

## **Deleuze and Ikeda: Rethinking the Subject of Revolution**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the resonances between Gilles Deleuze's and Daisaku Ikeda's philosophy of the subject and revolution. Although much has been written about Deleuze's and Ikeda's philosophies separately, relatively little has been focused on the resonances between these two philosophies. This paper aims to highlight the resonances between Deleuze's and Ikeda's philosophy of subjectivity and their implications for contemporary revolutionary discourses. This paper does not aim to establish that the two philosophies are identical, for it is recognized that Deleuze's philosophy developed in the context of Western philosophy and Ikeda wrote in the in the context of Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy advocated by Nichiren Daishonin. This paper aims to argue, instead, that despite the obvious differences, there are important resonances between these two philosophies, and they need to be explored as both philosophies may both benefit from mutual dialogue and theoretical exchanges. In the first part of this paper we will examine Deleuze's theory of the subject in the context of Western philosophy, followed by an examination of Ikeda's philosophy of the subject in the context of Mahāyāna Buddhism. In the third part, we will examine the resonances between Deleuze's and Ikeda's philosophy of the subject, and consider the implications of these for social and political revolutions.

### **Keywords**

subjectivity, desire, ethics, revolution, life-force

## Introduction

The twenty-first century is a century marked by unprecedented social, political and economic changes. The Occupy movement which started in New York in October 2011, the Arab Spring protests and the Sunflower movement in Taipei, the protests in Hong Kong and the Bersih protests in Kuala Lumpur together suggest that there is widespread dissatisfaction among the people with regards to their political and economic arrangements, and that they want change. In response to these events, thinkers from both the political left as well as the political right have offered various explanations for the crises. The publication of Thomas Nail's *Return to Revolution* (2012) is timely as it uses Deleuzian theory to address the issues that are pertinent to global movements today, but it can also be seen as an instance of a longstanding tradition of philosophers in the Deleuzian lineage who advocate a return to political thinking instead of mere activism in the streets for political change. This follows a tendency among Deleuze scholars to offer various analyses of the capitalist economy and what political transformation would mean. Some of the most notable ones include Rosi Braidotti (1994), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2000) and Manuel DeLanda (2006). Despite the obvious differences in the theoretical analyses of these thinkers, there seems to be a shared consensus that since the current problems have their source in the political-economic structure, that the solution has to be a political-economic one either in the form of loose political assemblages that are engaged in "molecular revolutions" or a worldwide "multitude" that engages the empire. While offering political prescriptions are important, it is easy to overlook Deleuze's repeated reminders not to overlook the importance of transforming the individual subject. For Deleuze, the transformation of the subject is not discontinuous from the transformation of politics. The two constitutes a continuum that is made distinct only by their relative intensities. In a similar way, Foucault would not see ethical and political projects as diametrically opposed, but as *one inseparable project*. Thus, if this trajectory is correct, then it calls for a rethinking of ethics and subjectivity in Deleuze's political project.

## Deleuze's Theory of the Subject

Although Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (2004) is commonly regarded as a "political" text, Foucault has hinted that it was also a book of "ethics." In his

“Preface” to the English edition of the text, he points out that in this text Deleuze and Guattari were not primarily concerned with ordinary “fascisms,” or “fascisms” that exist historically and in politics, exemplified by figures such as Hitler and others. Rather, Foucault insists that *Anti-Oedipus* is an “ethical” text and that Deleuze and Guattari were concerned about the “fascism” that exists in all of us. Foucault states:

Last but not least, the major enemy, the strategic adversary is fascism (whereas *Anti-Oedipus*' opposition to the others is more of a tactical engagement). And not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini—which was able to mobilize and use the desire of the masses so effectively—but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behaviour, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us. (xiii)

If Foucault was correct in his assessment of the text, then it suggests that we must not see *Anti-Oedipus* merely as a “political” text in the traditional sense of the term, but as a text in which ethical issues are interrogated, which takes into account how “fascism” can arise within us, and how these two may be related with each other. In other words, what *Anti-Oedipus* calls for is nothing less than a rethinking of the subject itself if we are concerned about political change.

Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of the subject was developed in the context of a critique of the Cartesian *subject*. From the Cartesian perspective, the subject is an internal “thinking substance” (*cogito*) that stands apart from and represents the external world while Hume, on the other hand, conceived of the subject as “a bundle of perceptions.” Kant sought to transcend these by introducing the notion of the “transcendental” subject. While Kant’s project was revolutionary in its times, Deleuze deemed it inadequate as it reintroduced the notion of a transcendent subject (Smith 48). This problem resurfaced in French phenomenology, particularly in the works of Jean-Paul Sartre, who sought to develop a phenomenological empiricism that follows Husserl’s footsteps. Deleuze criticised Sartre’s phenomenology as it does not achieve a breakthrough to immanence but re-establishes transcendence by way of repeating the Kantian gesture (Smith 47).

Instead of the traditional notion of the subject, which is characterized by transcendence, Deleuze developed a theory of the subject that is based on empirical *association*. By this is meant that the subject is seen as being “constituted in the

given but also able to transcend the given” (Buchanan, *Deleuzism* 106). Now the principle of association means that each subjective moment constrains the next moment, giving it a force and direction, in the same way that habit provides a tendency or inclination for our next move. In *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (1991), Deleuze states: “Habit is the constitutive root of the subject” (66, 92-93). This subject also operates via the principle of “appropriation,” this is where the subject is not seen as being fixed but is capable of appropriating the practices of everyday life in a way that it is able to create new forms of life. As Buchanan says, “Our experience of the world is meaningful only insofar as we institute *relations* between perceptions—it is these relations that make experience cohere sufficiently to be called understanding. As such, our construction of the world is an integral aspect of our experience of it; in fact, we experience it *as we construct it*” (*Deleuzism* 105–07).

In *Anti-Oedipus*, the idea of the subject is represented in terms of “desire.” By “desire” is meant the operation of the unconscious in conjunction with the Freudian “perception system.” This includes both internal and external modes of perception and essentially refers to the involuntary processes of the mind and the nervous system. In this view, desire is neither inherently good nor inherently bad, but has the potential to be both at the same time (Buchanan, “Desire” 15). The basic feature of this desire is that it should not be conceived in terms of *lack* but in terms of *production*. This means that desire is reconceived as being productive of the real itself (Buchanan, “Desire” 15–17). This desire is also neither personal nor collective, but refers to nature as a whole. This means that individuals and humankind are not central to the productive process. They remain important in this process, to be sure, but only as an integral part of nature. In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari’s schizoanalysis gives us a picture of the subject that is not restricted to the individual human being, but one which implicates humanity as a collective. Hence we see that Deleuze and Guattari adhered to Nietzsche’s insight, one based on the idea of the will-to-power, that the subject of history is not any individual or group, but ultimately “life” itself (Holland 111).

What does it mean to base one’s concept of the subject on desire instead of ideology? One implication of Deleuze and Guattari’s idea of “desire” is that desire, as we have mentioned, does not refer to a “lack” or deficiency but to a productive power (Holland 22). This means that we can no longer see people as being tricked by ideology into acting against their own interests, rather, the oppressive social structures are a result of their common desire—people *desire* and therefore produces an organization of force that enslaves them. Likewise, we only desire

revolution because we are attracted to regimes that would enable a greater development of force. This is not unlike the idea behind Nietzsche's "will-to-power" where people engage in conscious rationalizations in order to defend a given social arrangement. This explains why capitalism dominates, this is because it is attractive and frees our molecular unconscious from alienation through codes and overcodes, even as it strives to re-contain it through reterritorialization and recoding (Holland 95). Furthermore, the Deleuzian subject is no longer the *class* Subject in traditional Marxist theory, but something which is directly connected to an even deeper, almost unconscious biological life-force (Holland 106). This molecular unconscious as life-force represents the principle of difference, that is, underlying the conditions of identity required by consciousness and representation there is difference. In this sense, Deleuze was closer to Nietzsche's idea of becoming than Marx's theory of History. Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of the subject suggests that people are, whether they know it or not, complicit with existing oppressive structures.

