

Deleuze and Zen: An Interological Adventure

Peter Zhang
Grand Valley State University

ABSTRACT *This article experiments with interology as a mode of inquiry. It creates a multitude of interalities between Deleuze's works and Zen literature, partly for purposes of mutual illumination, partly for the sake of involution. It is meant as equipment for living, which is incomplete without the reader's involvement. Its serviceability rests on the reader's becoming one with it.*

KEYWORDS *Deleuze; Zen; Interality; Interology*

RÉSUMÉ *Cette article vise à faire l'expérience de l'interologie comme mode de recherche. Il génère une multitude d'interalités entre l'œuvre de Deleuze et la littérature zen, pour susciter à la fois des illuminations mutuelles et une forme d'involution. Il est conçu comme un assortiment d'outils pour la vie qui demeurerait incomplet sans la complicité du lecteur. Son utilité dépend de la capacité du lecteur à devenir un avec le texte.*

MOTS CLÉS *Deleuze; Zen; Interalité; Interologie*

Introduction

This article explores under-examined resonances and affinities between Gilles Deleuze's thought and the Zen sensibility. It is the author's belief that such an exploration will create a productive interface between Deleuze and Zen, enrich our understanding of both, and allow new insights to emerge. Part of the purpose is to reveal that there are secret tunnels between the two seemingly distant intellectual and ethical currents. The desired effect in the audience is the sting of perception and the shock of recognition. The article highlights such motifs as vitalism, ego-loss, voyage *in situ*, working against language, smoothness, et cetera.

Although Deleuze's mind was populated by a whole coterie of thinkers, three of them stood out as pivotal influences. In his introductory book on Deleuze, Todd May (2005) has a curious line: "Spinoza, Bergson, Nietzsche: Christ, the Father, the Holy Ghost" (p. 26), which is nothing less than a revelation of Deleuze's psychic makeup. The Christian overtone of May's analogy should not distract us from the

Peter Zhang is Associate Professor of Communication Studies at Grand Valley State University, 290 LSH, Allendale, MI 49401. Email: zhangp@gvsu.edu .

Canadian Journal of Communication Vol 41 (2016) 411-441
©2016 Canadian Journal of Communication Corporation

fact that the three thinkers' primary impulses all point in the direction of Zen. To be more specific, Spinozan ethics is an ethics of joy; so it is with Zen. Bergson celebrates *élan vital* (生命力) and sees intuition and immediate experience as far more important than the intellect for understanding the world; so does Zen.¹ Nietzschean philosophy is a life philosophy; so is Zen. As Alan Watts (1958) puts it, "The freedom and poverty of Zen is to leave everything and 'Walk on', for this is what life itself does, and *Zen is the religion of life*" (p. 60, emphasis added). Christmas Humphreys (1968) calls Zen a "virile, stern yet laughing philosophy of life" (p. 37). Deleuze's corpus embodies and affirms all three strands of philosophical and ethical influences. Thus, it is only natural if we detect resonances and affinities between Deleuze's thought and the Zen sensibility.

This article is not a linearly progressive essay that uses some philosophical first principle as its point of departure. Instead, it starts right in the middle. It is made up of an ensemble of provocations backed up with mutually resonant refrains drawn from Deleuze's corpus on the one hand and Zen literature on the other. Although an intimate familiarity with the two bodies of literature is not assumed in the reader, it is nevertheless called for. The textual strategy is not unlike that of rhapsody, montage, or mosaic.² While the provocations and refrains may serve to energize us, it is more interesting to see how flows of energy can be motivated by the intervals or interalities between them. As such, this exploration is interological in nature.

The issue of "hermeneutical gaps," however, poses a potential challenge to the legitimacy of this mode of inquiry. Can one translate into another vernacular (Deleuzism) concepts from such a different historical epoch or cultural milieu (that of Zen)? Is there any incommensurability between the two paradigms that is being done violence to? Indeed, a vast historical and geographical distance lies between the two intellectual and ethical currents, and whatever affinities and resonances there may be in between, they seem to be fragile and tenuous. As such, incommensurability is a given. At a spiritual level, however, it dissolves. There is "throughness" in between, which Deleuze seems to have figured out already, as evidenced by his book *The Logic of Sense* (1990), which has a lot to do with the fuzzy boundary between sense and non-sense. The book indicates that the influence of Zen upon Deleuze is direct. *Proust and Signs* (Deleuze, 1972) has a Zen flavour to it. So does *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983). So does Deleuze's style or mode of writing. There is a living quality to it. None of his ideas can be reduced to a thing. The posthumous glory of being hated by symbolic autopsists!

The issue of hermeneutical gaps is a Gordian knot cut by Deleuze, who transcends conceptual thinking by taking it to a bursting point. The hermeneutical gap argument may well be a symbolic resource deployed by theoretical conservatives to obstruct cross-cultural work. For our purposes, "gap" is precisely a synonym for "interality," which naturally attracts the flow of mental energy and motivates inquiry. *Zen in English Literature and Oriental Classics*, by R.H. Blyth (1942), is a precedent for this mode of inquiry. Similar examples are numerous in intellectual history. Deleuze's work actually gets us to ponder the question: what guise should Zen assume in the West? The following provocations may give us an inkling of an answer.

Provocations

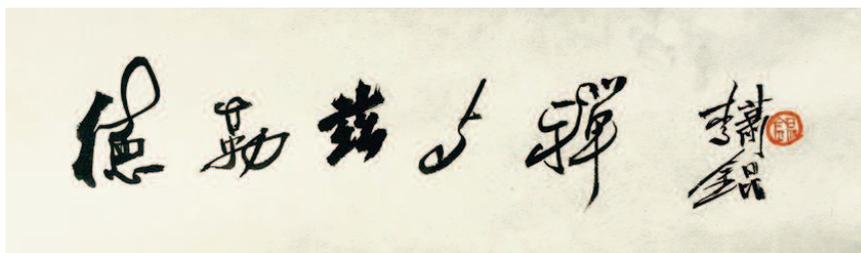
A profound vitalism lies behind both Deleuze and Zen.

The message is to unburden, unblock life, to trace lines of flight, to get rid of hindrances so life can reach its utmost potential. As such, Deleuze and Zen both imply a positive sense of virtue.

The vitalistic ethos is a recurrent motif in Deleuze's work. It runs through Deleuze's interpretation of the will to power, the eternal return, the active and the passive (as distinguished from the reactive), difference and repetition, nomad thought, and so on.³ The guiding question implied by this ethos is: is such-and-such life affirming or life negating? As Deleuze (1997a) points out in an article on Nietzsche: "[T]o affirm is not to bear, carry, or harness oneself to that which exists, but on the contrary to unburden, unharness, and set free that which lives" (p. 100). It is a question of "knowing whether a being eventually 'leaps over' or transcends its limits in going to the limit of what it can do, whatever its degree" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 37). The virtuous and free are those who do not block the life force (i.e., *élan vital*) that is within themselves. Vitalism in Deleuze is not just about the personal, though. It entails a politics as well. Reactionary forces, for example, have a vested interest in blocking movement, whereas active forces always embrace it (Deleuze, 1995). Democracy itself needs to be envisioned and practised vitalistically. A genuine democracy is nothing less than a crowned anarchy that allows people to give free rein to their potentials. Deleuze's work needs to be read as political philosophy.

Likewise, the point of Zen discipline is about unleashing the practitioner's arrested potentials—doing so without resorting to straining because straining almost always accomplishes the opposite. Conventional wisdom, however, often associates Zen with little more than calmness in a volatile world, thus missing the power or effectiveness side of Zen entirely. As Suzuki (1956) points out, "Dhyana is not quietism, nor is it tranquillization; it is rather acting, moving, performing deeds, seeing, hearing, thinking, remembering ..." (pp. 181–182). Zen manifests itself in real life as an efficacy emanating from the elimination of hindrances and blockages. To use a half line from Thomas Cleary (2005a), "Zen awakening ... unlocks hidden capacities" (p. 230). As such, it is vitalistic in nature.

Figure 1



Source: Lee Hsiao-kun

It is worth pointing out that the Spinozan notion of nature, which Deleuze invokes often, has an exact equivalent in Zen literature, which is called *hsing* [xing] 性. In the

final analysis, both are synonymous with *élan vital*. As Suzuki (1956) puts it: “*Hsing* means something without which no existence is possible, or thinkable as such. As its morphological construction suggests, it is ‘a heart or mind which lives’ within an individual. Figuratively, it may be called vital force” (p. 172). To see into one’s self-nature is to intuit one’s *élan vital*.

Deleuze and Zen both see the ego as a trap and advocate ego-loss.

Ethically speaking, ego-loss and vitalistic autopoiesis are simply flip sides of the same coin, the apparent paradox notwithstanding. For Deleuze, ego-loss constitutes a betrayal of the codes or life scripts overdetermined by the social system and involves the tracing of lines of flight, which is a species of life-experimentation with no guarantee. Indeed, in the search for freedom, a man takes his life in his hands. As Deleuze puts it in

“On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature”: [I]t is difficult to be a traitor; it is to create. One has to lose one’s identity, one’s face, in it. One has to disappear, to become unknown. (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 45)

A bit later in the same context, he points out, “We are always pinned against the wall of dominant significations, we are always sunk in the hole of our subjectivity, the black hole of our Ego which is more dear to us than anything” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 45). Identity, subjectivity, and ego are synonymous terms here. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze (1990) points out that “[t]he impersonal and pre-individual are the free nomadic singularities” (p. 141). Arguably, this single line captures the very gist of Zen. The impersonal and pre-individual are free from the hindrances that come with the ego and capable of operating in a state of *wuxin* 無心 (i.e., no mind). Hence, “[t]o paint without painting, non-thought, shooting which becomes non-shooting, to speak without speaking” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 137).

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) present the schizo as the one capable of accomplishing ego-loss. Take this quote:

[The schizo, the man of desire] produces himself as a free man, irresponsible, solitary, and joyous, finally able to say and do something simple in his own name, without asking permission; a desire lacking nothing, a flux that overcomes barriers and codes, a name that no longer designates any ego whatever. (p. 131)

Ego-loss is a mark of freedom, so to speak. It is also a mark of sanity: “True sanity entails in one way or another the dissolution of the normal ego” (Laing quoted in Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 132).

Deleuze associates ego-loss with the dissolution of substantives and adjectives. As he puts it in *The Logic of Sense*:

[W]hen substantives and adjectives begin to dissolve, when the names of pause and rest are carried away by the verbs of pure becoming and slide into the language of events, all identity disappears from the self, the world, and God. (Deleuze, 1990, p. 3)

Although this understanding is Stoic in origin, it is nevertheless well in line with the Zen sensibility. The grammatical equivalent of Zen is a verb in the infinitive form.

Zen literature holds that “[n]othing remains the same for two consecutive *ksanas* (the shortest imaginable periods of time)” (Hanh, 1995, p. 39). Therefore nothing has a fixed identity. To cling to a fixed ego is to negate the very essence of life, whereas to let go is to affirm life. This is precisely the main argument of Watts’ book *The Wisdom of Insecurity* (1951). In practical matters, the ego always brings with it a psychological blind spot, thus keeping one from coping with situations with an unclouded mind or no mind. The mind is an outcome of cultural conditioning. Ego-loss, or psychic minorization, is a matter of deconditioning—and the precondition for true wisdom.

