>21</sup> We should bear in mind that for Sartre, the status of the transcendental ego within critical philosophy is to a large degree made irrelevant by considerations that phenomenology brings to bear that seem to rule out the possibility of the Kantian system *tout court*. For our purposes, there is no need to determine an answer to the question of Sartre's intended target. Given that we are concerned with the logical structure of the argument, and not its specific relation to phenomenology, the use Sartre makes of it is of minor importance. The distinction between the empirical and the transcendental must still be borne in mind, however, in order to test the applicability of the argument to a more generally Kantian framework.

Despite the emphasis on phenomenology in Sartre's paper, his argument still begins with a reference to the transcendental deduction. Kant's statement that "the *I* think must *be able* to accompany all my representations" (*CPR*, B131–32) raises the question of whether the *I think* actually does accompany all of our representations, or on the contrary, whether in fact many of our representations occur without the presence of an *I*. This in turn raises two further questions. First, does the movement from a representation not being accompanied by an *I* to being accompanied by an *I* lead to a change in the structure of that representation? And second, while the *I* must be able to accompany our representations, is this because the *I* makes possible the unity of our representations, or rather is it the case that our representations are structured in such a way that it is always possible to prefix an *I think* to them? (*TE*, 34). The structure of Sartre's argument follows these three questions, with his answer to the first attacking the necessity of the transcendental ego, the second presenting an alternative theory of the unification of consciousness, and the third showing the impossibility of a transcendental ego. It is important to note that Sartre is here not attacking what is one of the fundamental premises of the transcendental deduction, but rather seeking a reinterpretation of the significance of this axiom. In this sense, he fully recognizes that for Kant, it is possible for the *I* to be lacking from empirical consciousness. It is for this reason that Sartre is happy to accept Kant's claim that the premise only requires a formal unity to find its fulfillment. For Kant, this analytic unity will in fact turn out to be grounded in a synthetic unity, which is the ground for the representations themselves.

What Sartre is instead considering is the possibility that the unity of our representations is not caused by the transcendental ego, but that, if this unity can be grounded by some other means, this does not exclude the possibility of the 'I think' accompanying all of our representations. In fact, it would make it possible, as it would form the set of representations to which the 'I think' is applied. While on a logical level, showing that the transcendental unity of apperception is not necessarily responsible for the unity of representations may not be too problematic, the difficulties emerge through the multiple roles that it plays throughout the Kantian system. As well as unifying consciousness, the transcendental ego also allows consciousness to separate itself from our representations and provides the feeling of spontaneity that characterizes the rational subject. Sartre must also attempt to explain why the idea of a subject cannot be legitimately held, given that it has previously been characterized as a self-evident truth. First then, we shall look at Sartre's account of the unity of consciousness.

Within phenomenology, there is a distinction between consciousness and the transcendental ego that, for Sartre, is vital. As we have said, consciousness is always consciousness *of* an object and thus is a relation to a particular object, as well as a particular mode of thinking of this object. An individual will naturally be conscious of a variety of different objects, states of affairs, and events, which raises an important problem for the Husserlian phenomenologist, namely, how these fragmentary experiences in disparate locations and at disparate times can be attributed to the same individual. This problem is compounded by the fact that the intentional acts of consciousness are intended to purely illuminate the essence of the object under consideration. This is after all the fundamental aim of phenomenology in grounding the sciences—the revelation of the pure essences of its objects of inquiry. The implication of this purity is, however, also the exchangeability of acts of consciousness, such that any idea of the individual itself dissolves. There is no way of differentiating one individual from another on the basis of consciousness, as its import comes from the object, which is public. The transcendental ego is introduced for these two reasons, since if we posit a structure from which acts of consciousness emanate, we can both guarantee the unity of these acts, since continuity is provided from their common source, and also account for personality, since these acts, though individually replaceable, form a coherent whole nonetheless within the transcendental ego.

Thus, the role of the transcendental ego, as unifying consciousness, plays the same role as the transcendental unity of apperception within the Kantian system. The primary difference is that the transcendental ego for Husserl must be accepted as a factual existent, whereas for Kant, it is instead a necessary posit, a formal unity. Sartre rejects these two reasons for the

transcendental ego on the grounds that both can be supplied by consciousness itself and that neither, therefore, provides a necessary reason for its existence. Individuality is first guaranteed to consciousness by Sartre through his recognition that consciousness exists much like a Spinozistic substance. That is, because consciousnesses share nothing, interaction is impossible. There is no danger therefore of a confusion between consciousnesses as each is both unlimited and necessarily separated from all others.