One ethical implication of Deleuze's theory of the subject is that the question may not be which political structure to choose from. Rather, the more urgent question is the often neglected one of how we may transform our own subjectivity. The subject under normal circumstances appears to be distinct and set apart from these oppressive structures, but it does not know that it is *constituted* by these structures and has a vested interest in the continued existence of these structures. The subject is more often than not, a *fiction* of representation whose meaning is only guaranteed by its external social determinations—its difference from something within the system. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze suggests that a way of stopping this is that we must stop thinking of the subject in terms of its difference in relation to other subjects, or from some external determinations, but as a *difference in-itself*. While this makes sense, because a revolution cannot be successful unless its constituent elements are revolutionary, it also appears to be impossible at the practical level because *it requires nothing less than an act of transformation within the subject itself*. Thus, just as Deleuze and Guattari did not dictate which political programs to take, they also did not decisively delineate the steps one must take in order to realize one's self-transformation.

### **Daisaku Ikeda's View of the Subject**

Deleuze's eventual orientation towards the subject as the basis for social transformation resonates with the idea of "Human Revolution" (*Ningen Kakumei*: 人間革命) advocated by Daisaku Ikeda. Although the use of the term "revolution" may give us the impression that Ikeda was referring to a political revolution, it should be noted that this revolution is not a political one, but one which is focused on the human. In other words, the focus is not on transforming political structures but on transforming individual lives. This is clear from his critique of those who are only interested in political transformations. In *Before it is too Late* (2009) he states:

During his modern history, man has been deluded into believing that the key to happiness lies in reforming exteriors. The consequence of misplaced emphasis on the exterior has been neglect of—even total oblivion about—the inner workings of human life, the need to suppress some mental actions and encourage others. Man's most pressing task today is the elevation and reformation of his inner spiritual life. This is what I call the human revolution. (98)

This emphasis on the "inner workings of human life" instead of politics resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's focus on the transformation of subject. In fact, this has led to their being criticized by "orthodox" Marxists for being "revisionist" and political inactive (Deleuze, *Pourparlers* 229–39). Ikeda's focus on "human revolution" may likewise appear to support political inactivism and it may also be criticized at times for its seeming disinterest in any real structural changes. This objection, however, overlooks the fact that more often than not, political change without a corresponding change in human consciousness is insufficient. The missing link in contemporary political theory seems to be the ethical subject and the concept of "human revolution" can be seen as a timely one. A human revolution does not seek to make changes through political coercion or force, but through engaging in dialogue. In *New Human Revolution* (1995) Ikeda states:

The transformation of the karma of one individual evokes a similar transformation of other individuals. This process can expand to make possible similar transformations in entire societies, in all humankind and even in the natural environment. This is the meaning of the Sōka Gakkai human revolution movement. (73)

These similarities aside, there are important differences between Deleuze and Ikeda's philosophy of the subject. Deleuze's theory of the subject is built upon his critique of the Cartesian idea of subject, while Ikeda developed his understanding of the subject on the basis of the Mahāyāna Buddhist conception of the subject advanced by Nichiren Daishonin, a thirteenth century Buddhist monk who sought to reform Buddhist teachings in Kamakura Japan. This subject is understood in terms of the language of Yogācāra psychology, in terms of the idea of eight different consciousnesses which includes the five sensory consciousnesses, a sixth mental-consciousness which processes the data received from these five senses, and a seventh *mano*-consciousness which divides this data dualistically into a subjective and objective pole. One then acts on the basis of this subject and object divide and generates *tendencies* which are stored in the eighth store-consciousness (*ālaya*-consciousness). In *Before it is Too Late*, Ikeda states:

The theory of various kinds of perceptive consciousness was evolved in its fundamental form in the fourth and fifth centuries by the Indian scholar Vasubandhu, though it was later modified and the number of consciousnesses was increased to nine. The first five of the nine consciousnesses correspond to the organs of sense perception: eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body (by which is meant receptors in the skin). In addition to these are four kinds of consciousness related to the mind. The first and most shallow of these could be called the ordinary consciousness, which organizes and coordinates information received through the sensory organs. The next, called the *mano*-consciousness, deals with mental activities independent of external sensory information. Still deeper is the *ālaya*, or storehouse, consciousness containing all memories from past existences that never reach the level of ordinary conscious awareness. In the *ālaya* -consciousness are found all the karma-controlled elements determining spiritual and mental characteristics and one's fate in this life. (99)