In the Linji/Rinzai 臨濟 School, each disciple is given a fitting *huatou/watō* 話頭 (critical phrase) to contemplate. The right *huatou* encapsulates the disciple’s Great Doubt (*dayi/daigi* 大疑, a state of concentration brought to its highest pitch). The disciple who is in a state of absolute concentration on the *huatou* stands a chance of being suddenly awakened by an accidental trigger, which may take a number of forms, such as the sound of the temple bell, the sight of a flock of birds against the grey sky, or a serendipitous stanza the disciple stumbles upon. A strong resonance may exist between the *huatou* and the stanza, thus inducing a cathartic catastrophe in the disciple’s mind, which becomes the site of the explosion. The most common *huatou* is “Who am I?” and the right answer is arguably “Buddha.” As the *huatou* is cracked, so the ego is pulverized, and the disciple experiences a *satori* (*wu/go* 悟), big or small. As Suzuki (1956) puts it, “The individual shell in which my personality is so solidly encased explodes at the moment of *satori*” (p. 105). Cleary (2005b) points out that *satori* “means the awakening of the whole potential for the experience of experience itself” (p. 234). Couched in Deleuzian terms, such awakening jolts one in the direction of “a pure perception identical to the whole of matter” (Deleuze, 1991, p. 27). Our labels for things are no more than thin simplifications. They promote recognition but pre-empt encounter. *Satori* entails the reopening of the doors of perception, or the lowering of the threshold of perception. As a result, one gains access to what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) call “microperceptions” (p. 283).

The utility of ego-loss is a recurrent motif in the works of Zhuangzi 莊子, which preceded and profoundly informed the rise of Zen. In the chapter entitled “Mastering Life,” for example, Zhuangzi tells the story of woodworker Ch’ing, who made a bell stand that seemed to be the work of gods or spirits. Ch’ing attributes his capacity to the achievement of ego-loss through fasting:

When I am going to make a bell stand, I never let it wear out my energy. I always fast in order to still my mind. When I have fasted for three days, I no longer have any thought of congratulations or rewards, of titles or stipends. When I have fasted for five days, I no longer have any thought of praise or blame, of skill or clumsiness. And when I have fasted for seven days, I am so still that I forget I have four limbs and a form and a body. By that time, the ruler and his court no longer exist for me. My skill is concentrated and all outside distractions fade away. ... That’s probably the reason that people wonder if the results were not made by spirits. (Watson, 1968, pp. 205–206)

Zhuangzi can be retroactively called a Zennist, the anachronism notwithstanding.

Deleuze's notion of "rhizome" is a recurrent motif in Zen literature even if the term is not used explicitly.

Deleuze associates the tree with transcendence ("a specifically European disease") and the West, and the rhizome with immanence and the East (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 18). The phrase "successive lateral offshoots in immediate connection with an outside" not only captures the image of the rhizome but also its spirit, which is the will to freedom or smoothness (i.e., "the removal of blockages") (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, pp. 12–19). The rhizome is characterized by lines of flight, so to speak. In a sense, the tree is to structure as the rhizome is to *communitas*, to borrow Victor Turner's (1969) vocabulary. The one implies striation, and the other, smoothness. But "rhizome" is a far more inclusive and far less anthropocentric term than *communitas*.

In Zen literature, the closest equivalent to the notion of rhizome is probably interbeing or *shishi wuai/ji ji muge* 事事无碍 (*muge* means "no blockage, no obstruction," which is synonymous with throughness or smoothness). "[*Ji ji muge*] is the idea of the mutual interpenetration of all things, or the mutual interdependence of all things. Its symbol is Indra's net, the principle of which is elaborated in the *Avatamsaka sutra*" (Watts, 1999, p. 43). In Hanh's (1995) words, "The presence of one thing (*dharma*) implies the presence of all other things. The enlightened man or woman sees each thing not as a separate entity but as a complete manifestation of reality" (p. 41). To be enlightened means to see the world as a rhizomatic web of interdependence. As such, the orchid and the wasp (one of Deleuze's examples for the rhizome) are but one organism. In *Unlocking the Zen Koan*, Cleary (1997) points to "the interconnectedness of everything in a cosmic web of Life" (p. 56). In like fashion, Peter Hershock (2005) points out: "Joining things' is the horizonless way (*dao*) of healing the wound of existence" (p. 115). Becoming rhizomatic can be therapeutic, so to speak, especially for the radically individualistic. In *The Joyous Cosmology*, Watts (1962) remarks, "[Zen] is a discipline in awareness as a result of which the mutual interrelation of all things and all events becomes a constant sensation" (p. 8). That is to say, Zen discipline culminates in a heightened awareness of the rhizome.

There is a striking resonance between the Zen notion of *ji ji muge* and the following passage by Deleuze (1990), especially the phrase "the universal communication of events":

The problem is therefore one of knowing how the individual would be able to transcend his form and his syntactical link with a world, in order to attain to the universal communication of events, that is, to the affirmation of a disjunctive synthesis beyond logical contradictions, and even beyond allogical incompatibilities. (p. 178)

The gist of *ji ji muge* and "the universal communication of events" is *tong* 通 (i.e., throughness) or smoothness. That the above passage comes from a chapter by Deleuze on univocity is no mere coincidence. One simply cannot talk about rhizome, interbeing, or *ji ji muge* without talking about univocity. These terms all imply each other. Let us bracket the whole notion of univocity for the moment.

Couched in Deleuzean terms, satori is a curious, stationary journey.

Put otherwise, *satori* is an inner trip, a psychic transformation that allows one to live

the striated in a smooth mode. That is to say, *satori* entails “a manner of being in space as though it were smooth” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 386).

As a Zen-spirited couplet found at the West Garden Temple 西園寺 in Suzhou, China, has it, “The ordinary person transforms his surroundings instead of his psyche, whereas the saint transforms his psyche instead of his surroundings” (凡夫轉境不轉心, 聖人轉心不轉境). This Zen idea coincides with Deleuze’s point that “flights can happen on the spot, in motionless travel” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 37). The oxymoronic phrase “motionless travel” refers to inner trips, psychic transformations, or “trips in intensity,” as Deleuze puts it in “Nomad Thought,” an article about Nietzsche (Allison, 1977, p. 149). Deleuze applies the phrase to nomads, who do not move but “stay in the same place and continually evade the codes of settled people” (Allison, 1977, p. 149). In a different context, he explains: “you shouldn’t move around too much, or you’ll stifle becomings” (Deleuze, 1995, p. 138). This description of nomads applies to awakened Zen practitioners, that is, spiritual nomads unhindered by the dominant codes of the societies in which they live so that “[w]herever they dwell, it is the steppe or the desert” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 376). It is worth mentioning that Zhuangzi, too, is fond of using oxymoron, calling the hermit “one who has drowned in the midst of dry land” (陆沉者) (Watson, 1968, p. 286). Watts’ (1958) description of the feel of *satori* is in order here:

[I]n many cases it seemed ... as though the oppressiveness of the outer world had suddenly melted like a vast mountain of ice. ... The whole rigid structure which is man’s usual interpretation of life suddenly drops to pieces, resulting in a sense of boundless freedom ... (p. 68)

To experience *satori* is to experience the sensation of smoothness or throughness *in the midst of dealing with* material constraints. It is about tracing out lines of flight without actually fleeing. As Watts (1958) points out further: “the Zen life does not move in ruts; it is the freedom of the Spirit, unfettered by external circumstances and internal illusions” (p. 59).

Satori is contingent upon slipping the trap of language. The exact same impulse is seen in Deleuze.

For one thing, Deleuze advocates the invention of a foreign language within language, or reaching the outside of language (Deleuze, 1997b).

The Zen mode of communication is economical, improvisational, suggestive, heuristic, pragmatic, sometimes paradoxical, but never syllogistic. The purpose is not so much to impart conventional knowledge as to trigger a sudden, total awakening, which is known as *dunwu* 顿悟. The Zen master can improvise well-calibrated, well-timed triggers to catalyze *satori* but can never force *satori* into a disciple. *Satori* happens only when the disciple *runs out of language* (言語道斷; 忘言)—pun intended. As a Zen phrase has it, “Bound up in words, a person gets lost” (滯句者迷) (Hori, 2003, p. 117).

It takes tireless negation on the part of the master for the disciple to get to the point where he is totally cornered, ready for the mind-blowing experience of *satori*, which feels like a catharsis and gives one the sensation of freedom—a sensation that is ineffable and incommunicable. Carl Jung rightly calls *satori* a “*mysterium ineffabile*”

(quoted in Suzuki, 1964, p. 11). The taste of *satori* is in the tasting. It is like drinking water—one knows for oneself whether it is cold or warm (如人飲水, 冷暖自知). As Humphreys (1968) puts it, *satori* is “the im-mediate experience of truth as distinct from understanding about it” (p. 33). The master’s negation (of discursive understanding) is indistinguishable from a profound affirmation (of suchness, of the flux of life that defies linguistic categorization).

Although language, like the pointing finger, always falls short of capturing “it,” to prescribe “Speak not” because of that is to miss the point entirely. The Zen-minded are full aware of both the limitations and the utility of language. What differentiates them from naïve verbal realists is that they are not overly obsessed with or distracted by mere semantics. Rather, they are more pragmatic minded and effect oriented. The Zen master frequently resorts to humour, paradox, conundrums, and nonsense to shake his disciples awake from their linguistically induced hallucinations, so they become aware of “it.” As the signifying function of language recedes, so the edifying function kicks in. Deleuze’s constant mention of Zen humour, Lewis Carroll, and pragmatics and his repeated use of paradox and oxymoron indicate that he was privy to this linguistic truth, just like the typical Zen master.⁴

The Zen mode of discourse is a recurrent motif in *The Logic of Sense*. Take this passage on paradox:

Chrysippus taught: “If you say something, it passes through your lips; so, if you say ‘chariot,’ a chariot passes through your lips.” Here is a use of paradox the only equivalents of which are to be found in Zen Buddhism on one hand and in English or American *nonsense* on the other. In one case, that which is most profound is the immediate, in the other, the immediate is found in language. (Deleuze, 1990, pp. 8–9)

Three additional lines from the book are worth quoting here: “Paradox is opposed to *doxa*”; “with the passion of the paradox, language attains its highest power”; “the paradox is the force of the unconscious: it occurs always in the space between (*l’entre-deux*) consciousnesses, contrary to good sense or, behind the back of consciousness, contrary to common sense” (Deleuze, 1990, pp. 75–80). Insofar as Zen means the triumphant irruption of the extra-sedentary, it is essentially para-doxical. A line from the back cover of Humphreys’ book *Zen Buddhism* (1968) is in order here: “Anyone who recognizes the super-sense behind the non-sense of Edward Lear or Lewis Carroll is already halfway to Zen” (n.p.). This line not only resonates with the Deleuze passage on paradox, but also sheds light on his book title, *The Logic of Sense*.

Deleuze’s notion of creating impossibilities and thereby possibilities captures well the process of cracking a gongan/kōan 公案.

