Chapter 1

Deleuze, Kant and the Transcendental Field

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INTRODUCTION

The last article Deleuze published before his death in November of 1995, entitled 'Immanence: A Life . . .', opens with the following question: 'What is a transcendental field?'.[1] In a certain sense, this Kantian problem, which Deleuze here takes up at the end of his career, is the question that animated his work from the start. Deleuze's first book, *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (1953), proposed a reading of Hume's empiricism by making use of post-Kantian questions that, in themselves, were foreign to Hume's own philosophy, but already pointed to the possibility of what Deleuze would later call a 'transcendental empiricism' (that is, a transcendental field freed from the constraints of a transcendental subject).[2] Whereas Kant had asked, 'How can the given be given to a subject?', Hume had asked, 'How is the subject (or what he called "human nature") constituted within the given?'. *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, published nine years later (1962), though on the surface an anti-Hegelian tract, is more profoundly a confrontation with Kant that interprets Nietzsche's entire philosophy as 'a resumption of [Kant's] critical project on a new basis and with new concepts'. Its central chapter is entitled, precisely, 'Critique'.[3] The project of

1 Gilles Deleuze, 'Immanence: A Life . . .', in David Lapoujade (ed.), *Two Regimes of Madness*, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), pp. 384–9.

2 Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p. 87.

3 Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 52: 'We believe that there is, in Nietzsche, not only a Kantian heritage, but a half-avowed, half-hidden rivalry . . . Nietzsche seems to have sought (and to have found in the "eternal return" and the "will to power")

Anti-Oedipus (1972), which was, for a time at least, perhaps Deleuze and Guattari's most famous work, is defined in explicitly Kantian and transcendental terms: just as Kant set out to discover criteria immanent to the syntheses of consciousness in order to denounce their illegitimate and transcendent employment in metaphysics, so Deleuze and Guattari set out to discover criteria immanent to the syntheses of the unconscious in order to denounce their illegitimate use in Oedipal psychoanalysis.[4] In Deleuze's magnum opus, *Difference and Repetition* (1968), the presence of Kant is almost ubiquitous, to the point where it can be read as both a completion and an inversion of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (just as *Anti-Oedipus* can be read as a completion and inversion of the *Critique of Practical Reason*).[5] Even Deleuze's 1981 book *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* can be seen as a reworking of the Transcendental Aesthetic.[6]

Deleuze's philosophy, from this viewpoint, can be rightly interpreted as a transcendental philosophy, but one that defines the transcendental field in a completely different manner than does Kant: it is a problematic, differential and virtual field populated with singularities and events, which constitutes a condition of *real* and not merely *possible* experience. In what follows, rather than trying to describe this transcendental field – which in effect would entail an elucidation of Deleuze's entire philosophy – I would simply like to make some fairly general observations on how this Kantian concern can serve as a guiding thread for interpreting the trajectory of Deleuze early writings. To be sure, this is only one of many approaches one can take on Deleuze's work, which encompasses an

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a radical transformation of Kantianism, a re-invention of the critique which Kant betrayed at the same time as he conceived it, a resumption of the critical project on a new basis and with new concepts.'

[4] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking Press, 1977), p. 75: 'In what he termed the critical revolution, Kant intended to discover criteria immanent to the understanding so as to distinguish the legitimate and the illegitimate uses of the syntheses of consciousness. In the name of *transcendental* philosophy (immanence of criteria), he therefore denounced the transcendent use of syntheses such as appeared in metaphysics. In like fashion, we are compelled to say that psychoanalysis has its metaphysics – its name is Oedipus. And that a revolution – this time materialist – can proceed only by way of a critique of Oedipus, by denouncing the illegitimate use of the syntheses of the unconscious as found in Oedipal psychoanalysis, so as to rediscover a transcendental unconscious defined by the immanence of its criteria, and a corresponding practice we shall call schizoanalysis.'

[5] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

[6] Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

immense diversity and scope. But it has the advantage of allowing us to explore the strategies Deleuze used in his early work in the history of philosophy to marshal resources for his reconceptualisation of the transcendental field. Historically, first, it explains why Deleuze wound up appealing to a 'minor' tradition of post-Kantian philosophy (Maimon, Nietzsche, Bergson) as opposed to what has come to be received as its 'major' tradition (Fichte, Schelling, Hegel). Substantively, second, it will permit us to examine the way Deleuze modified Kant's concept of the transcendental field in five crucial domains that defined the critical project: dialectics, aesthetics, analytics, ethics and politics. In each case, we will discover what it means to define the transcendental field with a method of genesis rather than a method of conditioning.

THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

Consider first the monographs Deleuze wrote in the history of philosophy. In addition to his short study on Kant, Deleuze wrote books on Hume, Spinoza and Leibniz (pre-Kantians), as well as books on Bergson and Nietzsche (post-Kantians). The question we have to ask is: Why did Deleuze choose to write on these particular thinkers, and not others? The answer is given by Deleuze himself. It is often said that pre-Kantian philosophy found its principle in the notion of God (that is, the analytic identity of an infinite substance), whereas post-Kantianism found its principle in the notion of the Self (that is, the synthetic identity of the finite Self).[7] Deleuze pointed out, however, that these God-Self permutations were of little interest to him, since it changes nothing in philosophy to put Man in the place of God. Indeed, it was in Kant himself, in a 'furtive moment' in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, that Deleuze found the hint of the possibility of a transcendental field that would entail not only the death of God, but also the dissolution of the Self (what Foucault would later call the death of Man) as well as the destruction of the world – the Self, the World and God being the three great terminal points of metaphysics.[8] Indeed, if these are the three endpoints of metaphysics, it is because they are the three great forms of identity: the

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[7] See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 58.
[8] Ibid.: 'Rather than being concerned with what comes before and after Kant (which amounts to the same thing), we should be concerned with a precise moment within Kantianism, a furtive and explosive moment which is not even continued by Kant, much less by post-Kantianism. For when Kant puts rational theology in question, in the same stroke he introduces a kind of disequilibrium . . . into the pure self of the "I think" . . . [that is] insurmountable in principle.'

identity of the person as a well-founded agent, the identity of the world as its ambient environment, and the identity of God as the ultimate foundation – to which Deleuze might add the identity of bodies as the base of the person, and the identity of language as the capacity to *denote* everything else.[9] One can sense two minor battles in these last two characterisations: against the phenomenological notion of the 'body image' as the final avatar of the theological concept of the soul,[10] and against the analytic preoccupation with the analysis of propositions and the theory of reference, which appears in Kant in the theory of judgement (one of Deleuze's great themes is 'to have done with judgement', which above all means the form of judgement in propositions, and not merely moral judgement).

How then does Deleuze marshal the resources of the history of philosophy to expand on this furtive moment in Kant (i.e., the idea of a transcendental field free from the coordinates of the Self, the World and God – that is, from the form of identity)? One of his chief influences here was the figure of Salomon Maimon, whose *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* – which was published in 1790, one year before the appearance of Kant's third *Critique* – laid down the basic objections against Kant that would come to preoccupy the post-Kantian philosophies of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel.[11] Maimon's basic objection was this: Kant

[9] See Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 293, 294: 'The order of God includes the following elements: the identity of God as the ultimate foundation; the identity of the world as the ambient environment; the identity of the person as a well-founded agent; the identity of bodies as the base [as Deleuze says elsewhere, the phenomenological concept of the "body image" is one of the final avatars of the old concept of the "soul"]; and finally the identity of language as the power of *denoting* everything else . . . The order of the Antichrist is opposed point by point to the divine order. It is characterised by the death of God, the destruction of the world, the dissolution of the person, the disintegration of bodies, and the shifting function of language, which now only expresses only intensities.' Cf. p. 176: 'The divergence of affirmed series form a "chaosmos" and no longer a world; the aleatory point which traverses them forms a counter-self, and no longer a self; disjunction posed as a synthesis exchanges its theological principle for a diabolical principle . . . The Grand Canyon of the world, the "crack" of the self, and the dismembering of God.'

[10] See Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 23: 'The "body image" – the final avatar of the soul, a vague conjoining of the requirements of spiritualism and positivism.'

[11] Maimon's now neglected work lies at the root of much post-Kantian philosophy; as Frederick Beiser notes, to study Fichte, Schelling, or Hegel without having read Maimon is like studying Kant without having read Hume; see Frederick Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy From Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 286. See also Jules Vuillemin, *L'héritage kantien et la révolution copernicienne* (Paris: PUF, 1954), p. 55: In the criticism of scepticism, 'what corresponds to the Kant-Hume relationship is now the Fichte-Maimon relationship'.

had ignored the demands of a *genetic* method. This criticism means two things.

First, Kant relied on what he himself called 'facts', for which he then searches for conditions. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant does more than simply claim that reason implies *a priori* knowledge; he adds that the so-called 'universal' knowledges of pure sciences such as mathematics are the knowledges in which reason necessarily manifests itself. They are the *a priori* 'facts' of reason. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant similarly takes as his point of departure the 'fact' of the judgement of value and moral action. Kant assumed these original facts of reason – the 'fact' of knowledge and the 'fact' of morality – and then sought their conditions of possibility in the transcendental. But this was a vicious circle that made the condition (the possible) refer to the conditioned (the real) while reproducing its image. In other words, Kant's conception of the transcendental entailed a *conformism* – the value of knowledge and morality are never placed in question. Maimon, by contrast, argued that Kant's claim to ground his critique on reason alone would be valid only if these *a priori* knowledges had been *deduced* or engendered from reason as the necessary modes of its manifestation. In other words, the immanent ambitions of Kant's critical project could be realised only if, rather than simply assuming these 'facts' as given, it provided a *genetic* account of knowledge and morality. Second, Maimon argued that this genetic demand could be fulfilled only through an account that described the transcendental conditions of *real* experience, and not merely those of possible experience. Even if the categories of the understanding are applicable to objects in general, the category itself can never specify which object it belongs to in *real* experience. By confining himself to possible experience, Kant was unable to provide the faculty of judgement a rule for determining *when* a given category was applicable to real experience. The concept of causality may indeed be applicable to certain irreversible causal sequences, as Kant argues in the Second Analogy (fire causes smoke, because fire always precedes

