

# Re-Construction for the New

## **Gilles Deleuze's Text-Critical Method in *Différence et répétition***

Emet Brulin

Supervisor: Fredrika Spindler  
Södertörn University | School of Culture and Education  
Master's thesis 30 HP/Credits  
Philosophy | Spring semester 2020



**SÖDERTÖRN UNIVERSITY** | STOCKHOLM  
sh.se

## Table of Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF METHOD OR HOW DO WE DO PHILOSOPHY</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Purpose, Aim, and Delimitations</i>	4
<i>Outline and Method</i>	6
<i>Previous Research</i>	7
<b>I. MAKING PHILOSOPHY, TELLING STORIES</b>	<b>12</b>
<i>I.I. Stories and Concepts: What is Philosophy Made of?</i>	12
<i>I.II. Philosophy, Stories and Figures of Art</i>	14
<i>I.III. Stories and Problems</i>	17
<b>II. PHILOSOPHY, ITS OTHERS, AND HISTORY: TIME AND TIME AGAIN</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>II.I. Repeating X, Mixing Y, and Making Z</i>	24
<i>II.II. Learning to Repeat and Time</i>	26
<i>II.III. Memory and the Virtual Text</i>	29
<b>III. MAKING DIFFERENCE: VOICES AND IMMANENT GENETIC CRITIQUE</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>III.I. Making Difference through Reproduction</i>	33
<i>III.II. Reading and Writing with Difference I</i>	35
<i>III.III. Free Indirect Discourse</i>	37
<i>III.IV. Reading and Writing with Difference II</i>	40
<i>III.V. Critique or How Difference Makes the Difference</i>	43
<b>IV. TOWARDS A METHOD OF RE-CONSTRUCTIVE MULTIPLICITIES</b>	<b>47</b>
<i>IV.I. Stories of Multiplicities</i>	47
<i>IV.II. Riemann and the Reconstruction of Space</i>	48
<i>IV.III. Bergson and his two Multiplicities</i>	51
<i>IV.IV. Deleuze's Conceptual Multiplicity</i>	53
<i>IV.V. Multiplicities as Emerging Methodological Devices</i>	56
<b>CONCLUSION: RE-CONSTRUCTION FOR THE NEW OR LEARNING HOW TO DO</b>	<b>62</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	<b>65</b>

## Introduction: The Problem of Method or How do we do Philosophy

The philosophical work of Gilles Deleuze converges towards a problem of the production of the new and to that end it develops a methodology. However, Deleuze's text-critical method has yet to be adequately examined and extrapolated. A study of his method is situated in two junctions of problematic and productive incongruities. First, between Deleuze's critique and disavowal of method and his apparent methodical approach to doing philosophy. Second, between his insistence on the importance and production of the new and his use of historical, heterogenous, and given material in that enterprise. An analysis of Deleuze's method, developing itself out of these junctions, promises to throw new light on the philosophy of Deleuze and, inversely, Deleuze's text-critical method can contribute to new methodologies.

In *Différence et répétition*, Deleuze criticises method as it supposes the benign function of thought and constitutes a path of uncritical common sense where it hinders, rather than brings about, change: "method is the means of that knowledge which regulates the collaboration of all the faculties. It is, therefore, the manifestation of a common sense, [...] presupposing a good will, and a 'premeditated decision'".<sup>1</sup> Method, in the Cartesian sense of certain and simple rules for the mind to be rigorously followed leads, in Deleuze's view, not to production of the new but to the solving of "given problems".<sup>2</sup> His critique is mirrored by a staunch disavowal: "I do not present myself as a commentator on texts. [...] it is not a question of commenting on the text by a method of deconstruction, or by a method of textual practice, or by other methods; it is a question of seeing what use it has in the extra-textual practice that prolongs the text".<sup>3</sup> Textual commentary does not appeal to Deleuze, neither as a hermeneutical search for meaning, nor in the critical deconstructive form, nor as narratology. In short, textuality has little to offer and method assumes too much and orients the thinker in thought; it directs the mind towards paradigmatic objects.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding his dismissals, Deleuze's way of doing philosophy is strikingly methodical. He systematically read and wrote on iconic as well as marginal or forgotten figures in the history of philosophy, as well as on art and science, and did so with a consistent, although varying, style: there is a singular doing attached to the name Deleuze.<sup>5</sup> Daniel W. Smith formulates this succinctly: "In all Deleuze's readings, [...] one reaches a kind of 'creative' point where Deleuze pushes the thought

---

<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968), p. 215. Trans. Paul Patton as *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), pp. 165–66. Henceforth *Différence et répétition* followed by French and English pagination.

<sup>2</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 209/161.

<sup>3</sup> Gilles Deleuze, 'Pensée nomade', in *Nietzsche Aujourd'hui? Tome I: intensités* (Paris: UGE, 1973), p. 186. Trans. Daniel W. Smith in "'A Life of Pure Immanence': Deleuze's 'Critique et Clinique' Project", in his *Essays on Deleuze*, (Edinburgh: UP 2012), pp. 192–93.

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of Deleuze's critique of method, see James Williams, 'Pragmatism after Deleuze and Guattari: The Problem of Method in *What Is Philosophy?*' [www.jameswilliams.net/deleuze](http://www.jameswilliams.net/deleuze) [accessed 090320].

<sup>5</sup> For Deleuze's consistent style, see Philippe Mengue, 'Logiques du style: Deleuze, « l'oiseau de feu » et l'effet du réel', in *Les styles de Deleuze: esthétique et philosophie*, ed. Adnen Jdey (Bruxelles: Impressions nouvelles, 2011).

of the thinker at hand to its ‘differential’ limit, purging it of the three great terminal points of metaphysics (God, World, Self), and thereby uncovering the immanent movement of difference in their thought”.<sup>6</sup> That is, Deleuze constantly merged voices with his interlocutors, creating what he called “zones of indiscernibility” between himself and what is known as his “friends and enemies”.<sup>7</sup> While Deleuze certainly forcefully rejects method, that does not mean that his way of doing philosophy is haphazard or anarchic. Instead, as is apparent for his readers, Deleuze did philosophy and constructed systems methodically, albeit with mobile, changing, and pragmatic methods.<sup>8</sup>

Should we not, in view of the junction between Deleuze’s critic of method and his apparent methodical approach to doing philosophy, ask ourselves: how we are doing what we are doing? That is, questions of method should be raised because, as Deleuze himself phrased it, “philosophy must constitute itself as the theory of what we are doing, not as a theory of what there is”.<sup>9</sup> Knowing what exists is achieved by learning how something is done: thought reveals itself as a function of how.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps, with time, we will come to see that Deleuze’s most fruitful contribution to philosophy was how he created the new and not the new he put forward as such.

This brings us to the second junction. “*Différence et répétition*”, and indeed Deleuze’s whole oeuvre, as Anne Sauvagnargues states, “converge towards this problem: under what conditions can one think the new as a true creation?”<sup>11</sup> Spelling out these conditions activates much of Deleuze’s philosophy but on the most general level the problem coincides with how a historical and given heterogeneous material can be made to create newness.<sup>12</sup> Deleuze brought forth new things – concepts, histories, orders, thoughts, consistencies and directions – by re-constructing the existing. That new philosophy, however, is created by means of its history, existing art, and science is not self-evident.<sup>13</sup> This uncertainty notwithstanding, philosophy, often seen as concerning the eternal and the universal and frequently articulated in terms of pure thought and a search for truth, beauty, and the good, is nonetheless a concrete textual practice. It comes to be in reading and writing; it is

---

<sup>6</sup> Daniel W. Smith, ‘Deleuze, Hegel, and the Post-Kantian Tradition’, in his *Essays on Deleuze*, p. 64. Smith’s assessment is close to that of Éric Alliez, who in turn refers to Michel Foucault: Deleuze’s philosophy of the event makes it possible to “lift the triple subjection” of “world, self, and God; sphere, circle, centre: three conditions making it impossible to think the event”. Michel Foucault, ‘Theatrum Philosophicum’ (1970), reprinted in his *Dits et Écrits*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), Vol. II: 1970–1975, p. 84 (my trans.). Cf. Alliez *Deleuze, philosophie virtuelle* (Paris: Synthélabo, 1996), p. 11.

<sup>7</sup> Smith, ‘Deleuze, Hegel, and the Post-Kantian Tradition’, in his *Essays on Deleuze*, pp. 63–5.

<sup>8</sup> For Deleuze’s mobile and changing methods, see Anne Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze et l’art* (Paris: PUF, 2005), pp. 9–13, 109–139, and 255–59. Trans. Samantha Bankston as *Deleuze and Art* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 1–4, 73–93, and 176–80. Henceforth *Deleuze et l’art* followed by French and English pagination.

<sup>9</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Empirisme et subjectivité. Essai sur la nature humaine selon Hume* (Paris: PUF, 1953), p. 152. Trans. Constantin V. Boundas as *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume’s Theory of Human Nature*, (New York: Columbia UP, 1991), p. 133. Henceforth *Empirisme et subjectivité* followed by French and English pagination.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Alliez, *Deleuze, philosophie virtuelle*, p. 18.

<sup>11</sup> Anne Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze. L’empirisme transcendantal* (Paris: PUF, 2010), p. 99 (my trans.).

<sup>12</sup> For such a deduction see Daniel W. Smith, ‘The Conditions of the New’, in his *Essays on Deleuze*.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Martial Gueroult, ‘The History of Philosophy as a Philosophical Problem’, *The Monist*, 53.4 (1969), 563–87.

in texts that manifestations of thought take place, critique is exercised, and novelty is presented. Something that seems true for Deleuze's philosophy albeit his expressed reservations about both method and textuality.

It could, in large, be argued that Deleuze's work became influential because of his methodical approach, in which heterogeneous material, research fields, methods, science, art, epochs, and historical figures are synthesised into something new. Studying this approach entails inscribing oneself in and confronting these problematic junctions, but for Deleuze a "problematic structure" is not a sign of a negativity. For him, a "questioning or problematising instance is part of knowledge and allows the grasping of the positivity, the specificity in the act of *learning*".<sup>14</sup> If method is taken to be transcendent and normative rules, it goes against the purpose – invention and creation of the new – of Deleuze's philosophical project. However, if method is taken to mean *what do we do* and *how do we do it*, then tracing a methodology in his work becomes an elaboration of the problem of method immanent to his work.<sup>15</sup> Unwinding Deleuze's work through a notion that to him was so foreign, problematic, and burdened with history as method helps us see his work in a new light. It might thereby be possible to reactivate a methodological dimension in Deleuze's work, in line with a quote from Nietzsche he often repeated, "for the benefit of a time to come".<sup>16</sup>

The critical literature related to Deleuze's method is limited and where it exists it has tended to respond to his method either by praise of his style or by acceptance of, and expansion on, a series of images and enigmatic statements he made about method – chief among them from an oft-quoted letter: "the way I coped with [doing the history of philosophy] at the time was to see it as a sort of buggery or, and it comes to the same thing, immaculate conception".<sup>17</sup> Others offer limited analyses. Smith mainly leaves the problem of the "creative point" unchallenged: he shows that it is there and that it is difficult to grasp but does not explicate it. Éric Alliez expands with vigour on what Deleuze is taking, returning, and making something new with, but does not show how Deleuze achieves this.<sup>18</sup> Guy Lardreau, another influential example, argues that Deleuze's method is predominantly one of "falsification", in which the power of the false and "the art of the forger" will undermine the hegemony of the history and make philosophy "differ" through interpreting it

---

<sup>14</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 89/63–64, see also 212/163.

<sup>15</sup> For the problematic status of method in Deleuze, see the first chapter, esp. pp. 8–21 and 40f, in Christian Kerslake, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy – From Kant to Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> Nietzsche quoted in Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 3/xxi.

<sup>17</sup> The letter continues: "I saw myself as taking an author from behind and giving him a child that would be his own offspring, yet monstrous. It was really important for it to be his own child, because the author had to actually say all I had him saying. But the child was bound to be monstrous too, because it resulted from all sorts of shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions that I really enjoyed". Reprinted in Gilles Deleuze, *Pourparlers, 1972–1990* (Paris: Minuit, 1990), p. 15. Trans. Martin Joughin as *Negotiations, 1972–1990*, (New York: Columbia UP, 1995), p. 6. Henceforth *Pourparlers* followed by French and English pagination.

<sup>18</sup> Alliez, *Deleuze, philosophie virtuelle*.

“falsely”.<sup>19</sup> Deleuze’s placement of the philosophical tradition vis-à-vis allegories of art, his enigmatic statements, and invocation of metaphors are largely accepted; Deleuze’s illusive practice is maintained. Three of the foremost interpreters of Deleuze thus locate the problematic but do not move beyond it.

Consequently, the way Deleuze did the history of philosophy appears in many studies as an aesthetic exercise, an enigma, or even as something inexplicable. Axel Cherniavsky offers the most thorough analysis of Deleuze’s method to date, and suggests that “the Deleuzian method consists of a procedure of singularization and connection, of determining elements and their subsequent composition”.<sup>20</sup> Cherniavsky shows that Deleuze makes concepts and ideas singular by drawing them to their limit and cleansing them of excessive parts, determining which elements a philosophical theory consists of, and by then recomposing converging and unconverging elements from various philosophers and theories. The description is apt but remains too abstract for the concrete reading and writing of philosophy. These responses to Deleuze’s method stop at the very point when an analysis of its concrete doing ought to begin.

### *Purpose, Aim, and Delimitations*

The purpose of the present study is accordingly to initiate an *excavation* of the *workings* of Deleuze’s text-critical method.<sup>21</sup> To clarify: the term text-critical method might evoke notions of textual criticism which is often associated with hermeneutics, exegesis, or philology – endeavours that search for a deeper meaning, or a truer context in which to interpret, texts. Such undertakings are far removed from Deleuze’s method in *Différence et répétition*. However, placing Deleuze’s method in the proximity of these traditions is a strategic choice aiming to show that Deleuze has something innovative to offer and that these traditions, in turn, might bring something to light in Deleuze’s work. Thereby, what is meant with ‘Deleuze’s text-critical method’, is a re-constructive and synthetic project and a confrontation with how textual criticism is usually conceptualised.

The present excavation will be as concrete as possible, as close to Deleuze’s text as possible, and have three points of departure: First, the act of reading and writing philosophy, because, as Deleuze often reminded his readers, it is through returning to the concrete that we can create. Second, seeing method as a problem, that is, assuming that Deleuze had a consistent method by

---

<sup>19</sup> Guy Lardreau, ‘L’histoire de la philosophie comme exercice différé de la philosophie’, in *Gilles Deleuze, immanence et vie*, ed. by Éric Alliez and others (Paris: PUF, 1998), p. 62.

<sup>20</sup> Axel Cherniavsky, *Concept et méthode: la conception de la philosophie de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2012), p. 175 (my trans.).

<sup>21</sup> Workings is here used in the sense of the Swedish *att verka*. *Verka*, and the use of workings, is aimed at an ambiguous meaning of a continuously working force that affects, that acts upon something, and how that force is working in and of itself. *Verka* is also etymologically close to *värka* (to which it is a homophone) that signals pain and being in labour.

which he went about doing philosophy and that this method can and should be made concrete and extrapolated. Three, that such an excavation should be immanent, analysing Deleuze's work with and through his own conceptual and methodological apparatus and thereby reconnecting distinct parts of his work in new ways while staying close to its overall movement. As such, the present focus is Deleuze's concrete text-critical method, and not a metaphysical or meta-philosophical method. The aim is therefore twofold: on the one hand, exegetic, that is, elucidating the workings of this text-critical method in *Différence et répétition*, and on the other hand, productive, that is, defining and extracting the method Deleuze is using in *Différence et répétition*.

Deleuze began his career with a series of monographs, before writing two treatises on his own philosophy, which included substantial sections on mathematics, psychoanalysis, physics, and biology. He then went on to write even more heterogeneous texts on philosophy, history, science, and literature together with, among others, Félix Guattari and Claire Parnet. He also produced works on the philosophy of cinema, art, and literature. Any demarcations in this extensive and heterogeneous body of work would be tentative. However, the present study will mainly draw on and analyse Deleuze's 1968 principal thesis for his Doctorat d'État, *Différence et répétition*.

*Différence et répétition* is a book that Deleuze, in his preface to the English edition, famously describes as the first where he "tried to 'do philosophy'" after having studied the "arrows or tools" of past thinkers, and consequently "trim [his] own arrows [...] and send them in other directions".<sup>22</sup> *Différence et répétition* is a book of synthesis where Deleuze brings together conclusions of his past studies in the monographs with thematic stories about difference in itself and complex repetition as the ungrounding ground of metaphysics following the principle of sufficient reason. The synthetic nature of *Différence et répétition* is the one reason for limiting the analysis to it, but it is also of particular interest since it constitutes a crucial junction in Deleuze's career where his manner of reading and writing philosophy has matured but where he has not yet taken the final step to his later jointly written work. Studying Deleuze's method there hence provides a possibility to capture it in the middle, when it has been developed from his earliest publications but not yet fully developed to what it later came to be.

The argument developed here touches on Deleuze's work on literature, science, or cinema, as well as his later jointly written work, but it is foremost aimed at *Différence et répétition*. However, the broader reach of this study is not solely *Différence et répétition*; in the following, I utilise this work as a prism to study Deleuze's method, while working through some general problems of the concrete doing of philosophy.

---

<sup>22</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. xv.

## Outline and Method

The first chapter proposes a new heuristic notion of philosophical stories as a way of understanding Deleuze's presentation of philosophy. In doing so, Deleuze's definition of philosophy as concept creation and the aestheticisation of Deleuze's method is critically examined and the story and methodological use of problems is analysed. The second chapter asks questions about the overarching unity of *Différence et répétition* and explores simultaneity and co-existence. It draws on Deleuze's concept complex repetition and his philosophy of time to understand how divergent times and scholarly enterprises can be brought to a fruitful concord in Deleuze's work. The third chapter analyses the workings of Deleuze's narrative tool, i.e. free indirect discourse, and his immanent and genetic critique. This is done by studying Deleuze's initial reading of Aristotle and the concept of difference. Aristotle's notion of difference is perhaps the most divergent from Deleuze's own and therefore interesting as a point of contrast. The fourth chapter begins with tracing a genealogy of Deleuze's pivotal concept of multiplicity before drawing the whole study to an end by suggesting that it is there, in the notion of multiplicity as an emerging methodological device, that it is possible to localise and extract Deleuze's re-constructive method.

The exegetic analysis will focus on shorter passages of *Différence et répétition* while the broader aim of extracting a methodology will be achieved by drawing on the whole text as well as other works by Deleuze and relevant critical literature. In trying to specify the methodologically process whereby this excavation is conducted, it is illustrative to draw on three advices offered by Deleuze that have been pivotal to me. First, that one should take the work you are facing such as it is, understand it from within its own horizons, admire it, and try to figure out to what problem it responds. One should not immediately judge or criticise it and when doing so, do it from the suppositions of the work itself.

When you are facing a work of genius, there is no point saying you disagree. First, you have to know how to admire; you have to rediscover the problems it poses, the machinery that belongs to it. It is through admiration that you will come to genuine critique. You have to work your way back to those problems which an author of genius has posed, all the way back to that which he does not say *in* what he says, in order to extract something that still belongs to him, though you also turn it against him.<sup>23</sup>

It is through tracing problems backwards and developing them forwards that creation takes place, but that should be done immanent to the work: developing that which is not evident and connecting it with other parts of the work.

---

<sup>23</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *L'île déserte et autres textes : textes et entretiens, 1953–1974*, ed. by David Lapoujade (Paris: Minuit, 2002), p. 192. Trans. Michael Taormina as *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953–1974* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), p. 139 (trans. mod.). Henceforth *L'île déserte* followed by French and English pagination. Deleuze reinforces the same point but referring to the lifelong and complete 'oeuvre' in Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, p. 118/85.



A second advice concerning how to read and respond to a philosophical work comes from one of Deleuze's seminars:

Spinoza never said it because he had no need to say it but we readers, we are forced to take note [and] I would like you to draw from it rules for the reading of all philosophers. He will not say: *notice this*. It is not for him to explain. I repeat, and I have to insist – one cannot do two things at once. One cannot at the same time say something and explain what one is saying. [It] is not for Spinoza to explain what Spinoza says, Spinoza has to do better than that: he has to say something. [But] we, in our modest task, it is up to us to say it.<sup>24</sup>

It is the humble task of the commentator to explicate what a philosopher has said, or, for the present purpose, *how* Deleuze managed to say and do what his work said and did. Deleuze cannot explain how he is making his philosophy while making it. It is our task to do that. To achieve this, we can follow a final advice offered by Deleuze, namely that “faced with extremely difficult texts, the task of the commentator is to multiply the distinctions”.<sup>25</sup>

Together, these three advices will be important for the subsequent analysis: admiring and taking the whole work as it is; tracing its problems while trying to explain what or how something is said and done; drawing out this *doing* from the text and thereby making apparent something new by way of offering further distinctions. The dynamic process of reading and writing philosophy thus implies a pliant work that goes back and forth between different points within a work, neither to identify its core meaning nor its potential cavities, but as to gently and forcefully prolong it. Make it resonate with something in the present. The application of these maxims for studying philosophy and the advice from Deleuze builds upon the supposition that, in Smith's words, “Deleuze's writings *exemplify* what they *express*: his texts are themselves problems, multiplicities, or rhizomes whose singularities can be connected in a variety of ways, [they are] a production of the new, [and] not merely an ‘interpretation’, as hermeneuticians might say”.<sup>26</sup> The method employed in the following analysis strives, in this sense, to be an immanent reading.<sup>27</sup>

### *Previous Research*

It is remarkable, in view of Deleuze's acclaimed and influential work, how little critical research there is on his concrete methods. There are frequent testimonies to the power of his unique way of writing philosophy, as well as to his importance in shifting the direction and focus of French

---

<sup>24</sup> Gilles Deleuze, ‘Cours Vincennes, Spinoza, 1981-03-17’ (my trans.) [www.webdeleuze.com](http://www.webdeleuze.com) [accessed 090119].