The following passage from *Negotiations* is at once powerful and self-explanatory:

We have to see creation as tracing a path between impossibilities ... Kafka explained how it was impossible for a Jewish writer to speak in German, impossible for him to speak in Czech, and impossible not to speak. ... Creation takes place in bottlenecks. Even in some particular language, even in French for example, a new syntax is a foreign language within the lan-

guage. ... You have to work on the wall, because without a set of impossibilities, you won't have the line of flight, the exit that is creation, the power of falsity that is truth. (Deleuze, 1995, p. 133)

As a result of the impossibilities or the double bind, Kafka ended up minorizing German, or inventing a foreign language within German. This process is best described as the transformation of a dilemma (impossible to speak in German, impossible to speak in Czech) into a tetralemma (it is German; it is not German but Yiddish; it is both; it is neither). The process is spelled out by Deleuze and Guattari in their book chapter "What Is a Minor Literature?" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, pp. 16–27). Kafka's minorization of German is very much a Zen experience.

There is a striking similarity between the Deleuze passage quoted above and Watts' account of the process of cracking a *kōan*:

[A]ll of these Koans involve one in some kind of dilemma. ... Every Koan must eventually lead to this impasse ... somehow [the Zen disciple] must find a way through. The moment he finds it there comes the flash of Satori ... suddenly the disciple has escaped from the bondage of his own imaginary prison—the rigid view of life which he himself has created ... (Watts, 1958, p. 70)

The *kōan* "is simply a means of breaking through a barrier" (Watts, 1958, p. 71). Deleuze (1990) remarks, "We must recover the aphorism-anecdote, that is, the koan" (p. 142). To crack a *kōan* is to experience a major psychic transformation (i.e., a *satori*). The post-*satori* state of mind is characterized by smoothness, or throughness.

Mediators are to Deleuze as triggers for satori are to the student of Zen.

For Deleuze, the chief function of mediators is to catalyze creativity, help remove blockages (e.g., Platonic Ideas), and induce becoming. Mediators are sources of inspiration and hold the potential to touch off a process of involution. But mediators cannot function if one has not developed the capacity to be affected. If one's will to becoming is the cause 因, then mediators are the *pratyaya* (*yuan/en* 緣). Suzuki (1961) points out, "[i]n fact, all the causes of satori are in the mind" (p. 245). In explaining the Zen term *jiyuan/kien* 機緣, Hori (2003) indicates that "*ki* denotes the potential of the practitioner or disciple ... and by extension the practitioner or disciple himself" and that *kien* means disciple and master (p. 678). That is to say, the master serves the function of *pratyaya*. But other things can serve as *pratyaya* too.

To be ethical means to be adequate to one's encounters or, to use Deleuze's (1990) language, "not to be unworthy of what happens to us" (p. 149). The virtuous person is thus marked by receptivity and affectability. For the prepared person, mediators can be anything. "They can be people ... but things too, even plants or animals" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 125). Deleuze and Guattari, for example, were mediators for each other. When they worked together, each of them falsified the other, which is to say that each of them "[understood] in his own way notions put forward by the other" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 126). Their collaborative works leave the impression that the writing was done by a third person that had emerged in between. *Anti-Oedipus*, for example, "at times took on a powerful coherence that could not be assigned to either one of [them]" (Deleuze, 2007, p. 239).

For the student of Zen, the primary mediator is the Zen master, who uses all sorts of *upaya* (i.e., expedient means) to bring about awakening in the disciple. As Suzuki (1956) puts it, “The Zen masters ... are always found trying to avail themselves of every apparently trivial incident of life in order to make the disciples’ minds flow into a channel hitherto altogether unperceived” (p. 90). However, if the mind of the student is ripe, then “all things and beings are teaching,” (Hershock, 2005, p. 115) which is to say, all things and beings are potential mediators. As the Zen phrase has it, “He saw the star and awakened to the Way” (見星悟道) (Hori, 2003, p. 166). Hakuin 白隱 reached his first awakening upon hearing the temple bell at the Eigan-ji Temple. Xiangyan/Kyogen 香巖 experienced *satori* when a piece of rock struck a bamboo as he was sweeping the ground (Suzuki, 1956). A monk called Yenju attained *satori* when he heard a bundle of fuel drop (Humphreys, 1968). Contemporary Chan master Victor Chiang 強梵暢 experienced awakening upon hearing his master’s snore. Yuanwu 圓悟 opened *satori* upon hearing an amorous poem (the English for the crucial last two lines is offered below):

一段風光畫不成，
洞房深處惱予情。
頻呼小玉元無事，
只要檀郎認得聲。

Again and again I called Little Jade, but for no real purpose,
Just so that my lover can recognize my voice. (Translation mine)⁵

The real message here is not what “I” say but “my” very voice. There is a hidden analogy, or a kind of allegorical coding, though, to which only the prepared disciple is privy: the *kōans* and cryptic words uttered by the Zen master now and then are not to be taken literally; they are addressed to those whose minds are ripe and are meant to shock them into awakening. The *de facto* addressee is oftentimes the accidental overhearer who is ready for the moment of abrupt awakening. The Sixth Patriarch, Hui-neng/Yeno 慧能, was a good example of such an overhearer. Legend has it that he attained his initial *satori* upon overhearing the following line from the *Diamond Sutra*: “Arouse the mind that abides in no place” (應無所住而生其心).

What makes meaningless sounds fitting triggers of awakening is probably the fact that sounds are living events in the process of fading away, thus embodying the principle of impermanence. Precisely because they are meaningless, such sounds do not distract people from their dependent arising and subsequent demising. A mountain spring is capable of preaching the Dharma 泉聲說法 precisely because its “expressions” are wordless and meaningless. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) have a line about sound that is worth quoting here: “sound invades us, impels us, drags us, transpierces us. It takes leave of the earth, as much in order to drop us into a black hole as to open us up to a cosmos” (p. 348).

*Couched in Deleuzean terms, satori is at once a breakdown
and a breakthrough.*

The high-frequency appearance of the two terms in *Anti-Oedipus* indicates the preoccupation of schizoanalysis. A passage by Suzuki (1964) explains the point well:

Satori ... is a sort of mental catastrophe taking place all at once, after much piling up of matters intellectual and demonstrative. The piling has reached a limit of stability and the whole edifice has come tumbling to the ground, when, behold, a new heaven is open to full survey. (p. 95)

A line by Jung is in order here too: “The occurrence of *satori* is interpreted and formulated as a break-through of a consciousness limited to the ego-form in the form of the non-ego-like self” (quoted in Suzuki, 1964, p. 14).

Surfing is a Zen sport. For Deleuze, it is a metaphor for life in a control society.

In surfing, the principle of non-duality plays a conspicuous role. Surfer, surfboard, and water constitute one integrated process. The truly free surfer is egoless.⁶ There is neither moving nor being moved; there is only “moving with.” There is no rational planning; there is only *in-the-moment* co-operation. There is no telling the difference between water’s energy and surfer’s energy; there is only synergy. Hence the sense of gracefulness. No wonder toward the end of the chapter on flowing with the Tao in his book *Cloud-hidden, Whereabouts Unknown*, Watts (1974) uses surfing to summarize the point:

The principle of the thing is also recognized by our own surf riders, some of whom know very well that their sport is a form of yoga or Taoist meditation in which the whole art is to generate immense energy from going with your environment, from the principle of *wu-wei*, or following the gravity of water and so making yourself one with it. For, as Lao-tzu himself said, “Gravity is the root of lightness.” (p. 34)

To say “there is only *in-the-moment* co-operation” is to say that surfing entails a present orientation. The present, as Okakura (1906) points out in *The Book of Tea*, “is the moving Infinity, the legitimate sphere of the Relative. Relativity seeks Adjustment; Adjustment is Art. The art of life lies in a constant readjustment to our surroundings” (p. 58).⁷ The last statement especially applies to life in a control society, the defining features of which are rendered visible by the sport of surfing, so Deleuze (1995) seems to suggest. As he puts it:

All the new sports—surfing, windsurfing, hang-gliding—take the form of entering into an existing wave. There’s no longer an origin as starting point, but a sort of putting-into-orbit. The key thing is how to get taken up in the motion of a big wave, a column of rising air, to ‘get into something’ instead of being the origin of an effort. (p. 121)

As natives of a control society, we do what surfers do: neither starting anything, nor finishing anything. Instead, we start in the middle, moving along with one wave after another, making constant adjustments as we go. As Deleuze (1995) points out: “control man undulates, moving among a continuous range of different orbits. *Surfing* has taken over from all the old sports” (p. 180, emphasis in original).

Deleuze’s concern is that, compared with the old discipline, control is a different animal entirely (a snake as apposed to a mole) and necessitates the invention of new weapons of resistance. For the Zen minded, however, agency resides in non-duality.

Metaphorically speaking, *jujitsu*—the Zen art of using the opponent's own strength to defeat him—may well be an efficacious style of resistance in control societies.

Deleuze would say: Zen constitutes a divergence from Buddhism.

This understanding is found in Suzuki too, who sees Zen as “the Chinese revolt against Buddhism” (quoted in Humphreys, 1968, p. 32). Deleuze (1990) suggests that Buddhism is hierarchical, whereas Zen is flat: “This adventure of humor, this two-fold dismissal of height and depth to the advantage of the surface is ... the adventure of Zen—against the Brahman depths and the Buddhist heights” (p. 136). Put otherwise, Buddhism is about transcendence, whereas Zen is about “the transcendence of transcendence (that is, absolute immanence),” to borrow Masao Abe's phrase (1985, p. 178). Deleuze's philosophy is a philosophy of immanence. It takes one to know one. It is worth noting that immanence is also a Taoist idea, according to which the Tao is inherent or immanent in the ten thousand things. As Zhuangzi points out, “It is in the piss and shit!” (Watson, 1968, p. 241).

Buddhism is otherworldly, whereas Zen is this-worldly. Buddhism carries an intellectualist baggage, whereas Zen does not. For the Zennist, “[t]here is no circle of birth and death to escape from, nor any supreme knowledge to attain” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 137). As Humphreys (1968) puts it, “Samsara, the Wheel of Becoming, is Nirvana” (p. 44). The door of Zen is open to illiterates like Hui-neng, whereas one who is well learned in the sutras may end up never experiencing *satori*. “Great learning and vast knowledge are only impediments to entering the gate of the dharma” (Addiss, Lombardo, & Roitman, 2008, p. 175). In Buddhism, there is a hierarchy from the Buddha, the Bodhisattva (he who dedicates his life and the fruits of life to his fellow men), the Arhat (he who strives for his own perfection before he presumes to lead his brother on the Way), all the way down to the average person. In Zen, everybody is a Buddha in disguise; put otherwise, the Buddha is viewed as “the principle of Enlightenment which dwells in all” (Humphreys, 1968, p. 29). As Hui-neng sees it, every one of us, whether wise or ignorant, is endowed with Prajna, by means of which one can see into one's self-nature and thus attain Buddhahood (Suzuki, 1956). The Zen masters, “instead of being followers of the Buddha, aspire to be his friends and to place themselves in the same responsive relationship with the universe as did Buddha” (Reps, 1961, pp. 3–4). A Zen phrase says it all: “Buddhas and sentient beings are one, but willy-nilly we divide them into sacred and profane” (生佛一如, 妄為凡聖) (Hori, 2003, p. 338).

