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"Knowledge of Pure Events"

A Note on Deleuze's Analytic of Concepts

What is the relation between philosophical concepts and events? This is a complex problem in Deleuze's philosophy, leading to a number of complex questions. Deleuze has famously defined philosophy as the creation of concepts, as "knowledge through pure concepts."[1] What is at issue here is not a theory of concepts as such, but the type of knowledge produced by the pure concepts of philosophy. One can certainly think without concepts, Deleuze says, but as soon as there are concepts in this sense, there is philosophy. "So long as there is a time and a place for creating concepts, the operation that undertakes this will always be called philosophy, or will be indistinguishable from philosophy, even if it is called something else."[2] Philosophical concepts, however, are defined by Deleuze in terms of events: "The concept speaks the event, not the essence or the thing."[3] At one level, this definition appeals to the traditional opposition between essences and events or accidents: concepts will henceforth express events and not essences. "For a long time one made use of concepts in order to determine what a thing is (essence). On the contrary, we are interested in the circumstances of the thing: in what case, where and when, how, etc.? For us, the concept must express the event, and no longer essence."[4] Or, as Deleuze writes at one point, "One can conserve the word essence, if one wishes, but only on the condition of saying that essence is precisely the accident or the event."[5] But this manifest distinction between essence and event conceals a more subtle distinction between a pure event and an actualized event: philosophical concepts, says Deleuze, express *pure events*. At several points, Deleuze distinguishes between the actualization of an event in a state of affairs, that is, in *history*; and the pure event, which is irreducible to its actualizations – the event in its *becoming*, in its specific consistency, which escapes history and is "utopic," both nowhere and no-where (a play on Samuel Butler's utopian neologism *Erewhon*). It is precisely the latter, according to Deleuze, that philosophy is able to express in a self-positing or self-referential concept. But what then is a pure event? How do concepts provide knowledge of pure events? And what kind of knowledge is thereby given to us?

   On this score, Paul Patton has provided a useful Deleuzian analysis of the political concept of "revolution," taking as his point of departure Kant's famous reflections on

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[1] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 7.

[2] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 9.

[3] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 21.

[4] Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 25-26.

[5] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 191, translation modified.

the French Revolution in *The Contest of the Faculties* (a text which, in recent history, has been taken up by thinkers as diverse as Foucault, Derrida, Habermas, and Lyotard). Kant distinguished between, on the one hand, the pure concept of revolution in favor of the universal rights of man, as this was expressed in the "enthusiasm" of Europeans for these ideals (this is what constitutes their "becoming" in relation to the concept); and on the other hand, the manner in which those ideas and the concept of revolution had been actualized in the bloody events of 1789 (history). Patton reformulates this Kantian distinction between spectator and actor into properly Deleuzian distinction between an event and a state of affairs, showing how the concept of "revolution" necessarily has a double structure. One the one hand, there is the concept insofar as it refers to or designates an actualized state of affairs (e.g., the actual events of the French Revolution in 1789), in which the concept is capable of effecting movements of relative deterritorialization within history, movements that can themselves be blocked or reterritorialized (the "betrayal" of the revolution, its inevitable disappointment); on the other hand, there is the concept insofar as it expresses a "pure event" that posits revolution as an *absolute* deterritorialization, a self-referential movement of pure immanence, a "pure reserve" that is never exhausted by its various actualizations.[6] Deleuze uses the term *utopia* to designate the "critical point" at which these two aspects of the concept are brought together: the point where the absolute deterritorialization expressed by the concept is connected with the present relative milieu. "To say that revolution is itself a utopia of immanence is not to say that it is a dream, something that is not realized or that is only realized by betraying itself. On the contrary, it is to posit revolution as plane of immanence, infinite movement, and absolute survey, but to the extent that these features connect up with what is real here and now in the struggle against capitalism, relaunching new struggles whenever the earlier one is betrayed" (Deleuze and Guattari 1999: 100).

    It would be easy, however, to quickly assimilate this distinction between pure and actualized events to several traditional analytics of the concept: the concept is a generality, and events are particulars; the concept expresses a universal, of which particular events are instantiations; the concept expresses a regulative ideal, which actual events approximate to a greater or lesser degree; and so on. In this views, the pure event would more or less function as a kind of invariant, in relation to which its actualizations would appear as so many variants. Deleuze, however, pursues a different path. On the one hand, he tells us, concepts are neither universal nor general but *singular*. According to Deleuze, this is a feature philosophical concepts share with scientific functions and artistic creations. In defining philosophy as the creation of concepts, or science as the creation of functions, Deleuze has in effect defined these domains in terms of a *creative* activity that has often been reserved for art alone. Just as a musician works with sound, a painter with line and color, and sculptor with clay, stone, or metal, the philosopher is someone who works with concepts, who creates concepts that respond to true problems. Concepts in this sense are the very *matière* of philosophical activity. And the products of these creative activities in art, philosophy, or science are themselves singular, which is why they bear signature of their creators:

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[6] See Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 2001), pp. 27, 97, 107, 136.

philosophical concepts and scientific functions are signed, just as paintings bear the signature of their painter. We speak of Descartes's cogito and Leibniz's monad in philosophy, and of Brownian motion, Fermat's last theorem, and the Feigenbaum number in science, just as we speak of a Cézanne still life or Van Gogh's sunflowers in art. The role of proper names in art, philosophy, mathematics, and science testifies to the *singularity* of their respective creations. The proper name, however, refers less to the person than to what they have created, invented, or discovered: a work of art, a scientific function, or a philosophical concept. It expresses, in short, a *non-personal* and singular mode of individuation.

On the other hand, Deleuze tells us, though singular in their mode of individuation, philosophical concepts are nonetheless multiple in their mode of constitution: concepts themselves are *multiplicities*. "It's not a matter of bringing all sorts of things under a single concept," Deleuze explains, "but rather of relating each concept to the variables that explain its mutations."[7] This characterization takes us to the heart of our problem, since it is *because* concepts are multiplicities that they express pure events. But at this point we encounter a difficult secondary problem in the interpretation of Deleuze that, to my knowledge, has gone largely unaddressed. What is the relation between the theory of concept presented in *What is Philosophy?* (1991) and the theory of Ideas presented in the fourth chapter of *Difference and Repetition* (1968)? Both concepts and Ideas are presented as "multiplicities," which might initially lead one to suspect that the shift from "Idea" to "concept" was merely terminological: what Deleuze presented as an "Idea" in 1968 would more or less be the equivalent of the notion of the "concept" presented in 1991. I do not believe, however, that this is the case. A concept is always created or invented under the constraint posted by the confrontation with a *problem*, and the theory of Ideas presented in *Difference and Repetition* is nothing other than a theory of the status and constitution of problems. Concepts are created under the constraint of a problem, but problems are themselves encountered as Ideas. It is because created concepts and problematic Ideas are both constituted *as* multiplicities that allows Deleuze to establish a rigorous internal relation between them. In order to understand the Deleuzian notion of a concept, then, we must first examine the means by which Deleuze "deduced" the notion of the Ideas (as problems) from the traditional notion of the concept itself.

Traditionally, concepts have been defined in terms of both their *comprehension* and their *extension*. The comprehension of the concept is the set of predicates that are attributable to the object of the concept; the extension of the concept is the number of exemplars that are thereby subsumed under the concept. The logic of the concept implies that comprehension and extension have an inverse relation to each other: the greater the extension, the smaller the comprehension, and vice-versa. The comprehension of the concept "lion," for instance, might include predicates such as "is a mammal," "has a large mane," "emits loud roars," "sleeps a lot," and so on. Thus defined, its current extension might be, say, ten thousand lions. However, if I limit myself to the lions living in the Sahara Desert (a specification of the concept), I reduce the extension of the concept, but have thereby enlarged the comprehension of the concept

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[7] Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p. 31.

by including within it the predicate "living in the Sahara Desert," and the lions living in the Sahara will no doubt have particular characteristics not shared by other lions. In general, most philosophers have agreed that there is a logical point at which the comprehension of the concept must stop. This is a *quid juris* question: you can prolong the comprehension of the concept indefinitely, but in principle you can never reach the individual lion as such. Why not? The answer to this question would constitute the principle of individuation. According to certain Aristotelians, the principle of individuation is to be found, not in the *form*, which is the form of the concept, but rather in the accidents of *matter*. To reach the individual, accidents and contingencies must be made to intervene, that is, attributes that do not belong to the concept. No matter how far you go in the comprehension or specification of the concept, there will always be several individuals subsumed under the concept, if only in principle. Even if we arrive at a state of the world in which there remains only one lion, the concept can never be pushed so far as to grasp the individuality of this single lion. This is what Deleuze calls, in *Difference and Repetition*, the "blockage" of the concept. You can expand the comprehension of the concept indefinitely, but you can never reach the point where extension = 1. Every concept necessarily has an extension = x.