We can answer the question of the unity of consciousness by pointing to the unity of the object, which does not itself require a subject to make its unity possible. Here is what is for Sartre a fundamental tenet of phenomenology but what will for Deleuze be transposed into an empirical thesis about duration derived from Bergson. For Sartre then, the claim will be that Kant has misconstrued a fundamental phenomenological fact, namely, the durational experience of time, and so has derived conditions for the possibility of experience that do not relate to actual empirical experience. Sartre observes the fact that time appears to us not as a series of instants, but rather primarily as a continuum, through which the past and present are not separated from one another, but rather are undifferentiated. Consciousness “unifies itself by escaping from itself” (*TE*, 38). That is, the unity comes from the order present in the object that is transcendent to consciousness. Thus the roll of a die unifies consciousness through the necessary relations between its faces as it progressively gives itself to consciousness. “The object is transcendent to the consciousnesses which grasp it, and it is in the object that the unity of the consciousnesses is found” (*TE*, 38). Sartre’s central point is that once consciousness is seen as intending toward an object, rather than just synthesizing representations, the object itself can take on the role of providing identity for the subject. The flux of consciousness itself also participates in this unity through the retention of previous experiences. “It is consciousness which unifies itself, concretely, by a play of ‘transversal’ intentionalities which are concrete and real retentions of past consciousnesses” (*TE*, 39).<sup>22</sup> The ego is not needed to unify consciousness as consciousnesses themselves traverse one another in such a way as to provide a decentered unity. Rather than emanating from a central point, they are interwoven in such a way as to make this central spoke redundant. Sartre further argues that rather than unifying the phenomenal world, transcendental consciousness would instead lead to its fragmentation, as the transcendental functions slice through the temporally unified field. Such a function would in fact destroy the unity, rather than being its precondition.

The transcendental subject is further necessary on the Kantian account in order to provide a distance between the subject and the world. For Kant, regardless of whether the subject synthesizes the world or merely recognizes

it, an act of synthesis is necessary for a relation to the world to be formed. As Sartre has removed what for Kant is the center of syntheses, Sartre must explain how it is possible that this relation to the world takes place. In fact, Kant himself provides an alternative. Without the synthetic activity of the subject, representations would “crowd in upon the soul.” The distance between self and world would be lost as it is the active taking up of the world that allows the subject to conceive of himself as separate from it. It is this option that Sartre will himself accept, noting, with Kant, that the ‘I think’ can but need not accompany all of our representations. In these cases, representations do indeed crowd in upon the soul. This is the state of being enthralled by the world, which itself calls for us to act. In this state, the world seems to occupy us with tasks, events themselves dictating our actions. While in this everyday mode of existence we frequently do make reference to ourselves, Sartre claims that many of these references are simply called forth by the grammar of our language. Here Sartre argues that there are limitations to doing philosophy with grammar. This does not mean that we cannot reflect on ourselves, but for Sartre, this reflection merely relates to an empirical self, which is itself constituted from the history of our relations to the world. This self for Sartre is real but is not in itself generative.

For a phenomenological account of consciousness to dispense with the transcendental ego, it is furthermore necessary for it to explain how the concept of the transcendental ego emerges in the first place. This stems from the fact that if phenomenology is to proceed on the level of pure description, it cannot rely on inference to explain the presence or absence of any particular entity. Sartre must therefore explain why the transcendental ego appears in our accounts of the life of consciousness; why in other words we are led to draw this false picture of consciousness. For Husserl, the transcendental ego is a phenomenological fact, for Kant a presupposition. It is a hypothesis that seems to draw us irresistibly toward it in whatever form it takes. In fact, Sartre will claim that the transcendental ego does fulfill a function, but one that is practical, rather than transcendental. Once we accept the disavowal of the ego, we see consciousness itself as the foundation of the psychic life. Consciousness as creative spontaneity (in what he describes as a Spinozan sense<sup>23</sup>) overflows any unity that could be given to it through the presence of a unified personality. Without the ego, consciousness becomes equal to the transcendental field. When consciousness is revealed to itself in this respect, as utterly unbounded and ungoverned, it is struck by dread. Perceptions crowd in upon the soul, and consciousness becomes lost within the world. Without the background of a unity, consciousness is now without concepts such as passion and will, appearance and reality. Thus the transcendental ego becomes equated with the desire to become being-in-and-for-itself in the later terminology of *Being and Nothingness*, that is, to become a mixture