<sup>25</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme* (Paris: PUF, 1966), p. 59. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam as *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone, 1988), p. 63. Henceforth *Le bergsonisme* followed by French and English pagination.

<sup>26</sup> Daniel W. Smith, ‘On the Becoming of Concepts’, in his *Essays on Deleuze*, p. 124. For the theatrical of Deleuze's work, how they dramatise themselves, see also Foucault, ‘Theatrum Philosophicum’.

<sup>27</sup> For a succinct definition of immanent reading, see James Williams, ‘Difference and Repetition’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), p. 34.

philosophy during the 1960s and his subsequent transdisciplinary influence. His philosophical predecessors (e.g. Nietzsche, Heidegger, Bergson, Freud) and contemporaries (e.g. Derrida, Foucault, Lacan) all sparked lively and fruitful methodological debates. In contrast, the way Deleuze conducted his reading and writing, and thereby his potential methodological contribution, has not generated debates of the same kind.

There is an increasing number of analyses of Deleuze's metaphysical method, the method internal to his philosophical system: transcendental empiricism.<sup>28</sup> These studies are not explicitly related to the subject at hand here as metaphysics is not our chief concern. More relevant are studies on Deleuze's relation either to the history of philosophy broadly, what Michel Hardt famously called his "apprenticeship in philosophy", or specifically how Deleuze relates to his so called enemies (e.g. Aristotle, Kant, Hegel) and friends (e.g. Spinoza, Nietzsche, Hume, Bergson).<sup>29</sup> The later studies are often related to one specific lineage, for example how Bergson plays out in Deleuze's philosophy, or conceptual exegesis, tracing the genealogy of, for example, the concept of multiplicity, difference, or immanence.<sup>30</sup> These studies are very helpful in understanding Deleuze's thought, and will be extensively used in what follows, but offer little on the method Deleuze deploys in exercising his apprenticeship. The aforementioned Smith, Sauvagnargues, Alliez, Kerslake, Lardreau, and Cherniavsky together with other commentators such as François Zourabichvili, Arnaud Villani, Manola Antonioli, and Emilian Mărgărit have provided crucial steps in this analysis of Deleuze's textual method. Deleuze's relation to both method and the history of philosophy have in general been more thoroughly examined in the francophone than in the anglophone reception.

Antonioli's *Deleuze et l'histoire de la philosophie: (ou de la philosophie comme science-fiction)* is symptomatic for many texts on Deleuze's method, as it surveys his relationship to the philosophical figures he writes on but stops short of taking the analysis further than insisting in the importance of the history of philosophy for Deleuze.<sup>31</sup> Her analysis is also typical in the sense that it approaches Deleuze's method through a certain aestheticism, in this case "science-fiction", which displaces the machinery of how Deleuze did philosophy.<sup>32</sup> Mărgărit offers an interesting and confrontational contribution when he suggests that Deleuze's "interpretive method" should be understood as

---

<sup>28</sup> For example, Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze. L'empirisme transcendantal* and Levi R. Bryant, *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence* (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> For example, Michael Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1993), *Aux sources de la pensée de Gilles Deleuze*, ed. Stéfán Leclercq (Paris: Vrin, 2005), and *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage*, ed. Graham Jones and Jon Roffe (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Many of Daniel W. Smith's exegetic essays, collected in his *Essays on Deleuze*, falls into this category.

<sup>31</sup> Manola Antonioli, *Deleuze et l'histoire de la philosophie: (ou de la philosophie comme science-fiction)* (Paris: Kime, 1999).

<sup>32</sup> See also Lawrence Olivier, 'Comment Deleuze lit la philosophie? Lecture et écriture anexactes', in *Vers Deleuze: nature, pensée, politique*, ed. Yves Couture and Lawrence Olivier (Paris: Hermann, 2018), pp. 139–76.

“interpretation and construction”.<sup>33</sup> Interpretation here is a way of identifying a problematic within the text, connecting different parts of the text, and singling out what is missing or underlying. In contrast, construction is a critical assessment (choosing what is healthy, in a Nietzschean sense) that moves the text forward. Though the double movement of understanding a text through seeking out its problem and making something new out of it via a critical gesture is significant, this analysis still leaves many questions in want for answers when it both mirrors and contradicts what Deleuze stated. Without a detailed analysis of the mechanisms of Deleuze’s approach, it appears not very different from the hermeneutics of, say, Paul Ricœur or Hans-Georg Gadamer.

The edited volume *L’art du portrait conceptuel: Deleuze et l’histoire de la philosophie* includes several fruitful analyses of Deleuze’s relationship and way of engaging with his philosophical companions and his manner of painting philosophical portraits.<sup>34</sup> However, the different contributions are to a large extent stuck both with the problem of engaging Deleuze’s method through one of his enigmatic images, in this case portraiture, and with focusing on what Deleuze takes from Nietzsche, Hume, or Kant and not on how he does it.

Sauvagnargues has provided some of the most insightful and detailed analyses of Deleuze’s overarching method. She traces, in *Deleuze et* the development and disappearance of Deleuze lingering tendencies for (psychoanalytical) analysis and (hermeneutical) interpretation and towards “symptomatology” and “experimentation”.<sup>35</sup> She does this while drawing out some of the general tendencies for his method, how it can be approached immanently, and insisting on the importance of Guattari for Deleuze’s development. Even though her focus is predominantly Deleuze’s use of literature and his later developmen she is one of few that stresses the importance of synthesis in his method, something that will, in what follows, be important.

Another attractive path into the method of Deleuze is style. Zourabichvili seems to have been the first to analyse Deleuze’s use of the “unconventional” narrative tool free indirect discourse which Zourabichvili characterises as a “way to report the speech of another in a direct style that turns into a merger with that of the other’s – to speak in your own name within the borrowed voice of another. [...] A writing of two”.<sup>36</sup> Unfortunately, despite the richness of his analysis in other aspects, Zourabichvili does not take the analysis much further than noting the difficulties that this narrative tool poses. Deleuze’s use of free indirect discourse and what that means for his method will be further discussed in chapter three. The volume *Les styles de Deleuze: esthétique et philosophie*

---

<sup>33</sup> Emilian Mărgărit, ‘A Sketch of Deleuze’s Hermeneutical Spin’, *Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology and Practical Philosophy*, Vol. III.2 (2011), 450–60.

<sup>34</sup> *L’art du portrait conceptuel: Deleuze et l’histoire de la philosophie*, ed. Axel Cherniavsky and Chantal Jaquet (Paris: Garnier, 2013).

<sup>35</sup> Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze et l’art*, pp. 110–11/74.

<sup>36</sup> François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze, une philosophie de l’événement* (Paris: PUF, 1994), pp. 5–6 (my trans.). See also Alliez, *Deleuze, philosophie virtuelle*, who takes the analysis a few steps further but without generalising it.

offers several thought-provoking analyses in the vein of Deleuze's style and the function of style for Deleuze.<sup>37</sup> Isabelle Ginoux, for example, analyses the double movement of Deleuze's style when writing about Nietzsche, and his statements on the style of Nietzsche. Deleuze largely utilises free indirect discourse but, in his reading of Nietzsche, humour, irony, and masques become his working tools. However fruitful this approach is, it appears, on the one hand, limited as it only applies to one author or style at a time and, on the other hand, too broad since it does not delve into the underlying mechanics of Deleuze's method.

In his essay *La guêpe et l'orchidée*, Villani devotes a chapter to Deleuze's method. He begins by noting that Deleuze's methodology has so far been "too neglected" and that it is a "heuristic methodology", having "as object the production of the new".<sup>38</sup> Villani shows that it contains a theory of the good objection, a way to find the good problem, and "a program to establish the good concept and the good oeuvre". To show what he means by this, Villani takes his readers through Deleuze's readings of Hume, for the objection, and of Bergson, for the problem. Villani makes important points worth noting. First, that Deleuze takes from Bergson the images of how the bad butcher cuts meat – which Bergson in turn takes from Plato's *Phaedrus* – but, when it comes to Deleuze, it is no longer a question of "cutting, but of following the articulations". Cutting meat, Villani notes, is an unsatisfactory image since the butcher can never retract from his cut. In Deleuze's work it is all about knowing how to "go upstream, back down beyond the cut where a junction is at work, where two elements determine a joint [...] as rivers knowing how to flow back up to their source".<sup>39</sup> Villani then moves into the content of Deleuze's philosophy and even though his deliberations are more nuanced and insightful than much of the existing literature on Deleuze, he loses track of the methodology he set out to study.

Cherniavsky, to take a final example, conducts in his *Concept et méthode: la conception de la philosophie de Gilles Deleuze* a thorough analysis of Deleuze's re-constructive method on its own accord, one that is distinct from his philosophical method and mostly without accepting his enigmatic images and statements. *Concept et méthode* contains three parts. The first part is an analysis of elements where Cherniavsky mainly studies the theory of philosophical concepts such as that Deleuze and Guattari formulated it in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* The overall analysis thus stems from the definition of philosophy as the creation of concepts. In the second part, the notion of creation is the main focus. Here Cherniavsky singles out the problem of method as posed by Deleuze and tries to define it in relation to Bergson's notion of intuition. Cherniavsky stresses how the history of philosophy functions as the material in the philosophical system Deleuze is creating – instead of, for example,

---

<sup>37</sup> *Les styles de Deleuze: esthétique et philosophie*, ed. Adnen Jdey (Bruxelles: Impressions nouvelles, 2011).

<sup>38</sup> Arnaud Villani, *La guêpe et l'orchidée. Essai sur Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Belin, 1999), p. 53 (my trans.).

<sup>39</sup> Arnaud Villani, *La guêpe et l'orchidée*, p. 56 (my trans.).

empirical impressions or transcendental notions. In the third part, Cherniavsky turns to the image of philosophical thought and what the purpose of creating philosophy is from a Deleuzian horizon. Cherniavsky's analysis spans Deleuze's complete oeuvre but does so from the perspective of his late work. Cherniavsky's analysis can be summarised by his definition of Deleuze's method:

The philosophical exercise is formally defined by a method of two rules – singularization and connection or cutting and intersecting [*le découpage et le recoupement*]. The history of philosophy provides this method with its material – that is why it is conceived as a collage.<sup>40</sup>

Deleuze's method, as conveyed by Cherniavsky, implies cutting out and matching multiple pieces together in such a way that the configuration is something new. It is a very apt description of Deleuze's method but without moving the process closer to Deleuze's actual texts it stays too abstract. This notwithstanding, it will remain a key point of reference for the following analysis.

The present study is called for partly because of an apparent lack of research into Deleuze's text-critical method. This lack is threefold: First, in comparison to other philosophers of the twentieth-century, Deleuze's philosophical legacy has not yielded the same critical considerations concerning method. Second, in light of the frequent testimonies to the incongruity of, and praise for, his innovative and influential work there ought to be something worthwhile to learn from Deleuze. Third, existing research on Deleuze's method, surveyed here, does not go far enough in its creative ambitions, it does not aim to analyse said method in its concrete doing or to extract it so it can be put to work again. Consequently, what Villani noted in 1999, that Deleuze's methodology "has without a doubt been too neglected" today still rings true.<sup>41</sup> Rectifying that, and going beyond existing analyses, will make us see Deleuze's philosophy in another light and contribute to the development of new methods. I will here argue that Deleuze's text-critical method is re-constructive and has as its purpose the production of the new out of the existing and its history.

---

<sup>40</sup> Cherniavsky, *Concept et méthode*, p. 312 (my trans.). 'Le découpage et le recoupement' comes from *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (and in turn from Bergson). In the English translation of that work it is rendered as "cutting and cross-cutting" which misses some interesting nuances. *Recoupement* comes from the verb *recouper* which, in addition to recut, also means to intersect, to match, or to corroborate. All of these meanings come into play when it is used as a methodological notion and I will, therefore, translate it as "intersecting" in the hope that this will remind the reader of *recoupement's* capacity of bringing things together. See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Minuit, 1991), p. 21. Trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson as *What Is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), p. 16. Henceforth *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* followed by French and English pagination.

<sup>41</sup> Villani, *La guêpe et l'orchidée*, p. 53 (my trans.).

## I. Making Philosophy, Telling Stories

### I.I. Stories and Concepts: What is Philosophy Made of?

We should, in a certain sense, take Deleuze literally when he writes that “a book of philosophy should be in part a very particular species of detective novel, in part a kind of science fiction. [A]s if it were an imaginary and feigned book”.<sup>42</sup> We should, that is, read Deleuze as though he is telling stories. Not in the sense of representational pieces of communicative action, but as productive singularities. Deleuze, in fact, makes frequent reference to the notion of telling stories, for example in his seminars: “Assume that I am telling you a story [*raconte une histoire*]. This story consists of taking up one of the central points of Leibniz’s philosophy, and I tell it to you as if it were the description of another world”.<sup>43</sup> Deleuze uses narration to extract things from the history of philosophy, and to pick up and single out a section or a concept to tell another story that makes something new. How is this storytelling to be understood? What is its relationship to other definitions Deleuze gave of his undertaking? The notion of telling philosophical stories will in this chapter be proposed as a heuristic tool to be used for analysing *Différence et répétition*.

Late in their careers and late in life, at midnight, as they put it, Deleuze and Guattari undertook to respond to the question ‘what is philosophy?’ Their answer is well known: “philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts”.<sup>44</sup> Even though this definition of philosophy is mostly associated with Deleuze’s late work with Guattari it is in fact something that Deleuze developed throughout his life. In *Différence et répétition*, he states that empiricism, one of his most important philosophical spurs, “treats the concept as object of an encounter”.<sup>45</sup> Further, in an early text on Bergson: “A great philosopher is someone who creates new concepts: these concepts simultaneously surpass the dualities of ordinary thought and give things a new truth, a new distribution, and an extraordinary cutting out”.<sup>46</sup> From the beginning to the end of Deleuze’s work as a philosopher, philosophy implies the creation and encounter of concepts.<sup>47</sup>

The philosophical concept, Deleuze and Guattari argues in *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, is created to give consistency to a chaos defined not “by the absence of determinations [but] by the infinite

---

<sup>42</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 3 and 4/xx and xxi–ii.

<sup>43</sup> Gilles Deleuze, ‘Cours Vincennes, Leibniz, 1980-04-15’, trans. Charles J. Stivale, [www.webdeleuze.com](http://www.webdeleuze.com) [accessed 090119]. Concerning the use of stories, Joe Hughes notes that “throughout his lectures Deleuze repeatedly says things like, ‘Assume that I’m telling you a story’ or ‘Let’s approach this like a story’”. Joe Hughes, *Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition. A Reader’s Guide* (London: Continuum, 2009), p. 16.

<sup>44</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, p. 8/2.

<sup>45</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 3/xx–xi.

<sup>46</sup> Deleuze, *L’île déserte*, p. 28/22 (trans. mod.).

<sup>47</sup> The philosophical concept is distinct from concepts of recognition – which has or denotes objects such as tables, occurrences such as meetings, or abstract things such as states – and from universal concepts such as truth or beauty, which in themselves, according to Deleuze, need to be explained. See Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 169–74/129–33, and for a discussion Smith, ‘On the Becoming of Concepts’, pp. 127–30.

speed with which they take shape and vanish” and, as such, philosophical concepts does not exist ready-made as an eternal forms but are fabricated.<sup>48</sup> From this follows, first, that philosophy is “not contemplation, reflection, or communication”. It is not an attitude but rather an activity, a productive “constructivism”. Second, that the philosophical concept does not have a referent object and is not a concept of recognition or representation. Instead, it is self-referential. When created, it fabricates that which it is positing.<sup>49</sup> The three great forms of thought – art, science, and philosophy – are, for Deleuze and Guattari, equally creative enterprises that in different mediums strive to confront opinion, clichés, and stupidity by making something new.<sup>50</sup>

Philosophical concepts, according to Deleuze and Guattari, are articulated or cut out from the timely chaos of evanescent determinations, intersected [*recoûpe*] with other concepts, and in connection to a problem with which it is co-articulated. Each concept consists of several “distinct, heterogeneous, yet inseparable” components that become a totalising yet fragmented whole with both an internal and an external consistency.<sup>51</sup> The concept achieves this is by being a “point” of “coincidence, condensation, or accumulation” where it is in “a state of *survey* [*survol*] in relation to its components”. The concept traverses, oversees, and charts its components at infinite speed. It is thus an act of thought and an event: the philosophical concept “is real without being actual, ideal without being abstract, [and] it has no reference: it is self-referential; it posits itself and its object at the same time as it is created”.<sup>52</sup> The philosophical concept is real but not actual and it is concrete without being material or having a referent object. From this follows that, the philosophical

concept is not discursive, and philosophy is not a discursive formation, because it does not link propositions together. [...] Consequently, the philosophical concept usually appears only as a proposition deprived of sense. [...] Concepts are measured against a ‘philosophical’ grammar.<sup>53</sup>

Faced with this unequivocal statement, it would appear that the present investigation on text-critical method should be nullified. In Deleuze and Guattari’s view, proposing a text-critical method based on text and dealing with how different texts and notions presented in texts come together have little to do with philosophy. Therefore, it is worthwhile to retrace the steps taken so far.

The philosophical concept is a creative event with powerful effects. It is self-referential knowledge without an object that only happens to be articulated with words but that has no traditional sense. However, reading works such as *Différence et répétition* or Descartes’s *Discourse on*

---

<sup>48</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, p. 44/42, cf. 11/5.

<sup>49</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, pp. 11–12/6–7.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, pp. 186–88/197–99.

<sup>51</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, p. 25/19.

<sup>52</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, pp. 25–26/20–21.

<sup>53</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie?*, p. 22/27.

*Method*, there appears to be more to the philosophical text than this. Even Deleuze, as Cherniavsky, calls attention to, saw in philosophical praxis more than one activity. His definitions of philosophy include: an untimely critique, a diagnostic of civilisation, an enterprise of demystification, a denouncement of stupidity, a vision of the invisible, a theory of multiplicities, a theory of what we are doing, a pure practice, a counter-effectuation of events, *amor fati* and a cult of life, affirmation and joy.<sup>54</sup> These definitions span Deleuze's complete oeuvre and in several cases they reappear in more than one book or interview, implying that carry a sustained significance for Deleuze. In other words, philosophy is also discourse, material texts, and the telling of critical and creative stories. Philosophy is not only the fabrication of concepts even though that act might be its crescendo. While philosophy creates concepts, and the reading of philosophy implies the odd and powerful encounter with concepts, other things also happen.

Philosophy needs flesh and bone, something corporeal that insists and persists in a practice, which Deleuze showed by incorporating all forms of texts. Philosophy needs stories because that is how it can take form, enter the living, and effect change. However, those stories should not be representational, they should posit and create something new in being told.<sup>55</sup> Thus, instead of nullifying the investigation here, the excavation of the workings of Deleuze's re-constructive method continues through the notion of stories.

### *I.II. Philosophy, Stories and Figures of Art*

It is illustrative to explicate the notion of stories further through contrasting it with other notions that have been of importance in discussions surrounding Deleuze's method. To indicate how he reads and writes philosophy and its history, Deleuze offers several images or allegories derived from artistic practices, such as detective, psychological, or science-fiction novels, portraiture and collage, and theatre and dramatisation. These metaphors as well as his enigmatic statements – creating a “monstrous child” behind the back of his “intercessors”, establishing a zone of indiscernibility, or entering a joint wave<sup>56</sup> – have been taken to hold privileged explanatory meaning when trying to unpack the workings of Deleuze's method. Quoting these suggestive statements or

---

<sup>54</sup> For references, see Cherniavsky, *Concept et méthode*, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> The notion of telling philosophical stories has affinities with the metahistorical work of Hayden White. In his analysis of nineteenth-century historiography, White argues that history is made as “a verbal structure in the form of a narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of *explaining what they were by representing them*”. This is close to Deleuze's use of stories, but with one crucial caveat. Deleuze's stories are not told to represent anything; they are made to create something new. A further analysis between White and Deleuze's work could nevertheless prove fruitful, notably in light of Deleuze's analysis of how meaning is produced serially and not hierarchically, immediately in the event and not through representation. Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1973), p. 2

<sup>56</sup> For the monstrous child, see the introduction above and Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, p. 15/6. For intercessors, which in the English edition is translated as “mediators”, see the text with the same title in Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, esp. p. 171/125.



images has become standard practice when discussing Deleuze, creating, in turn, a particular image of Deleuze's method as aesthetic and elusive. What does it, however, mean to invoke images or allegories such as these?

