

Deleuze and Hume's Guillotine

With its empiricism and vitalism, Gilles Deleuze's philosophy carries a noticeable practical dimension. Nonetheless, decisive answers for the question of ethics – what is to be done? – are difficult if not impossible to infer from it. Ian Buchanan, in his article *Desire and ethics* observes this fact with a certain disappointment and makes an appeal for rereading of the crucial deleuzian notions („becoming, the body without organs, desiring machines”) in order to uncover their ethical imports. He also claims that most of the deleuzian scholars (Foucault and Braidotti most remarkably): 1) commit a „classic error of trying to argue ‘ought’ from ‘is’” and 2) try to predicate ethical judgements on the basis of the desire alone. Committing of this „classic”, (naturalistic) error – violation of the so called Hume's law – provides Buchanan with enough reason to dismiss the aforementioned interpretations of Deleuze's ethics. But, for Deleuze, is this really an error? What seems to be prevalent throughout his work is rather an attempt to do away with any autonomous domain of moral judgment and to formulate an immanent theory of ethics – an ethics which is continuous with evidence, experience and life. This path, diverging from postulatory or prescriptive approaches, shows Deleuze as a non-reductive naturalist in search for a non-abstract, pragmatic and flat model for ethics. Desire is but one of its supports – contemplation (like in Stoics), worldly encounters (experimentation) or habits (repetitions) are not less important here. It is not that bare ‘is’ implies ‘ought’ – the proper ethical question would be rather ‘*how* something is’. Still, can any ethical theory forgo all the imperative mode, abstain from discriminating and giving instructions which always entail a certain ‘ought’? I will try to review this question in a metaethical perspective. I will also suggest that Foucault (with the notion of non-facist life) and Braidotti (with the notion of sustainability) both provide worthwhile reservations for a potentially nebulous and all-affirmative deleuzian ethics.