Kant himself, in his letter to Marcus Herz of 26 May 1789, wrote of the *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*: 'But one glance at the work made me realize its excellence and that not only had none of my critics understood me and the main questions as well as Mr. Maimon does but also very few men possess so much acumen for such deep investigations as he.' Immanuel Kant, *Philosophical Correspondence*, ed. and trans. Arnulf Zweig (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 151. In a letter to Reinhold, Fichte wrote: 'My respect for Maimon's talent is limitless; I firmly believe, and am willing to prove, that the critical philosophy has been overturned by him.' Fichte, *Briefwechsel*, III/2, p. 282, as quoted in Beiser, *The Fate of Reason*, p. 370, note 2.

smoke in the order of time). But the concept itself gives us no means of distinguishing, within experience, between *necessary and universal connections* and *contingent and constant conjunctions*. Hume's scepticism, in other words, remains unanswered, and Kant's duality between concept and intuition remains unbridgeable. Maimon, by contrast, was the first to argue that this duality could only be overcome through the formulation of a principle of difference. Whereas identity is the condition of possibility of thought in general, *it is difference that constitutes the genetic condition of the real*.

These two Maimonian themes – the demand for a *genetic method* and the positing of a *principle of difference* – reappear as leitmotifs in almost every one of Deleuze's books through 1969, even if Maimon's name is not always explicitly mentioned. The reason for this is not difficult to ascertain. The post-Kantian philosophers all took up Maimon's challenge, but in some fashion each of them still subordinated the principle of difference to the principle of identity. Deleuze, I would argue, returns to Maimon in order to take up the one option that was not pursued as such by post-Kantian philosophy (though Schelling no doubt remains closest to Deleuze). For Deleuze, 'difference-in-itself' (the title of the first chapter of *Difference and Repetition*) becomes the genetic element of real experience, from which all other relations are derived (identity, analogy, resemblance, opposition, contradiction, negation, and so forth). Indeed, these two Maimonian themes will become two requirements of Deleuze's 'transcendental empiricism', that is, a transcendental field without a transcendental subject or a thing-in-itself, both of which introduce elements of transcendence into the transcendental field. (It is important to recall that, for Kant, 'transcendence' and 'transcendental' are diametrically opposed terms: his *transcendental* philosophy was a method of immanence whose aim was to critique the *transcendent* illusions of reason.) In Deleuze, there are no subjects, although there are processes of subjectivation; there are no objects, but there are processes of objectivation; there is no 'pure reason', but there are historically variable processes of rationalisation, and so on. This is why Deleuze can say that the transcendental field is a principle of critique *as well as* a principle of creation.

The Pre-Kantian Tradition: Hume, Leibniz, Spinoza

It is not coincidental that Maimon described his own reformulation of transcendental philosophy as a 'coalition system' [*Koalitionssystem*] that incorporated various elements from the systems of Hume, Leibniz,

Spinoza. Nor is it coincidental that Deleuze devoted a separate monograph to each of these thinkers. In this sense, Maimon functions as one of the primary philosophical precursors to Deleuze. At one level, Deleuze's books on Hume, Leibniz and Spinoza, are simply brilliant monographs in the history of philosophy; but when Deleuze *uses* these pre-Kantian thinkers in his constructive works such as *Difference and Repetition* – when he treats them as contemporaries, as it were – he always asks the post-Kantian question: How would their systems function if they were freed from the metaphysical illusions of the Self, the World and God that were criticised by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*? What would happen if one removed the theological exigency of a pre-established harmony from Leibniz's philosophy? Or if one removed the identity of a single substance from Spinoza's philosophy?[12] This is how Deleuze transforms pre-Kantian thinkers into post-Kantian resources for his own thought, as way of reconfiguring the transcendental field. (We have already seen how Deleuze saw in Hume's philosophy an inversion of the Kantian question: 'How is the subject constituted in the given?' rather than 'How is the given given to a subject?')

Consider Leibniz's philosophy, for instance, from this post-Kantian viewpoint. First, *God* would no longer be a Being who compares possible worlds and allows the 'best' of all possible worlds to pass into existence; rather, he would become a pure process that affirms incompossibilities and passes through them. Second, the *World* would no longer be a world of continuity defined by its pre-established harmony; instead, divergences, bifurcations and incompossibles would now be seen to belong to *one and the same universe*, a chaotic universe in which divergent series trace endlessly bifurcating paths, and give rise to violent discords and dissonances that are never resolved into a harmonic tonality: a 'chaosmos', as Deleuze puts it (borrowing a portmanteau word

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[12] On these points, see the letter to Martin Joughin, cited in the 'Translator's Preface' to *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), p. 11: 'What interested me most in Spinoza wasn't his Substance, but the composition of finite modes. I consider this one of the most original aspects of my book. That is: the hope of making substance turn on finite modes, or at least of seeing in substance a *plane of immanence* in which finite modes operate, already appears in this book. What I needed was both (1) the expressive character of particular individuals, and (2) an immanence of Being. Leibniz, in a way, goes still further than Spinoza on the first point. But on the second, Spinoza stands alone. One finds it only in him. This is why I consider myself a Spinozist, rather than a Leibnizian, though I owe a lot to Leibniz.'

from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*), and no longer a world.[13] Leibniz could only save the 'harmony' of *this* world by relegating discordances and disharmonies to *other* possible worlds. Third, individuals (the *Self*), rather than being closed upon the compossible and convergent world they express from within, would now be torn open, and kept open through the divergent series and incompossible ensembles that continually pull them outside themselves. The 'monadic' subject, as Deleuze puts it, becomes the 'nomadic' subject.[14] The Leibnizian notion of *closure* is here replaced by the Deleuzian notion of *capture*.