One of the most famous images that Deleuze comes back to several times and that have received attention is philosophy as portraiture:

The history of philosophy [...] is rather like portraiture in painting. Producing mental, conceptual portraits. As in painting, you have to create a likeness, but in a different material: the likeness is something you have to produce, rather than a way of reproducing anything (which comes down to just repeating what a philosopher says).<sup>57</sup>

Another complementary image is the collage:

It seems to us that the history of philosophy should play a role roughly analogous to that of *collage* in painting. The history of philosophy is the reproduction of philosophy itself. In the history of philosophy, a commentary should act as a veritable double and bear the maximal modification appropriate to a double.<sup>58</sup>

To these images, Nietzsche and his theatrical philosophy that “brought new means of expression to transform philosophy” should be added.<sup>59</sup> By staging the history of philosophy and making it play out as theatre “the written text is going to be illuminated by other values, non-textual values”.<sup>60</sup> By turning philosophy into theatre it can come alive. It seems that Deleuze is saying that it is possible to escape some of the discipline's spectres through these images and the gestures they imply. Invoke images like these appears to be in line with the work of someone that mixes philosophy proper with other types of texts but at the same time it remains peculiar, because Deleuze insisted that he was doing pure philosophy and was not fond of metaphors. He said of himself that he was the most naïve of his generation, the one doing philosophy and metaphysics most directly, the “one who felt the least guilt about ‘doing philosophy.’”<sup>61</sup> Why do not philosophy's own resources suffice?

Collage, portraiture, and theatre. Three images that have been amply interpreted in the critical literature. Gregory Flaxman notes that “Deleuze turns to the work of art because, especially in its literary formation, it musters the powers of the false to create the ‘impossible’. [...] Put differently, we could say that the work of art creates ‘signs,’ provided we grasp the sign apart from the sense of reference or representation with which the term is typically identified”.<sup>62</sup> Cherniavsky argues

---

<sup>57</sup> Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, pp. 185–86/135–36.

<sup>58</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 4/xxi.

<sup>59</sup> Deleuze, *L'île déserte*, p. 177/127.

<sup>60</sup> Deleuze, *L'île déserte*, p. 199/144.

<sup>61</sup> Deleuze, *Pourparlers*, p. 122/89.

<sup>62</sup> Gregory Flaxman, *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2012), p. 183. Flaxman's analysis here echoes Lardreau's argument about falsification, as discussed in the introduction.

that the notion of portraiture should be interpreted as neither literal, “Deleuze is no painter”, nor completely metaphorical, “in the sense of *fiction*: it is *really* a matter of reproducing an oeuvre while at the same time displacing it in relation to itself”.<sup>63</sup> Creating likeness in painting is not done by recreating an identical image, but by means of distortion and reflections of something beyond the apparent. Thus, Cherniavsky continues, the portrait is an insufficient figure for Deleuze’s philosophy because it is aimed at one individual at the time, the one who is portrayed or the one doing the portraying, and Deleuze’s philosophy is one where differences are connected. The collage offers this mixture and Cherniavsky consequently concludes “that the portrait is not the encounter between the artist and the model but rather the place where a plurality of models composes the unity of the artist”.<sup>64</sup>

It is no question whether Deleuze’s images and statements are powerful, just as many of the critical interpretations based on them are compelling – and have had significant impact on how Deleuze’s work is read – but it might be more productive to neither interpret them, nor give them explanatory power, nor accept the prism they offer. Instead, questions should be asked about the function of invoking them at all. The aim for Deleuze, and for his interlocuters, it would appear, is to explain something, or to infer something new and subversive, by referring to another practice that is better known. However, in terms of how Deleuze does philosophy, the deferral in itself is more interesting than the medium by which it is made. By pointing outside of philosophy and not making philosophy concrete on its own terms, Deleuze creates a distance to his practice and the philosophical text. On the one hand, Deleuze diligently does philosophy proper, pure metaphysics, and on the other hand, he is telling stories, playing theatre, making collages and painting portraits. This double movement brings philosophy’s outside in connection with its inside, in order to revolutionise it, which simultaneously distances philosophy from itself.

When placed side by side, not only do philosophy and literature, art, or theatre move towards each other so that one metaphorically is interpreted by means of the other – where the metaphor, the artistic figure, does the explanatory work for the benefit of philosophy. However, philosophy and art also bring something out of each other. One places the other in relief and makes its particularities clearer. This contrasting effect, counter to the predominant interpretation of joining art and philosophy together, brings forth something that is philosophy proper. Philosophy with its formal, stringent, and dry texts and concepts, on the one side, and the arts with their allegories and figures, beauty, and playfulness on the other. A methodological use of the artistic figures, where their function is on the surface, as relief. Using terms and practices from one domain to further

---

<sup>63</sup> Cherniavsky, *Concept et méthode*, p. 200 (my trans.).

<sup>64</sup> Cherniavsky, *Concept et méthode*, p. 203 (my trans.).

another induces risks but also possibilities. If Deleuze's use of figures and practices from the arts to explain his work is not interpreted metaphorically but as a surface phenomenon, as a way of making difference and thereby something new through the encounter between art and philosophy, then it is possible to see how the notion of telling stories acts on the philosophical discourse to change its rigidity and dogmatism by throwing light on it and offer another complementary unity.

### *I.III. Stories and Problems*

Tracing Deleuze's story of problems makes it possible to further analyse how Deleuze tells stories, while at the same time clarifying his notion of problems and their role in his method. In general, Deleuze's stories 'begin' in two different ways: either sideways as if he stumbles over something in another thinker's work which he then develops in a new direction – multiplicity is an example of this – or they begin with a bold statement or claim that the rest of the story unfolds and defends – the stories of difference and repetition in *Différence et répétition* are examples of the latter strategy. Neither form is thereby a true beginning but rather a development from the middle; the stories always have a precursor or begin without an introduction. The story of the problem is no exception. Within the chronological span of Deleuze's complete oeuvre, the story of the problem begins with Hume and Bergson. In the structure of *Différence et répétition*, this story seems to begin with Plato and dialectical thought and method, but that is in fact its end, its final target. And finally, from a perspective of the theory of problems in *Différence et répétition*, it is developed out of differential calculus and works backwards towards Plato. A dialectic of the problem in Deleuze does not have a first term, nor is it possible to reduce it to a pure philosophical concept.

Chronologically the story of the problem starts sideways in *Empirisme et subjectivité* where Deleuze, within a digression, develops a notion of good objections and the nature of philosophical theories. A good objection is not aimed at the conclusions of a theory, saying "things are not like that", but rather at the question or problem that begets the theory.<sup>65</sup> Such an objection shows that the problem is not relevant, should be raised in another way, or has not been pursued far enough. Underlying Deleuze's argument is a definition of philosophical theories as a function of problems: "a philosophical theory [...] is not the resolution to a problem, but the elaboration, *to the very end*, of the necessary implications of a formulated question".<sup>66</sup> A philosophical theory aims, in other words, to show how things are or should be through the development of a problem. However, not by its resolution or through presenting a conclusion. The correctness of theories should not be judged by anything other than what it is trying to tell from its point of departure.

---

<sup>65</sup> Deleuze, *Empirisme et subjectivité*, p. 119/106.

<sup>66</sup> Deleuze, *Empirisme et subjectivité*, p. 119/106.

The next chronological step is in *Le bergsonisme* where Deleuze develops the problem from the perspective of the Bergsonian method of intuition. He reformulates Bergson's method according to a few rules, the first of which reads: "apply the test of true and false to problems themselves".<sup>67</sup> It is a rule with a complement: "false problems are of two sorts, 'non-existent' [...] and 'badly stated'".<sup>68</sup> A problem is equally susceptible to being wrong, and more detrimental when it is, as a solution. Drawing on Bergson, Deleuze says that non-existent problems involve a confusion of more and of less. There is more in nonbeing than in being, being plus its negation, just as there is more in the possible than there is in the real: the real plus "an act of mind throwing the image back into the past".<sup>69</sup> Furthermore, badly stated problems involve "badly analysed composites that arbitrarily group things that *differ in kind*".<sup>70</sup> The foremost example is the problem of time which Bergson argues is saturated by spatial concepts and badly posed. What Deleuze takes from Bergson is the insistence on the centrality of the problem and the need for stating it well. Deleuze quotes – and as Villani notes, makes it his own – Bergson's poetic formulation of problems:

Stating the problem is not simply uncovering, it is inventing. Discovery, or uncovering, has to do with already exists, actually or virtually; it was therefore certain to happen sooner or later. Invention gives being to what did not exist; it might never have happened.<sup>71</sup>

It is by stating and creating problems that the new is brought forth and, by extension, it is by connecting problems in new ways that new orders are established. The beginning of Deleuze's story of problems in his books on Hume and Bergson is important for his overall story about problems because therein lay the seeds to what he will develop in *Différence et répétition*: from Hume and Bergson, Deleuze draws the idea that stating a problem and pursuing it as far as possible is more important than any solution. It is in the pursuit of a good problem rather than in the following of a rigorous method that invention happens.

In *Différence et répétition*, Deleuze develops the story of problems in at least seven distinct passages spanning all chapters and most important junctions of the book. By focusing on a few snapshots from this story it is possible to see how Deleuze develops his stories. The introduction takes place against a backdrop of themes usually not associated with Deleuze: Plato, dialectics, and the quest for solid ground. In Platonism, Deleuze argues, grounding happens as a function of problems and myth. The Platonic method reaches truth by overcoming problems: "Plato defined the dialectic as proceeding by 'problems', through which one raises oneself until a pure grounding principle".<sup>72</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, p. 3/15.

<sup>68</sup> Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, p. 6/17.

<sup>69</sup> Bergson quoted in Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, p. 7/17 (trans. mod.).

<sup>70</sup> Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, p. 7/18 (trans. mod.).

<sup>71</sup> Bergson quoted in Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, p. 4/15–16. Cf. Villani, *La guêpe et l'orchidée*, pp. 54–55.

<sup>72</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 88/63 (trans. mod.).

Plato's dialectics function, for Deleuze, by overcoming, solving, problems where the problems are steppingstones and solutions the goal. Deleuze says, however, that the role the problem plays in a grounding dialectics, equal to the negative in Hegel's dialectic, is not what we should be concerned with: "Neither the problem nor the question is subjective, private, determinations marking a moment of insufficiency in knowledge". The problematic status of things or a lack of knowledge does not mark a negativity that the dialectical movement will overcome. Rather, it is the mark of a positivity. The oracle's response is another problem, the forward movement is, indeed, not towards a foundational grounding, but towards further problems, just as a lack in knowledge provides an "act of learning".<sup>73</sup> Deleuze here does several things typical for his storytelling. He narrates a classical history of dialectics beginning with Plato but retroactively applying what he has learned about problems from Bergson so as to create, within traditional history, what could be called a minor story, one that he shows is already present in Plato's doctrine.<sup>74</sup>

Through the following step, Deleuze connects the problem back to the negative but this time in relation to psychoanalysis. Desire, the motor of psychoanalysis, "does appear neither as a power of negation nor as an element of an opposition, but rather as a searching force, questioning and problematising, operating in a different field than need and satisfaction".<sup>75</sup> At the same time as Deleuze here shows a debt to Kant's revision of desire as productive and not defined by lack, he starts to displace dialectics.<sup>76</sup> In this stage of the story, Deleuze connects the problem across his work and over the different themes and sources but at the same time argues for a constitutive, impersonal, and creative method of posing problems in their own right. Problems, with Bergson, have a dimension of true or false in themselves. That is: good and well posed problems *are* and do not go away when solved.

In a further step, Deleuze takes the story back to another beginning: "Aristotle assigned the dialectic its real task, its only effective task: the art of problems and questions. [...] Dialectics shows how to pose a question legitimately".<sup>77</sup> Deleuze recognises the importance of Aristotle's contribution but nevertheless has a twofold query. First, that Aristotle remained content to "trace [*décalquer*] problems from propositions" and, second, that Aristotle made these solvable propositions relate to common sense.<sup>78</sup> Aristotle thus made the truth that problems can produce

---

<sup>73</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 89/63–64 (trans. mod.).

<sup>74</sup> The conceptual pair major minor is a reoccurring theme in Deleuze's late work. See for example. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2* (Paris: Minuit, 1980), pp. 133–35 and 446–63. Trans. Brian Massumi as *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1987), pp. 105–7 and 361–74. Henceforth *Mille plateaux* followed by French and English pagination.

<sup>75</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 140–41/106 (trans. mod.).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Daniel W. Smith, 'Deleuze, Kant, and the Theory of Immanent Ideas', in his *Essays on Deleuze*, p. 117.

<sup>77</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 207/160.

<sup>78</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 204/157.

dependent on what is already known and agreed upon. These two faults, in Deleuze's view, deprives philosophy and dialectics of its proper power. Philosophy only sets itself problems it can solve or follows methods that leads to solutions. The problems posed stem from empirical or private notions because this is where they can easily be found – or provided by teachers.

In the first part of the story, Deleuze has aligned problems with dialectics and identified its historic origins in Plato, Aristotle, and Hegel. In the third chapter, the centre and pivot of *Différence et répétition*, he presents the problem with the problem:

What is missed is the internal character of the problem as such, the imperative internal element which decides in the first place its truth or falsity and measures its intrinsic genetic power: that is, the very object of the dialectic or combinatory, the 'differential'.<sup>79</sup>

Deleuze's story of the problem reconstructs the present day logical and everyday notion of the problem, from something to overcome or solve and to a problematic of the problem. The beginning of the extract, "what is missed...", should be read at the same time 'as what is lacking in this theory' and 'what has been overlooked'. What is missed is the internal being of the problem, the differential, the fact that problems are and do not go away when supposedly solved. Overcoming – raise up (*Aufheben*) over – a negativity and resolving the drama appear as a romantic dream.<sup>80</sup> What is unfolding in this story is another form of historiography where the consecutive moments or inventions are not related to each other as propositions, 'solutions' to new or old problems, on a progressive timeline. "Once we 'forget' the problem", Deleuze writes, "we have before us no more than an abstract general solution".<sup>81</sup> The state, for example, is a solution to a problem – organising and protecting a society – but in its daily activity and our interaction with the state this is forgotten. The state is assumed as an abstract generality with its own trajectory far beyond its genesis as a contingent solution to a problem. The internal workings of the problem itself must be remembered and worked out.

In the following step, Deleuze takes the story back both to Kant's hidden Platonism and to Leibniz, and forward to modern interpretations of the latter's differential calculus. What is at stake is, partly, the question that, if infinitesimals or differentials "are real or fictive" and in that case what their function is within mathematics and philosophy; partly, a merging of terminology and methodology between mathematics and philosophy, and thereby establishing a new theory of problematics.<sup>82</sup> Differentials are infinitesimal changes of quantity measured as discrete

---

<sup>79</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 210/161–62.

<sup>80</sup> For raise up, *aufheben*, or *soulever* see Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 76/53.

<sup>81</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 211/162

<sup>82</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 228/176.

approximations that are always smaller than any real number.<sup>83</sup> Calculus as it was developed by Leibniz and Newton is infamous for solving problems but remaining problematic in itself. Differential calculus, infinitesimals, and differentials were for centuries without rigorous definition and still today rests on shaky, nonstandard, or hyperreal ground. It has always been heralded and used by applied mathematicians, scientists, and engineers but frowned upon by puritans because of it lacking firm definition. The results come from discrete approximation and resemble the dialectic movement circling in on a precise but indefinite result but, as differentials are neither infinite nor finite, they remain problematic in a qualified sense.

The questionable ground of the differentials can be said to disappear in the result yielded by the calculus' correct approximation: "Neither real nor fictive, the differentials express the nature of a problematic as such, its objective consistency along with its subjective autonomy".<sup>84</sup> In differential calculus, Deleuze finds a model for overcoming the limitations of the vicious cycle of a dialectics aiming at providing answers to given problems, that is: a method for providing productive results with neither a prescribed way leading there nor a classical philosophical dialectics aiming for clear and distinct answers.

Deleuze is wary of the fact that his use of mathematics will be interpreted as metaphorical: "Differential calculus obviously belongs to mathematics, it is an entirely mathematical instrument". The same apply to problems and dialectics: "*Problems are always dialectical*: the dialectic has no other sense, nor do problems have any other sense". Any and all problems are dialectical, just as differential calculus completely belongs to mathematics. According to Deleuze, what is mathematical about differential calculus, is the solutions it offers when applied to mathematical problems, just as it "must be said that there are mathematical [...] problems, even though every problem is dialectical".<sup>85</sup> The method of calculus might stem from mathematics but that does not restrict it to yielding problematic solutions within that particular arena:

It is not mathematics which is applied to other domains but the dialectic which establishes for its problems, by virtue of their order and their conditions, the direct differential calculus corresponding or appropriate to the domain under consideration.<sup>86</sup>

At this junction, Deleuze joins the two stories of mathematics and philosophy together to bring about something new. First, Deleuze constructs his story, a series of steps from within the history of philosophy where he recasts conclusions drawn from his analysis of Hume and Bergson to create his own particular trajectory. Second, through bringing in terms and methods from mathematics

---

<sup>83</sup> Cf. Morris Kline, *Mathematical Thought from Ancient to Modern Time* (London: Oxford UP, 1972), pp. 342–389, 400–35.

<sup>84</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 231/178.

<sup>85</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 232/179. See also, p. 235/181: "there is no metaphor here..."

<sup>86</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 235/181.

he is able to offer another understanding of what he sees as missing in the philosophical method of dialectics: differentials. A vanishing yet insisting something that both is and is not but that in either case do not completely go away: a problematic that persists in the solutions it yields.

In the last step of his story of the problem, Deleuze moves the analysis beyond his reconfigured differential dialectics. He begins by reconnecting to contemporary “modern thought”, literature, and art and notes the extent to which “the renaissance of ontology is based upon the question-problem complex” before restarting the story again: “From Plato to the post-Kantians, philosophy has defined the movement of thought as a certain type of passage from the hypothetical to the apodictic”.<sup>87</sup> From doubt to certainty, from hypothetical problems to timeless truths. Deleuze, in a rather odd twist, instead invokes chance, dice throws, and the affirmation of decisions: “That is why problems are inseparable from a power of decision, a *fiat* which, when we are infused by it, makes us semi-divine beings. Did not mathematicians declare themselves to be descending from gods?”<sup>88</sup> The story of the problem itself ends without a firm answer, without solid ground, in aporia rather than in an apodictic principle.

Deleuze’s story is moving backwards and forwards between classical philosophical texts and mathematics; introducing new vocabulary and figures to open a path out of the impasse created. Deleuze complements the traditional history of dialectics with a kind of recursion where he shows how parts of the original history elude the major trajectories of history, while at the same time complementing it with his own minor histories that has always been present and played a role within the major history. Following the problem through *Différence et répétition* makes it clear that a story consists of several smaller histories that interweave – the story of the problem, of difference, of time, or of the subject – spread out over the entirety and scope of the book. The problem functions as a pivot in how Deleuze makes philosophy and how his method can be analysed. Doing philosophy is not about defining a method and following it rigorously, it is about posing new, or stating implicit, problems to be developed but without invoking a first term or hoping for an apodictic conclusion.

It is thus possible to conclude that Deleuze does other things than produce concepts and that his method can be excavated without recourse to aestheticism. While Deleuze does create a philosophical concept of the problem, that is just one aspect of the work done in *Différence et répétition*.<sup>89</sup> There is also the history told about dialectics and the minor story interwoven in that, the critique exercised against the established figures and concepts, and the merging together of

---

<sup>87</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 252–53/195–96.

<sup>88</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 255/197. See also 258/200: “How disappointing this answer seems to be!”

<sup>89</sup> For a formal conceptualisation of Deleuze’s problems, see Sean Bowden, ‘An Anti-Positivist Conception of Problems: Deleuze, Bergson and the French Epistemological Tradition’, *Angelaki*, 23 (2018), 45–63.



mathematics and philosophy. From this perspective, the notion of problems becomes clearer as a pivotal part of Deleuze's method. It is by posing problems, developing, and reconnecting them across fields and times that Deleuze creates. It is also inspired by this that the present investigation unfolds.

In a final note, the invoking of these figures can be understood as a pragmatic and pedagogic way for Deleuze to delimit his material and to create a distance to his and philosophy's serious nature in its infinite and grand ambitions to truth, good, beauty and eternity: *a* story of philosophy rather than *the* history of philosophy, one with stories and detective novels instead of meditations and treaties. The subversive amusement of narrative. This method is a joyful manner of demarcating and putting philosophical gravity in question while retaining precision and intensity. It is in this manner, playful and local yet with prowess and clarity, that the heuristic notion of telling philosophical stories is used.