Although Nichiren recognizes the importance of the eighth consciousnesses, he does not think that it is easy to bring about transformation at this level. This is why he states: "You should base your mind on the ninth consciousness, and carry out your practice in the six consciousnesses" (Ikeda, *Unlocking* 164). This brings home the point that from the perspective of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism, the

Yogācāra conception of the eighth consciousness as a collective storage of all of one's previous negative karmic tendencies, while theoretically sound, makes it impossible for one to bring about transformation at this level. From Nichiren's perspective, there has to be an even deeper consciousness which can transform this eighth consciousness. This is why Nichiren maintains that it is important to bring about a "revolution" in the ninth or *amala*-consciousness. Ikeda seems to have inherited this understanding of the subject and pointed out its importance in his work *Choose Peace* (1995). In this text, he states:

Transforming bad karma into good karma cannot be done on the level of the Eighth Consciousness alone. Universal life, which subsumes the Eighth Consciousness, is the Ninth Consciousness (the *amala vijñana*), or the Buddha nature, which, as you say, must be strengthened as much as possible. Once attained, the Buddha state of life purifies and reforms the Eighth Consciousness (Karma Storehouse) and orients all karma toward ultimate good. This is the quintessential meaning of Buddhism. (73)

From Ikeda's perspective then, the ninth "pure" and "spotless" consciousness acts as a sort of theoretical and practical necessary for Buddhist salvific practices. He states:

The ninth or *amala*-consciousness is the key to transforming the dynamics of the *alaya*-consciousness. The Sanskrit word *amala* means "pure," "stainless" or "spotless." As its name suggests, the *amala*-consciousness remains eternally untainted by karmic accretions. The karmic storehouse, with its accumulation of bad karmic seeds, has become fouled with the three poisons, like the gases arising from a trash dump. A pure clean steam gushes forth from the depths of our lives once the ninth level of consciousness is opened, and all impurities simultaneously and immediately are swept away like detritus washed from the street in a spring shower. (*Unlocking* 162)

In *Unlocking the Mysteries of Birth and Death* Ikeda, continues to identify this innately "pure," "stainless," and "spotless" ninth consciousness with the Buddha-nature itself. He states:



The ninth consciousness is itself the ultimate reality of all things and is equivalent to the universal Buddha nature. Buddhism teaches that we can change our deepest karma through drawing upon this inner capacity of our lives rather than through the intervention of an external god. (162)

It is important at this point to notice that while Ikeda is focusing on the “human” in “human revolution,” he also refers to a deeper layer in the structure of human consciousness itself. This is a level of consciousness that ultimately linked to the “life force” itself (Ikeda, *Before* 100). It is important to recognize that this “Ninth Consciousness” also operates at a collective level as a transpersonal “life-force” (*seimei*) (Susumu 437). This concept of a subject that is linked to other subjects in a collective and inter-subjective manner strongly resembles Deleuze’s idea of subject, in the sense that when we go deep enough, we do not find individual subjects, but a collective that is called “a Life.”

In *Dawn After Dark* (2007), Ikeda elaborates on how these nine consciousnesses operate by saying that

focusing on consciousness, this doctrine deals with the process of life operations and elucidates the inner regions of life. Information received through sensual—visual, aural, olfactory, gustatory and tactile—perceptions are only partial. To compile, synthesize and assimilate them and to determine ways to respond to them, another kind of consciousness is necessary. This consciousness, which operates in the cerebral cortex, is called thought-consciousness (*mano-vijnāna*).

Thought-consciousness, considered sixth in a series including consciousness depending on the five sensory organs, conceptualizes information gathered from these organs and determines ways of adapting to them. It is, consequently, a fairly lofty kind of spiritual activity. But, since it always depends on information gathered by the five senses from the exterior world, it is impotent in relation to the inner world of the conscious being. The tendency you mention for the Western intellect to be oriented always to the exterior world arises, no

doubt, from a halting at, or an overemphasis on, this sixth consciousness.

