

# Moral intending Desire:

## On the function of “God” in Deleuze-Guattari

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“You shall not bear false witness.” How can such a simple sentence prescribe the prohibition? A “word” itself is a mere “word”, and it cannot impose any constraints by itself. However, in some cases, it certainly restrains our behavior when it becomes a “Commandment”.

Kant describe the Power of Commandment as that of Moral Law, which references the concept of God. However, what kind of God does Kant present us after the Critique of pure Reason? Let us track back in the process of discovery of the Moral Law to when he first encountered some passages penned by Rousseau (chap. 1). By doing so, I intend to clarify the function of God in the world of disenchantment as compared with the critique of Deleuze-Guattari to Kant (chap. 2).

### Chapter 1. From Rousseau to Kant

“Again, if, as it is impossible to doubt, man is by nature sociable, or at least fitted to become sociable, he can only be so by means of other innate feelings, relative to his kind;... the motive power of conscience is derived from the moral system formed through this twofold relation to himself and to his fellow-men.” (Rousseau: IV, 600)

The nature of human we refer to as “conscience” is regarded by Rousseau as an essential concept to form moral systems. “Wherever there is feeling and intelligence, there is some sort of moral order ... Thus his [the good man’s] place depends on the common centre, which is God, and on all the concentric circles which are His creatures” (Rousseau: IV, 602). Rousseau thinks that this kind of “moral order”, derived from the feeling of conscience, directly correlates with the formation of society.

According to Rousseau’s social contract, “each individual enters on a contract with himself” (Rousseau: III, 362). However, the “himself” is not individual which has a personal will, but the one who belongs to the general will. That is, each individual contract with himself as “a member of the sovereign” (*ibid.*). “Individuals having only submitted themselves to the sovereign, and

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the sovereign power being only the general will, we shall see that every man in obeying the sovereign only obeys himself" (Rousseau: IV, 841). According to Rousseau, this contract between duplicated 'one selves'—private and social—makes a society.

Following this process of formulation of the general will, Kant, on his "Memorandum in the 'Regard on feeling of beauty and holiness'" made mature his concept of Moral Law. "Human natures are naturally sociable, and we cannot approve sincerely what the others disapprove" (Kant: XX, 156). Hence, "from that point of view people understand the impossibility of 'bearing false witness' is not derived from philanthropy, but from the sense which distinguishes justice from injustice. This sense originates naturally in the human mind, which adjudicates on what is categorically good (not from point of utility),... thus, it is the ability of moral stance as a heuristic media" [*ibid.*]. By the sociability of human nature, Kant indicate the formation of moral sense and the passage to the 'general will', which declare the dimension of law.

Nevertheless, this sociability which occurs in Rousseau's thinking is situated as "a heuristic media" for Kant. He eliminates it from his theoretical system. Rousseau's "oneself" as "a member of the sovereign", which is oriented to the others, turn into the inner intelligible being in Kant's frame. Pure will of "oneself" as an intelligible being does not indicate relations of real persons, but only the ideal world. According to Kant, the relations of real society are considered only as "sociability unsociable". The social function by Rousseau is eliminated from Kant's theoretical frame. We cannot bear false witness, in Kant, because we are potentially intelligible beings. As an experiential being, we can bear false witness, of course. However as a intelligible being, we are not able to do it. According to Kant, we cannot escape from Moral Law, because we 'are' pure reason, which is derived from Rousseau's general will and eliminated social moment.

Yet, before internalization of 'oneself' as Moral Law, we should think about the process of formation of the Law. How do we obey in the universality of the general will? Following to the critique of Deleuze-Guattari to Kant, let us think about the structure of socialization from natural condition of "inconscious desire".

## **Chapter 2. Critique of Deleuze-Guattari to Kant**

### **2-1. Of the function of God**

According to Deleuze-Guattari, "the unconscious is Rousseauistic, being man-nature" (AOE, 132/122). It's not a matter for the unconscious desire to be good or evil (cf. *ibid.*), it is sociable by nature. Rousseau's desire for moral order, which has a relation to the self-love of Rousseau, is situated by Deleuze-Guattari as an unconscious desire before formulation of "self-consciousness", which, therefore, does not know the difference of between self and others.