## II. Philosophy, its Others, and History: Time and Time Again

### II.I. Repeating X, Mixing Y, and Making Z

What constitutes the overarching unity of *Différence et répétition*? It is clearly neither historical representation nor classical axiomatic or interpretative philosophy. It is neither a historical study of the development of certain concepts, nor a pure, logical, and atemporal meditation. All possible historic times are present simultaneously, just as many forms of knowledges come together in *Différence et répétition*. Rather, the unity of the text lies in its heterogeneity, a heterogeneity constituted by timely simultaneity and thematic co-existence. In his monographs in the history of art and philosophy, Deleuze brings the contributions and requirements of one figure to bear on figures from another time and field with almost complete disregard for anachronisms or perceived incompatibilities.<sup>90</sup> As Smith notes, Deleuze reads Spinoza through “Duns Scotus’s concept of univocity, and Leibniz” through the late nineteenth-century “mathematical theory of singularities”, even though neither one of these concepts or theories exist in their respective works.<sup>91</sup>

In Deleuze’s major treatises, this ungodly mix is taken a step further. In *Logique du sens*, the Stoics meet *Alice in Wonderland* in what could have proved to be an awkward séance, but which turns out to be a highly productive encounter. Similarly, *Différence et répétition* uses the history of philosophy, but also psychoanalysis, literature, mathematics, physics, and biology without much regard for chronology or context. In addition to this concoction, *Différence et répétition* is bursting with repetitions. The same stories appear time and time again, never finishing but only adding to one another. Deleuze does not resign either to a strict representation of historical facts or to a timeless and pure beginning in which philosophy is created without history or empirical studies. This raises two questions. First, how can different historical times be present in the present? Second, how can so different scholarly and artistic discourses be made to resonate with each other? In other words, how does a method that produces unity in heterogeneity and through repetitions work?

The table of contents in *Différence et répétition* reveals a seemingly classical structure: a preface, an introduction, five analytical chapters, and a conclusion. To what degree this structure is conventional, however, depends on how it is understood. Reading the subheadings makes it obvious that the classical outline is to some extent an illusion. The same terms appear again and again, sometimes changed, sometimes juxtaposed. Classical philosophical names and references, not limited to any one theme or time, are mixed with those from mathematics, psychoanalysis, biology, literature, and physics. From the perspective of its formal structure, *Différence et répétition*

---

<sup>90</sup> Deleuze is, of course, not alone in pursuing these general methodological strategies. Rather, it is an overall tendency in most post-Kantian and continental philosophy. However, the particularities of Deleuze’s operationalisation of these strategies should be spelt out.

<sup>91</sup> Smith, ‘Deleuze, Hegel, and the Post-Kantian Tradition’, p. 64.

can be viewed as a compilation of layers of broken-up stories: part of a story is given in the beginning of the book and another part later; themes come to the forefront, disappear, and reappear. It is a repetitious read.

A quick look at the fourth chapter, 'Synthèse idéelle de la différence', will clarify the nature of this mix.<sup>92</sup> It starts with an analysis of the problematic status of ideas in Kant's transcendental dialectics before moving on to combine Kant and Maïmon with a series of important figures from the history of differential calculus – among them Wronski, Bordas-Demoulin, Houël, and Dedekind. Platonic and Kantian ideas, Euclidian space, Hegel's philosophy of difference, and  $\frac{dy}{dx}$  are merged. From here Deleuze traverses into metamathematical questions of the reality and explanatory power of calculus and the infinitely small, only to come back to themes he touched upon in the first two chapters, such as dialectics and Aristotle's concept of difference. Deleuze then introduces one of his key concepts, multiplicity, and forms it through combining mathematics and biology with Bergson and moves this up to his transcendental empiricism and its pre-individual field while using examples for his exposition from pre-Socratic atomism, modern biology, and Marx. From this, Deleuze moves on to a discussion about the form of the founding question in philosophy with an illustration of his argument from Péguy's *Clio*, and a discussion of the nature of chance, God, and (non-)being. Following this is a rare confrontation with Heidegger and a discussion of literature (Artaud, Roussel, Homer, and Joyce). Intertwining these themes with the sociology of Tarde, and the linguistic structuralism of Saussure. Deleuze then explicates two more key concepts: the virtual and differenc-<sup>t</sup>iation. Thus, Deleuze's approach to doing philosophy regards neither historical succession nor disciplinary consistency as determining factors.

It could be argued that the unity of *Différence et répétition* is the arguments Deleuze develops or the concepts he creates but that does not explain the methodological problem of how he joins these incongruent topics and sources together. Rather, the unity lies in its heterogeneity and its repetitions, which presents a problem: something makes this heterogeneity legitimate and, moreover, productive. While reading *Différence et répétition* might be a dislodging experience, that does not mean that its synthesising text-critical method cannot be made intelligible.<sup>93</sup> Two devices that Deleuze utilises in drawing together his motley crew will be investigated in the chapters that follow. In the present chapter, the focus is the philosophical framework that makes this concoction work together. That means examining Deleuze's philosophy of time and history, for simultaneity, as well as how repetitions of stories support thematic co-existence.

---

<sup>92</sup> No references are given in this summary since the purpose is not detailed explication.

<sup>93</sup> See the testimonies on the reading experience by translators and commentators in the special issue 'Difference and Repetition at 50!', ed. by Vernon W. Cisney, Chas. Philips, and Daniel W. Smith, *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*, 14.1 (2020).

## II.II. Learning to Repeat and Time

Despite a sprawling index, a mass of historical figures, and a bibliography that “is obviously not exhaustive, and could not be” since difference and repetition are everywhere, *Différence et répétition* seems to be all about the same thing.<sup>94</sup> Deleuze seemingly mechanistically repeats everything and evens out differences between historical times and scholarly boundaries. He appears to smooth out differences, repeats, and echoes himself. However, Deleuze proposes a distinction in repetition that might dislodge him and *Différence et répétition* from the boredom and pain common to conscripts and pupils everywhere when hearing the sergeant-teacher’s rallying call: *repetitio est mater studiorum*.

The way out is found in the encounter Plato-Freud-Proust. Deleuze proposes in the introductory chapter to *Différence et répétition* a provisional critique of repetition where he subjects Freud to his immanent and genetic critique: “We repeat because we repress... Freud was never satisfied with such a negative schema, in which repetition is explained by amnesia”.<sup>95</sup> The hypothesis of psychoanalysis is that we heal by repeating, in a safe setting, past traumas rendered unconscious by our defences and society’s conventions. But what is it we are repeating when we are repressing? Psychoanalysis, Deleuze explains, focuses on mechanistic repetitions and the slips of tongues, metonyms, and metaphors – what he calls “disguises and variations, masks and costumes”. A form of repetition Deleuze terms a “bare and brute repetition (as repetition of the same)” where the original term – the mother, a split, a trauma – is repeated incessantly.<sup>96</sup> Freud was, according to Deleuze, never satisfied with such a simplistic notion of repetition but was unable to follow another path.

The road not taken was to have followed the disguises and variations instead of the presumed existence of an original. Mechanistic repetition assumes the identity of its object and treats the manifestations of the repetitions as “masks and costumes” but these, says Deleuze, “do not come ‘over and above’, they are the internal genetic element of repetition itself, its integral and constituent parts”. Deleuze reverses the schema: “I do not repeat because I repress. I repress because I repeat, I forget because I repeat”.<sup>97</sup> Slips, misspoken words, compulsive thoughts, or unspeakable hurt are not representations of a true object, a first term, loss, or original sin, they are the true objects of a disguised, clothed, or complex repetition. As Deleuze explains, “Repetition [...] constitutes itself only by disguising itself [...] the same thing is both disguising and disguised”.<sup>98</sup> Beneath the brute and mechanistic repetition Deleuze locates another path of complex repetition. Uncovering this

---

<sup>94</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 391/334.

<sup>95</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 26/16.

<sup>96</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 27/16 (trans. mod.).

<sup>97</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 26–27/16–18 (trans. mod.).

<sup>98</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 26 and 29/16 and 19 (trans. mod.).

path appears to happen, in *Différence et répétition*, through a bold reversal of Freud by means of reading his texts against himself, but the logic of Deleuze's move it stems from his readings of Proust and Bergson. Deleuze shows that Freud had an understanding of two forms of repetitions, both a negative schema of repetition, and a way out, through the observed disguises. However, that argument is itself a repetition from Deleuze's previous work.

Deleuze performs a similar reading of Plato where he shows that the Idea that Plato postulates only exists in a mythical present past. The Idea, Deleuze writes, "must be at once never-seen and yet already-recognised, a disturbing unfamiliarity. It is then tempting to say poetically that this has been seen, but in another life, in a mythical present: You are the image of..."<sup>99</sup> The original term is not, but must be, present; it must first be identified, then represented and recognised.

The only way that either Freud or Plato can achieve this, Deleuze argues, is by assuming a phantom object somewhere beyond reach. However, the traces of another trajectory remain in their work, even though this path was betrayed or forgotten. In brute repetition, there is always other layers present, that is the actual terms, disguises, and masks, that which is repeated, and that which is drawn from them. In seemingly mechanistic repetitions of history in books or for educational purposes, something is indeed repeated, but it is not an original term of knowledge. Inside that repetition there is the other form and in this "clothed repetition", as Smith puts it, "what is repeated is not a prior identity or originary sameness, but rather a virtual object [which] is always displaced in relation to itself and has no fixed identity".<sup>100</sup> What seems to be a bare repetition of the same argument concerning Plato and Freud in fact takes place within the virtual presence of Proust and Bergson.

What Deleuze finds in Proust's work, and shows in his analysis of the hero's serial loves in *Proust et les signes*, is that repetition does not begin in a given original experience. The hero's love for the mother is connected to Swann and his love and desire for – and jealousy of – Odette. In Proust, Deleuze locates an immediate clothed repetition. The love portrayed in *The Search* never begins and never ends: "love's repetition is a serial repetition".<sup>101</sup> As is, one could add, the repetition of Deleuze. The repetitions in *Différence et répétition*, that in turn repeats the history of philosophy while adding other times and themes, are methodological repetitions of arguments and strategies Deleuze found in, and developed from, Proust.

Repetition presumably assumes the existence of a founding first term or moment, but when one searches for such a point in Proust's work, one finds only further loves. The "hero's loves, for

---

<sup>99</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 184–85/141–42. Cf. 91f and 118f/66f and 87f.

<sup>100</sup> Daniel W. Smith, 'The Concept of the Simulacrum: Deleuze and the Overturning of Platonism', in his *Essays on Deleuze*, p. 22.

<sup>101</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, 3<sup>rd</sup> rev. ed., (Paris: PUF, 1976), p. 85. Trans. Richard Howard as *Proust and Signs* (Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 2000), p. 68. Henceforth *Proust et les signes* followed by French and English pagination.

Gilberte, for Mme de Guermantes, for Albertine form a series” who’s origin we may want to locate “in the hero’s love for his mother, but here too we encounter Swann” whose love for “Odette already constitutes part of the series that continues with the hero’s love for Gilberte, for Mme de Guermantes, for Albertine”.<sup>102</sup> Every love is precluded by another imaginary or real love, there is no origin or initiator to start any of the series in *The Search*. The hero’s childhood love for the mother repeats in itself other loves, such as between his mother and someone else or the love between his mother and her mother. Not only is there no first term, the singular loves that the hero lives also constitute repetitions or series of “beginning, course, and termination”. The overarching repetition repeats itself in each instant: “The personal series of our loves refers both to a vaster, transpersonal series and to more restricted series constituted by each love in particular”.<sup>103</sup> The series are implicated in one another and any transgression leads to new variations and further repetitions in new series.

While it is in Proust that Deleuze finds the nucleus to the fusion he achieves in the series X-Plato-Proust-Freud-Y, there is also need for caution. Disguised repetition does not necessarily imply progression, either in love or in philosophy. Rather, repetition implies continuous encounters with something, be it young girls for Proust’s hero or the concepts and stories of philosophy:

What we repeat is each time a particular suffering; but the repetition itself is always joyous, the phenomenon of repetition forms a general joy. Or rather, the phenomena are always unhappy and particular, but the idea extracted from them is general and joyous. [...] We extract [*extrayons*] from our particular despairs a general Idea<sup>104</sup>

Repetition, painstaking or frustrating as it may be, extracts something, ideas, learning, or healing – “all cure is a voyage to the bottom of repetition”<sup>105</sup> – from the repetitious series and its object.

Another repetition is indispensable. Chapter two, ‘La répétition pour elle-même’ begins with the statement: “repetition changes nothing in the object repeated but does change something in the mind which contemplates it”. This claim is accompanied by a problem derived from Hume: AB, AB, AB, A... “When A appears, we expect B with a force corresponding to the qualitative impression of all the contracted ABs”.<sup>106</sup> When something is repeated, we expect its continued repetition with a force corresponding to the length and force of whatever has been repeated:

Repetition changes nothing in the object or the state of affairs AB. [But] a change is produced in the mind which contemplates: a difference, something new *in* the mind. [...] Does not the paradox of repetition lie in the fact that one can speak of repetition only by virtue of the

---

<sup>102</sup> Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 85 and 88/68 and 71.

<sup>103</sup> Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 87 and 89/70 and 72.

<sup>104</sup> Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 91–92/74.

<sup>105</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 30/19.

<sup>106</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 97/70.

change or difference that it introduces into the mind which contemplates it? By virtue of a difference that the mind *draws from* [soutire] repetition?<sup>107</sup>

Repetition affects the one that contemplates, repeats, and is the subject of repetitions. To repeat constitutes change, it makes something new possible even though the object that is repeated stays the same; something is drawn from the series of repetitions. A difference is cast, both in the sense of a before and after and in the sense of making a difference. By repeating historical works on the problems and ideas of repetition, Deleuze draws forth something new. Deleuze changes perspective and takes up what appears to be the same concept, but is in fact placed in a different series, Hume–Bergson, instead of Plato–Proust–Freud.

The problem, however, stays the same: what do we extract from repetition and how do we do it? Deleuze seemingly repeats his argument in relation to Freud and Plato and makes it seem as if he in an encounter with their texts finds something that is both present and hidden and forgotten. However, a deeper engagement with Deleuze’s work reveals that the nucleus of what he finds in Freud and Plato is a repetition from his engagement with Bergson, Hume, and Proust. Deleuze’s text-critical method involves a complex repetition where what is repeated, and thereby singularized and reconnected with other series, is virtual and multiple. For every turn in the series, Deleuze and his readers draw something new from it. What is at stake in the series of repetitions that provides Deleuze with the distinction between bare and disguised repetition is to show that there is no ultimate term, and that the object that is repeated is a virtual object. This is equally true of Deleuze’s own repetitions.

### *II.III. Memory and the Virtual Text*

What is repeated is virtual and it is from the virtual, though equally real, half of the object that something is drawn. “Repetition”, Deleuze writes, “is constituted not from one present to another”, or from an original to a copy, or from a one love to another, “but between two coexistent series that these presents [*sic.*] form in function of the virtual object (object = X)”.<sup>108</sup> Deleuze’s virtual objects are created between and through coexistent materials through oscillating from one time and one context to another. The changes of contexts, materials, and times lets the forward repetitious movement draw something new from each at every turn in a non-circular series. Therefore, even without a full explication, the virtual is helpful for confronting current methodological problems. The problems are, on the one hand, triple: the co-existence of diverse types of scholarly and artistic practices; the simultaneity of times from which the practices originate;

---

<sup>107</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 96/70.

<sup>108</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 138/105.

and the repetitious nature of *Différence et répétition*. And, on the other hand, the problem is singular: what does it mean to make philosophy by way of history, and to construct something new out of a heterogeneous existent?

Deleuze presents his work using a temporally and thematically heterogeneous mix because in order to reach his overall purpose, effectuating change and making the new, he seems to be aiming to reach deep and wide into the obscure notion of memory. The purpose is by no means to represent memory or its content but rather to show its trickery and treason towards the time to come.<sup>109</sup> The purpose of combing his mismatched characters is not to even out differences but to unearth something that is of the past but in the present. On memory, Deleuze writes that

we do not proceed from an actual present to the past, that we do not recompose the past with various presents, but that we place ourselves, directly, in the past itself. That this past does not represent something that has been, but simply something that is and that co-exists with itself as present.<sup>110</sup>

Deleuze finds in Proust and Bergson a presence of the past in the present. No representation is possible because what is habitually split into past, present, and future is in itself an indivisibly present now. The past, as well as the future, exists but only as virtual dimensions of the present. We can neither move backwards nor forwards in the arrow of time because these dimensions co-exist simultaneously in the present as projections. The past exists as virtual presence in the present, but representing it is futile, because, as Deleuze puts it, “we cannot say that it was. It no longer exists, it does not exist, but it insists, it consists, it *is*.”<sup>111</sup> Representing that which is already present would be an exercise in vain. What we are able to do, however, is to place ourselves in the present past and modify it. The sources Deleuze uses in *Différence et répétition* do not constitute parts of a past that has been, a forever lost interval or moment that we can never reach but merely represent to the best of our ability to learn from. The past is *here now* in the present, it is “this being of the past in itself [...] called the virtual”.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, memory needs to be modified here. In its virtual present coexistence.

Here a clarification is called for. The present investigation is aimed at the workings of a concrete text-critical method but the virtual seems far removed from anything concrete. This, however, is a faulty issue of terminology. By way of style and perceived obscurity, the concept of the virtual runs the risk of being taken as esoterica. Nothing could be further from its purpose. To offer an allegory,

---

<sup>109</sup> ‘Trickery and treason’ come from Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977), p. 48. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam as *Dialogues II* (New York: Columbia UP, 2007), p. 41. For a different analysis, see Fredrika Spindler, “‘All Philosophy Starts with Misosophy’”, or On Love, Trickery and Treason: Deleuze and the History of Philosophy’, *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*, 13.3 (2019), 435–44.

<sup>110</sup> Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 73/58.

<sup>111</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 111/82.

<sup>112</sup> Deleuze, *Proust et les signes*, p. 73/58.



the virtual can be thought of as the part of a text one strives to fathom, either as reader and somehow sensing that there is more to the text than one is at present capable of understanding, or as writer when one struggles to give one's text the consistency it has in one's mind. It is completely there yet wholly absent. Addressing the hazard of vagueness, Deleuze writes that

the virtual is opposed not to the real but to the actual. *The virtual is fully real in so far as it is virtual.* [...] The virtual must be defined as strictly a part of the real object – as though the object had one part of itself in the virtual into which it plunged as though into an objective dimension.<sup>113</sup>

What Deleuze offers is a pertinent description of objects of knowledge; that is, the part of a text that is neither in the letters nor the footnotes, that cannot be pointed out but that anyone who has ever read or written knows exists. One part, real and actual, is on the page in your hands, another part, equally real but virtual, sometimes escapes us but is no less present and insisting.

Drawing on sources from all possible times and making them resonate with one another without considering context, succession, or the risk of anachronism is only problematic if one operates with a concept of progressive time and a representable past that was. From the perspective elaborated by Deleuze, such concerns are voided as the different forms of knowledge or times a certain idea or concept 'belong' too are as present as anything else. They are real in so far as they are virtual. This only appears counterintuitive because our language forces us to place history in another time. To forgo a later analysis: displacing the present past into another dimension, implies the spatialization of time, that is, making continuously flowing time into divisible parts.

With its heterogeneous unity, *Différence et répétition* refuses to abide by these temporal norms and linguistic restraints. Its purpose is creation for the future by means of the present past. It is the virtual memory – with its trickery and treason – that needs to be examined and affected, not a distant past that exists as a monument in a lost, petrified world striving to be represented. However, the notion of representation needs to be more stringently understood, and with it repetition. Deleuze writes: "The prefix RE- in the word representation signifies this conceptual form of the identical which subordinates differences".<sup>114</sup> Representation coincides with bare repetition. When the dream of a first term reigns, the possibility of repeating and healing, or moving beyond mechanistic repetitions is lost.

In changing perspective, moving from a static notion of repetition and from the idea of a true divisible past, the prefix *re-* is transformed. "*Re-petition*", Deleuze insists "opposes *re-presentation*: the prefix changes its meaning, since in the one case difference is said only in relation to the

---

<sup>113</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 269/208–09.

<sup>114</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 79/56.

identical, while in the other it is the univocal which is said of the different’’.<sup>115</sup> Staying with a model of representation, assuming a static original or a finite history, means that very little will change in either object or subject. However, with the help of a clothed repetition and the notion of virtual present past, change in the subject and in its memory is more likely to happen. The virtual, the object that is repeated and from which something is extracted by the contemplating mind, is consequently not only a concern of memory or a present past. More accurately, the virtual, concerns the future. When a more complex notion of repetition is brought to bear on the material digested in *Différence et répétition*, and when other notions of time and history come to the fore, novel possibilities for understanding why and how Deleuze joins his heterogenic material together opens up. Philosophy’s movement should then not be seen as circular but instead as complex, disguised, and interpolated series of repetitions.

The notion of repetition can offer a final insight. As demonstrated, Deleuze moves towards his concept of complex repetition from different angles, making similar analyses but with minor variations to contrast and differentiate, and always in order to draw out something new from the past. In this process, Deleuze chisels out different meanings of repetition. Chiefly bare and disguised repetition, but two other meanings playing shadowy roles, are repetition as theatre and as learning.<sup>116</sup> Playing theatre revolves around perfecting something over and beyond a first disappearing original term. The actor does not strive to copy his or her part, the well-played role incorporates in its evanescence the person played. The same goes for the play in its totality: theatre is not a re-enactment of a series of events, it is itself an event that might or might not have connections to other events, but it is never a copy of an original. The process of repetition as theatre then encircles learning. The recurrence of Deleuze’s stories functions in an equivalent way. By playing the same theme over and over again, the reader changes. Something is drawn from the repetition: even though the words stay the same, something is changed in the repeating mind. We learn with the reoccurring words, with the stories that appear and reappear. This is why *repetitio est mater studiorum* is so misunderstood: we learn nothing from repeating the same, we learn from repetition itself; we do not learn because we repeat, we repeat because we are learning.