But what then is it that "blocks" the concept? What prevents the concept from reaching the individual? "Who blocks the concept," asks Deleuze, "if not the *Idea*?"[8] The theory of Ideas put forward by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* is developed in part to explain the sufficient reason of this conceptual blockage. "Any hesitation between the order of the Idea and the order of the concept is disastrous."[9] Deleuze's great precursor in this effort, by his own admission, was Leibniz. Leibniz was the first philosopher to attempt to define the concept *as* individual (Adam, Caesar). How was he able to make this claim? By explaining that the comprehension of the concept does not go on indefinitely, but is *actually infinite*. What blocked the concept is not simply the matter that goes beyond the conceptual form, but the threat of actual infinity in the conceptual form itself. Aristotle had already seen, in other words, that the concept can become individual only at the point where its comprehension = ∞ and its extension = 1. This definition of the concept became possible for Leibniz only because he was able to posit an actual infinity everywhere: every individual substance, or monad, envelops the infinity of predicates that constitute the states of the world. The monad is the individual unity filled with an infinite multiplicity – or rather, the individual is the concept insofar as it has an actually infinite comprehension, and thus an extension = 1. It is one and the same thing to say that the concept goes to infinity and that the concept is individual. Using mathematical symbolism, we could say that the individual is 1/∞ (whereas in Leibniz God is the inverse of the monad, ∞/1). Leibniz was able to reconcile the concept and the individual because, in his philosophy, the comprehension of the concept is not simply continued indefinitely, but is actually infinite. However, according to Deleuze, Leibniz's theological and rationalist presuppositions prevented him from carrying his exploration of sufficient reason to term. In Leibniz, the three great terminal concepts of metaphysics (God, World, Self) are preserved in

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[8] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 220.
[9] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 212.

such a way that the Leibnizian "Idea" preserves the rights of representation and the Cartesian principle of the clear and distinct: God is the being who comprehends an actual infinity of possible worlds, and chooses the "best"; the World itself is an actual infinity, which only exists in the actual infinity of each monad (Self) that expresses it.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze reformulates the theory of Ideas in a way that eliminates these three metaphysical presuppositions, resulting in an immanent and differential theory of the Idea as *problematic*. *God* is no longer a being who compares and chooses the richest compossible world, but now becomes a pure Process that affirms incompossibilites as belonging to a single world. The *World* is no longer a continuous world defined by its pre-established harmony; instead, divergences and bifurcations must 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 word from Joyce) and no longer a world. *Individuals*, finally, rather than being closed upon the compossible and convergent world they express from within, are now torn open, and kept open through the divergent series and incompossible ensembles that continually pull them outside themselves. The "monadic" individual, as Deleuze puts it, becomes the "nomadic" individual. "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."[10] The Leibnizian notion of *closure*, in short, is replaced by the Deleuzian notion of *capture*. For Deleuze, "bifurcations, divergences, incompossibilities, disaccords belong to the same variegated world, *which can no longer be included in expressive unities*, but only made or unmade following prehensive unities and according to variable configurations, or changing captures. In a single chaotic world, divergent series trace always bifurcating paths [...]. Beings are torn apart, maintained open by the divergent series and incompossible sets that take them outside themselves, rather than being closed on a compossible and convergent world that they express from within. In this sense, modern mathematics have been able to develop a 'fibered' conception, according to which 'monads' experiment with the paths in the universe and enter into the syntheses associated with each path. It is a world of captures rather than closures."[11]

But how can Deleuze say that "incompossibles" (either ... or) belong to one and the same world? This is obviously impossible at the level of the "actual" world, in which only one side of a logical either/or can exist. But it *is* possible at the level of "virtual" problems, and Deleuze theory of problematics draws on a long tradition in mathematics – pioneered by Abel, Galois and Poincaré, among others – that examined the nature of problems as such, apart from their solution (or more acutely, the notion of problems *without* solution). Put simply, in the theory of differential equations, the conditions of the *problem* posed by the equation is determined by the existence and

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[10] Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, with Charles Stivale; ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 174.

[11] Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli: Leibniz et le Baroque* (Paris: Minuit, 1988), p. 111.

distribution of singular points in a differen*t*iated topological field (a field of vectors), where each singularity is inseparable from a zone of objective indetermination (the ordinary points that surround it). In turn, the *solution* to the equation will only appear with the integral curves that are constituted in the neighborhood of these singularities, which marks the beginnings of the differen*ci*ation or actualization of the problematic field. In this way, the ontological status of the problem as such is detached from its solutions: in itself, the problem is a multiplicity of singularities, a nested field of directional vectors which define the "virtual" trajectories of the curves in the solution, not all of which can be actualized. Non-linear equations can thus be used to model objectively problematic or indeterminate physical systems, such as the weather (Lorenz): the equations can define the virtual "attractors" of the system (the intrinsic singularities toward which the trajectories will tend in the long-term), but they cannot say in advance which trajectory will be actualized (the equation cannot be solved), making accurate prediction impossible. A problem, in other words, has an objectively determined structure (virtuality), apart from its solutions (actuality).[12]