Buddhism, however, goes further toward understanding the inner world by positing a seventh consciousness independent of sensory perception. Called *mano-vijnāna*, the seventh consciousness is reflective, meditative thought directed to the inner world. It is, in addition, the being engaging in the meditative thought. Since it is the source of extremely self-centred impulses and emotions, Buddhist thought provides for an eighth consciousness, called the *alaya-vijnāna*, which is an accumulation of the karma that can be called the seeds of such impulses and emotion. In addition, there is a ninth consciousness (called *amala-vijnāna*), which represents the life force of the whole universe. (184–85)

In Ikeda's understanding of the subject, the seventh consciousness deals with acquired impulses and the eighth consciousness is the storehouse for our hereditary consciousness (*Dawn* 188). The eighth consciousness stores the memory which in turn acts as an inclination towards further acts of a similar nature, what Yogācāra Buddhism would term "karmic seeds." Using Yogācāra terminology, Ikeda recognizes that these seeds, once stored in our consciousness, do not disappear but remain there as trace memories that influence future deeds (*Unlocking* 160).

Although there is a reciprocal influence between the tendencies and one's consciousness, the karmic tendencies reside at a very deep level and can remain inaccessible (Ikeda, *Unlocking* 158). The eighth consciousness, therefore, is usually regarded as possessing deterministic influence on both our physiological and psychological karma (Ikeda, *Dawn* 188). On the other hand, although the eighth consciousness influences human behavior, it does not determine human behavior. There is an even deeper ninth consciousness known as the "*amala-vijnāna*" that enables human beings to deal with the dominance of karma (Ikeda, *Dawn* 189-90). Ikeda maintains that at this level, we have entered the realm of a "ubiquitous self in union with the universe" (Ikeda, *Dawn* 185).

The resonance between Deleuze's and Ikeda's theories of the subject is clear—both reject the idea of a subject which is distinct from the external environment and which has no relation to other subjectivities. This does not mean that their theories are identical. Both worked in very different theoretical and philosophical contexts—while Deleuze's theory of subject is developed as a

critique of the Cartesian subject, Ikeda primarily worked within the context of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism. Nevertheless, what is interesting is how they come to share so much in common despite their obvious differences. Deleuze's philosophy of subject is one which accepts desire as a collective underlying force, one that he saw in terms of the Nietzschean notion of a pre-conscious collective subject. Ikeda's idea of the subject is based on Mayahana Buddhism which sees every apparent individual as being interconnected with each other in terms of a primordial "life force."

### **On the Revolution: Between Deleuze and Ikeda**

Deleuze's theory of the subject raises an important question. Given that the traditional notion of the subject has been undermined, who or what is the agent for political transformation? In other words, in what sense did Deleuze remain a Marxist? In response to a series of criticisms launched by Antonio Negri in the 90s, Deleuze together with Guattari, maintained that they were faithful to the basic tenets of Marxism (*Pourparlers* 229–39). Despite this declaration, however, it is not exactly clear how Deleuze and Guattari were really "Marxists" because there is an obvious lack of conventional Marxist terms in their texts (Pellejero 102–18). There is no mention of "history" as being inevitably driven by class conflict, of a series of economic stages where the dissolution of capitalism necessarily gives rise to socialism and then communism, seen as a utopian state. Instead, there are many references to "lines of flight," "minorities," and "war machines." Thus, far from being "Marxists," Deleuze and Guattari seem to have abandoned Marxist ideas (Pellejero 102). They were "Marxist" only in the sense that they were concerned with the problems created by capitalism.

One decisive tenet shared by "orthodox" Marxists was that Marx believed in the revolution as a means of social progress. Since Deleuze and Guattari did not call for revolution in this Marxist sense, it is reasoned, they must have abandoned Marxism. However, this only works to the extent that Marx himself advocated revolution. In fact, evidence suggests that Marx was deeply ambivalent about revolutions. In a response to Hegel's theory of historical repetition in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, Marx states: "Hegel remarks somewhere that all great events and characters of world history occur, so to speak, twice. He forgot to add: the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce" (594). This passage shows that Marx was aware that historical repetition is not merely an analogy, a