This chapter began by asking where the unity of *Différence et répétition* lay. The provisional answer was heterogeneity and repetition. From this, the analysis moved through the workings of different forms of repetition, to a present past, a virtual text, and possibilities of affect mind and memory to make something new. Doing so has provided a framework for understanding Deleuze’s method and epistemology.

---

<sup>115</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 80/57.

<sup>116</sup> See for example Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* pp. 12–20/5–11.

### III. Making Difference: Voices and Immanent Genetic Critique

#### III.I. Making Difference through Reproduction

We have, thus far, seen how Deleuze is breaking apart the totalising history of philosophy into local, minor, stories and how his philosophy of time and repetition provides a framework for constructing something new out of various times and diverse scholarly and artistic enterprises. What now needs to be investigated is how this joining-together is made in the concrete text. There is a considerable amount of things happening at the same time in Deleuze's stories – distinctions made, implicit and explicit references, etc. – so to open them up they can be said to comprise of three momentous operations. First: a kind of reproduction or summary. While it might be done with irony, Deleuze reproduces the logic and the terms at hand in seemingly neutral and unquestionable formulations. This operation is both an introduction of key terms, expressions, or styles particular to the author Deleuze is working on, and of the logic of the theory proposed. Second: a merging of voices known as free indirect discourse where it becomes hard to distinguish who is speaking. This narrative device illuminates Deleuze's text-critical method. Third: an immanent and genetic critique, which also abides by the logic of sufficient reason. It is, in short, an operation where Deleuze intervenes in the other's text to make it say what Deleuze wants to say. This is often done through introducing yet another author, text, or argument.

These operations are distinctions I introduce for the present analysis in order to analyse how Deleuze is constructing his stories. They stem from close study of a broad range of his texts, not exclusively *Différence et répétition*. Here, the operations of Deleuze will be demonstrated through a few excerpts from a section where Deleuze discusses Aristotle's concept of difference while beginning to synthesise his own difference.<sup>117</sup> Although these operations are presented in succession here, they exist, in Deleuze's texts, and work intertwined and parallel to each other.

In the first sentence in the concerned section, "Aristotle says: there is a difference which is at once the greatest and the most perfect, *megiste* and *teleios*", there are three things to note.<sup>118</sup> First, Deleuze begin by the introduction of a manner of address, "Aristotle says", through the verb 'to say' [*dire*]. This insistence on the act of saying is important. It recounts Aristotle's philosophy, since saying is an expression and an act that reverberates throughout his texts and in the logic of his philosophy, while at the same time this 'saying' relates to the tradition's appropriation of Aristotle. The most classical conceptualisation is the Aristotelian dictum "being is said in many ways", to which the tradition has answered with an interpretation of being per analogy or against it with the

---

<sup>117</sup> The second section of the first chapter. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 45–53/30–35.

<sup>118</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 45/30.

argument of the univocity of being.<sup>119</sup> That “Being”, as Deleuze puts it, “is said in a single and same sense”.<sup>120</sup> Deleuze consequently uses the verb *dire* and related terms or verbs (e.g. *voix*, *parler*, *vocal*), some of which are unfortunately lost in the translation, frequently throughout this section. He is, in other words, adapting his terminology to the subject of the story. The second thing to note is that the first sentence gives an ironical summary of Aristotle’s project: is he actually looking for the best possible difference? However, this also indicates an Aristotelian logic of searching for essence and the pure, to which Deleuze is keenly sensitive. Third, the use of Greek terminology (*megiste* and *teleios*), indicates that Deleuze is reading Aristotle directly, in contrast to the use of Latin terminology later in the same paragraph, which indicates Deleuze’s shifts to interpreting Aristotle through the early Latin translation and reception.

Deleuze continues his introduction of Aristotle in the following sentences by showing the logic of Aristotle’s concept of difference while also moving to the third operation of critique by demonstrating how Aristotelean difference is, in itself, instable or even contradictory:

Difference in general is distinguished from diversity or otherness. For two terms differ when they are other, not in themselves, but in something else; thus when they also agree [*conviennent*] in something else: in genus when they are differences in species, in species for differences in number, or even ‘in being, according to the analogy’ for differences in genus.<sup>121</sup>

It is possible, without claiming to render neither Aristotle’s nor Deleuze’s theories full justice, to say that for Aristotle, true difference only exists between species and assumes identity in the genus, the higher taxonomic class.<sup>122</sup> That is why Deleuze indicates ironically that Aristotle is looking for the greatest and most perfect difference: a distinct and clear difference between this thing and that thing. Difference, for Aristotle, is a predicate that determines what species a particular being or thing belongs to. In contrast, the difference between those things that belong to different genera or between two things within the same species is no true difference but rather otherness, for different genus, or diversity, for accidental or material difference within species – as indicated with the verb ‘to agree [*convenir*]’ in the quote.

Deleuze goes on to say that “difference is confused with the inscription of difference in the identity of an undetermined concept”.<sup>123</sup> The undetermined concept is the higher taxonomic class or, if it is the top of the so-called Porphyrian tree, i.e. the hierarchical order (genus, species, material

---

<sup>119</sup> Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, p. Γ, 2, 1003a33. Trans. W.D Ross in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1985).

<sup>120</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 53/36.

<sup>121</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 45/30.

<sup>122</sup> For a comparison between Deleuze and Aristotle on these issues, see e.g. chapters one, two, and six in Miguel de Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2004).

<sup>123</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 48/32.

and individual things) of how much something *is*, Being as such through analogy.<sup>124</sup> For Aristotle, in Deleuze's portrait of him, difference is accidental, not essential, and follows from identity or essence instead of being something in itself. The logic, according to Deleuze's initial expose of Aristotle, owes much to Porphyry's interpretation and implies that Aristotle's difference divides things and beings into a hierarchical order – something Aristotle would not necessarily agree with.

In this story, Deleuze does not employ a pedagogical method. He provides several terms (difference, diversity, otherness, genus, species, number), a manner of address (to say) and a logic (to agree, analogy, division) but omits many of the pieces and how they come together. However, one gains more of an understanding later in the section as Deleuze expands on how these terms, manner of address, and logic follow each other and work together. In this sense, it is a productive story in its own right rather than an exegetic exercise or pedagogical survey. The story is neither a representation of Aristotle, a recount of what Aristotle's theory says, nor is it an interpretation, an attempt to unearth what Aristotle actually meant that shows an underlying logic within his theory. In a manner of speaking, the story skims on the surface of what happens in Aristotle's theory of difference, making the story accessible to those that are interested in Deleuze's narrative more than Aristotle himself, while also containing, like any good story, a deeper engagement with the subject matter available to whoever knows Aristotle well.

A note on voices before moving on: apart from the fact that Deleuze has authored this story, he also speaks directly here, even though a shift is occurring. Deleuze is slowly leaving the scene to the character Aristotle. Deleuze outright says something in the first sentence (Aristotle says...), but in the following (Difference in general...) a mixing between the two begins. Aristotle's theory is presented combined with the historical interpretation of it, using Deleuze's sarcasm and critical distortion. The beginning of the story puts the reader *in medias res*, reproducing a story that has already begun with terms and a logic the reader is presumed to know.

### III.II. *Reading and Writing with Difference I*

The second operation of Deleuze's storytelling is the mixing of voices called free indirect discourse. The purpose of this form of narration in *Différence et répétition* appears to be to let the characters of the story tell their own narrative, as if Aristotle himself is conveying terms, arguments, and concepts, rather than Deleuze telling us about his reading of Aristotle. Free indirect discourse is working, in what could be called its negative form, on the assumption that there is a distinct and

---

<sup>124</sup> What has been coined 'The Porphyrian tree' is this: 'Substance is itself a genus. Under it is body, and under body is animate body, under which is animal; under animal is rational animal, under which is man; and under man are Socrates and Plato and particular men'. Porphyry, *Introduction [Isagoge]*, trans. Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003), p. 6.

definable difference between two authors, characters, or the mediator and the mediated. However, it simultaneously has a positive form that reveals the impossibility, or inherent contradiction, of this difference: related texts, authors, concepts, narratives are joined already.

As seen above, Deleuze criticizes Aristotle for subsuming difference under identity and merely thinking difference as something between two self-identical things and as something assigned to them. It is in light of this that the workings of free indirect discourse within Deleuze's philosophy should be understood. In the first paragraph of the section on Aristotle's difference, a peculiar form of dialogue between Deleuze and Aristotle emerges:

Under these conditions, what is the greatest difference? The greatest difference is always an opposition, but of all the forms of opposition, which is the most perfect, the most complete, that which 'agrees' best? Related terms belong to one another; contradiction already belongs to a subject, but only in order to make its subsistence impossible and to qualify the change by which it begins or ceases to be; privation again expresses a determinate incapacity on behalf of an existing subject.<sup>125</sup>

The first thing to note is that the text here shifts without explicit demarcation between what is Deleuze's voice, that asks questions, and what presumably is 'Aristotle's' answers. There is clearly a difference between the two, one is Aristotle, the other Deleuze, but there is also a synthesis and a blurring of who is speaking. Deleuze tries to both encircle the requirements of Aristotelian difference and to show how it works. It is a difference that is not only spoken, but that also names that which it separates. That which is relative to another thing 'says' something to the other. It is a difference that, in the form of an opposition, defines two opposing yet related terms. The best difference in Deleuze's version of Aristotle's theory is one that agrees or convenes most perfectly, when it is clear in what thing things differ. Aristotle's difference appears at this stage of *Différence et répétition* as a rigid concept and to a certain extent far from the dynamics of Aristotle's original theory. Deleuze conveys it so as to juxtapose it to the concept of difference he will later develop, that is: a notion of difference that is productive rather than assigned.

In the excerpt above, the difference between Deleuze and Aristotle's voice is clear compared to the difference between voices in other parts of *Différence et répétition*. As if the reading of Aristotle changes in line with Deleuze's argument. When Deleuze is telling the story of Aristotle's greatest and most perfect difference then, in fact, there is such a difference *in* the storytelling – between Deleuze and Aristotle – but further on, when Deleuze deploys his critique more explicitly and is trying to create something new out of Aristotle's conception of difference, the manner in which it

---

<sup>125</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 46/30. Deleuze's choice of words is illustrative: "Les relatifs *se disent* l'un de l'autre; la contradiction *se dit* déjà d'un sujet", which literally translates as "related terms *say to* one another; contradiction already *says of* a subject" (my italics) but the translator, Paul Patton, obviously has to give it as "belong to".

is told changes. The difference between them becomes less evident and their voices morph. Free indirect discourse, in other words, functions as a form of testimony to the argument Deleuze is developing. To draw further conclusions from this, and continue the analysis in more detail, it is helpful to briefly investigate the workings of this narrative tool on its own terms.

### III.III. *Free Indirect Discourse*

Free indirect discourse is a form of narration where, without indication, a shift is made between telling a story directly or indirectly to a form of discourse that gives precedence to someone's 'mind' or the occurrence's 'own' expression. It is a narrative tool that has long been the object of analysis and linguistic debate without being firmly defined. For Deleuze, free indirect discourse is a style that allows his characters speak freely within 'his' text, to create anonymity, and collective utterances.<sup>126</sup> The academic debate surrounding this style centres around *who* is speaking: is it the fictional narrator, the 'I' of the story, the characters, the author, or does it even reflect the reader's thoughts?

To understand the workings of this narrative style, an example might help. In her overview of debates concerning free indirect discourse, Violeta Sotirova offers a formalised example:

1. [D]irect speech: He stopped and said to himself, 'Is that the car I saw here yesterday?'
2. [I]ndirect speech: He stopped and asked himself if that was the car he had seen there the day before.
3. [Free indirect discourse]: He stopped. Was that the car he had seen here yesterday?<sup>127</sup>

The differences between the forms might seem slim but the implications are puzzling. As Sotirova points out "the second part of no. 3 is clearly not a question posed by the author to a reader; it is directed by the character 'he' to himself".<sup>128</sup> It is neither a first-person account, there is no I, even though it appears to be the character talking in the end of the sentence, nor is it the author that asks this question since at the beginning of the sentence 'he' is being observed and reported. As the linguist V.N. Vološinov points out, formally important for this form of discourse is.

the absence of a reporting verb, ['said' or 'asked' in the previous example], which is a prerequisite in direct and indirect discourse. [...] Thanks to the fact that such a verb is

<sup>126</sup> When Deleuze's use of free indirect discourse has been analysed, scholars often see it as a stylistic question that obfuscates his argument. This is particularly true in the anglophone reception. Cf. Claire Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 109–14, Hughes, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition*, pp. 14–17, and Smith, "'A Life of Pure Immanence': Deleuze's 'Critique et Clinique' Project", pp. 211–22. The francophone interpretation has been more attuned to Deleuze's ontological and political use of it. Cf. Zourabichvili, *Deleuze, une philosophie de l'événement*, Alliez, *Deleuze, philosophie virtuelle*, and contributions in Jdey ed., *Les styles de Deleuze*.

<sup>127</sup> Roy Pascal quoted in Violeta Sotirova, *D.H. Lawrence and Narrative Viewpoint* (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 18–19. Pascal calls it "style indirect libre" but it clearly refers to the same notion.

<sup>128</sup> Sotirova, *D.H. Lawrence and Narrative Viewpoint*, p. 19.

omitted in [free indirect] discourse, the author is able to present the utterances of his characters in a way suggesting that he himself takes them seriously, and that what is at stake is not merely something that was said or thought, but actual facts.<sup>129</sup>

This description seems apt in the context of Deleuze's manner of writing on a formal level of voices. Deleuze often omits a reporting verb that could indicate who is speaking when he is summarizing or reproducing something. Similarly, he seldom uses a marker to indicate when he is intervening in a seemingly neutral summary. Vološinov's second point, suggesting that this enables the author to emphasize the concepts and reasoning being discussed as actual facts to be taken seriously, appear equally pertinent. Deleuze uses this tool to stress the impact of concepts and notions and their status as pertinent facts rather than contingent notions or interpretations.

The usual understanding of free indirect discourse within narrative analysis or linguistics, as well as in many commentaries on Deleuze's use, is that it blends various pre-existing voices, persons, or characters. Sotirova, in her overview, indicates that it might be difficult or even impossible to determine who or what is speaking free indirect discourse.<sup>130</sup> That does, however, not negate the ambition of settling the debate on what is in fact speaking – or indeed the underlying assumption that there is a definite utterer of a certain statement. This does not seem like a satisfying interpretation in the context of Deleuze as his philosophical work stresses the importance of an impersonal style and questions the notion of any pre-existing subject with a clear voice. Making free indirect discourse a vital part of his philosophy of language exactly emphasises these points.

Deleuze analyses free indirect discourse in several passages and interviews. For example in *Logique du sens* where it is hinted at as a possible “fourth discourse” or a “fourth person singular”.<sup>131</sup> Most decisively though in *Mille plateaux* where he and Guattari state that “we believe that narrative consists not in communicating what one has seen but in transmitting what one has heard, what someone else said to you. Hearsay”. And this retransmission has one form above all other: “There are [...] all manner of voices in a voice, murmurings, speaking in tongues: that is why all discourse is indirect, and the translative movement proper to language is that of [free] indirect discourse”.<sup>132</sup> In their analysis and (un)grounding of language based on collective hearsay, Deleuze and Guattari draw on Vološinov, who further discusses the function of free indirect discourse. Vološinov's first critique of traditional interpretations is that it is based on a mixing of voices:

---

<sup>129</sup> V.N. Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1986 [1929]), p. 150. Vološinov calls it “quasi-direct discourse” but, again, it refers to the same notion.

<sup>130</sup> See the first chapter in Sotirova, *D.H. Lawrence and Narrative Viewpoint*.

<sup>131</sup> See the 15th and 19th series in Gilles Deleuze, *Logique du sens* (Paris: Minuit, 1969). Trans. Constantin V. Boundas and others as *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia UP, 1990).

<sup>132</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, p. 97/76–77.



The word ‘mixture’ in the definition is completely unacceptable, since it entails a genetic explanation – ‘formed from a mixture of’ – which can hardly be proved. And even in its purely descriptive way, the definition is faulty inasmuch as what we have in [free indirect] discourse is not a simple mechanical mixture or arithmetical sum of two forms but a completely new, positive tendency in active reception of another person’s utterance.<sup>133</sup>

Vološinov’s rebuttal of the assumption of two or more distinct voices, utterers, or characters that mix can hardly be more forceful. He similarly refutes the idea that it would be a “masked” discourse where the point is to “guess” who the speaker is or that it would be a binary either/or form: this character or that. Furthermore, it is “by no means does [free indirect] discourse express a passive impression received from another’s utterance” or “the direct reception and experience of another person’s speech”.<sup>134</sup> However, if free indirect discourse is not a mixing, an arrhythmic summation of pre-existing voices, an invitation to guess who is speaking, or reported impressions of someone else’s statements, what is it then?

Deleuze and Guattari provide an explanation of what they see in this device:

The social character of enunciation is intrinsically founded only if one succeeds in demonstrating how enunciation in itself implies *collective assemblages*. [...] It is for this reason that indirect discourse, *especially ‘free’ indirect discourse*, is of exemplary value: there are no clear, distinctive contours; what comes first is not an insertion of variously individuated statements, or an interlocking of different subjects of enunciation, but a collective assemblage resulting in the determination of relative subjectification proceedings, or assignations of individuality and their shifting distributions within discourse. Indirect discourse is not explained by the distinction between subjects; rather, it is the assemblage, as it freely appears in this discourse, that explains all the voices present within a single voice.<sup>135</sup>

Free indirect discourse is thus simply a better way to capture the actual workings of language and to insist on how language subjectifies rather than a means where subjects communicate. In short, for Deleuze and Guattari, free indirect discourse better captures how language works and replaces abstract notions of language based on a definitive speaker, a signifier, and a structure (and all that follows from such assumptions). In an individual statement, uttered by one person or written by a particular author, there are an infinite number of voices and statements; there is no original statement or person where meaning originate. This holds true irrespective of which form of discourse is used but free indirect discourse clarifies this, as it muddles the immediate notion of any one voice. On a grammatical level this poses a number of problems but, according to Vološinov, and Deleuze and Guattari, it does not pose a problem in understanding the meaning of

---

<sup>133</sup> Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, p. 142.

<sup>134</sup> Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, pp. 144, 146, and 154.

<sup>135</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, p. 101/80.

what is said.<sup>136</sup> It is, after all, possible to understand the texts signed by the name Deleuze even though it might be difficult to pinpointing who is speaking within them.

The importance of this narrative device is twofold. On a syntactic or language philosophical level, it better explains how language work and implies the impossibility of clearly distinguish who is speaking. On a concrete, practical level, free indirect discourse is a style for telling stories, to revitalise, and to make arid texts more capturing and effectful to their audience. However, this is both easy and difficult to reconcile with how we usually read. Readers seem to desire a definable speaking subject, the lack of which makes the text ‘difficult’, yet, we do understand the sense of what is said. Something captures us in the vividness of a text or story told with free indirect discourse. For these reasons, commentaries on Deleuze’s work often simultaneously praises his style and the philosophy he makes, while attempting to show what in his texts is indeed ‘Deleuze’, and what is, for example, ‘Spinoza’, or ‘Bergson’ – as if it matters more what comes from Deleuze and what comes from those that he draws on than the ideas put forth. In relation to the negative and positive form of free indirect discourse, this narrative device clearly constitutes both an ontological and a political tool for Deleuze, undermining the desire for predefined subjects and objects just as it fosters another understanding of difference.

### III.IV. *Reading and Writing with Difference II*

Let us now analyse the end of the paragraph quoted previously. In ‘response’ to the last question Deleuze posed, a small shift has occurred in the text: it has become harder to decide who or what is speaking.

So long as we consider the concrete being with respect to its matter, the contrarieties which affect it are corporeal modifications which give us only the empirical, accidental concept of a still extrinsic difference (*extra quidditatem*). Accidents may be separable from the subject, as ‘white’ and ‘black’ are from ‘man’; or inseparable, as ‘male’ and ‘female’ are from ‘animal’: accordingly, the difference will be called either *communis* or *propria*, but in so far as it pertains to matter, it will always be accidental. Thus, only a contrariety in the essence or in the form gives us the concept of a difference that is itself essential (*differentia essentialis aut propriissima*). Contraries in this case are modifications which affect a subject with respect to its genus. Genera are in effect divided by differences in essence which take the form of contraries, such as ‘with feet’ and ‘with wings’. In short, contrariety in the genus is the perfect and maximal difference, and contrariety in the genus is specific difference.<sup>137</sup>

Drawing on Porphyry’s *Isagoge* and hinting at the Latin reception of Aristotle (indicated by the Latin terminology and a subsequent footnote), Deleuze here gives an account of some of the

---

<sup>136</sup> Vološinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, p. 144. Cf. p. 148.

<sup>137</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 46/30.

consequences of Aristotle's philosophy of difference. However, is it Aristotle or Deleuze that 'speaks'? Is it a critique or a summary? The beginning of the first sentence, "So long as [*Tant que*]", seems to imply a reservation on Deleuze's part. A conditional *if* we do like this *then* we will only get a concept of extrinsic or accidental difference, and thus not a true concept of a difference in itself. As such, it is likely to be Deleuze's voice. However, the following sentences could be read either as an ironic summary from the viewpoint of Deleuze, Porphyry, and the Latin reception of Aristotle, just as they could be read either as emanating from Aristotle (via Porphyry and subsequent reception) or from Deleuze's reading.