One could say that Deleuze effects a similar type of conversion in his reading of Spinoza. For Deleuze, there can be neither a single substance nor essences (even singular essences), and thus, strictly speaking, no third kind of knowledge, since there is nothing to know at this level.[15] It is the first and second kinds of knowledge – affections/affects and concepts – that give us the most adequate access to Being. Although Deleuze likes to consider himself as Spinozist, that does not mean he accepts everything in Spinoza; far from it. The same holds for Bergson: even though Deleuze can rightly be considered a Bergsonian (as much as a Kantian, or a Leibnizian, or a Spinozist), Bergson's first book, *Time and Free Will*, contains a sustained critique of the concept of intensity, which Deleuze explicitly rejects.[16]

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[13] The term 'chaosmos' can be found in James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake* (London: Penguin, 1999 [1939]), p. 118: 'every person, place and thing in the chaosmos of Alle anyway connected with the gobblydumped turkery was moving and changing every part of the time'.

[14] See Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 17: 'Instead of a certain number of predicates being excluded from a thing in virtue of the identity of its concept, each "thing" is open to the infinity of predicates through which it passes, and at the same time it loses its center, that is to say, its identity as a concept and as a self' (translation modified).

[15] See Deleuze's critique of Spinoza's notion of substance in *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 40–1: 'Nevertheless, [in Spinoza] there still remains a difference between substance and the modes: Spinoza's substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent on substance, but as though on something other than themselves. Substance must itself be said *of* the modes and only *of* the modes. Such a condition can be satisfied only at the price of a more general categorical reversal according to which being is said of becoming, identity of that which is different, the one of the multiple, etc. That identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle *become*; that it revolve around the Different: such would be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical.'

[16] See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 239: 'This is why the Bergsonian critique of intensity seems unconvincing. It assumes qualities ready-made and extensities already constituted.'

The Post-Kantian Tradition: Maimon, Nietzsche, Bergson

Deleuze's strategy with regard to the post-Kantian tradition of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel – which constitutes the history of the synthetic identity of the finite Self – is slightly different. Deleuze occasionally appeals to aspects of their thought that escapes this synthetic identity, such as Schelling's theory of power.[17] More importantly, though, Deleuze creates his own 'minor' tradition of post-Kantian philosophy which finds its shining points in Maimon, Bergson and Nietzsche, who made no appeal to the synthetic self.

In his book *Bergsonism*, Deleuze examines Bergson's famous critique of the notion of the possible, which has certain parallels with Maimon's critique. Bergson considers a number of metaphysical questions – 'Why is there order rather than disorder?' 'Why is there something rather than nothing?' 'Why is there this rather than that?' – and argues that these are false questions derived from a misplaced use of negation. Why? (1) What is given in experience is *order*, but we negate that order, and then speak of *disorder*, when we encounter an order we did not expect or do not understand (order + negation = disorder). (2) What is given in experience is *being*, but we negate that being, and then speak of non-being or 'nothingness', when a being does not correspond to our expectation and we experience it as a lack, or as the absence of what interests us (being + negation = non-being). (3) Finally, what is given in experience is the *real*, but we negate that real, and then speak of the possible, when we consider or desire that the real could have been otherwise (the real + negation = the possible). In each of these cases, we fall into the same error: we mistake the more for the less, or an after for a before. We behave as though non-being existed *before* being, disorder *before* order, and the possible *before* existence – as though being came to fill in a void, order to organise a preceding disorder, the real to realise a pre-existing possibility. As Deleuze writes: 'Being, order, and the existent are truth itself; but in the false problem there is a fundamental illusion, a "retrograde movement of the true", in which being, order, and the existent project themselves back into a possibility, a disorder, a nonbeing that are supposed to be primordial.'[18]

One can see the parallels with Maimon's critique of Kant: for

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[17] See, e.g., Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 190–1.
[18] Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone Books, 1988), p. 18, quoting from Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Mabelle L. Andison (Totowa, NJ: Littlefield, Adams & Co, 1975), p. 118.