There is an unmistakable Taoist element in Deleuze and Zen alike.

Watts (1989) points out, “The origins of Zen are as much Taoist as Buddhist” (p. 3). Without Taoism, the divergence of Buddhism into Zen is unthinkable. To rephrase the point, Zen is the outcome of the interality and involution between Indian Buddhism and Chinese Taoism. As such, it displays a hybrid energy that is negentropic in nature. If, as Okakura (1906) observes, “[i]n ethics the Taoist railed at the laws and the moral codes of society” (p. 53), the typical Zennist is fiercely iconoclastic too. Similarly, Deleuzian ethics is all about decodification, or the invention of lines of flight to slip the trap of culture and to unblock, unburden life. Speaking of flight (i.e., escape), Humphreys' point about Zen being “an escape into life, not an escape from it” applies

to Deleuzean ethics as well (Humphreys, 1968, p. 74). Deleuze would call the Zen sensibility a minor, nomadic sensibility. “Minor” and “nomadic” are synonymous with “vitalistic.” Nanquan 南泉 pointed out in a lecture: “If there are names, everything is classified in limits and bounds” (若有名字皆属限量) (quoted in Watts, 1989, p. 129). If, as Flusser (2003) puts it, “all definition is a form of imprisonment” (p. 48), then the nomadic sensibility is all about indefinability. The same can be said of the Taoist and Zen sensibilities. Taoists and Zennists are spiritual nomads. In this sense, Deleuze’s interest in nomadism and nomadology could be characterized as a Zen impulse. Between the royal and the nomadic, he is definitely invested in the latter, both ethically and politically.

Lao-tzu said, “The scholar gains every day, but the Taoist loses every day” (為學日益, 為道日損) (quoted in Watts, 1962, p. 11). Pursuing the Tao is not about adding anything. Rather it is about eliminating blockages, hindrances, impediments, trained incapacities, and the like. As Bruce Lee (1975), the Taoist-minded martial artist, observes, “The more aware you become, the more you shed from day to day what you have learned so that your mind is always fresh and uncontaminated by previous conditioning” (p. 200). Zen follows the same logic. As a way of liberation, Zen rests on the elimination of attachment 去執; having no attachment 無執 is the sign of one who has received the Tao 得道. Zen values simplicity and poverty, and sees ego-loss and the forgetting of language as marvellous accomplishments. Literally, Zen 禪 is “manifesting (示) the simple (單)” (Wilson, 2012, p. xxvi). Watts (1958) points out, “the poverty of the Zen disciple is the negative aspect of his spiritual freedom; he is poor in the sense that his mind is not encumbered with material and intellectual *impedimenta*—the significant Latin word for ‘baggage’” (p. 59).

Suzuki (1956) has a passage that explains why intellectual baggage is to be dispensed with:

The mind is ordinarily chock full with all kinds of intellectual nonsense ... it is chiefly because of these accumulations that we are made miserable and groan under the feeling of bondage. Each time we want to make a movement, they fetter us, they choke us, and cast a heavy veil over our spiritual horizon. We feel as if we are constantly living under restraint. We long for naturalness and freedom, yet we do not seem to attain them. The Zen masters ... want to have us get rid of all these wearisome burdens which we really do not have to carry in order to live a life of truth and enlightenment. (pp. 17–18)

Like the Taoist and the Zennist, Deleuze is privy to the wisdom of elimination: “eliminate the too-perceived, the too-much-to-be-perceived. ‘Eliminate all that is waste, death, and superfluity’ ... everything that roots each of us (everybody) in ourselves, in our molarity” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 279). In elimination lies the very secret of becoming, so to speak. Invoking the voice of François Cheng, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out in *A Thousand Plateaus* that Chinese poets “retain, extract only the essential lines and movements of nature” (p. 280), which is to say the inessentials are eliminated. The extraction motif recurs in the chapter on the refrain: “Your synthesis of disparate elements will be all the *stronger* if you proceed with a sober gesture, an

act of consistency, capture, or extraction that works in a material that is not meager but prodigiously simplified, creatively limited, selected” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 345, emphasis in the original).

In the chapter on how to make oneself a body without organs (BwO), Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out: “The BwO is what remains when you take everything away. What you take away is precisely the phantasy, and significances and subjectifications as a whole” (p. 151). To make oneself a BwO is to eliminate all the hindrances so one reaches an egg-like state—full of potentials, free from illusions, the ego, and the attendant meaning system. This read is highly compatible with the spirit of the first hexagram of the *I Ching*: “The action of Heaven is strong and dynamic. In the same manner, the noble man never ceases to strengthen himself” (Lynn, 1994, p. 130). The strengthening is accomplished through the elimination of impediments. Deleuzian vitalism is a matter of elimination. So it is with Taoism and Zen.

In the opening chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) put forward “PLURALISM = MONISM” as “the magic formula we all seek” (p. 20). Behind this formula lies the notion of univocity, the gist of which can be grasped through this line from *The Logic of Sense*: “to the extent that divergence is affirmed and disjunction becomes a positive synthesis, it seems that all events, even contraries, are compatible—that they are ‘inter-expressive’ ” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 177). A bit later in the same context, Deleuze (1990) points out:

The univocity of Being does not mean that there is one and the same Being; on the contrary, beings are multiple and different, they are always produced by a disjunctive synthesis, and they themselves are disjointed and divergent, *membra disjuncta*. ... It occurs, therefore, as ... the ultimate form for all of the forms which remain disjointed in it, but which bring about the resonance and the ramification of their disjunction. ... It is ... a single voice for every hum of voices and every drop of water in the sea. (pp. 179–180)

The notion of univocity is an acoustic, affirmative, vitalistic notion. It “affirms multiplicity and the unity of multiplicity,” to borrow a line from *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (Deleuze, 1983, p. 36). It implies a crowned anarchy, a “chaosmos,” and a vitalistic political philosophy, the essence of which is captured by the question “How can a being take another being into its world, but while preserving or respecting the other’s own relations and world?” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 126). To use the formulation of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), “anarchy and unity are one and the same thing, not the unity of the One, but a much stranger unity that applies only to the multiple” (p. 158).

Behind the notion of univocity lies a non-dualistic view of oneness and differences, a view that is also found in Taoism. The whole idea of univocity resonates strongly with Zhuangzi’s notion of “the piping of heaven” (天籟), which is perhaps the most beautiful metaphor for the Tao: “Blowing on the ten thousand things in a different way, so that each can be itself—all take what they want for themselves, but who does the sounding?” (Watson, 1968, p. 37). The answer to the rhetorical question “who does the sounding?” is the Tao, which is the supreme oneness that affirms the ten thousand things. Liezi 列子, too, holds a non-dualistic view of oneness and differences. As he

points out: “Though their shapes and ch’i are different, [the Ten Thousand Things] are equal in nature, and none could be exchanged for the other” (quoted in Wilson, 2012, p. 77).

This Taoist, non-dualistic view of oneness and differences has been inherited by Zennists, for whom “The ‘ten thousand things’ in themselves are one” (萬法一如), as a Zen phrase has it (Hori, 2003, p. 158). Another Zen phrase dramatizes the simultaneous affirmation of both oneness and differences: “Outwardly he says, ‘All are one,’ privately he says, ‘They are not the same’ ” (前頭說一體, 這裏說不同) (Hori, 2003, p. 413). Humphreys points out in his book *Zen Buddhism*: “the Many is the One without ceasing to be individual things ... the One can be Many and still be One. This is Jijimuge ...” (1968, p. 45). Suzuki remarks that Maha Prajna (i.e., supreme wisdom 大智) “sees into the unity of things,” and Maha-Karuna (i.e., supreme compassion for all living things 大悲) “appreciates their diversity” (quoted in Humphreys, 1968, p. 49). Since the Tao affirms the idiosyncrasies of the Many, there is really no contradiction or duality between following one’s nature 任性 and being in accord with the Tao 合道, as Seng-ts’an 僧璨, the Third Patriarch, teaches in the Taoist-flavoured poem “Hsinhsin Ming.” Toward the end of the poem, Seng-ts’an points out: “Each thing reveals the One, the One manifests as all things” (Seng-ts’an, 2001, n.p.). This line is perhaps the most concise elaboration on the formula put forward by Deleuze and Guattari, “PLURALISM = MONISM.” The awakened man is capable of perceiving both unity and multiplicity without suspecting the least contradiction between them.

Deleuze’s understanding of etiology is in line with Taoist thinking and Zen thinking. All three take flow to be a sign of life and health and take blockage 滯 to be the cause of illness, be it physical or mental or both. Flow implies *tong* 通 (i.e., throughness, a Taoist notion) or *wuzhu* 無住 (i.e., non-abidance, a Zen notion) and vice versa. The following quote from Deleuze (1997b) is self-explanatory: “Neuroses or psychoses are not passages of life but states into which we fall when the process is interrupted, blocked, or plugged up. Illness is not a process but a stopping of the process, as in the ‘Nietzsche case’ ” (p. 228). Hui-neng holds a parallel view: “To concentrate on the mind and to contemplate it until it is still is a disease and not *dhyana*” (住心觀淨是病非禪, quoted in Watts, 1989, p. 94).

Deleuze’s notion of singularity has strong affinities with the Zen experience.

For one thing, to accomplish ego-loss is to become a “free, anonymous, and nomadic singularity,” which is “impersonal and pre-individual” and best known as “the fourth person singular” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 107, p. 141). Nietzsche’s Overman would be a good example; so is the Zen adept. The notion of singularity constitutes a philosophical intervention into, and an effort of going beyond, the Platonic dichotomy between universals (i.e., the Ideal Type, the model) and particulars (i.e., the specimen, the faithful copy regulated by and judged on the basis of the Ideal Type). As Deleuze (1995) points out: “There are no universals, only singularities” (p. 146). The notion of singularity belongs with the idea of univocity or crowned anarchy. Singularity is unique. It is a singular expression of the univocity of Being or a larger, chaomic whole. Grammatically, it is designated by the indefinite article, which “is indetermination of the person only because

it is the determination of the singular” (Deleuze, 2001, p. 30). A fully ethical society is a society of neither individuals nor individuals nor persons but singularities.

Fellow Deleuzeans looking for a working definition of singularity in Deleuze’s works often end up contemplating this quote: “Singularities are turning points and points of inflection; bottlenecks, knots, foyers, and centers; points of fusion, condensation, and boiling; points of tears and joy, sickness and health, hope and anxiety, ‘sensitive points’ ” (1990, p. 52). Grasped this way, singularity indicates a threshold, a critical point, the point that marks a qualitative difference. It is noteworthy that in his book *An Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, Suzuki (1964) precisely uses the freezing point, which fits Deleuze’s definition of singularity, as an analogy for *satori*: “When the freezing point is reached, water suddenly turns into ice; the liquid has suddenly turned into a solid body and no more flows freely” (p. 95). Part of the message is that “the coming of *satori* ... takes place *abruptly*” (Suzuki, 1961, p. 364, emphasis added).