The following sentence, "Accidents may be separable [...]", is a further step on Deleuze's quest to answer the question of what the greatest and most perfect difference is. Corporeal differences, difference within a species, between individuals of the same species, or differences within the same genus in a form that does not distinguish it from another species (male or female are indeed different but not in the sense of distinct species in themselves), does not provide such a difference, but differences or contrarieties between species does. You have, if you are a flying creature, an essential difference from one that walks, an either-or relationship: "with feet" *or* "with wings". That is the greatest and most perfect difference, the specific difference – the *diaphora*. Deleuze is then telling us about Aristotle's understanding of difference, and neither of them might agree with the narrative, however, the interesting things to note is how Deleuze constructs his narrative.

The excerpt above demonstrates the workings of Deleuze's style of writing and reading well: it blends of voices and perspectives and neither provides a reporting verb or marker of the speaker. The subject is Aristotle's philosophy together with its reception, and what Aristotle thought of, for example, essence, accident, substance, and difference. However, the presence of several perspectives and authors, their texts, and how they work together or diverge, on one level initiate Deleuze's explicit transformation from difference between to differentiation, and, on another level, its textual practice: the melting and becoming of these voices and their differentiation. Deleuze does not juxtapose the perspectives – his own, Aristotle's, Porphyry's, and the traditional interpretation – instead, through having them share the same sentences without letting it be known who is who, he lets them all speak simultaneously in a collective utterance.

For Aristotle, as articulated by Deleuze, difference is a predicate, something assigned to a substance or essence to make it possible to speak this essence – or to determine what it is. An order can be established with the help of identifying difference between different genera, species, and individuals. Difference, particularly specific difference, is used to determine what is what or who is who. Even if the question 'who is who' does not imply difference but merely otherness, the logic is the same: there is contrariety between someone and someone else. Deciding contrariety

resembles what happens when reading in what could be called a non-Deleuzian modus: trying to determine who is speaking, what piece of information, or what expression emanates from where. Hence, free indirect discourse appeals to a very Aristotelian problem: determining and assigning differences to identify being. While it also demonstrates the inherent difficulties of determination and assignation. Writing and reading stories is traditionally seen to be made via markers of who does what and what happens to whom; a story is a series of events related in time and space and attributed to a subject or an object. Determining what happens and who effectuates it, or is affected by it, is done through identifying difference between events and subjects. Accordingly, reading and writing stories with an Aristotelian type of difference means identifying something already there by finding its essence or true meaning.

However, Deleuze and Guattari stated that “what comes first is not an insertion of variously individuated statements, or an interlocking of different subjects of enunciation, but a collective assemblage resulting in the determination of relative subjectification proceedings, or assignations of individuality and their shifting distributions within discourse”.<sup>138</sup> For them, a collective assemblage comes first. This collective results in subjectification, assignation of individuality and shifting distributions within the story. The events, notions, and problems of the story effectuates the subjectification. When Deleuze expands on his criticism of Aristotle and develops his concept of difference he strives to invert the order between substance and difference, he makes difference, or rather the verb differentiation, the pivotal point in place of substance or essence.

In Deleuze’s view, difference as differentiation produces the things and events we perceive, rather than them just being there and then distinguished from each other by assigned difference. This changes the meaning of reading and writing stories. It is the collective utterance or hearsay, for which the free indirect discourse is exemplary, that differentiates and thus make the persons, events and things that make up a story. Writing or reading with a productive difference means making or drawing something from what is said, not from a presumed utterer. Difference makes the difference. The traditional interpretation of free indirect discourse – that it is a blurring the lines between who speaks and as a source of confusion and misunderstanding in the work of Deleuze – is thus not sufficient. For Deleuze, as for his texts, it is a fundamental tool in the production of philosophy. Its workings are aimed at producing collective utterances that are hard to accredit to a specific someone and, more importantly, the utterances produce that ‘someone’ out of remnants handed down through a present history and thus to produce something new.

---

<sup>138</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, p. 101/80.

### III.V. Critique or How Difference Makes the Difference

The third operation, briefly sketched in the beginning of this chapter, concerns how Deleuze transposes someone else's argument or concept: how what began with a summation of Aristotle's concept of difference ends up with Deleuze's own concept. This operation of Deleuze's telling of stories is a process that develops something new out of something existing, producing the new through a process of critique which keeps that which it is criticising. This process shows that whatever Deleuze would like to say is already present in what has been said, however not as something unthought or as a deeper foundation. His critique thus draws on his work on Kant (immanence), Nietzsche (genesis), and Leibniz (sufficient reason). Deleuze's storytelling concerns the genesis of the story – how it came to be – and its results, that is: the things and occurrences that are in the present. Deleuze establishes his notion of critique in his 1962 book *Nietzsche et la philosophie*. There Deleuze draws on Kant, Nietzsche, and Nietzsche's critique of Kant's critical project, in writing that a critique must be “immanent”, “total and positive”, and “that nothing can escape it”.<sup>139</sup> This was Kant's project, but, Deleuze argues, Nietzsche saw its ambition as unfulfilled because Kant took that which he criticized (reason, understanding, moral, etc.) as pre-given and not in itself susceptible to critique. Nietzsche tried to radicalize the critique and aimed it instead on the ideas or concepts criticized, conducting it at the level of a genesis of reason, understanding, and morality.<sup>140</sup> In other words, to exercise a critique for Deleuze means establishing an immanence, a concept, or a theory which will only be criticised from within its presuppositions, tracing a genesis backwards so as to explain how the particular concept or theory came to be.

In *Différence et répétition*, Deleuze writes that “the conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presupposes itself and the genesis of the act of thinking in thought itself”.<sup>141</sup> Concerning a critique of the negative, which also concerns critique generally, he says: “critique of the negative is radical and well-grounded only when it carries out a genesis of affirmation and, *simultaneously*, the genesis of the appearance of negation”.<sup>142</sup> Critique needs to reveal how that which it is aimed at came to be and at the same time ground a new genesis of the dimension it is constructing in and through critique. For Deleuze, critique is thus both destruction and construction, according to the requirements of sufficient reason where everything needs a cause and a ground but where grounding happens with a “twist” because the foundation is the groundless: “To ground is to metamorphose”.<sup>143</sup> That is, everything needs to

---

<sup>139</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris: PUF, 1962), p. 102. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson as *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, (London: Athlone Press, 1983), p. 89. Henceforth *Nietzsche et la philosophie* followed by French and English pagination.

<sup>140</sup> Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, pp. 102–108/89–94. Cf. *Différence et répétition*, pp. 178–79/137.

<sup>141</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 182/139.

<sup>142</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 266/206.

<sup>143</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 200/154.

have a cause or an explanation, making Deleuze's critique inherently positive. These critical projects, Kant's, Nietzsche's, and Deleuze's, are clearly aimed at bigger issues than an individual sentence or a short excerpt but the critical impulse of these projects, particularly Deleuze's, should still be present at all levels of his stories.

At the beginning of the second paragraph of Deleuze's analysis of Aristotle's concept of difference, Deleuze concludes that, for Aristotle, the greatest and most perfect difference is specific difference, or *diaphora* – i.e. the difference assigned to a species and thus contradiction between two distinct species. Deleuze is thereby in a position to move this notion of difference a step further; his way of doing that, through reproduction and by free indirect discourse, is to draw out the consequences of Aristotle's concept. Deleuze applied the concept, and let it undermine itself, by first showing where it came from, its inaugural workings within Aristotelian philosophy, and its reception, thus both giving its genesis and criticizing its consequences:

[Specific difference] is synthetic, since the determination of species [*spécification*] is a composition, and the difference is actually added to the genus in which it was hitherto only virtually [*qu'en puissance*] included. It is mediated, it is itself mediation, the middle term in person. It is productive [*productrice*], since genera are not divided into differences but divided by differences which give rise to corresponding species. That is why it is always a cause, the formal cause: the shortest distance is the specific difference of the straight line [...].<sup>144</sup>

The two sentences that precede this quote have a similar structure, calling the specific difference “pure”, “intrinsic” and “qualitative”, so as to make up a kind of list of properties that Deleuze asserts to specific difference. On the one hand, these properties appear to be straightforward, as if Deleuze does not want to do much about them other than listing them but, on the other hand, there is a particular function of the manner in which he is enumerating the properties, and the structure of these properties themselves. The third sentence is instructive, “It is productive...” It should first be noted that this is counter to Aristotle's conception of specific difference, it turns the causal relationship around: difference for Aristotle is assigned (by judgment, Deleuze will say) or noted empirically (“with feet” or “with wings”). It does not *do* anything. Nevertheless, Deleuze claims, difference is a producer. Moreover, and this is the second point: Deleuze's reading, which takes place not only vis-à-vis Aristotle but also with the tradition's interpretation of him in constant play, focuses less on what Aristotle says and more on what its effects have been. Deleuze draws something from Aristotle's theory that was not necessarily intended, producing something new.

What is specific difference a producer of? It produces, in the genera, species. There are different species not because of an existence first of bigger genera, and then specific species and individuals, before finally someone or something differentiates them *post factum* on the basis of their apparent

---

<sup>144</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 47/31.

differences. Rather, there are different genera and different species because something has changed within the bigger or smaller groups, something that *makes* them different and subsequently smaller and more differentiated. Deleuze argues that this something can only ever be difference in itself because differentiation happens before any difference can be observed or assigned.

Deleuze's example is the straight line: it is not the case, as Aristotle in Deleuze's initial reading seems to imply, that there first was a straight line and then, to be able to differentiate that line from other lines, the shortest distance was assigned to it. The shortest distance, the specific difference in this case, produces the straight line, that which is different with this type of line from all other lines is what makes it. The critical point is not the stringency of the argument, and clearly, the rendering here is simplified, but how it is deployed and the consequences Deleuze focuses on. It can be seen again here:

Such a synthetic and constitutive predicate, attributive more than attributed, a veritable rule of production, has one final property: that of carrying with itself that which it attributes. [...] Difference carries with itself the genus and all the intermediary differences. The determination of species links difference with difference across the successive levels of division, like a transport of difference, a *diaphora* of *diaphora*, until a final difference, that of the *infima species*, condenses in the chosen direction the entirety of the essence and its continued quality, gathers them under an intuitive concept and grounds them along with the term to be defined, thereby becoming itself something unique and indivisible [*atomon, adiaphoron, eidos*].<sup>145</sup>

Deleuze here draws out the consequences of Aristotle's concept of difference *via* its most perfect version, the *diaphora*. This approach is related to the way he deploys or exercises critique. Let us first note that there is no free indirect discourse at work here, Deleuze fairly clearly speaks with his own voice and the narrative voice is polemic. Aristotle would not agree with Deleuze's portrait of his concept. The base for Deleuze's understanding of the *diaphora* is that it is productive and synthetic, it brings things together, and that it is attributed, that is: some external power (the faculty of judgment) allocates it. When these two points, synthetic and attributed, come together, Deleuze claims that it is an attribute in itself. Specific difference or difference as such is productive because it divides something, but that division creates the next level of things which belongs to what has been divided. In this whole argument, Deleuze tacitly invokes Porphyry and the notion that there is a difference – from substance via body, animated body, animal, and rational animal to individual men – which both divides the higher taxonomic class and makes the underlying class. Difference divides, attributes, and synthesises.

In *Différence et répétition*, when Deleuze works with a particular concept such as difference, the task of his critique and how he creates are the same. He starts in a given notion, traces it backwards

---

<sup>145</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 47/31. Square brackets from Patton's translation, Greek alphabet in original.

to the cause or problem that rendered it from the beginning, shows both the faults and prowess of the concept at hand and then re-constructs it in a new shape and on a transformed ground. In the story of Aristotelian difference, Deleuze establishes how difference works and how it came to be while making something new with it. While analysing Aristotle's concept of difference Deleuze simultaneously subjects it to criticism, both because it does not work as Aristotle claimed it did within his own system and because the concept had grave consequences for the philosophy that came after him. At the same time, Deleuze finds a nucleus in Aristotle's concept of difference that he will carry on and develop. The key is, of course, that difference is productive.

Deleuze's concept of criticism is therefore inherently positive and re-constructive. It is not aimed at something unthought or hidden in the text. His wording, as analysed here, is illustrative: Freud "indicated another path [but] he was unable to prevent himself maintaining the model of a brute repetition, at least as a tendency";<sup>146</sup> Plato's original form is there and yet not there, "a mythical present" making Plato the "first to overturn Platonism";<sup>147</sup> Aristotle was forced "to lend [specific difference] strange powers" and so missed his chance to a productive philosophy of difference.<sup>148</sup> The object of the critique is nowhere and for no one pure negativity or absence, what Deleuze draws out was always present. His textual critic is aimed at the virtual part of notions to actualise them in new configurations, and therein lay his potential contribution to the traditions of textual criticism.

This chapter has excavated how Deleuze tells his stories through a close reading of a few pages of *Différence et répétition*. We have seen how Deleuze introduces a story via a reproduction that offers a manner of address in relation to the philosopher in focus, how his narrative device free indirect discourse both uses and undermines the notion he addresses. He subjects his topic to a reconstructive criticism that is immanent to the notion at hand at the same time as it significantly transposes that same notion to something new. It is in this sense we can understand how, in Deleuze's own words: "difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse".<sup>149</sup> By making difference in and not between authors or concepts, Deleuze is able to provide new trajectories. His genetic and immanent critique is another tool with the same purpose, that is to challenge the inner differences in the logic of a particular notion and thereby reconstruct what is his view already existed.

---

<sup>146</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 27/16–17.

<sup>147</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 185 and 93/142 and 68.

<sup>148</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 48/32.

<sup>149</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 286/222.



## IV. Towards a Method of Re-Constructive Multiplicities

### IV.I. Stories of Multiplicities

As seen in this thesis, the method in *Différence et répétition* consists of drawing different works, authors, fields, and concepts together. It is by engrafting heterogeneous elements that Deleuze creates the new. The problem at hand in this last chapter is how the merging of diverse works and relations between them are established, how systems are formed, and resonances are achieved. This problem corresponds in part with a concept Deleuze developed with the help of, among others, Bergson, and the mathematician G.B.R Reimann: multiplicity. Through tracing the notion of multiplicity in their work and the ways in which Deleuze deploys it, this chapter will thus identify and offer a methodological device to further understand Deleuze's re-constructive method.

The noun multiplicity and its connected problems appear in all Deleuze's major publications from 1953 to his last texts. As a philosophical concept, multiplicity aims to substitute the old and unsatisfactory notions of essence and substance (*ousia*). That is, Deleuze turns an essentialist and static ontology into an inherently dynamic and genetic one, or what Manuel DeLanda calls a "morphogenic process" and that Beistegui describes as "ontogenesis".<sup>150</sup> In this function, multiplicity supports several of Deleuze's most famous notions such as differentiation, the philosophical concept, abstract machines, and smooth and striated spaces. However, as I argue here, multiplicity is also a methodological device for Deleuze. Multiplicity is a way of modifying and reengaging the pieces of the given in a new manner. In this capacity, it can function as a prism through which it is possible to discern Deleuze's method.

A "multiplicity", Deleuze writes in a decisive formula, "must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organisation belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system".<sup>151</sup> It is thus not a multiplicity of something, it is a proper noun, a fusion, and a system in its own right. A multiplicity, Deleuze explains, comprises dimensions, continuity, and definitions. While being indeterminate, not decided by any transcendent principle, the elements of a multiplicity are determinable through their relations with one another. Elements are therefore reciprocal definitions and "cannot change unless the multiplicity changes its order and its metric".<sup>152</sup> Dimensions and elements only exist as functions of the intrinsically formed relationships within the multiplicity, meaning that the multiplicity itself stays heterogeneous and continuously changing depending on forces inside it or forces acting upon

---

<sup>150</sup> Manuel DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. 2. Most of DeLanda's book develops this theme. Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*, p. 266. See chapter eight for the transformation from *ousia* to multiplicity.

<sup>151</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 236/182.

<sup>152</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 237/183.

it. This makes the multiplicity, when divided, change in kind or quality rather than in degree or quantity. Temperature can illustrate this in two ways. First, taking a container of water heated to 90°C and dividing it into two equal smaller parts will, of course, give you two entities, but their intensity will not have changed in the same manner. Both will still measure 90°C – not 45°C. Second, if the temperature, the intensity, is changed by adding or subtracting energy it can reach thresholds or singularities where the water's 'nature' will change into ice or gas.<sup>153</sup>

In pivotal moves, both Riemann and Bergson disposed of the dialectical choice between one and multiple, each substituting the opposition for two types of multiplicities. For Riemann, it concerned the building blocks and relations of space and for Bergson linear time and our sense of flowing time, what he called duration, given to us as a impure composite. The first type is

a multiplicity of exteriority, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of order, of quantitative differentiation, of difference in degree; it is a numerical multiplicity, discontinuous and actual. [T]he other type of multiplicity appears in pure duration: It is an internal multiplicity of succession, of fusion, of organization, of heterogeneity [...]; it is a virtual and continuous multiplicity that cannot be reduced to numbers.<sup>154</sup>

The first of these multiplicities, the classical, is composed by aggregation and binds together more or less stable units by a logic of addition ( $n + 1$ ). As such, it is still subordinated to the one. In contrast, the other type proceeds by fusion and is the multiplicity of the properly substantive form. Hallmarks of the second type of multiplicity is its evasiveness, its virtuality and non-actuality, its subjectivity and non-objectivity, and that it constantly changes in kind.

The division of two types of multiplicity is interesting here since it relates to the problems of who, what, and what times can be the originator of specific notions as well as of the way these notions are brought together. They spark questions about our will to make out what belongs to whom and how things are constituted. As we shall see, following in Deleuze's footsteps and retracing the genealogy of the concept of multiplicity will eventually provide a tool for textual critic.

#### *IV.II. Riemann and the Reconstruction of Space*

The problem that begets Riemann's notion of multiplicity had troubled geometry and mathematics since Euclid's *Elementa*, namely the possibility of parallel lines in space or what is called Euclid's parallel postulate. If it were true, Euclid's three-dimensional idealisation of space would be correct, while disproving it enables other conceptualisations of space. Intuitively, from our local experience of the space we are emerged in, two parallel lines would not meet at any point. However, looking

---

<sup>153</sup> Example from DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, p. 18.

<sup>154</sup> Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, pp. 30–31/38.

at space globally or externally, for example, as a sphere, the answer is not as straightforward. By the early nineteenth-century the attempts at proving Euclid's parallel postulate were exhausted and suspicion were growing that non-Euclidean spaces with more than three dimensions were conceivable. A crucial step was taken when curves and surfaces became regarded as spaces in themselves and not immersed in the idealised Euclidean space with Cartesian coordinates  $(x, y, z)$ .

Using calculus, curves and surfaces could be investigated in themselves and their characteristics, like immanent curvature in the form of deviation, could be determined at infinitely small intervals.<sup>155</sup> By simultaneously localising and globalising space, differential geometry showed that the parallel postulate is only valid in a relatively small flat surface but not on a sphere or in space as such and thereby that Euclid's postulate was based on experience and not *a priori* facts. Riemann generalised these conclusions and reconstructed space, not from our experience but from "a general notion of multiply extended magnitudes" that forms "a *continuous* or *discrete* manifoldness".<sup>156</sup> Starting from an assumption of these neutral entities Riemann reconstructed space away from its Euclidean idealisation as a homogeneous three dimensional container, and towards present-day understandings of space as matter of different density dependent on the forces acting in and on it.

Riemann's reconstruction begins with brushing aside the discrete multiplicity since that would bring back the problems of a homogeneous space. Concerning continuous multiplicities, he assumed that space can only be known locally or infinitesimally where it resembles the Euclidean idealisation of space. He subsequently works "by defining the distance between two generic points whose corresponding coordinates differ only by infinitesimal amounts".<sup>157</sup> Riemann assumes that these infinitely small point-spaces coincide with the idealised homogeneous Euclidean notion of space where formulas such as Pythagoras theorem, providing the distance between points, can be deployed. Continuous multiplicities thus consist of juxtaposed points or infinitely small internally homogeneous Euclidean pieces of space. In contrast, the so-called Riemann space of continuous multiplicities globally lacks homogeneity; it is different everywhere because of the accumulation of different neighbourhoods of space. The result is, as Albert Lautman writes, that

'two neighbouring observers can locate the points in a Riemann space that are in their immediate neighbourhood, but they cannot, without a new convention, be located with respect to one another'. Each neighbourhood is therefore like a small bit of Euclidean space, but the connection from one neighbourhood to the next neighbourhood is not defined and

---

<sup>155</sup> For a succinct explanation of this process, see DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, pp. 3–5.

<sup>156</sup> Bernhard Riemann, 'On the Hypotheses Which Lie at the Bases of Geometry', trans. by W.K. Clifford, *Nature*, 8.183, 184 (1873), 14–17, 36, 37. I.I (references to chapter and paragraph). Manifoldness is the old mathematical translation of *Mannigfaltigkeit* or what is now known as multiplicity, variety, or manifold.