However, just like Rousseau, Deleuze-Guattari does not reject the alienating society, praising the pure happiness of "natural condition" of the unconscious desire. Clarifying its structure, they try to criticize the process of formation of society, which, according to Deleuze-Guattari, is often handled by dogmatic, prescribed assumptions. The function of "God", in the theory of Deleuze-Guattari, is "energy of recording" (AOE, 92/86), which records the self-identity of the unconscious desire on the society. When the process of socialization by "God" is done "in the paranoiac

inscription”, that is, when it functions in dogmatic way, it would become “the greatest enemy”, although when it functions “in the miraculating inscription”, it will become “the greatest friend” (cf. *ibid.*). However, what are the criteria for dividing the two functions of “God”. Let us regard the description of “God” in Deleuze-Guattari.

The function of “God” discussed in Deleuze-Guattari refers to the same function in Kant’s theoretical frame. “The importance of the Kantian definition that posits God as the a priori principle of the disjunctive syllogism, so that all things derive from it by a restriction of a larger reality (*omnino realitatis*): Kant’s humor makes God into the master of a syllogism” (AOE, 90/84). Simulating Kant’s context, Deleuze-Guattari argue the function of “God”.

The proposition **Everything existing is thoroughly determined** signifies not only that of every **given** pair of opposed predicates, but also of every pair of **possible** predicates, one of them must always apply to it; through this proposition predicates are not merely compared logically with one another, but the thing itself is compared transcendently with the sum total of all possible predicates... Now although this idea of **the sum total of all possibility**, ..., is itself still indeterminate, ..., we nevertheless find on closer investigation that this idea, as an original concept, ... refines itself to a concept thoroughly determined *a priori*, and thereby becomes the concept of an individual object that is thoroughly determined merely through the idea, and then must be called an **ideal** of pure reason. (Kant: A 573-4/B 601-2)

In what way is the idea of a certain individual object determined? According to Kant, it is determined by the function of the disjunctive syllogism. Of the sum total of all possible predicates, what are the proper predicates for a certain being? That is determined by selecting proprieties from “every pair of opposed predicates”. In an opposition of Human/Animal, for example, the essence of the being should be determined by following disjunctive syllogism, of which the major premise is “a certain being should be Human or Animal without exception” and the minor premise is “this being is not Animal”, thus the conclusion “this being is Human”. In the process of the syllogism, the idea of the being is determined as Human. In that way, “the sum total of possible predicates” determines potentially the idea of all being and then “must be called an ideal of pure reason”. In that meaning, “the ideal of pure reason” should be called “God” in the theoretical frame of Kant because the function of “God” is nothing else than determination of the idea of all individual objects.

However, is this kind of description of “God” acceptable for the disenchanting modern world? For understanding the real meaning of this function of “God”, we should consider the psychoanalytic argument which Deleuze-Guattari brought forth when they discussed the concept of “God”.

## 2-2. The psychoanalytic structure of moral system

As the structuralist linguistics of Saussure show, all “predicates” are opposite to the neighboring predicates in the linguistic system called “Langue”, which have no correspondences with the real objects. The value of a certain word (“signifiant”) is determined by the relation with other words in the linguistic system. Our world view is articulated by that relation of words with

no relation to the articulation that the real world is supposed to have. What should this being be? The idea of being is, therefore, determined by some “syllogism” of the opposite predicates in the pure linguistic system, as Kant tells us. The structuralistic linguistics also tells us that the opposite predicates in the linguistic system, which have no relation to the experiential world, determine the essence of being. However, how does the pure linguistic system establish the authority of articulation in reality? Lacan’s structuralistic psychoanalysis explains the structure in which a simple sentence gains the power to articulate real world. According to Lacan, we need the dimension of “God” for having a nodal point between pure linguistic system and its meaning in the real world.<sup>1</sup>

Then, how does the function of “God” work through? Let us go back to see the process of formation of the general will in the perspective of psychoanalysis.

Am I White or Black? An opposite predicates White/Black determine the idea of being in the logical sphere of Lacan’s game of prisoners. There, three prisoners eager to get the general will in a certain “society” for their liberations. One of the symbols selected from two black and three white is posted in the back of each prisoner, who reasons his own symbol by looking at the other symbols that is posted in other two prisoners. For his own liberation, each prisoner desires the answer if he is White or Black.