Bergson, the possible is a false notion, a source of false problems. When we think of the possible as somehow 'preexisting' the real, we think of the real as something more than possible, that is, as the possible with existence added to it. We then say that the possible has been 'realised' in the real. This process of realisation, Deleuze suggests, is subject to two rules: resemblance and limitation. The real is supposed to *resemble* or to be 'in the image of' the possible that it realises: the concept of the thing is already given as possible, and simply has existence or reality added to it when it is realised. On the other hand, since not every possible is realised, the process of realisation involves a *limitation* by which some possibles are supposed to be repulsed or thwarted, while others pass into the real. But this is where the slight of hand becomes obvious: if the real is supposed to resemble the possible, is it not because we have retrospectively or retroactively 'projected' a fictitious image of the real back into the possible? In fact, it is not the real that resembles the possible, it is the possible that resembles the real. As Deleuze would later write in *Logic of Sense*, 'the error of all determinations of the transcendental as consciousness is to conceive of the transcendental in the image and resemblance of what it is supposed to found'.[19] One can see why Deleuze, following Bergson, would reject the notion of 'conditions of possibility', and will replace the possible-real opposition with the virtual-actual couplet: every phenomenon is an actualisation of virtual elements, relations and singularities that are themselves real.[20]

Nietzsche and Philosophy, in turn, is animated by similar Kantian concerns, though we will not explore them in detail here. In general, Deleuze argues that it is Nietzsche who finally fulfilled Kant's transcendental project by bringing the critique to bear, not on false claims to knowledge and morality, as in Kant, but on knowledge and morality themselves, on true knowledge and true morality – and indeed on the very notion of truth itself. Deleuze interprets the will to power and eternal return as genetic principles that give a genealogical account of the meaning and value of knowledge, morality and truth.[21]

In these early works, Deleuze explicitly sets out a certain number of criteria for thinking about the status of the transcendental field. First, the condition must be a condition of real experience, and not merely of possible experience: 'it forms an intrinsic genesis, not an extrinsic

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[19] Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 105.
[20] Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, pp. 94–103; Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 208–14.
[21] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, pp. 51–2, 93–4.

conditioning'.[22] Second, this means that the condition cannot be in the image of the conditioned, that is, the structures of the transcendental field cannot simply be traced off the empirical. Third, to be a condition of real experience, the condition can be no broader than what it conditions; the condition must therefore be determined *along with* what it conditions, and must *change* as the conditioned changes (conditions are not universal but singular). Fourth, to remain faithful to these exigencies, 'we must have something *unconditioned*' that would be capable of 'determining *both* the condition and the conditioned'.[23] This is the crux of Deleuze's debate with Hegel: Is this unconditioned the 'totality' (Hegel) or the 'differential' (Deleuze)? Is it external difference (the 'not-X' of Hegel) or internal difference (the *dx* of Deleuze)? Fifth, the nature of the 'genesis' in the genetic method must therefore be understood, not as a dynamic genesis – that is, as a historical or developmental genesis – but rather as a static genesis (i.e., a genesis that moves from the virtual to its actualisation).

Deleuze's work in the history of philosophy, it seems to me, was organised, in a rather conscious manner, around this aim of rethinking the nature of the transcendental field. When Deleuze claims that the limitations of the Kantian theory can only be overcome through a theory of singularities, it is because singularities (or events) escape the system of the Self, the World and God. As Deleuze constantly says, they are 'impersonal' [escaping the form of the Self], pre-individual' [escaping the form of God] and 'a-cosmic' [escaping the form of the World]'.[24] It would not be difficult, I think, to show that Deleuze's use of prior figures in the history of philosophy – such as Plato, Aristotle, the Stoics, Lucretius, Duns Scotus – are also put in the service of this transcendental project, and it is this overriding concern that bestows that particularly 'Deleuzian' tone to his monographs.

KANT AND DELEUZE'S CONSTRUCTIVE PHILOSOPHY

This Kantian theme becomes even more revealing when one turns from Deleuze's work in the history of philosophy to his elaboration of his own philosophical system. I use the term 'system' advisedly. 'I feel that I am a very classical philosopher', Deleuze once wrote. 'I believe in philosophy as a system . . . [But] for me, the system must not only be in

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[22] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 154.
[23] Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, pp. 122–3.
[24] Ibid. p. 177.

perpetual heterogeneity, it must be a heterogenesis, something which, it seems to me, has never before been attempted.'[25] *Heterogenesis*: this means, following Maimon, that the system must be a genetic system that accounts for the genesis of the heterogeneous, the creation of difference, the production of the new. Our second question then becomes: What would Deleuze's 'system' look like if one attempted to describe it in Kantian terms? I would like to briefly take a stab at this here, using five Kantian rubrics that roughly parallel the architectonic of Kant's own system: Dialectics, Aesthetics, Analytics, Ethics and Politics.

a. *Dialectics* (Theory of Ideas). Consider first Deleuze's conception of Dialectics, that is, his theory of Ideas (what can only be *thought*). Deleuze's philosophy is far too quickly identified as an 'anti-dialectical' mode of thought. It is true that Deleuze is anti-Hegelian: what he criticises in the Hegelian dialectic is its reliance on the mechanisms of contradiction and 'the labour of the negative', which Deleuze replaces with movements of difference and the joy of affirmation. It is also true that he is anti-Platonic, at least insofar as Plato defined Ideas in terms of their self-identity and their transcendence; for Deleuze, Ideas are immanent and differential.