matter of imaginative constructions made by historians to make sense of history, but historical action itself (Deleuze, *Difference* 91). This is why even though those who are in history may think that their role is unique, that their acts are “free” from the determinations of history, Marx contends that they remain part of the movement of History, and are therefore playing a part dictated in advance by History. This is why the seeds of Louis Bonaparte’s destruction in 1848 were laid in advance in the constitution of the French Revolution of 1789 whether historians recognize this or not (Marx 594). Marx maintained that historical actors are *just that*, players in a *theatrical* performance so huge that they have no way of knowing its delimitations. Marx explains: “[c]omic repetition works by means of some defect in the mode of the past. . . . The hero necessarily confronts this repetition so long as ‘the act is too big for him’” (Deleuze *Difference* 92). An authentic revolutionary must deal with the fact that his acts, despite their apparent progressiveness, can in reality be deeply conservative. Deleuze, however, was neither a historical determinist nor a political pessimist, and maintains that “these two moments are not independent, existing as they do only for a third moment beyond the comic and the tragic: the production of something new entails a dramatic repetition which excludes even the hero” (*Difference* 92). Deleuze argues that the lesson to be drawn from the failure of the first two revolutions is not that *all* revolutions end in failure, but that they demand a *third* revolution that must differ decisively from the two previous ones. In order to understand what this “third moment” refers to, we need to understand the distinction between “Idea” and “idea” in *Difference and Repetition*.

Deleuze’s “Idea” differs from the “Idea” that is usually understood in the western philosophical tradition. Unlike the “Idea” in this tradition, it does not represent an object or a concept (Hegel). On the other hand, the Deleuzian “Idea” is also not merely a vague idea in the individual consciousness. Deleuze states:

The Idea is not yet the concept of an object which submits the world to the requirements of representation, but rather a brute presence which can be invoked in the world only in the function of that which is not “representable” in things. The Idea has therefore not yet chosen to relate difference to the identity of a concept in general: it has not given up hope of finding a pure concept of difference in itself. (*Difference* 59)

The Deleuzian Idea then, is not merely a representation but a “brute presence” in the world. It refers to tendencies and intensities that are not yet represented but which can have an impact on the real world. Elsewhere, Deleuze also calls this the

“virtual” in contrast to the “actual” meaning those presences which have been represented. For Deleuze, although “the virtual” is never actualized, it is also distinctly different from a mere logical possibility. Unlike a mere logical possibility which remains an abstraction, “the virtual” serves as the conditions which make the actual possible. Constantin Boundas maintained that “the virtual nonetheless has the capacity to bring about actualisation” (297).

This can also be understood in terms of the Deleuzian distinction between “difference” and “repetition.” While we ordinarily understand difference in terms of a thing’s difference *from* something else, that is, a difference that is tied to representation, there is also difference that is not tied to any representation, difference that does not involve a comparison to another thing or concept. Deleuze insists that “[d]ifference is not and cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subject to the requirements of representation” (*Difference* 262). This means that repetition is not necessarily the recurrence of *the same* but the recurrence of a *pure difference without any* originary first term. This is derived from Deleuze’s interpretation of Nietzsche’s “eternal return” which opens up the insight that there can be only the pure repetition of difference itself without the need for a beginning, center or ground (*What is Philosophy?* 41).

Deleuze’s distinction between the Idea and ideas structures Deleuze’s theory of revolution. Just as there is a distinction between the “Idea” and “idea,” there is likewise a distinction between the “Idea” of revolution and the “idea” of revolution. While the “Idea” of revolution does not have any determinate shapes or recognizable representations, nonetheless it remains a “brute force” of intensities and energies that can bring about real change and transformation in the actual world by providing the conditions for its actuality. As intensities, there is no need for any political program or representation, the necessity for street protests, the replacement of one party by another would solve problems. Hence, the question to ask is not which political structure to adopt but what Idea may serve as the condition for the new?

The revolutionary Idea requires a new way of thinking but it is not clear how this process begins. This is because there is always fear in relation to what is new. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that this may have something to do with the fact that “one does not think without becoming something else” (*What is Philosophy?* 42). This is why political transformation requires a transformation of the subject. This is when subjective identity is dissolved through “the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought

itself” (Deleuze, *Difference* 139). The subject must release his or her revolutionary intensity by overcoming the strict determination of subject and object that serves to maintain oppressive political structures, whether capitalist or otherwise. When the subject is dissolved into a “non-subject,” when the “self” becomes “non-self,” when it turns into a mass of intensities with its own mass, intensity, and velocity, it is already a form of revolution, even if there is no individual agency for transformation. If the subject is dissolved into “life” itself, then who or what is the agent of change? This question already presupposes the idea of an individual subject that we need to overcome in the first place.