For the Zen practitioner, singularity means the threshold moment when the practitioner is about to experience the mental catastrophe known as *satori*. That is to say, it is the Kairotic moment 禪機 when the master’s *he/katsu* 喝 (i.e., shout) or other expedient means may trigger *satori*, the neurophysiological basis of which may well be the concurrent happening of an astronomic number of quantum leaps in the practitioner’s brain, a happening that transforms the practitioner’s brain and being for good. Deleuze himself suggests that Kairos is the condensation and intensification of singularities. Take this line from *Difference and Repetition*: “we must condense all the singularities, precipitate all the circumstances, points of fusion, congelation or condensation in a sublime occasion, *Kairos*, which makes the solution explode like something abrupt, brutal and revolutionary” (Deleuze, 1994, p. 190). The language is highly suggestive of *satori*, namely, sudden, total awakening. To use another formulation of Deleuze’s, “It is at this mobile and precise point, where all events gather together in one[,] that transmutation happens” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 153).

Singularity is the threshold of becoming or transmutation. For the Zen practitioner, reaching singularity means nothing less than seeing into one’s own nature 見性 or seeing essence. This understanding is supported by the following passage from *Dream Conversations*, written by Musō Kokushi 夢窓國師, the Rinzai Zen Buddhist monk:

Once someone asked a great Zen master of China about the distinction between mind and essence. The master said, “When it’s cold, water freezes into ice; when it’s warm, ice melts into water. Similarly, when you are confused, essence freezes into mind; when you are enlightened, mind melts into essence. Mind and essence are the same, but they differ according to confusion and enlightenment.” (Cleary, 2005b, p. 218)

John Blofeld (1972), translator of *The Zen Teaching of Hui Hai*, uses the image of boiling to explain the abruptness of *satori* or illumination, the natural consequence of which is deliverance 解脫: “it takes place abruptly, rather in the way that water, after gradually getting hotter, suddenly boils” (p. 150).

Deleuze’s notion of the event captures Zen reasoning in a nutshell.

On the other hand, the Zen arts are perhaps the best way to demonstrate the incorporeal, virtual nature of the event.

The notion of the event is Stoic in origin and has ethical and political overtones. It “is coextensive with becoming” and constitutes a resistance against the idea that the world is determined and sutured so tightly that the new cannot happen (Deleuze, 1990, p. 8). Grammatically, the event takes the form of the infinitive, which has an unbounded quality. The gist of the notion can be grasped from the following quote:

[The event is] the part that eludes its own actualization in everything that happens. ... It is the virtual that is distinct from the actual, but a virtual that is no longer chaotic, that has become consistent or real on the plane of immanence that wrests it from the chaos ... the event is pure immanence of what is not actualized or of what remains indifferent to actualization, since its reality does not depend upon it. The event is immaterial, incorporeal, unlivable: pure *reserve*. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 156, emphasis in original)

Over every actuality or state of affairs, there hovers the specter of a virtual double, which is irreducible and plural in nature.⁸ As the void is the source of plenitude, so the virtual is the reservoir of potentials. The event “implies something excessive in relation to its actualization, something that overthrows worlds, individuals, and persons” (Deleuze, 1990, pp. 167–168). To will the event is to affirm the virtual and liberate oneself from the limitation, if not the tyranny, of the actual. A point made by Seng-chao [Seng-zhao] 僧肇 about *prajna* (intuitive wisdom) is in order here: “Wisdom illumines the Mystery (*hsüan*) beyond mundane affairs” (quoted in Watts, 1989, pp. 82–83). For our purposes, the point is that it takes *prajna* to intuit the event that hovers above or lies beyond a state of affairs.

The image Deleuze uses for the event in *The Logic of Sense* is “the faint incorporeal mist which escapes from bodies” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 10). It bears mentioning that in the Zen art of drawing, the mist appears in the guise of empty space, which enacts the Zen notion of *Śūnyatā* 空. Suzuki (1959) points out, “*Śūnyatā* is formless, but it is the fountainhead of all possibilities” (p. 37). Later on in *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze remarks:

The event is the identity of form and void ... [I]n the [Zen] art of drawing ... the brush controlled by an unsupported wrist balances form and emptiness and distributes the singularities of a pure event in fortuitous strokes and “furry lines”. ... The void is itself the paradoxical element, the surface nonsense, or the always displaced aleatory point whence the event bursts forth as sense. (Deleuze, 1990, pp. 136–137)

If form is the equivalent of the actual, then void or emptiness is the equivalent of the virtual, embodies the principle of counter-actualization, and stands for “the infinite in the here and now” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 100). There is an implicit Zen formula here: voidness = infinity. The Zen-minded Watts is privy to this understanding. Take this formulation of his: “the final position of Zen is that it does not take any special viewpoint, and yet is free to take every viewpoint according to the circumstances” (Watts, 1989, p. 168). Deleuze associates the event with the Aion, which is “the present without thickness,” the present of the counter-actualization (1990, p. 168). This idea immediately calls to mind the Zen notion of birth and destruction at a *ksana* 刹那生

滅. Thus explained, the Aion and *ksana* are largely synonymous. Insofar as “identity” means non-duality or oneness, “the identity of form and void” is simply a different way of saying “form is emptiness” (色即是空), which is not a nihilistic statement but a vitalistic one.⁹ Behind the statement lies a fourfold logic, or tetralemma, which is the logic of becoming.

Watts (1989) has a line in *The Way of Zen* that is very similar to the Deleuze passage about drawing quoted above:

The secret lies in knowing how to balance form with emptiness and, above all, in knowing when one has “said” enough ... the figure so integrally related to its empty space gives the feeling of the “marvelous Void” from which the event suddenly appears. (p. 179)

Empty space is precisely what the emerging line of inquiry called interology 間性論 foregrounds.¹⁰ Although it could well be that Watts means “the event” in a somewhat different sense than Deleuze does, the Zen aesthetic here implies the same ethics that Deleuze’s notion of the event entails—an ethics characterized by the appreciation and affirmation of the virtual. In this sense, there is a natural affinity between interology, Zen, and Deleuze’s event-oriented philosophy.

In a sense, to intuit the event inside what occurs, the void/infinity beyond the form, or the virtual that hovers over the actual, is to experience a degree of *satori*; on the other hand, when one is ripe for *satori*, any occurrence is enough to provide the spark for the explosion. Deleuzian ethics is consubstantial with this understanding. As Deleuze (1990) puts it:

Either ethics makes no sense at all, or this is what it means and has nothing else to say ... to become worthy of what happens to us, and thus to will and release the event, to become the offspring of one’s own events, and thereby to be reborn, to have one more birth, and to break with one’s carnal birth ... (pp. 149–150)

The “moral” is: “the *Amor fati* is one with the struggle of free men” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 149). R.H. Blyth associates the *Amor fati* (i.e., love of fate) with Zen. As he puts it: “Zen is making a pleasure of necessity, wanting to do what you are doing, a perpetual realization that ‘all that we behold is full of blessings’, that ‘cheerful faith’ as Wordsworth calls it” (Blyth, 1959, p. 87). Humphreys (1968) says the same thing where he explains the delicate virtue of acceptance: “freedom is not in doing what you like but in liking what you do” (p. 76). The freedom in question is a spiritual freedom. To couch it in the language of Zen, whatever happens to us, be awakened by it and get reborn. This is precisely the definition of *satori*.

Another Humphreys (1968) quote is in order here:

Psychologically ... the result [of *satori*] is a second birth, or new becoming, for the ego, in the sense of the self which certain Buddhist teachers spend their time persuading their audiences has no existence (*anatta*), receives in *satori* (and not one moment before) its death-wound, and there is born, on the hypothetical line where the conscious and unconscious meet, the

Self which in the end will achieve Supreme Enlightenment. Satori is, therefore, the re-making of life itself ... (p. 128)

To use Hori's formulation, "The conventional self was destroyed in the Great Death, out of which there would step an awakened self" (2003, p. 69). The birth of the (awakened) Self is called *xin ren tuo luo/shin jin datsu raku* 新人脱落. The above quote by Humphreys gives a new meaning to the line from the French poet Joë Bousquet that Deleuze is fond of invoking: "My wound existed before me, I was born to embody it" (quoted in Deleuze, 1990, p. 148). That is to say, I was born to experience ego-death and to become the offspring of that event (i.e., a free man). Form is to void as ego is to the post-*satori* Self, which is egoless and measureless.

The paradoxical notion of getting drunk on pure water captures the feel of satori, and that of the Zen mode of being in general.

As a recurring motif in Deleuze's work, the notion is double-voiced (i.e., it carries the voice of Henry Miller and that of Deleuze simultaneously), as the following quote implies: "We are trying to extract from alcohol the life which it contains, without drinking: the great scene of drunkenness on pure water in Henry Miller" (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 53). Similarly, Zen is about experiencing the spiritual in the quotidian, or tasting the sweetness of life in the simplest of meals. It does not rely on alcohol for the effect of inebriation. If anything, it prefers what the Taoists call "inner alchemy" (内丹) or what is endogenous. A quote from *A Thousand Plateaus* captures the ethos well:

Drugs are too unwieldy to grasp the imperceptible and becomings-imperceptible; drug users believed that drugs would grant them the plane, when in fact the plane must distill its own drugs, remaining master of speeds and proximities. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 286)

In a sense, Zen discipline is an apprenticeship in inner alchemy; to practise Zen is to construct a plane of consistency or immanence that distills the equivalents of magic chemicals.

To borrow Watts' (1989) formulation, the Zen or post-*satori* state of consciousness is "not unlike being pleasantly drunk—though without the 'morning after' effects of alcohol" (p. 23). Here is how Suzuki (1964) characterizes it:

All your mental activities will now be working to a different key, which will be more satisfying ... and fuller of joy than anything you ever experienced before. The tone of life will be altered. There is something rejuvenating in the possession of Zen. The spring flowers look prettier, and the mountain stream runs cooler and more transparent. (pp. 97–98)

Being Deleuzean feels the same way. The Deleuze effect has a striking resemblance with the Zen effect, so to speak.

The Zen art of archery is a recurrent motif in Deleuze's works.

This art enacts Deleuze's notion of monism and the Zen notion of non-duality. Take this line from *A Thousand Plateaus*: "In the smooth space of Zen, the arrow does not go from one point to another but is taken up at any point, to be sent to any other point, and tends to permute with the archer and the target" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987,

p. 377). The smooth space of Zen affords infinite possibilities for relaying, redirecting, and relaunching the arrow so its trajectory is totally indeterminate. Given the oneness between archer, arrow, and target, by shooting the arrow into the air, the archer also launches himself into the air, and starts an indeterminate adventure of transmutation and becoming.

Regarding the oneness of archer, arrow, and target, et cetera, Deleuze (1990) points out:

[T]he Bowman must reach the point where the aim is also not the aim, that is to say, the Bowman himself; where the arrow flies over its straight line while creating its own target; where the surface of the target is also the line and the point, the Bowman, the shooting of the arrow, and what is shot at. (p. 146)

Here, “shooting ... becomes non-shooting” (Deleuze, 1990, p. 137). It takes the language of tetralemma to account for what is transpiring: *it is shooting; it is not shooting; it is both shooting and non-shooting; it is neither shooting nor non-shooting but Zen discipline, under which Bowman, arrow, and target become one, the ego of the Bowman is eliminated, and the subject-object dichotomy is dissolved. As such, the Zen art of archery challenges the linguistic ideology behind our syntactic conventions, especially the ideology of transitivity, and “inspires only a silent and immediate communication”* (Deleuze, 1990, p. 137).