<sup>157</sup> Kline, *Mathematical Thought from Ancient to Modern Times*, p. 890.

can be done in an infinity of ways. The Riemann space is thus presented as an amorphous collection of juxtaposed pieces that are not attached to one another.<sup>158</sup>

In an intrinsically defined plane or space, not immersed in a higher space or container and mapped with a Cartesian coordinate system, a curve does not differ from a straight line. Based on this insight, Riemann imposes a means to measure distance and curvature from parts of any multiplicity. This provides an intrinsic metric for the juxtaposed pieces of space where the “length of lines is independent of their position, and consequently, every line is measurable by means of every other”.<sup>159</sup> Relative comparison is possible but not definite measurement. However, the central problem of how connections between the elements or neighbourhoods can be established remains. To solve this, Riemann showed that within a coordinate system, as one imposed on an infinitely small piece in a multiplicity, there existed certain geometrical characteristics that do not change when the multiplicity is transferred to another system of coordinates since these characteristics are representations of matter and are “intrinsic properties of the manifold itself”.<sup>160</sup>

These characteristics are called invariants or tensors and are quantitative values of magnitude and direction of, for example, the comparable lines just mentioned, that stays the same even if the system within which they represent matter is changed for another. The relative, locally defined or “imposed”, metric ( $ds^2$ ) on the one hand “ties together the points of space” in the multiplicity, and the absolute invariants or tensors that are intrinsic to the manifold, on the other hand, and enables connections to be made and studied in a Riemann space.<sup>161</sup> The infinitely small pieces of space are consequently not intrinsically connected. Instead, there is successive approximation, juxtaposition, accumulation, and conjunction of neighbourhoods around points. The connections are mathematically imposed, they are not inherent to the multiplicity, but are made with tensors that represent actual magnitudes or forces. The metrics used for multiplicities are thus of a comparative nature. The earth cannot be measured by stepping out of our universe, it can only be scaled relative to other things therein. Accumulations and connections in a multiplicity thereby happen by means of forces acting in or on it.<sup>162</sup> This deferred synthetic process, in a transferred sense, is pivotal to an understanding of Deleuze’s method.

In *Mille plateaux*, Deleuze and Guattari draw a distinction between Riemann’s continuous multiplicities, their intrinsic nature of “accumulation” or “patchwork” of pieces of space, and the later development of tensor analysis and imposed metrics. They call this distinction an “Euclidean

---

<sup>158</sup> Albert Lautman, *Les mathématiques, les idées et le réel physique* (Paris: Vrin, 2006), p. 136. Trans. Simon Duffy as *Mathematics, Ideas, and the Physical Real* (London: Continuum, 2011), p. 98. Henceforth *Les mathématiques, les idées et le réel physique* followed by French and English pagination. Also quoted in, Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, p. 606/485.

<sup>159</sup> Riemann, ‘On the Hypotheses Which Lie at the Bases of Geometry’. II.I.

<sup>160</sup> Kline, *Mathematical Thought from Ancient to Modern Times*, p. 901.

<sup>161</sup> Kline, *Mathematical Thought from Ancient to Modern Times*, pp. 892 and 1133.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Riemann, ‘On the Hypotheses Which Lie at the Bases of Geometry’ III.III.

conjunction of Riemann space” which implies “parallelism” instead of accumulation. This distinction is important to their theory of smooth and striated space, but the two processes are also “linked”.<sup>163</sup> It is nevertheless hard to see how connection at all is possible in the case of a pure accumulation – even a patchwork quilt has stitches between the patches. Furthermore, Riemann spaces only became a truly useful concept when tensors were defined as laws of nature and the forces acting on space were determined as gravitation.

To sum up, each local point in a Riemannian space is indeterminate and only becomes determinable owing to the relations it forges with other points, magnitudes, or forces acting upon it since they are not only heterogeneous in relation to one another but also in relation to space as a whole. This method of defining curvature and distance, step by step and closer and closer, “without exiting the multiplicity” and without taking a position of someone looking *at* space or inhabiting it, makes “the distinction between space and multiplicity disappear” and the system as a whole based on accumulation and thus simultaneously heterogeneous and continuous.<sup>164</sup>

#### *IV.III. Bergson and his two Multiplicities*

To gain another perspective on synthesis and the genesis of multiplicity, Bergson’s development of Riemann’s multiplicities is helpful. Bergson’s aim in *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* is to undo what he saw as a false problem of free will that arises out of Kant’s critical philosophy. To that end, he analyses what he identified as an unfortunate conflation of space and time where the Euclidean notion of space, as adopted by Kant, denatures our sense of flowing time or duration. This problem, Bergson says, “arise from our placing side by side phenomena which do not occupy space” which stems from that we “express ourselves by means of words and usually think in terms of space. Language requires us to establish between our ideas the same sharp and precise distinctions, the same discontinuity, as between material objects”.<sup>165</sup> Bergson disentangles this, in his view, unfortunate mixture between space, time, and duration in a tripartite distinction attained through an analysis of discrete and continuous multiplicities.

The first type of multiplicity, quantitative and discontinuous, is based on arithmetic, numbers, and spatial synthesis. Here we are counting, argues Bergson, by assuming that individual units making up the multiplicity are identical, but if individual units are all alike they “differ at least by the position which they occupy in space”, making them discontinuous and juxtaposed by the space

---

<sup>163</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, pp. 606–7n18/485–86 and 573n19.

<sup>164</sup> Lautman, *Les mathématiques, les idées et le réel physique*, p. 151/112 (trans. mod.).

<sup>165</sup> Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, (Paris: PUF, 1948 [1889]), p. vii. Trans. F.L. Pogson as *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, (London: George Allen, 1913), p. xix. Henceforth *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* followed by French and English pagination.

they occupy.<sup>166</sup> From this assumption, there are two different ways to count: either keep all units in one image, “placing them side by side in an ideal space”, or repeat the individual number – say fifty – “times in succession the image of a single one”.<sup>167</sup> Both ways of counting seemingly take place in time, but imply that we must keep the successive images and set them side by side. Such a process can only take place in space because where and how would these images or units “remain when we pass to the following”? Where and how could they “wait, if they were nothing but an instant” if not in space?<sup>168</sup> We are counting moments of duration by means of space and consequently conflating the two forms. Bergson says that such counting and synthesising happens by “jerks, [and] sudden jumps” that forms a multiplicity but one which is ultimately discontinuous.<sup>169</sup> Our attention and mind jump between provisional and ultimate units, forming a multiplicity, but one that is based on and represented by a spatial form and mainly concerns objects that we can see and touch, at least in a deferred sense, as with abstract numbers.

The other type of multiplicity, qualitative and continuous, emerges in contrast to the first, it is based on another way of counting and is, according to Deleuze, represented by duration. This multiplicity concerns our sense of flowing time where passing moment, impression, or intensities cannot be easily discarded or discontinued from another. “Pure duration”, as Bergson defines it, “is the form which the succession of our conscious states assumes when our ego lets itself *live*, when it refrains from separating its present state from its former states”.<sup>170</sup> This multiplicity concerns “affected psychic states” that we cannot count “in the same way” and things that cannot be “given in space” and that are thereby only countable through a process of “symbolic representation”. For these successive states, Bergson says, we range them, “in an ideal space and then fancy [*s’imaginant*] that [we] are counting them in pure duration” as abstracted and countable quantities “stripped of their qualities”. Qualitative sensations such as sounds, or those sensed by touch or feelings – physical or mental impressions – cannot be counted, instead we limit ourselves “to gathering the qualitative impressions produced by the whole series” of such sensations, and to place such a series in relation to flowing time.<sup>171</sup> While the mark of this latter continuous multiplicity is that it requires a sort of leap of faith to intellectually grasp or define it, Bergson insists that this does neither mean that we do not intuitively understand and use it in our daily life nor that it is less precise than the discontinuous multiplicity.

---

<sup>166</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, p. 57/77.

<sup>167</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, pp. 57–58/77.

<sup>168</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, p. 59/79.

<sup>169</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, p. 61/82.

<sup>170</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, p. 75/100.

<sup>171</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, pp. 63–65/85–87.

The forming of connections, synthesis, or fusion in a qualitative multiplicity is more elusive than in the quantitative type but doing so reveals the target of Bergson's critique: our habit to think in terms of space and use a language based on discontinuity. For this type of multiplicity

several conscious states are organized into a whole, permeate one another, gradually gain a richer content, and might thus give anyone ignorant of space the feeling of pure duration; but the very use of the word *several* shows that I had already isolated these states, externalised them in relation to one another, and set them side by side; thus [...] setting out time in space.<sup>172</sup>

We are, however, fully capable of synthesising continuous multiplicities without dividing them into discontinuous elements. Consciousness can make “qualitative discrimination without any further thought of counting the qualities or even of distinguishing them as *several*”.<sup>173</sup> Conscious states of varying intensity and quality come together without being discrete or placed side by side. Nevertheless, Bergson's recognition of our inclination to fall back on counting discrete elements is important when, for example, we consider the desire to ascribe individuated ideas to individual philosophers and the hardships we run into when such lines are blurred.

Bergson set out to resolve what he saw as a false problem of the place and function of free will, which he did by crossing out the distinction between one and multiple and superseding it with a distinction between two types of multiplicity. Bergson thereby argued that experience is given to us in composite mixtures of succession, which needs to be broken apart by analysis so that pure duration become distinct from any spatial forms. This presents a contrast to Deleuze's argument that duration is “defined less by succession than by coexistence”.<sup>174</sup> For Bergson, coexistence as fusion is “carried out by our consciousness [of external phenomenon] to permeate, complete, and, continue one another”.<sup>175</sup> There exists another way of living in Bergson's view, one in which we would be sensing the flow of time, and endure in continuous multiplicities. Neither Bergson nor Riemann offer detailed accounts of these synthesising processes, as their arguments do not require it. For the present purpose, however, these processes need to be spelled out further and thereby Deleuze's appropriation and development of Riemann and Bergson's work comes into play.

#### *IV.IV. Deleuze's Conceptual Multiplicity*

When Deleuze begins to tell his story of multiplicities in *Différence et répétition* he does so indirectly, starting in a recuperated and transformed notion of Ideas. “Ideas are multiplicities: every Idea is a

---

<sup>172</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, p. 91/122.

<sup>173</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, p. 90/121.

<sup>174</sup> Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, p. 56/60.

<sup>175</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, pp. 92–93/124.

multiplicity, a variety”.<sup>176</sup> It is worth noting that Deleuze rarely if ever formulates a definition of multiplicity using the copula ‘is’. In not defining multiplicity this way, he heeds his own requirement of not searching for essences while simultaneously exposing two important traits of multiplicities.<sup>177</sup> Partly their virtuality, that multiplicities are real and account for the real albeit not being actual, physical entities, and function as a form of replacement for essence or substance (*ousia*). Partly, that multiplicities have “correspondences without resemblance” with that which it brings forth that “are of a structural-genetic nature”<sup>178</sup> – contrary to essences that have the corresponding resemblance with that which is subsumed under it.

A passage where Deleuze explicates “under what conditions” we are able to speak of a multiplicity clarifies his view. One condition for a multiplicity in the strong substantive form is that

the elements of the multiplicity must have neither sensible form nor conceptual signification, nor, therefore, any assignable function. They are not even actually existent, but inseparable from a potential or virtuality. In this sense, they imply no prior identity, no positing of a something that could be called one or the same.<sup>179</sup>

That is, the elements of a virtual multiplicity do not exist apart from one another or from the binding forces. The elements cannot be counted, individuated, or measured in and of themselves. An individual feeling, in a composite of feelings, cannot be identified as such without the complex changing nature. To use a decisive formulation, multiplicities and their elements are “*other* without there being *several*”.<sup>180</sup> The elements or points and their immediate neighbourhoods have no meaning apart from the reciprocal relationships they enter into or from the globality of that multiplicity. The elements are virtual, fully real without being actual, and thus not given as present “in a concrete but changing reality”, to quote Sauvagnargues.<sup>181</sup> In other words, a condition for the Deleuzian multiplicity is the non-individuality, indiscernibility, or anonymity of the parts that it consists of. The parts are real but neutral, neither one nor multiple, and locally homogeneous but globally heterogeneous and can only become actual through reciprocal relations they enter into. Consequentially, the amorphous collection of elements in a multiplicity cannot be absolutely measured only relatively compared with the help of a new convention.

It seems like a paradox: the elements – be it sensations or time, a neighbourhood of space, or a piece of writing – do not actually exist and have no identity in and of themselves, and yet they are connected to other virtual pieces and effect reality. The elements must, as Deleuze writes

---

<sup>176</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 236/182.

<sup>177</sup> This relates to Deleuze’s dream of replacing the copula *is* with *and*, the French homonyms *est* and *et*.

<sup>178</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 238/184.

<sup>179</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 237/183.

<sup>180</sup> Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, p. 36/42.

<sup>181</sup> Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze. L’empirisme transcendantal*, p. 94 (my trans.).



in effect be determined, but reciprocally, by reciprocal relations which allow no independence whatsoever to subsist. Such relations are precisely non-localisable ideal connections, whether they characterise the multiplicity globally or proceed by the juxtaposition of neighbouring regions. In all cases, the multiplicity is intrinsically defined, without external reference or recourse to a uniform space in which it would be submerged.<sup>182</sup>

Through temporal and reciprocal relationships, fusion takes place and the virtual pieces come together to form a new whole. Local and reciprocal relations make the new actual and present, but changing, state of things. However, to be able to speak of a multiplicity, the pieces and the determining process cannot refer to something outside the multiplicity since appealing to something externally existing would recall the problems of essence and a philosophy of representation. In a particular multiplicity, the relations are intrinsic to that multiplicity. The elements and connections making up a multiplicity have to become actual, take form, and be available for their assigned function at the same time. The reciprocal virtual relations turn into spatio-temporal actual relationships, manifested in physical objects, concrete everyday ideas, or concepts, at the same time as the virtual elements become actual terms and forms that we usually take to signify such objects or notions.<sup>183</sup>

This is the point where Deleuze takes his synthesis and forming of a philosophical concept of multiplicities further than his precursors. Riemann developed his notion to revise a faulty conceptualisation of space and based it on neutral magnitudes; Bergson used the notion to purge time of any pre-Riemann notions of space. Deleuze, it seems, brings both space and time back in but does so in a processual and synthetic manner. The pure virtual structure of the not yet actualised multiplicity forms a genesis between actual and virtual presents:

It is sufficient to understand that the genesis takes place in time, not between one actual term, however small, and another actual term, but between the virtual and its actualisation. In other words, it goes from the structure to its incarnation, from the conditions of a problem to the cases of solution, from the differential elements and their ideal connections to actual terms and diverse real relations which constitute at each moment the actuality of time.<sup>184</sup>

Deleuze here draws together his work on physics, mathematics, and philosophy: time and space, problems, and solutions. Space is not the empty homogeneous form it is in Euclid and Kant; time is no longer measured by the moments and movements in space towards which Bergson reacted. Multiplicities, as genesis and structure, come together, but do not forge relations either in measurable time – time unfolding linearly with the “phenomenal subject *appearing within time*”<sup>185</sup> –

---

<sup>182</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 237/183.

<sup>183</sup> Cf. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 237/183.

<sup>184</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 237–38/183.

<sup>185</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 116/86.

nor in space as a homogeneous container. Space is nothing but the relations formed between terms, in the binding forces of gravity, and time is the synthetisation between the actual passing presents and a virtual past.

The virtual creates, and becomes determined by, the actual through the complex two-way process of differentiation: determination, integration, actualisation, and individuation. A story, a philosophical notion, idea, or concept in *Différence et répétition* is complete without being either whole or wholly there. There is a virtual side to the actual text, which is an equally real text and as such a philosophical entity. This virtual multiplicity is fully determined and partakes in philosophy and the history of thought, and becomes actual, individuated, and integrated through the process of writing and reading philosophy. Even when singling out something as one we are fully capable of understanding that it is already multiple and countless. In making philosophy concrete, letting the difference make the difference, criticising by drawing out consequences, and synthesising the diverse for the benefit of the new, we determine, integrate, actualise, and solve. This process moves one part of thought to the actual, the concrete, and one part to the real but virtual part, to be moved back into the actual by the next turn of thought.

Consequently, Deleuze's conceptualisation of multiplicity concerns synthesis. How this synthesis takes place is key to distinguishing between two types of multiplicity. Exactly how, however, this formation happens is still largely unresolved. Indeed, it is possible to review whether Deleuze's theory of multiplicity in itself is one or multiple.<sup>186</sup> The way Deleuze tells his stories in *Différence et répétition* make them clearly distinguishable as singular, but he also connects all of them to all other stories that make up the book as a whole. The stories are, to repeat, “*other* without there being *several*”.<sup>187</sup> Without the critique of Aristotle and his concept of difference and without the displacement and multiplication of the notion of repetition, Deleuze's conceptualisation of multiplicities would not work.

#### *IV.V. Multiplicities as Emerging Methodological Devices*

From here, let us turn from studying multiplicity as a concept to see how it can make us understand the method at work in *Différence et répétition*. As previously demonstrated, Deleuze works with philosophy, art, and science as if they comprise singular but interconnected stories given in the present. The question that will move us beyond Smith's description of Deleuze as pushing “the

---

<sup>186</sup> Most famously by Alain Badiou who argued in his *Deleuze. 'La clameur de l'être'* (Paris: Hachette, 1997) that Deleuze's philosophy falls back into the one or One-all. Badiou's critique has been firmly rebuked but that does not annul the problem it points out.

<sup>187</sup> Deleuze, *Le bergsonisme*, p. 36/42.

thought of the thinker to its ‘differential’ limit” and Cherniavsky’s definition of Deleuze’s method as “singularisation and connection or cutting and intersecting” is:<sup>188</sup> how does he do this? How does Deleuze re-construct the present past for the benefit of the new? We shall now simultaneously draw on the work of Riemann and Bergson on multiplicities, Deleuze’s readings of them, and on what has been learned in the preceding chapters about stories, complex repetition and time, free indirect discourse, and critique as synthesis to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Deleuze method in *Différence et répétition*.

First, we turn to Bergson, who distinguished between quantitative and qualitative multiplicities. *Différence et répétition* consists of the history of philosophy mixed with psychoanalytic theory, physics, mathematics, and literature. Every time Deleuze draws on someone or something he makes new connections within not only that particular story but also between it and other stories or concepts, from other times, and between themes seldom seen as connected. However, as the critical literature constantly aims to show, the pieces are distinguishable, possible to make discontinuous, and perhaps even count. From Bergson’s perspective it is possible to see *Différence et répétition* as a quantitative multiplicity. Deleuze works in line with Bergson’s argument that a single story or a whole book is already a multiplicity, consisting of further pieces, further repetitions, that is arithmetically put together. Deleuze places singularities next to each other in series that the reading and repeating mind jumps and jerks between to synthesises them into a wholeness. The provisional and ultimate units can be counted, defined, and broken up into smaller pieces but they still have an overarching wholeness created by repetitions, problems, and collective utterances.

However, its subjectivity and infinite bifurcating virtuality also makes *Différence et répétition* composed as a qualitative multiplicity. A particular concept or story, say, from ancient Greek philosophy, have a qualitative sense which cannot be taken out of the totality without it changing nature. For some readers, it is Nietzsche who is the motor behind the critical impetus in *Différence et répétition*, for others, it is Bergson who is Deleuze’s true master, whereas it for him is Spinoza. *Différence et répétition* is, however, a book, a book whose philosophical trajectory has an intensity such that breaking it up into distinct parts does not render it justice. It is, to borrow from Bergson, “organized into a whole” where the stories and notions “permeate one another [and] gradually gain a richer content”.<sup>189</sup> It should be remembered, on the one hand, the difficulty of thinking, and talking without recourse to spatial metaphors that Bergson pointed out and, on the other hand, the power and utility of free indirect discourse that Vološinov and Deleuze and Guattari insisted on. That is, *Différence et répétition* is not comprised as a mixture of pre-existing voices but is a whole that

---

<sup>188</sup> Smith, ‘Deleuze, Hegel, and the Post-Kantian Tradition’, p. 64. Cherniavsky, *Concept et méthode*, p. 312 (my trans.).

<sup>189</sup> Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, p. 91/122.

permeate and gains in richness by the collective stories it tells. It is fused together not by arithmetic but by the virtual presence of something that is always more than the tangible real. Deleuze's approximations of the history of philosophy constructs a different present.

Second, we turn to the continuous multiplicity proposed by Riemann and taken up by Lautman. Riemann combined Euclidean notions with the insights on how to make immanent, relative, measurements on a surface without stepping outside it or immersing it in a higher space, creating the neutral magnitude of continuous multiplicity. Transposed to the way Deleuze makes philosophy this is similar to singularising a specific story, making it immanently homogeneous by subjecting it to critique, focusing on its problem instead of its potential solution, and letting the author at hand speak through an anonymous voice or by an impersonal *one* (specifically the French pronoun *on*). The points a story or concept consists of are the only legitimate coordinates that can be measured and criticised against one another to both live up to Kant's requirements of an immanent critique and Nietzsche's demand for the critique to be genetic. Deleuze exercises his critique, displacement, and narration not by exiting the story or concept, immersing it in a higher-level structure, but through following and measuring its logic locally. The stories, much like Riemann and Lautman's pieces of space, are only related to themselves; they are immanently homogeneous but globally heterogeneous.