Deleuze’s philosophy of the subject raises a number of important questions when we return to the question of political transformation or revolution. Firstly, the Deleuzian subject raises the question of which political programs to adopt. Deleuze and Guattari are known for not advocating any concrete political programs with fixed aims and objectives, which in turn raises the question of whether it is possible to predict what the revolution would look like beforehand. If predictions depend on some form of prior representation, then without these representations one cannot recognize whether a social phenomenon is revolutionary or not. Secondly, what sort of unknown future might be pointed toward or “opened” by this unrepresented revolution? Following Nietzsche, Deleuze characterizes his “repetition of difference as “a throw of the dice” or a kind of “creative destruction.” In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze reminds us that “For the new—in other words, difference—calls forth forces in thought which are not the forces of recognition, today or tomorrow, but the powers of a completely other model, from an unrecognized and unrecognisable *terra incognita*” (*Difference* 136). Such a notion of revolution can at best bring us a *different* future, but we cannot be certain if it is a *better* one. There is always the chance in the Deleuzian revolution that we may open doors to something that is much more fascistic.

In contrast to Deleuze’s idea of revolution, Ikeda’s understanding of revolution is invariably positive—it is not experimental and it is confident that this change is positive. One reason for Ikeda’s confidence is that his idea of human revolution is not based on external structural conditions but on positive changes within each single person. He states:

There are many kinds of revolutions—political, economic, industrial, scientific, artistic, and so on. But no matter how external factors change, the world will never get better as long as people remain selfish and apathetic. As John F. Kennedy said, in 1963, “Our problems are

manmade--therefore, they can be solved by man. And man can be as big as he wants.

An inner change for the better in a single person is the essential first turn of the wheel in the process of making the human race stronger and wiser. This “human revolution” is, I believe, the most fundamental and most vital of all revolutions. This revolution—an inner process of self-reformation—is completely bloodless and peaceful. In it everyone wins and there are no victims. (“Human Revolution” 121)

In this regard, there is an important difference between Deleuze’s and Ikeda’s idea of revolution. While Deleuze is interested in a revolution which brings about changes in the social and political landscape, it is not certain that this revolution would bring about a better condition. There is always the risk that the new exceeds what we can accept at the ethical level currently. This may have something to do with Deleuze and Guattari’s interest in what a political body *can do*, instead of imposing a preconceived notion of what such a body *should do*. Ikeda, on the other hand, is confident that the outcome of such a human revolution must be a positive one. This confidence or “faith” probably has to do with his confidence that at its deepest level, the subject is characterized by wisdom and compassion (Urbain).

## Conclusion

There is much in common between Deleuze’s philosophy of subject and Ikeda’s understanding of the subject, as both regard the subject as critical to any social and political considerations. This is something that is often overlooked by political theories that places an exclusive focus on structural reforms rather than human reforms. This does not mean that Deleuze’s and Ikeda’s theories are identical—Deleuze developed his theory of the subject in the context of French poststructuralist thought in the 60s, in a highly critical posture in relation to the shortcomings of traditional notions of the subject, while Ikeda’s view of the subject is based on the Mahāyāna system assumed by Nichiren. Deleuze’s solution was to rethink the subject in terms of “desire,” while Ikeda turned to the transpersonal idea of “life force” advanced by Toda. Again, both use the term “revolution” but in two different senses, while Deleuze use the word “revolution” in the Marxist sense of bringing about social and political change, Ikeda uses the term “revolution”

primarily to refer to *subjective* change, albeit one which will radiate outwards and affect society positively. He shares with Deleuze a mistrust for mere political programs without a corresponding change in the subject, with one important difference: while Deleuze leaves the end of this revolution open and unpredictable, Ikeda is confident that the outcome of the human revolution will be a positive one. This comes from the Mahāyāna Buddhist belief that all individuals are innately filled with wisdom and compassion. Following this attempt to draw our attention to the theoretical compatibility between Deleuze and Ikeda, there arises the task of finding new creative assemblages between Asian and Western philosophies, as both could benefit from more dialogues and exchanges in their common struggle against the domination of political-economic structures that feeds on “sad passions.” We need new assemblages that are productive of “joyful passions.”

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[Received 31 December 2014; Accepted 29 April 2015 ]