Deleuze and Guattari use the image of the Zen tea box broken in a hundred places to illustrate the point of schizoanalysis.

Humpty Dumpty makes an equally potent image. The following passage from *Anti-Oedipus*, a Zen-flavoured book, is worth quoting at length:

[T]he schizophrenic process ... is not an illness, not a “breakdown” but a “breakthrough,” however distressing and adventurous: breaking through the wall or the limit separating us from desiring-production, causing the flows of desire to circulate ... [S]chizoanalysis would come to nothing if it did not add to its positive tasks the constant destructive task of disintegrating the normal ego ... [I]t is certain that neither men nor women are clearly defined personalities, but rather vibrations, flows, schizzes, and “knots”. ... The task of schizoanalysis is that of tirelessly taking apart egos and their presuppositions; liberating the prepersonal singularities they enclose and repress; mobilizing the flows they would be capable of transmitting, receiving, or intercepting; establishing always further and more sharply the schizzes and the breaks well below conditions of identity; and assembling the desiring-machines that countersect everyone and group everyone with others. For everyone is a little group (*un groupuscule*) and must live as such—or rather, like the Zen tea box broken in a hundred places, whose every crack is repaired with cement made of gold, or like the church tile whose every fissure is accentuated by the layers of paint or lime covering it ... (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. 362)

To paraphrase the point, everyone is a multiplicity; the ego is a pseudo-unity that traps and arrests the vital forces of this multiplicity; schizoanalysis reveals the fissures and unleashes the vital forces. As a therapeutic practice, its efficacy resides in the restoration of

tong (i.e., throughness). The fissures “embody” the Zen notion of *li/ri* 理 and the philosophical concept of interality 間性. In this sense, there is Zen in schizoanalysis. The passage immediately calls to mind a Zen phrase: “裂開也在我，捏聚也在我，” which literally means “cracking up is up to me; kneading together is also up to me.”¹¹ The “I” coalesces as a result of causes (因) and external conditions (*pratyaya* 緣) but is impermanent or empty. It has its utility when the right *pratyaya* calls for it but is to be let go of afterwards (即此用，離此用). Nonattachment to the “I” allows “my” action to be more efficacious.

Watts (1959) has a few lines about the broken Zen tea box in his booklet *Beat Zen, Square Zen, and Zen*:

[T]here are painters and writers ... who have mastered the authentically Zen art of controlling accidents. Historically this first arose in the Far-East in the appreciation of the rough texture of brush-strokes in calligraphy and painting, and in the accidental running of the glaze on bowls made for the tea-ceremony. One of the classical instances of this kind of thing came about through the shattering of a fine ceramic tea caddy, belonging to one of the old Japanese tea masters. The fragments were cemented together with gold, and its owner was amazed at the way in which the random network of thin gold lines enhanced its beauty. (pp. 12–13)

Watts suggests that the cracks in the tea caddy reveal “a principle of order which in Chinese philosophy is termed *li*, and which Joseph Needham has translated ‘organic pattern’” (p. 13).

Regarding *li* 理, Watts (1959) points out further:

Li originally meant the markings in jade, the grain in wood, and the fiber in muscle. It designates a type of order which is too multidimensional, too subtly interrelated, and too squirmingly vital to be represented in words or mechanical images. (p. 13)

If an intuitive grasp of *li* allows the artist to create beauty, it also enables the schizoanalyst to unleash arrested vitalities.

The Stoic sage in The Logic of Sense is veritably indistinguishable from the Zen master.

On the other hand, the Zen attitude presented in *Zen in the Art of Archery* is largely indistinguishable from the Stoic stance. The following passage is either Deleuze’s (1990) contribution to Zen literature or his repurposing of the Zen mode of communication toward Stoicism, or both.

We must imagine a situation in which a disciple is raising a question of signification: O master, what is ethics? The Stoic sage takes then a hard-boiled egg from his reversible cloak and designates the egg with his staff. (Or, having taken out the egg, he strikes the disciple with his staff, giving him to understand that he himself must provide the answer. The disciple, in turn, takes the staff and breaks the egg in such a manner that a little of the white remains attached to the yoke and a little to the shell. Either the master has to do all of this himself, or the disciple will have come to have an understanding only after many years.) At any rate, the place of ethics

is clearly displayed between the two poles of the superficial, logical shell and the deep physical yoke. (p. 142)

The passage suggests that a virtuous and virtuosic Stoic sage or Zen master explains nothing. Instead, he makes do with whatever is handy and turns it into a witty heuristic so as to touch off a sudden epiphany on the part of the disciple.

The following advice (from *Zen in the Art of Archery*), which coaches the Zen attitude, also crystallizes the Stoic mental posture: “You know already that you should not grieve over bad shots; learn now not to rejoice over the good ones. You must free yourself from the buffetings of pleasure and pain ...” (Herrigel, 1953, p. 87). The essence of archery does not reside in hitting the target, but in self-fashioning and spiritual transformation.

Deleuze’s notions of speed and slowness capture the two modes of Zen existence and the secret behind Zen-inspired martial arts.

The Chinese idiom “still as a girl, fast as a loose rabbit” (靜若處子, 動若脫兔) says it all. As if commenting on the Chinese idiom, which notably has its origin in *The Art of War* (by Sun Tzu), Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out: “The girl is certainly not defined by virginity; she is defined by a relation of movement and rest, speed and slowness” (p. 276).

Deleuze and Guattari present speed and slowness as above or below the threshold of perception. They use Sumo wrestling 相撲 to illustrate the point:

Like huge Japanese wrestlers whose advance is too slow and whose holds are too fast to see, so that what embraces are less the wrestlers than the infinite slowness of the wait (what is going to happen?) and the infinite speed of the result (what happened?). ... Movement, like the girl as a fugitive being, cannot be perceived. (p. 281)

Although Sumo wrestling per se is associated more with Shintoism than Zen, stillness and speed do characterize Zen-inspired martial arts as well. When still, the Zen-spirited martial artist embodies the perfection of *wudi/muteki* 無敵—being unchallengeable; when the opportune moment comes, he makes a move that is imperceptibly fast.¹² Bruce Lee constitutes a perfect example. Some of his moves can only be perceived when played back in slow motion. The typical bodybuilder is no match for the karate fighter because the latter can easily “read” the former, anticipate his moves, and meet him where he is coming. Bruce Lee’s Jeet Kune Do 截拳道 embodies the same principle.

There is Zen in the way Deleuze and Guattari (1987) talk about Kleist’s speed and slowness in *A Thousand Plateaus*:

Kleist: everything with him, in his writing as in his life, becomes speed and slowness. A succession of catatonic freezes and extreme velocities, fainting spells and shooting arrows. Sleep on your steed, then take off at a gallop. Jump from one assemblage to another, with the aid of a faint, by crossing a void. Kleist multiplies “life plan(e)s,” but his voids and failures, his leaps, earthquakes, and plagues are always included on a single plane. (p. 268)

The implication seems to be that stillness is the ground out of which speed bursts forth, and that to banish stillness is to block becoming. Perhaps Zen precisely resides in the “bimodal oscillation” (to use a technical term in a non-technical sense) between

speed and slowness. Here, “void” is synonymous with “interality,” which is indispensable for becoming. The last sentence of the quote indicates that stillness and speed are of a piece—they belong to the same plane of immanence.

Later on in the same book, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) associate speed and slowness with affect and ego-loss:

This element of exteriority—which dominates everything, which Kleist invents in literature, which he is the first to invent—will give time a new rhythm: an endless succession of catatonic episodes or fainting spells, and flashes or rushes. Catatonia is: “This affect is too strong for me,” and a flash is: “The power of this affect sweeps me away,” so that the Self (*Moi*) is now nothing more than a character whose actions and emotions are desubjectified, perhaps even to the point of death. Such is Kleist’s personal formula: a succession of flights of madness and catatonic freezes in which no subjective interiority remains. There is much of the East in Kleist: the Japanese fighter, interminably still, who then makes a move too quick to see. The Go play. (p. 356)

To restate the point, in Kleist, there is only affect-induced speed or slowness, but no ego whatsoever. It should not come off as a stretch to say that in the eyes of Deleuze and Guattari, Kleist embodies the Zen ethos.

Notably, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) associate speed and slowness with the nomad, and consider speed to be essentially a matter of intensity, thereby arriving at the paradoxical oneness of speed and slowness that characterizes nomadism:

The nomad knows how to wait, he has infinite patience. Immobility and speed, catatonia and rush ... a speed may be very slow, or even immobile, yet it is still speed ... speed is intensive ... *speed ... constitutes the absolute character of a body whose irreducible parts (atoms) occupy or fill a smooth space in the manner of a vortex*, with the possibility of springing up at any point. (It is therefore not surprising that reference has been made to spiritual voyages effected without relative movement, but in intensity, in one place: these are part of nomadism.) (p. 381, emphasis in original)

In the final analysis, nomadism is a spiritual enterprise. Zen is a species of nomadism precisely in this spiritual sense. It is worth pointing out that Disney has been cashing in on the paradoxical oneness of speed and slowness. At the end of the movie *Zootopia*, for example, it was the slow-moving sloth that was caught speeding. Deleuze and Guattari would say, however, that the sloth’s speeding does not really give it speed, paradoxical as this may sound.

In a letter to Kuniichi Uno, Deleuze (2007) indicates that Guattari embodies the speed principle whereas he himself embodies the stillness principle. Between the two of them, there is Zen, so it seems. Take this quote:

I should compare [Guattari] to the sea: he always seems to be in motion, sparkling with light. He can jump from one activity to another. He doesn’t sleep much, he travels, he never stops. He never *ceases*. He has extraordinary speeds. I am more like a hill: I don’t move much, I can’t manage two projects at once, I obsess over my ideas, and the few movements I do have

are internal. ... Together, Félix and I would have made a good Sumo wrestler. (p. 237)

The mountain and water images are noteworthy. The one apparently rests; the other moves. The one embodies Samadhi 三昧/定; the other embodies Prajna 慧. As the typical Zen-spirited artist is affectively invested *between* mountain and water, so the interality between Deleuze and Guattari has a Zen quality to it. Put otherwise, there is a contrapuntal or symbiotic relationship between Deleuze and Guattari, who are mediators for each other. The interface and interplay between them affords involution and becoming. The last line of the quote captures the two modes of Zen at once. When applied to the mind, slowness and speed mean imperturbability and non-abidance (无住), respectively, which are flip sides of the same coin. The imperturbable side of the mind is captured by an *ichigyomono* 一行物 (one-liner) found in the *Zenrin Kushu* 禪林句集: “When the water flows quickly, the moon is not carried along” (水流不流月) (Wilson, 2012, p. 146). This mental attitude allows the swordsman, for example, to register everything without being detained by anything in a complex situation. Imperturbability ensures fluidity and speed of the mind, thus allowing the swordsman to take right action. Takuan Sōhō 澤庵宗彭 calls this attitude—this combination of stillness and speed—“immovable wisdom” (不動智). The gist lies in “glancing at something and not stopping the mind” (Wilson, 2014, p. 48). As such, the mind is at once everywhere and nowhere in particular 心無所在, 無所不在, hence its freedom. Eugen Herrigel (1953) calls this mental state “right presence of mind” (p. 59). A still mind is a fast mind, relative to which other things seem to slow down, such as an arrow coming at oneself. On a separate note, this age of massive distraction demands both tranquility and non-abidance of the mind.