Now, let us assume that prisoner A sees the two backs of the other prisoners B and C posted all White. Then, prisoner A begins to reason in the assumption that “if I am Black” for getting the minor premise of syllogism “I am not...” If he is Black, prisoner B and C will regard the other backs posted Black of A and White of the other. In that condition, moreover, if it is assumed that prisoner B (or prisoner C) is reasoning “if I am Black”, on that assumption of B (or C), prisoner C (or B) would see Black of A and Black of B (or C). Nevertheless, prisoner C (or B) who could reason his color very easily (if two Black are posted in the others “I am not Black”, then the minor premise of syllogism leads the conclusion directly) would not reach the conclusion. If this reasoning of prisoner A is correct, that is, if the other prisoners reason in the completely same manner as prisoner A assumes, the conclusion should be “I am White”. In that way, the disjunctive syllogism of the opposite predicates “Black/White” has been done in the assumption “the other prisoner reasons in the same manner as a prisoner”.

Thus, the solution of syllogism needs to take all prisoners under the completely same ‘reason’ rather than disparate individuals. For arriving at the conclusion of the question “Am I White or Black?”, the three prisoners must put themselves in each other’s shoes and use the same reasoning under the same context. That “reason” does not belong to the particular person, but only to general common sphere to three persons which the reasoning itself opens. Lacan calls that reason ‘The Other’ in his theoretical frame. By the function of ‘The Other’, simple opposite words such as “Black/White” have a power of articulation that determine the being of prisoners in the common logical sphere.

We can compare Lacan’s model, which designs the process of arriving at the common logical sphere, with that of the formation of general will in the frame of Rousseau. As Rousseau says, ‘the moral order’, which the human being intends to make because of its natural desire for society, is realized by a social contract. For the ideal society, Rousseau’s social contract requires,

above all, “the complete transfer of each associate, with all his rights, to whole community” (Rousseau: III, 360). In this time, “each giving himself completely, the condition is the same for all” and “the transfer being carried out unreservedly, the union between the associates is as perfect as it can be” (Rousseau: III, 361). Here, the unconscious desire in the natural condition arrives at a social condition by “giving himself completely” to “whole community” to make his identity in that society. As Lacan explains, each member of game gets into the same logical sphere by using the same reasoning, without exception. In order to get into the same logical sphere, each member needs to feed his desire all into the same thing. It seems that nothing has changed by that process. It seems “each in giving himself to all gives himself to none” (*ibid.*), as Rousseau says. Nevertheless, we must say something has changed definitely. In the process of formulation of the common sphere, each member belongs to the same general will, which should be called “The Other” in Lacan’s frame, thus he has accepted it as “himself”. In that process of reasoning, the common identity of the society has been made.

“You shall not bear false witness.” This simple sentence prescribes the prohibition, because we already belong to the general will when we become a member of society. We have accepted “The Other” as “ourselves” in order to get social identity. For this reason, we would not be able to tell a lie without self-deception. However, we have to say, this impossibility of lying is not a natural ‘fact’ of human being as Kant believes, but something constituted in the psychoanalytic process. The function of “God” is constructed in the process itself of reasoning rather than some intelligible one. Once a society is formed, indeed, we should obey to “The Other” absolutely. On the “sanctity of the contract” (Rousseau: III, 363), “if anyone refuses to obey the general will he will be compelled to do so by the whole body (Rousseau: III, 364). However, that sainted contract may be made alternatively. The unconscious desire can always construct a new society in its natural sociability. It is that possibility of recreation of society that Deleuze-Guattari tried to show by the notion of “energy of recording”. When the process of socialization by “God” is done in dogmatic way, it becomes “the greatest enemy”. Yet, when it functions “in the miraculating in scription”, it would become “the greatest friend”. The unconscious desire may have a potential energy that destroys the stark and stiff society and recreate new moral systems.

#### Note

- 1 For details of this argument, please refer to the following article: Daisuke ARAYA, “Engraved difference: on the concept of Foundation in Deleuze-Guattari and Lacan” in *Ethics of differences*, Nakanishiya Publishing, Kyoto, 2004

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