However, from within one voice, story or concept, one cannot locate anything beyond one's "immediate neighbourhood", not the heterogeneous system which appears only as "an amorphous collection of juxtaposed pieces".<sup>190</sup> All the heterogeneous elements in the overall patchwork of *Différence et répétition* are not only related to one another but also attached. With the way *Différence et répétition* is written and structured, there does not exist direct and unique connections between only two or three stories. All pieces are connected to all others, and that is how Deleuze generates his philosophical system. To understand how the coupling is done it is illustrative to borrow the double perspective of intrinsic invariants, tensors, and the local but imposed metric.

Deleuze claimed that a philosophical theory is "an elaborately developed question, and nothing else".<sup>191</sup> However, not only is a philosophical theory a developed question, a complex philosophical work such as *Différence et répétition* functions out of the specification and development of problems, or what Deleuze and Guattari call a "calculus of problems".<sup>192</sup> The approximation of problems and the immanent and genetic critique bind *Différence et répétition* together and provide the disparate stories with coherence and forward movement. Problems and a critique that show the genesis of a certain notion, while elaborating on it and developing the notion forward into something new, play

---

<sup>190</sup> Lautman, *Les mathématiques, les idées et le réel physique*, p. 136/98.

<sup>191</sup> Deleuze, *Empirisme et subjectivité*, p. 119/106.

<sup>192</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, pp. 576/461 and 570n61.

in Deleuze's work a role similar to the notions of tensors and metric in a Riemann space. The problems are invariant, they are, and do not go away when moved between systems. Every heterogeneous story is stitched together, forming, with the vocabulary of *Mille plateaux*, a patchwork quilt, or a "felt [made by] the entanglement of fibres by fulling".<sup>193</sup> To achieve this conjoining in the context of making philosophy, a measurement for relative comparison is needed just as some things need to stay the same within the stories even if they are moved from one system of references, say ancient Greek philosophy, to our days, such as essence, difference, being, or method. It appears that the development of problems, such as difference and repetition, plays this joining function in *Différence et répétition*.

A typical paragraph from the conclusion of *Différence et répétition* can illustrate Deleuze's method of drawing disparate themes together through common problems:

The question of the *ens omni modo determinatum* must be posed as follows: something which exists only in the Idea may be completely determined (differentiated) and yet lack those determinations which constitute actual existence (it is undifferentiated, not yet even individuated). If we call the state of a completely differentiated Idea 'distinct', and the forms of quantitative and qualitative differentiation 'clear', then we must reject the rule of proportionality between the clear and the distinct: Ideas, as they exist in themselves, are distinct-obscure. Opposed to the clear-and-distinct of Apollonian representation, Ideas are Dionysian, existing in an obscure zone which they themselves preserve and maintain, in an indifferenciation which is nevertheless perfectly differentiated, in a pre-individuality which is nevertheless singular: the obscure zone of an intoxication which will never be calmed; the distinct-obscure as the double colour with which philosophy paints the world, with all the forces of a differential unconscious.<sup>194</sup>

The mixture of periods, names, languages, and terminology is striking. To mention some of the most obvious references, the paragraph starts in the question of a completely determined entity, posed in Latin with its echo of Spinoza, Maimon, and thereby Kant, is paired with Deleuze's capitalised Idea, wrenched from Plato and Kant. The Idea is then placed on the pre-individual field within Deleuze's transcendental empiricism and given a genetic and problematising function as productive. The presence of terminology derived from Leibniz's differential calculus, and the play with difference popular in French philosophy at the time (Derrida's *différance*, Deleuze's differenciation, Lyotard's differend), is placed together with language ringing of Descartes, such as clear, distinct, and obscure. There are Nietzschean and Greek overtones in using the conceptual pair Apollonian and Dionysian, and the end comes with a nod to Freud's unconscious. Not being fully attentive and knowledgeable in all areas touched upon by Deleuze might induce a feeling of

---

<sup>193</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille plateaux*, p. 594/475.

<sup>194</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 358–59/280.

reading white noise or having vertigo.<sup>195</sup> The questions almost pose themselves: How did Deleuze get his bearings straight? How does he create with such a mixture?

The understanding of Deleuze we have hitherto achieved, provides us with several possible routes. The synthesis between different lines of thought, times, and terminologies can be unpacked by a focus on the problems that substantiate his reasoning. In this case, individuation and determination, and follow their displacements. It is also possible to rely on the re-constructionist method of putting old things into new use by synthesis. Keeping the old and known, the immediate neighbourhood, steady but adding pieces that seem unrelated but that, when measured against one another, reveal commonalities that can be used to further the new.

However, Deleuze use of differential calculus and the notion of multiplicities also reveals another trajectory of Deleuze's methodological inventions. Deleuze does not seem to take the model for his text-critical method from literary studies, Nietzsche, structuralism, or hermeneutics, as most of his contemporaries, but from mathematics and physics.<sup>196</sup> Specifically, from differential calculus and differential geometry. Mathematics has on many occasions achieved breakthroughs by applying methods developed for a specific purpose and in one field on different problems in other fields. Riemann and his precursors only managed to solve the problems of multidimensional space by the application of differential calculus.<sup>197</sup> Calculus itself was developed to solve something completely different, that is, problems of rate of change and approximated instantaneous values.

Deleuze draws on the methodology of science in a double sense. Partly, he takes the structural approach of borrowing methods from one field and applying them to another: Riemann's mathematical multiplicities are brought to bear on the philosophical problem of a static ontology of essence and substance. Similarly, Deleuze uses story-telling and free indirect discourse to make philosophy. Partly, he draws on science for actual methods. The key example is multiplicity as a methodological device for synthesis instead of, for example, interpretation or genealogy, but he also takes the impetuous for his problematics from differential calculus. It is thus possible to paraphrase Deleuze to say that his method obviously belongs to philosophy, it is an entirely philosophical instrument, but that is because what it yields is a philosophical outcome, the new, and not because of its ground.<sup>198</sup>

From this perspective, a final route reveals itself. Deleuze relies, throughout *Différence et répétition*, on approximations of philosophical, scientific, and artistic concepts, stories, and images to yield

---

<sup>195</sup> For the intensity of white noise and vertigo, see Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 266ff/206ff and 304f/236f.

<sup>196</sup> Simon Duffy provides a discussion of several mathematical models Deleuze takes from mathematic, though not related to his methodology. See the introduction and conclusion for a general discussion in his, *Deleuze and the History of Mathematics: In Defence of the 'New'* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013).

<sup>197</sup> Cf. DeLanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, pp. 3–5.

<sup>198</sup> Cf. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 232/179 and section I.III. above.

productive and new philosophical systems, that nevertheless lack a first term or ground and that stays problematic. In the excerpt above this is illustrated by the discrete jumps between terms without definition or interpretation. The role the terms play is not a foundational one but a vanishing presence for the benefit of a result that stems from them but where they disappear. The result is an approximative instantaneous value, a tangent between heterogenous terms. Lines are drawn between Platonic and Kantian ideas, between Maïmon, Apollon, and Freud, and between Greek, Latin, modern, and contemporary philosophy. The tangents aim not to determine the terms but to approximate a new, momentary, value as a sort of rate of change – what could be called a philosophical differential. It is by connecting, closer and closer, divergent points that a workable result is gained. It can thereby be suggested that Deleuze establishes a methodological calculus. A calculus that may stand on problematic ground and that neither yield apodictic results nor determine its terms; that, however, does not devalue the method's productivity.

This problem of connecting terms together, all things considered, points to the open-ended state of philosophical works, according to which neither the intentions of its author nor the understanding of its readers are fixed. Deleuze uses a method that, like a “dice throw [is] capable of affirming the whole of chance”, one that does not lay down directions for the mind but merely points to a synthetic capacity that *could* work.<sup>199</sup> Instead of transcendental rules to be rigorously followed, he offers immanent questions and problems, and a method for learning and doing with our friends without a privileged certitude.

With Deleuze's explication of multiplicity as a basis, it is possible to say that it is the task of the philosophical work is to actualise the world in a new configuration. The connections, the doing of philosophy, are there and can be sensed while simultaneously being absent as the past that never was but still insists itself upon us. The double nature of the impersonal process of re-constructing is complementary; it is a combining of things in which our textual works, as Deleuze writes, “are developed around or on the basis of a fracture that they never succeed in filling”.<sup>200</sup> The stories told, concepts developed, and critique exercised is but local interventions in an unfolding process of the state of things (the world, the subject, and God), a process in which the elements form new evasive relations.

---

<sup>199</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 258/200.

<sup>200</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 252/195.

## Conclusion: Re-Construction for the New or Learning How to do

When Deleuze's work is read as an elaboration of the problem of what we do when we do philosophy, when his work is viewed as a subversive nod to how one can draw something new out of the old, and when *Différence et répétition* is seen as a map of how re-construction can be achieved, a new image of Deleuze's philosophy emerges. This is an image of someone who, among other things, took on ontological and political challenges the past has weighed upon the present and that the future demands. It is an image of a philosopher who offers an impudent and daringly anachronistic method of bringing together epochs, lines of inquiry, scientific and artistic fields, incompatible philosophies, and on the basis of these propose a pragmatic methodology, not for the old style but for a time to come.<sup>201</sup>

This initial excavation into the philosophical praxis of Deleuze was conducted in four steps. In the first step I cautioned against analysing Deleuze's method through his enigmatic statements and the images he has offered. Arguing instead for the notion of telling stories as heuristic methodological tool to complement his definition of philosophy as concept creation. In line with this, Deleuze's notion of problems was also examined as method and story. The second step concerned the framework of Deleuze's method and addressed questions of repetition, time, and possibilities of modifying memory for the future. This was done through probing the heterogeneous unity of *Différence et répétition*, how Deleuze constructs minor histories within history, and repetition as a methodological strategy. In the third step, Deleuze's narrating and critique were analysed. The main object of study was Deleuze's hallmark narrative tool, free indirect discourse. It was argued that it should not be seen as just a peculiar style but also as a political and metaphysical tool. Deleuze's use of style is tightly connected to his positive and double-edged notion of critique: uncovering the genesis of the object of the critique while retaining parts thereof and offering new trajectories out without negation. Finally, the fourth step moved to synthesis, namely multiplicity as a methodological device. Having established the concept of multiplicity through studying its genesis, its productive function in the methodology of *Différence et répétition* was examined.

Taken together, these four steps allowed me to respond to the overall double purpose of the inquiry: to initiate an excavation of the workings of Deleuze's text-critical method in *Différence et répétition* and, through such an excavation, to begin extracting a methodology provisionally called *re-construction*. The problem Deleuze's philosophical praxis responds to and elaborates on, as laid out in this thesis, is how to transform a present past for the future, and how to critically construct with what there is to make new order. Deleuze's text-critical and re-constructive method draws together heterogeneous material from philosophy, literature, art, and science from divergent times

---

<sup>201</sup> Cf. Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 4/xxi.



to produce the new. It works, in a first step, by moving the texts it incorporates back and forth between the virtual and the actual by exercising immanent and genetic critique and by depersonalising them through free indirect discourse. Deleuze, through his method, then, in a second step, synthesises this heterogeneous material by approximations, accumulation, and intertwinement in multiplicities. This is achieved with the help of measurements for relative comparison via problems that connect a given that is diverse. These twin processes simultaneously bring the divergent parts closer and closer together while actualising them in multiplicities where they are no longer only singularities but a new and working machinery in its own right.

It is further possible to conclude that Deleuze achieves his innovative work not by successive interpretation or critical deconstructions but by methods that prolong the text. The model for these methods, it seems, does not only stem from the usual sources for philosophical method but rather Deleuze draws on literature, for stories and free indirect discourse, and differential calculus and geometry in the form of approximations, problematics, and multiplicities. This adoption of models and logic from other fields might help explain why Deleuze's method is still relatively neglected and often has been aestheticised rather than explored on its own terms. It is a methodology and logic slightly foreign to the traditional philosophical praxis. It is, in line with this, only lately that Deleuze's engagement with the sciences has begun to receive sustained attention. Approaching something by means of well-known metaphors is more comfortable than through foreign terms and logic, however precise they are.

This inquiry has been limited in scope both in terms of the material analysed and the concepts and tools developed. Further investigations are needed to show how Deleuze made his philosophy – how he re-constructed philosophy – and the philosophical and historiographical consequence thereof. The initial findings and suggestions here relating Deleuze's methods to mathematics indicates that further work is called for both as an exegetic exercise and to view their impact in the history of philosophy after Deleuze. Similarly, it would be fruitful to trace the changes Deleuze's methods underwent, how they were deployed in his early works, and impacted by the event of Deleuze and Guattari.

While this investigation explicitly has focused on *Différence et répétition* its findings might reach further, as this might be Deleuze's most important work, written in his own name. Whether the findings of this study can go beyond *Différence et répétition* need examination, but they show every sign of being substantiated by previous studies – especially Cherniavsky and Villani's insistence on Deleuze's 'singularization and connection or cutting and intersecting'. I have attempted to capture Deleuze's manner of achieving this connection or intersection. Doing so does not only corroborate

and nuance previous research on Deleuze, but might also provide new tools, new stories, and possibly new ways of addressing political challenges through the methods we use.

Deleuze's methodological problems resembles those that he early on elaborated in relation to Hume. That is, the difficulty of establishing relations and of how something can go beyond [*dépasser*] the given.<sup>202</sup> Problems in this sense have no final answers. Rather, Deleuze develops them in the context of Hume in the direction of praxis, associationism, and what principles does. The burden of philosophical and political history needs to be managed and Deleuze offers us a way forward in that enterprise, even though he held neither the history of philosophy, nor method, nor textuality in high esteem. His criticism notwithstanding, he developed and used, as I have shown, specific methods for confronting history and the given, and that may one be his legacy.

The problem Deleuze seems to hand over to us is similar: what to do with Deleuze? One possible route forward has been proposed here: use his method. However, "there is", Deleuze writes, "no more a method for learning than there is a method for finding treasures". If we are to do things *as* Deleuze did, we cannot do *what* he did. To blindly replicate a manner of doing would just keep you stuck in common sense. "We learn", as Deleuze phrases it, "nothing from those who say: *Do as I do*". Rather, he explains, "Our only teachers are those who tell us *do with me*".<sup>203</sup> The method of re-creating would be learning to read and write with Deleuze. We can take something from him, his virtual multiplicities, for example, and turn it into a re-constructive device for writing new stories for the future.

---

<sup>202</sup> Cf. Deleuze, *Empirisme et subjectivité*, pp. 2–4 and 117/22–24 and 104.

<sup>203</sup> Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, pp. 215/165 and 35/23.

## Bibliography

- Alliez, Éric, Deleuze, *Philosophie virtuelle* (Paris: Synthélabo, 1996)
- Antonioni, Manola, *Deleuze et l'histoire de la philosophie: (ou de la philosophie comme science-fiction)* (Paris: Kime, 1999)
- Aristotle, 'Metaphysics', in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. W.D Ross (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985)
- Badiou, Alain, *Deleuze. 'La clameur de l'être'* (Paris: Hachette, 1997)
- Beistegui, Miguel de, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004)
- Bergson, Henri, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1948 [1889])
- , *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (London: George Allen, 1913)
- Bowden, Sean, 'An Anti-Positivist Conception of Problems: Deleuze, Bergson and the French Epistemological Tradition', *Angelaki*, 23 (2018), 45–63
- Bryant, Levi R., *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Immanence* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2008)
- Colebrook, Claire, Gilles Deleuze (London: Routledge, 2002)
- Cherniavsky, Axel, *Concept et méthode: la conception de la philosophie de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2012)
- Cherniavsky, Axel, and Chantal Jaquet, eds., *L'art du portrait conceptuel : Deleuze et l'histoire de la philosophie* (Paris: Garnier, 2013)
- Cisney, Vernon W., Chas. Philips, and Daniel W. Smith, eds., 'Difference and Repetition at 50!', *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*, 14.1 (2020), 1–4
- DeLanda, Manuel, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)
- Deleuze, Gilles, *Empirisme et subjectivité: essai sur la nature humaine selon Hume* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1953)
- , *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1962)
- , *Le bergsonisme* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1966)
- , *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1968)
- , *Logique du sens* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1969)
- , 'Pensée nomade' in *Nietzsche Aujourd'hui? Tome I: intensités* (Paris: UGE, 1973)
- , *Proust et les signes* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1976)
- , *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone Press, 1983)

- , *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone, 1988)
- , *Pourparlers, 1972-1990* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1990)
- , *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990)
- , *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991)
- , *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)
- , *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)
- , *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)
- , *L'île déserte et autres textes : textes et entretiens, 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002)
- , *Deux régimes de fous : textes et entretiens 1975-1995*, ed. David Lapoujade (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2003)
- , *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004)
- , *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975-1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Michael Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2007)
- , 'Cours Vincennes, Leibniz, 1980-04-15', trans. Charles J. Stivale <https://www.webdeleuze.com> [accessed 9 January 2019]
- , 'Cours Vincennes, Spinoza, 1981-03-17' <https://www.webdeleuze.com> [accessed 9 January 2019]
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari, *Mille plateaux. Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980)
- , *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987)
- , *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie ?* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991)
- , *What is Philosophy?* trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (Paris: Flammarion, 1977)
- , *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)
- Duffy, Simon, *Deleuze and the History of Mathematics: In Defence of the 'New'* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)

- Flaxman, Gregory, *Gilles Deleuze and the Fabulation of Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012)
- Foucault, Michel, 'Theatrum Philosophicum' (1970), in his *Dits et écrits*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994), Vol. II. 1970–1975
- Gueroult, Martial, 'The History of Philosophy as a Philosophical Problem', *The Monist*, 53.4 (1969), 563–87
- Hardt, Michael, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)
- Hughes, Joe, *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition. A Reader's Guide* (London: Continuum, 2009)
- Jdey, Adnen, ed., *Les styles de Deleuze: esthétique et philosophie* (Bruxelles: Impressions nouvelles, 2011)
- Jones, Graham, and Jon Roffe, eds., *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009)
- Kerslake, Christian, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy – From Kant to Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009)
- Kline, Morris, *Mathematical Thought from Ancient to Modern Times* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972)
- Lardreau, Guy, 'L'histoire de La Philosophie Comme Exercice Différé de La Philosophie', in *Gilles Deleuze, immanence et vie*, ed. Éric Alliez, Danielle Cohen-Levinas, Françoise Proust, and Lucien Vinciguerra (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1998)
- Lautman, Albert, *Les mathématiques, les idées et le réel physique* (Paris: Vrin, 2006)
- , *Mathematics, Ideas, and the Physical Real*, trans Simon Duffy (London: Continuum, 2011)
- Leclercq, Stéfan, ed., *Aux sources de la pensée de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Vrin, 2005)
- Mărgărit, Emilian, 'A Sketch of Deleuze's Hermeneutical Spin', *Meta: Research in Hermeneutics, Phenomenology and Practical Philosophy*, Vol. III.2 (2011), 450–60
- Mengue, Philippe, 'Logiques du style. Deleuze, « l'oiseau de feu » et l'effet du réel', in Jdey, ed., *Les styles de Deleuze*
- Olivier, Lawrence, 'Comment Deleuze lit la philosophie? Lecture et écriture anexactes', in *Vers Deleuze: nature, pensée, politique*, ed. Yves Couture and Lawrence Olivier (Paris: Hermann, 2018), pp. 139–76
- Porphyry, *Introduction [Isagoge]*, ed. and trans. Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)
- Riemann, Bernhard, 'On the Hypotheses Which Lie at the Bases of Geometry', trans. W.K. Clifford, *Nature*, 8.183, 184 (1873), 14–17, 36, 37
- Sauvagnargues, Anne, *Deleuze et l'art* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2005)

- , *Deleuze. L'empirisme transcendantal* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2010)
- , *Deleuze and Art*, trans. Samantha Bankston (London: Bloomsbury, 2013)
- Smith, Daniel W., “‘A Life of Pure Immanence’: Deleuze’s “Critique et Clinique” Project’, in his *Essays on Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012)
- , ‘Deleuze, Hegel, and the Post-Kantian Tradition’, in his *Essays on Deleuze*
- , ‘Deleuze, Kant, and the Theory of Immanent Ideas’, in his *Essays on Deleuze*
- , ‘On the Becoming of Concepts’, in his *Essays on Deleuze*
- , ‘The Concept of the Simulacrum: Deleuze and the Overturning of Platonism’, in his *Essays on Deleuze*,
- , ‘The Conditions of the New’, in his *Essays on Deleuze*,
- Sotirova, Violeta, *D.H. Lawrence and Narrative Viewpoint* (London: Continuum, 2011)
- Spindler, Fredrika, “‘All Philosophy Starts with Misosophy’, or On Love, Trickery and Treason: Deleuze and the History of Philosophy’, *Deleuze and Guattari Studies*, 13.3 (2019)
- Villani, Arnaud, *La guêpe et l'orchidée. essai sur Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Belin, 1999)
- Vološinov, Valentin Nikolaevič, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986 [1929])
- White, Hayden, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973)
- Williams, James, ‘Difference and Repetition’, in *The Cambridge Companion to Deleuze*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Henry Somers-Hall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012)
- , ‘Pragmatism after Deleuze and Guattari: The Problem of Method in *What Is Philosophy?*’, 2017 <https://www.jamesrwilliams.net/deleuze> [accessed 9 Mars 2020]
- Zourabichvili, François, *Deleuze, une philosophie de l'événement* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1994)