Like Jakob von Uexküll, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) are fond of talking about the tick. In a sense, the tick is girl and rabbit (i.e., stillness and speed) in one. Take this passage from *A Thousand Plateaus*:

[T]he tick, attracted by the light, hoists itself up to the tip of a branch; it is sensitive to the smell of mammals, and lets itself fall when one passes beneath the branch; it digs into its skin, at the least hairy place it can find. Just three affects; the rest of the time the tick sleeps, sometimes for years on end, indifferent to all that goes on in the immense forest. Its degree of power is indeed bounded by two limits: the optimal limit of the feast after which it dies, and the pessimal limit of the fast as it waits. (p. 257)

Although Deleuze and Guattari associate the tick with the Stoic, it can serve as a metaphor for the Zennist just as well. For one thing, it knows how to fast. When it stays at the tip of the branch, its stillness resembles the state of Samadhi. Its self-nature makes it so that it will be awakened whenever a mammal passes beneath the branch, in the same way all of us will awaken to our innate Buddha nature upon encountering the right trigger. Upon awakening, it drops onto the mammal with absolutely no hesitation, which is to say, the action is taken in an utterly *wuxin* 無心 (mind-less) mode. The butyric acid emitted by the mammal—any mammal—triggers off astonishing life in the tick, which switches from a girl mode (rest) to a rabbit mode (movement) immediately. Once awakened, the tick lives the rest of its life in an intense and passionate mode. To use Giorgio Agamben’s words, “the tick’s feast of blood is also her funeral

banquet, for now there is nothing left for her to do but fall to the ground, deposit her eggs and die” (Agamben, 2004, p. 46). The tick’s post-awakening life more or less exemplifies the point of the Zen phrase “Having heard the Way in the morning, I can die in the evening” (朝聞道夕死可也) (originally from *The Analects* of Confucius, collected in Hori, 2003, p. 258).

If Kerouac’s *On the Road* (2007) is partly an outcome of the speed of typing, then Cixous’ *Neutre* (2004) calls for an accelerated speed of reading. As Deleuze (2004) puts it:

We see the Cixous mystery in her last book *Neutre*: an author acknowledged as difficult generally demands to be read slowly: in this case, however, the work asks us to read it “fast,” and we are bound to read it again, faster and faster. The difficulties which a slow reader would experience dissolve as the reading speed increases. In my view, Cixous has invented a new and original kind of writing ... writing in strobe, where the story comes alive, different themes connect up, and words form various figures according to the precipitous speeds of reading and association. (p. 230)

The way Deleuze takes account of Cixous’ writing calls to mind the invention of film, which more or less coincided with Bergson’s philosophy. The whole idea of strobe rests on the co-functioning of speed and microintervals. Deleuze’s explanation points in the direction of Zen and interality for the simple reason that Zen emphasizes relationality rather than thingness, interdiction and extra-diction rather than diction, and that, as far as interality studies is concerned, the meaning of words lies as much *between* and *beyond* words as within words. Deleuze’s repeated mention of speed and slowness can be attributed to Paul Virilio’s influence, but the treatment is different. With the exception of the quote cited above, there is rarely any one-sided emphasis on speed alone in Deleuze’s work.

The discourse of accelerationism popular among present-day Deleuzeans is more or less an extrapolation of Deleuze’s understanding of the middle, which is “where things pick up speed” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 25). To paraphrase Deleuze’s point, interality is the locus of acceleration. The gist of accelerationism is the precipitation of Deleuzian events and becomings, and can be summarized with the equation *becoming = going through and beyond (control)*, which involves an allusion to Deleuze’s interview with Toni Negri entitled “Control and Becoming” (Deleuze, 1995, pp. 169–176). The understanding is that speeding up or acceleration, as opposed to slowing down, is the means of accomplishing throughness and beyondness, both of which are Zen-spirited terms. Metaphorically speaking, accelerationism is a species of socio-political *jujitsu* 柔術, the latter being a Zen-inspired martial art. An obvious blind spot of the discourse is its overemphasis on speed and the attendant de-emphasizing of slowness or stillness. The under-examined question is “Acceleration at what cost?” Accelerationism is a bit too future- and purpose-oriented. Zen, by contrast, is present-oriented and purposeless.

For the student of Zen, Deleuze’s notion of “zone of proximity” immediately calls to mind the existential atmosphere created by the Zen master.

The notion is interological in nature. The Zen master’s virtue 德 lies in the transformative quality of the zone of proximity he creates. The following quote applies to Zen

masters whose very presence constitutes an *event*:

[W]hen they enter a room they are not persons, characters or subjects, but an atmospheric variation, a change of hue, an imperceptible molecule, a discrete population, a fog or a cloud of droplets. Everything has really changed. (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 66)

The zone of proximity created by the Zen master retunes the being of the disciple (because being is really interbeing), even though it offers no guarantee for *satori* or spiritual awakening. The Zen master's aura is an integral element of his being. On the other hand, this aura also varies depending on which disciple is in his company. It is said that a master may radiate 放光 at a kairotic moment to transmit a specific message to a specific disciple. Put otherwise, the being of the Zen master is a field being, and the nature of this field (i.e., zone of proximity) is a function of whoever is co-present. A Linji-style Zen master's zone of proximity is often characterized by the abrupt, penetrating shouts he makes to expedite his disciples' cracking of their *huatou* and induce mental catastrophes on their part.

Zen in the Art of Archery (Herrigel, 1953) can be read as a story about the transformative power of the zone of proximity created by the Zen-spirited master archer with whom the author studied. Of course, it is a story about ego-loss, too, as evidenced by the line "Is it 'I' who draw the bow, or is it the bow that draws me into the state of highest tension?" (p. 88). The following words are unforgettable:

If I had been continually shooting badly, the Master gave a few shots with my bow. The improvement was startling: it was as if the bow let itself be drawn differently, more willingly, more understandingly. (p. 86)

The zone of proximity a Zen master creates is a function of his *jingjie/kyōgai/gocara* 境界.¹³ Suzuki (1956) explains, "The *kyogai* is his mode or frame or tone of consciousness from which all his reactions come and wherein all outside stimulations are absorbed" (p. 249).

Deleuze's notion of becoming imperceptible resonates with the Zen notion of "Soften one's light and mingle in the dust" 和光同塵.

Notably, the Zen notion is Taoist in origin (originally from *Tao Te Ching* [*Dao De Jing*], collected in Hori, 2003, p. 178). Regarding the man of becoming, Deleuze and Guattari (1987) point out:

[A]fter a real rupture, one succeeds ... in being just like everybody else. To go unnoticed is by no means easy. ... If it is so difficult to be "like" everybody else, it is because it is an affair of becoming. ... This requires much asceticism, much sobriety, much creative evolution: an English elegance, an English fabric, blend in with the walls ... (p. 279)

This quote also calls to mind the Zen phrase "The superior hermit hides himself in a noisy market" (大隱隱於市).¹⁴ Suzuki (1964) points out, "Zen reveals itself in the most uninteresting and uneventful life of a plain man of the street, recognizing the fact of living in the midst of life as it is lived" (p. 45).

"Becoming imperceptible" is a recurrent motif in Deleuze's work. Take these lines from *Dialogues*:

[W]e no longer have any secrets, we no longer have anything to hide. It is we who have become a secret, it is we who are hidden, even though we do all openly, in broad daylight. ... We have painted ourselves in the colours of the world. (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 46)

The Pink Panther is one of Deleuze's favourite examples for becoming imperceptible.

One who is familiar with the 10 stages of spiritual cowherding will realize immediately that becoming imperceptible is the highest step of Zen-style spiritual training, which is couched in the following language:

Entering the City with Bliss-bestowing Hands. His humble cottage door is closed, and the wisest know him not. No glimpses of his inner life are to be caught; for he goes on his own way without following the steps of the ancient sages. Carrying a gourd he goes out into the market; leaning against a stick he comes home. He is found in company with wine-bibbers and butchers; he and they are all converted into Buddhas. (Suzuki, 1961, p. 376, emphasis in the original)

Becoming imperceptible implies a mode of action that is clean or inconsequential, that creates no karma 業. Taoists and Zennists call it *wu-wei* 無為, or action that is non-action. As a Zen phrase has it: "Entering the forest he moves not the grass; [e]ntering the water he makes not a ripple" (入林不動草, 入水不立波) (Watts, 1989, p. 152). Suzuki (1961) calls this kind of action "meritless deeds" that leave no tracks or shadows. He invokes the following Zen couplet to illustrate the point: "The bamboo shadows are sweeping the stairs, but no dust is stirred. The moonlight penetrates deep in the bottom of the pool, but no trace is left in the water" (竹影掃階塵不動, 月穿潭底水無痕) (p. 352). Deleuze's (1998) phrase "a rigorous innocence without merit or culpability" indicates that he is privy to this understanding (p. 4). A precursor to this notion can be found in the immemorial *I Ching*: "In the Book of Changes it is said: 'A tied-up sack. No blame, no praise.' This counsels caution" (Baynes, 1967, p. 394). The original wording in Chinese is "《易》曰: '挾囊, 無咎, 無譽.' 蓋言謹也。"

Concluding remarks

This article indicates that there is an unmistakable Zen flavour to Deleuze's thought. It invites Deleuze scholars and Zen devotees alike to experience the resonant interval between Deleuze's corpus and Zen literature as a site for interanimation and mutual illumination, a space for new insights to emerge. As such, the article puts on display interology as a mode of inquiry and interality as a locus of fresh understanding. The essay is meant to be provocative rather than exhaustive. It is supposed to be invitational and unfinished. It celebrates creativity and receptivity, transitivity and affectability, singularity and multiplicity, haecceity and potentiality, acceleration and deceleration, tranquility and non-abidance. It takes impermanence as the very essence of life, immanence as the transcendence of transcendence, betweenness as the condition of possibility for thoroughness and beyondness. The reader is invited to let go and venture to the point where Deleuze as an effect is indistinguishable from Zen as a flavour, where emptiness is indistinguishable from infinity, where Samadhi is at one with Prajna, where every step becomes the *daochang/dōjō* 步步是道場, every en-

counter obtains a spiritual quality, every *ksana* is intuited as a witness for perishability and rebirth, where one becomes compassionately detached, intoxicated by pure water, and enraptured by the mundane acts of life.