But Deleuze develops his own theory of Ideas primarily by reconsidering Kant's Dialectics. If Kant critiqued the concept of the world, it was because the true object of that Idea is the category of causality, and the causal nexus that extends infinitely in all directions, and can never be unified. When we believe we can unify this causal nexus and assign an object to it – we can call it the World, or the Universe, or the totality of what is –, we are then in a transcendent illusion. The true object of that idea, its immanent object, is the category of causality itself, the extension of which we experience as a *problem*. This is the aspect of Kant that Deleuze takes up: Ideas are *objectively problematic structures*. Deleuze's claim that he is a pure metaphysician amounts to saying that Being – ultimate reality – is a *problem*: it always presents itself to us under a problematic form (we experience the world, and everything in the world, initially in the form of a problem – something we do *not* recognise, but rather something that forces us to think).

In a way, Deleuze here takes up and develops a theme first proposed

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[25] Gilles Deleuze, 'Lettre-préface de Gilles Deleuze', in Jean-Clet Martin, *Variations: La Philosophie de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Payot, 1993), p. 7. See also Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 9: 'Today it is said that systems are bankrupt, but it is only the concept of the system that has changed.'

in Heidegger's book, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*.[26] For Heidegger, the great problem in Kant was the relation between thought and being – that is, the relation between concepts and intuitions. Kant himself effected a mediation between the two via the operations of *synthesis* and *schematisation*, which are operations of the productive imagination. But in the third *Critique* (written after Maimon's *Essay*), Kant showed (against Heidegger) that the secret of the Kantian project does not lie in the imagination, but in the theory of Ideas: when synthesis breaks down it produces the experience of the *sublime*, and when schematising breaks down, it produces the operation of *symbolising*. Now both the sublime and the symbol (along with genius and teleology) are means through which Ideas appear in Nature itself, in the sensible. This is what it means to say that Deleuze's theory of Ideas is purely immanent: Ideas are problematic ontological structures that are immanent to experience as such. They do not simply exist in our heads, but are encountered here and there in the constitution of the actual world. The history of humanity, as well as the history of nature (or rather, its 'becoming'), can be conceived of as a history of *problematisations* – a notion Foucault would later adopt from Deleuze.[27]

However, when it comes to fleshing out the exact nature of these problematic structures (or Ideas), Deleuze turns not to Kant, but to Leibniz. Many of the concepts he uses to characterise the nature of problems can be found in Leibniz: problematic structures are multiplicities, constituted by singularities (or events), which are themselves defined in terms of the differential relation between indeterminate and purely virtual elements, and so forth. As Deleuze once commented in a seminar: 'All the elements to create a genesis as demanded by the post-Kantians are virtually present in Leibniz.'[28]

One can already sense here the revolution Deleuze is in the process of introducing into the history of philosophy. If Deleuze can consider himself a metaphysician, and rejects the Heideggerian theme of the end of metaphysics, it is because be believes – naively, as he puts it – that it is possible to construct a new metaphysics that replaces the old one (where the Self, the World and God were the highest forms of identity): the concept of multiplicity replaces that of substance, singularities or

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[26] Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

[27] See, for instance, Michel Foucault, 'Polemics, Politics and Problematizations', *Essential Works of Foucault*, ed. Paul Rabinow, vol. 1, *Ethics* (New York: The New Press, 1998).

[28] Deleuze, seminar of 20 May 1980, available online at <www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze>.

events replace the notion of essence, and so forth. If the theory of Ideas is a response to the Socratic question 'What is. . .?', one could say that, for Deleuze, anything that *is* is a multiplicity (and not a substance), constituted by a convergence of singularities (and not by an essence), which are virtualities (and not possibilities), and so on. The aim of Deleuze's theory of Ideas, in other words, is to provide us with a means of thinking the nature of being, even if he would later call into question the concept of ontology by suggesting that the term '*est*' (is) should be replaced with the word '*et*' (and).

b. *Aesthetics* (Theory of Sensation: Space and Time). We turn now, second, to the question of aesthetics. If the question of sensibility plays an important role in Deleuze's work, it is because in themselves such problematic structures are primarily *sensed* rather than apprehended: they affect us, and provoke us to think. This is why Deleuze calls them problematic multiplicities, as opposed to theorematic structures that begin with well-defined axioms. Kant himself had separated the theory of sensation (aesthetics) into two isolated parts. In the 'Transcendental Aesthetic' of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, aesthetics designated the theory of sensibility as the form of *possible* experience: this was the *objective* element of sensation as conditioned by the *a priori* forms of space and time. In the 'Critique of Aesthetic Judgment' in the *Critique of Judgment*, which includes the Analytics of the Beautiful and the Sublime, aesthetics designated the theory of art as a reflection upon *real* experience: this was the *subjective* element of sensation as incarnated in the feeling of pleasure and pain.

For Deleuze, by contrast, space, time and sensation are themselves differential Ideas. He locates the conditions of sensibility in an *intensive* conception of space and a *non-chronological* conception of time, which are actualised in a plurality of extended spaces, and a complex rhythm of actual times, which is the object of Deleuze's analyses in the 'Repetition' chapter of *Difference and Repetition*. Moreover, since for Deleuze the aim of art is to produce a sensation, these genetic principles of sensation are also the principles of composition of the work of art, and conversely, it is the structure of the work of art that reveals these conditions. Deleuze's theory of sensation in this way reunites the two halves of aesthetics dissociated by Kant: the theory of forms of experience (as the 'being of the sensible') and the work of art (as a 'pure being of sensation').