Acknowledgements

The author thanks Professor Tatsuya Higaki for inviting him to present an initial version of this article at a plenary session at the Deleuze Studies in Asia Conference held at Osaka University in June 2014. He also thanks the following scholars for reading a version of the article: Robert L. Ivie, Stephen C. Rowe, Kenneth Surin, Richard John Lynn, Geling Shang, Wayne Schroeder, Bill Guschwan, Blake Seidenshaw, and Deneb Kozikoski Valereto. He feels indebted to Ron Greene, Charles Stivale, Chan Master Victor Chiang, and Jason Adams for their responsiveness when he had questions about certain ideas, and to Jean-François Vallée for putting the abstract and keywords into French. Last but not least, he thanks Lee Hsiao-kun 李蕭錕 for creating a calligraphic version of the main title (see Figure 1).

Notes

1. Humphreys (1968) presents the *kōan* exercise as “the concentration of mind and heart and will on the breaking of the bonds of the intellect, that the light of the intuition may illumine the mind, and the domination of the opposites be broken once and for all” (p. 73).
2. This textual strategy or style of exploration is more or less justified by a line from Foucault’s preface to *Anti-Oedipus*: “Develop action, thought, and desire by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p. xiii).
3. Deleuze (1995) points out: “In the act of writing there’s an attempt ... to free life from what imprisons it. ... Everything I’ve written is vitalistic, at least I hope it is” (p. 143). Regarding the eternal return, Deleuze remarks, “Only affirmation comes back, only what can be affirmed comes back, only joy returns” (2001, pp. 88–89).
4. For an example of paradox, take this line from “On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature”: “It would take a true alcoholic to attain that degree of sobriety” (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987, p. 50). And this line from *A Thousand Plateaus*: “Be quick, even when standing still!” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 24). And the phrase “an extremely populous solitude” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 377). Zen literature is full of paradoxical formulations. Take this line from *Zen in the Art of Archery*: “I see the goal as though I did not see it” (Herrigel, 1953, p. 84). The late Sokei-an Sasaki 曹溪庵 found Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland* to be an admirable Zen manual (Watts, 1989, p. 167).
5. Richard John Lynn 林理彰, the sinologist and translator of the *I Ching* as interpreted by Wang Bi 王弼, holds that the poem was written from the bridegroom’s perspective. Upon request, he offered the following translation by email in September 2015:

It’s a scene impossible to capture in a picture:
She deep within the nuptial chamber really annoys me,
Constantly calling for Little Jade for no reason at all,
Just because she wants me to stay aware of her voice.

There are two lines in *Zen Sand* that are synonymous with the second half of the poem: “Wanting to get Chou-lang to turn his head again, from time to time she plucks the wrong string” (欲得周郎顧, 時時誤拂弦) (Hori, 2003, p. 400).

6. Herrigel (1953) makes a similar point in *Zen in the Art of Archery*:

“Is it ‘I’ who draw the bow, or is it the bow that draws me into the state of highest tension? Do ‘I’ hit the goal, or does the goal hit me? Is ‘It’ spiritual when seen by

the eyes of the body, and corporeal when seen by the eyes of the spirit—or both or neither? Bow, arrow, goal and ego, all melt into one another, so that I can no longer separate them. And even the need to separate has gone” (p. 88).

This understanding challenges the linguistic ideology behind the active voice. The question about whether “It” is spiritual or corporeal or both or neither constitutes a classical example of a tetralemma. The next important idea is ego-loss, the non-duality or interfusion between subject and object, or a primordial sense of oneness.

7. A few lines from McLuhan and Powers (1989) are in order here: “Paradoxically, electronic man is re-creating the conditions of the Orient and the Third World as the norm for our new world. Instant readjustment to surrounding, or robotism, cannot be avoided. The new passion for Zen and the *Tao of Physics* and ESP has an electronic base which is irresistible, because unconscious” (p. 101).

8. The 64 hexagrams of the *I Ching* are more about events than states of affairs, because each hexagram already contains a series of propensities or virtualities. If the whole notion of the event is about becomings, then so is the *I Ching*. This is just one of the reasons why a comparative study of Deleuze and the *I Ching* is in order. A couple of lines by Flusser (2011) are worth mentioning here: “an infinity of tendencies stream from every phenomenon, surrounding it with a cloud of futures. That is exactly what makes a phenomenon concrete, that it is a core surrounded by innumerable possibilities” (pp. 160–161).

9. Humphreys (1968) associates (form with *shi/ji* 事 and void with *li/ri* 理. As he puts it:

“Ji are events, persons, the world of the particular and the concrete. Ri are principles, totalities, the abstractions which lie behind all Ji. Ji is rupam, form, and Ri is sunyata, the Void. ... Their relation is one of ‘perfect mutual unimpeded solution’. ... Each individual Ji is not only dissolved unimpededly in Ri but also each in the other individually, mutually, and totalistically” (p. 89).

Compared to Humphreys, Deleuze uses “Events” in a very special sense. Philosophically, the void “embodies” both *li/ri* and interality 間. Thus *li/ri* and interality should be synonymous. However, some *li/ri* can be dead *li/ri*, whereas interality always points in the direction of *tong* 通 (i.e., throughness, smoothness, flow). On the other hand, the “*wuai/muge*” in *shili wuai/jiri muge* 事理無礙 and *shishi wuai/jiji muge* 事事無礙 also means *tong*.

10. As such, interology is interested in the virtual, or the infinite in the here and now.

11. Hori (2003) translates the phrase as “To destroy—is within me. To put together—is also within me” (p. 451).

12. The idea of unchallengeable stillness immediately calls to mind the gamecocks Chi Hsing-tzu trained for the king. “Another cock can crow and they show no sign of change. Look at them from a distance and you’d think they were made of wood. Their virtue is complete. Other cocks won’t dare face them, but will turn and run” (Watson, 1968, p. 204).

13. The explanation Suzuki (1965) offers in *The Training of the Zen Buddhist Monk* is “general mental attitude, the basic tone of one’s inner life” (p. 160).

14. This phrase appears in *Zen Sand* in a slightly different guise: “A great recluse hides himself in court and market, [a] small recluse hides himself in hills and woods” (大隱隱朝市, 小隱隱山林) (Hori, 2003, p. 415)

References

- Abe, Masao. (1985). *Zen and Western thought*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press.
- Addiss, Stephen, Lombardo, Stanley, & Roitman, Judith (Eds.). (2008). *Zen sourcebook: Traditional documents from China, Korea, and Japan*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing.
- Agamben, Giorgio. (2004). *The open: Man and animal*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Allison, David B. (Ed.). (1977). *The new Nietzsche*. New York, NY: Dell Publishing.

- Baynes, Cary F. (Trans.). (1967). *The I Ching*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Blofeld, John. (1972). *The Zen teaching of Hui Hai*. New York, NY: Samuel Weiser.
- Byth, R.H. (1942). *Zen in English literature and Oriental classics*. Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press.
- Blyth, R.H. (1959). *Oriental humor*. Tokyo: Hokuseido Press.
- Cixous, Hélène. (2004). *Neuter*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press.
- Cleary, Thomas. (1997). *Unlocking the Zen koan*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Cleary, Thomas. (2005a). *Classics of Buddhism and Zen: The collected translations of Thomas Cleary, Vol. 1*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Cleary, Thomas. (2005b). *Classics of Buddhism and Zen: The collected translations of Thomas Cleary, Vol. 3*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (1972). *Proust and signs* (Richard Howard, Trans.). New York: George Braziller.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (1988). *Spinoza: Practical philosophy*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (1990). *The logic of sense*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (1991). *Bergsonism*. New York, NY: Zone Books.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (1994). *Difference and repetition*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (1995). *Negotiations*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (1997a). *Essays critical and clinical* (Daniel W. Smith & Michael A. Greco, Trans.). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (1997b). Literature and life. *Critical Inquiry*, 23, 225–230.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (2001). *Pure immanence: Essays on a life*. New York, NY: Zone Books.
- Deleuze, Gilles. (2004). *Desert islands and other texts: 1953–1974*. New York, NY: Semiotext(e).
- Deleuze, Gilles. (2007). *Two regimes of madness: Texts and interviews 1975–1995*. New York, NY: Semiotext(e).
- Deleuze, Gilles, & Guattari, Félix. (1983). *Anti-Oedipus* (Robert Hurley, Seem Mark, & Helen R. Lane, Trans.; Preface by Michel Foucault). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, & Guattari, Félix. (1986). *Kafka: Toward a minor literature*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, & Guattari, Félix. (1987). *A thousand plateaus*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, & Guattari, Félix. (1994). *What is philosophy?* New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, Gilles, & Parnet, Claire. (1987). *Dialogues* (Hugh Tomlinson & Barbara Habberjam, Trans.). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Flusser, Vilém. (2003). *The freedom of the migrant: Objections to nationalism*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Flusser, Vilém. (2011). *Into the universe of technical images*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Hanh, Thich Naht. (1995). *Zen keys*. New York, NY: Doubleday.
- Herrigel, Eugen. (1953). *Zen in the art of archery*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Hershock, Peter. (2005). *Chan Buddhism*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Hori, Victor Sōgen. (2003). *Zen sand: The book of capping phrases for kōan practice*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.
- Humphreys, Christmas. (1968). *Zen Buddhism*. New York, NY: Macmillan Company.
- Kerouac, Jack. (2007). *On the road*. New York, NY: Viking.
- Lee, Bruce. (1975). *Tao of Jeet Kune Do*. Santa Clarita, CA: Ohara Publications.
- Lynn, Richard J. (1994). *The classic of changes: A new translation of the I Ching as interpreted by Wang Bi*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- May, Todd. (2005). *Gilles Deleuze: An introduction*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- McLuhan, Marshall, & Powers, Bruce. (1989). *The global village*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Okakura, Kakuzo. (1906). *The book of tea*. New York, NY: Fox Duffield & Company.
- Reps, Paul. (1961). *Zen flesh, Zen bones*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books.
- Seng-ts'an. (2001). *Hsin-hsin ming*. Buffalo, NY: White Pine Press.
- Sun Tzu. (2003). *The art of war*. New York: Barnes and Noble Classics.

- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. (1956). *Zen Buddhism: Selected writings of D.T. Suzuki*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. (1959). *Zen and Japanese culture*. New York, NY: Bollingen Foundation.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. (1961). *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (First Series). New York, NY: Grove Press.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. (1964). *An introduction to Zen Buddhism*. New York, NY: Grove Press, 1964.
- Suzuki, Daisetz Teitaro. (1965). *The training of the Zen Buddhist monk*. New York, NY: University Books.
- Watson, Burton. (1968). *The complete works of Chuang Tzu*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press.
- Watts, Alan. (1951). *The wisdom of insecurity: A message for an age of anxiety*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Watts, Alan. (1958). *The spirit of Zen: A way of life, work and art in the Far East*. New York, NY: Grove Press.
- Watts, Alan. (1959). *Beat Zen, square Zen, and Zen*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.
- Watts, Alan. (1962). *The joyous cosmology: Adventures in the chemistry of consciousness*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books.
- Watts, Alan. (1974). *Cloud-hidden, whereabouts unknown*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Watts, Alan. (1989). *The way of Zen*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Watts, Alan. (1999). *Buddhism: The religion of no-religion*. Rutland, VT: Tuttle Publishing.
- Wilson, William Scott. (2012). *The one taste of truth: Zen and the art of drinking tea*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.
- Wilson, William Scott. (2014). *The swordsman's handbook*. Boston, MA: Shambhala.