One of Deleuze's most important works in this regard is his two-volume study of the cinema. Whatever their importance for film studies, *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image* are essentially an elabora-

tion of Deleuze's Transcendental Aesthetic. One of the characteristics of film is that it presented a new type of image: an image that moves, and that moves in time. The philosophical question Deleuze poses in these works is: 'What exactly does the cinema show us about space and time that the other arts do not show?'[29] He presents the work as a classification of the multiplicity spaces and times actualised in modern cinema. In his book on Proust, he likewise examines the various structures of time revealed in *In Search of Lost Time*. If one of the characteristics of modern art was to have renounced the domain of representation and instead to have taken the *conditions* of representation as its object, Deleuze's numerous writings on the arts are in effect explorations of this transcendental domain of sensibility: the subtitle of his study of the painter Francis Bacon is 'the logic of sensation'.

  c. *Analytics* (Theory of the Concept). Consider now the third division of Kant's first *Critique*, the Analytic of Concepts. Deleuze agrees with Kant that philosophy can be defined as 'knowledge through pure concepts', but he takes the further step, against Kant, that concepts can never be given ready-made or *a priori*. Rather, concepts must always be created, invented, or fabricated (which is why Deleuze considered himself to be an empiricist), and they are always created in response to a specific problem.[30] One can note the deduction of these domains in Deleuze: (1) being (reality) presents itself under the form of a problem (*Dialectics*); (2) these problematics (differential multiplicities) are not known by us, they are primarily sensed, and these sensed intensities provoke us to think (*Aesthetics*); (3) one of the outcomes of this thought process (though by no means the only one) is the creation of concepts (*Analytics*).

  In *Difference and Repetition*, however, Deleuze is highly critical of concepts, but primarily *insofar* as they are subordinate to the model of judgement, which consists of subsuming the particular under the general – whether these are the genus and species of Aristotle, or the Kantian categories. 'Every philosophy of categories', writes Deleuze, 'takes judgment as its model'.[31] Judgement has two functions: common sense and good sense. *Common sense* is a faculty of identification that can be

[29] Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972–1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 58.

[30] See Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 7: 'The following definition of philosophy can be taken as being decisive: knowledge through pure concepts.' This phrase is qualified by the more famous line: 'philosophy is the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts' (p. 2).

[31] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 33.

defined in terms of both the subjective identity of the self and its faculties, and the objective identity of the things to which these faculties refer. Since we no more find ourselves before a universal indeterminate object than we are a universal self, however, judgement requires a second faculty of *good sense* (the French *sens* here meaning 'direction'), which subsumes diversity under the common form of the Same, reducing the more differentiated to the less differentiated, the singular to the regular, ultimately equalising difference by relating it to the form of an object or the identity of a subject. This is the orientation that one finds in Kant's Table of Categories, which are derived from the various forms of judgement: the categories provide an *a priori* direction that everyone must follow, and they are distributed in an *a priori* manner that everyone must share. The type of distribution offered in the Table of Categories, as Kant himself noted, is inseparable from the agrarian problem: it implies the establishment of enclosures, the delimitation of territories, the assignation of 'property' and the instituting of 'classes'.

It was not until *What is Philosophy?*, published in 1991, that Deleuze put forward his own analytic of concepts, for which his motto, one might say, was 'to have done with judgement' (even reflective judgement). The sedentary distribution of categories found in Kant (and Aristotle) is imposed upon a prior nomadic and problematic distribution of elements, relations and singularities (multiplicities) that Deleuze has analysed in his Dialectics. (Like Kant, Deleuze distinguishes Ideas from concepts, albeit in an original manner.) This is the import of Deleuze's doctrine of univocity, derived, in modified form, from Duns Scotus: Being speaks in one voice, but what it speaks is difference-in-itself (or problematics). Categories, whether Kantian or Aristotelian, can only have an analogical relation to Being, never a univocal relation – which is why a philosophy such as Deleuze's can never have categories (unless, like Peirce, for example, one creates a new concept of a 'category'). The basis for Deleuze's Analytics thus lies in his Dialectics: a concept, Deleuze tells us, is a *heterogenesis*:[32] it actualises a certain number of singularities and renders them consistent within itself. In this sense, concepts do not have a referent, since their object is created at the same time the concept is created. Deleuze thus distinguishes concepts from the 'functions' of science and logic, which – although they are equally creative – are necessarily referential, and are developed in discursive systems.

The earliest, and perhaps still the most concrete, example of Deleuze's approach to concepts can already be found in his 1967 study of

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[32] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 20.

Masochism.[33] It criticises the Hegelian presumptions (of complementarity and opposition) implied in the notion of 'sado-masochism', and instead presents a differential analysis of the component elements of the concepts 'sadism' and 'masochism', showing that each of these concepts define incommensurate objects, separate universes between which there is no communication.

d. *Ethics* (Theory of Affectivity). Fourth, what is Deleuze's relation to the second *Critique*, the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Deleuze often uses the term 'morality' to define, in very general terms, any set of 'constraining' rules (e.g. a moral code) that consists in judging actions and intentions by relating them to *transcendent* values (this is good, that is evil. . .). It is this Kantian model of judgement and the appeal to universals that Deleuze rejects. What he calls 'ethics' is, on the contrary, a set of 'facultative' rules that evaluate what we do, say, or think according to the *immanent* mode of existence that it implies. One says or does this, thinks or feels that: what mode of existence does it imply? As both Spinoza and Nietzsche showed, modes of existence are defined *intensively* as a degree of power, a capacity for affecting or being affected that is necessarily actualised at every moment. Each in their own way showed that there are certain things one cannot do *or even think* except on the condition of being weak, base, or enslaved, unless one harbours a vengeance or *ressentiment* against life (Nietzsche), unless one remains the slave of passive affections (Spinoza); and there are other things one cannot do or say or feel except on the condition of being strong, noble, or free, unless one affirms life or attains active affections.

Moreover, one would have to argue that the concept of desire that lies at the basis of Deleuze's ethico-political philosophy – notably in *Anti-Oedipus* – is an explicit attempt to rework the fundamental theses of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*. Kant presents the second *Critique* as a theory of desire, and he defines desire, somewhat surprisingly, in *causal* terms: desire is 'a faculty which by means of its representations is the *cause* of the actuality of the objects of those representations'. In its lower form, the products of desire are fantasies and superstitions; but in its higher form (the will), the products of desire are acts of *freedom* under the moral law – actions which are, however, irreducible to mechanistic causality. Deleuze takes up and modifies Kant in two fundamental ways. First, if desire is productive or causal, then its product is itself *real* (and not illusory or noumenal): the entire socio-political field,

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[33] Gilles Deleuze, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1989).

Deleuze argues, must be seen as the historically determined product of desire. Second, to maintain this claim, Deleuze appeals to the theory of Ideas outlined above. In Kant, the postulates of practical reason are found in the transcendent Ideas of God, World, and the Soul, which are themselves derived from the types of judgement of relation (categorical, hypothetical, disjunctive). For Deleuze, by contrast, desire is determined by a set of constituting passive syntheses (connective, disjunctive, conjunctive), which in turn appeals to Deleuze's genetic and differential theory of Ideas. In this sense, what one finds in Deleuze is at once an inversion as well as a completion of Kant's critical philosophy.

e. *Politics* (Social Theory). Consider, finally – and very briefly – the question of politics, which is developed primarily in the works Deleuze co-authored with Félix Guattari. The link between ethics and politics is, for Deleuze, redefined as the link between desire and power: *desire* (the difference between active and reactive forces in a given mode of existence) never exists in a spontaneous or natural state, but is always 'assembled' [*agencé*] in variable but determinable manners in concrete social formations, and what assembles desire are relations of *power*. Deleuze remains 'Marxist' in that his social theory is necessarily tied to an analysis of capitalism, which he defines by the conjunction or differential relation between the virtual quantities of labour and capital. What he calls 'schizophrenia' is an absolute limit that would cause these quantities to travel in a free and unbound state on a desocialised body: this is the 'Idea' of society, a limit that is never reached as such, but constitutes the ideal 'problematic' to which every social formation constitutes a concrete solution. For Deleuze, the central political question concerns the means by which the singularities and states of difference of the transcendental field are assembled in a given socius. *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* consequently outlines a typology of four abstract social formations – 'primitive' or segmentary societies, States, nomadic 'war machines' and capitalism itself – that aims to provide the conceptual tools for analysing the diverse dimensions of concrete social structures: How are its mechanisms of power organised? What are the 'lines of flight' that escape its integration? What new modes of existence does it make possible? These types of social formations are not to be understood as stages in a progressive evolution or development; rather, they sketch out a topological field in which each type functions as a variable of coexistence that enters into complex relations with the other types.

CONCLUSION

These, to be sure, are only very general schematic characterisations of the structure of Deleuze's project. The conclusions I would like to draw from them are modest: first, that in both his historical and constructive work, Deleuze was pursuing the elaboration of a philosophical system (one that is open, differential, problematic, and so on); and second, that this system is a transcendental system, one that both completes and inverts Kant's critical project. Historically, in working out this transcendental project, Deleuze primarily made use of three pre-Kantian thinkers (Hume, Spinoza and Leibniz) and three post-Kantian thinkers (Maimon, Nietzsche and Bergson) – all of whom provide Deleuze with the resources to think through a metaphysics stripped of the presuppositions of both God and Man, infinite substance and finite subject. Constructively, I have tried to sketch out the implications of Deleuze's project in five Kantian domains – dialectics, aesthetics, analytics, ethics and politics – showing how, in each case, Deleuze introduces into his analyses a consideration of the role of heterogenesis. Finally, I might note that Deleuze himself summarises his distance from Kant in terms of two fundamental inversions: the repudiation of universals in favour of the *singular*, and the repudiation of the eternal in favour of the *new*, that is, the genetic conditions under which something new is produced (heterogenesis).[34] These are perhaps the two essential themes that mark Deleuze's reconceptualisation of the transcendental field towards a 'transcendental empiricism'.

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[34] Deleuze frequently makes both these points; see, for instance, the conclusion of 'What is a *dispositif*?' in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 159–68.