Beyond Leibniz, Deleuze innovation is to have defined such problems-Ideas in terms of the notion of virtuality, rather than possibility (which can still be articulated in a concept), and to have broken the principle of the "clear and distinct" into two irreconcilable halves: a problematic Idea is clear only insofar as it is confused, and distinct only insofar as it is obscure. In other words, there is always an *excess* of the Idea over the concept, and it is this excess that accounts for the blockage of the concept: "It is the excess in the Idea [or problem] which explains the lack in the concept."[13] In this sense, Deleuze's theory of Ideas forms a necessary propadeutic to his theory of the concept. Being necessarily presents itself in a problematic form, as a problem; but problems, as Ideas, always exceed the comprehension of the concept. Ideas and concepts are both multiplicities; but concepts are created by selecting certain singularities-events from the Idea, and never exhaust the "pure reserve" of problems-Ideas. Put simply, the concept is a case of solution of a problematic Idea, it takes the chaotic or nomadic virtuality of an problematic structure and renders it consistent.

With this Idea-concept relation reestablished, we can now return, more fully armed, to our question of how concepts express pure events. Concepts, we were saying, are multiplicities. "There are no simple concepts," Deleuze writes, "Every concept has components and is defined by them.[14] The Cartesian concept of the cogito, for instance, has three components, namely, doubting, thinking, and being. The components of this concept (doubt, thought, being) can in turn be grasped as concepts, with their own components. Concepts can therefore extend to infinity, and, as Deleuze insists, are never creating from nothing. Even in Descartes, the concept of the cogito can be said to express a pure event that has been extracted from a state of things, "counter-actualized," and thus does not and cannot have a referent: it "posits itself in

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[12] Manuel DeLanda has provided a useful reading of Deleuze's ontology utilizing recent developments in complexity and chaos theory. See his *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (New York: Continuum, 2002).

[13] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 220.

[14] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 16, 19.

itself – it is a self-positing" and thus constitutes for Descartes "the always-renewed event of thought."[15] It is this status of the concept as expressing a pure event that poses the challenge to Deleuze's own analytic of concepts. If concepts are multiplicities, how are we to understand the nature of the components of the concept and the relation these components have with each other (consistency)? "The clearest, easiest answer to this question of consistency ('What holds things together?')," Deleuze has written, "seems to be provided by a formalizing, linear, hierarchized, centralized arborescent model."[16] In the set theoretical model of concepts, for example, concepts are defined as classes, with their components defined extensionally or referentially, and their consistency defined logically. Since none of these options are open to Deleuze, his analytic of concepts constitutes a fundamental realignment of the traditional theories of the concept. For our purposes, we can briefly examine in turn the two modes of consistency (endo- and exo-) by which Deleuze defines the concept.

1. *Endo-consistency*. Put succinctly, as a multiplicity, a concept is composed of a finite number of distinct, heterogeneous, and nonetheless inseparable components; it is the point of coincidence, condensation, or accumulation of these component elements (symptoms, signs), which it renders consistent *in itself*; and this internal consistency in turn is defined by the zones of neighborhood or indiscernibility that it creates between these components. These are the three aspects that define the endo-consistency of a concept, which we can briefly examine in turn. First, the *components* of the concept are neither constants nor variables, but pure "variations," they are neither general nor particular, but pure and simple "singularities." As opposed to the extensional character of concepts in the set theoretical model, for Deleuze, the components of a concept are intensive, that is, they do not introduce any division into the concept as such. Second, the internal *relations* of the concept, which are established between these components, are neither relations of comprehension nor extension, but rather relations of "intensive ordination." "Components remain distinct, but something passes from one to the other, something that is undecidable between them. There is an area *ab* that belongs to both *a* and *b*, where *a* and *b* become indiscernible. These zones, thresholds, or becomings, this inseparability, define the internal consistency of the concept."[17] In the concept of the cogito, for example, there is a zone of neighborhood that marks the passage between doubting and thinking (I who am doubting cannot doubt that I think), and another between thinking and being (in order to think it is necessary to be). Moreover, each of these components is marked by its own zones or phases: first there are the various phases of doubt (perceptual, scientific, obsessional), then the various modes of thought (feeling, imagination, ideational), and finally the various types of being (infinite being, finite thinking being, extended being). Third, if the concept can be said to express a pure event, it is because, within the concept itself, none of these concepts are separable from each other (changing one of the components would effectively change the concept itself. Thus, the concept itself is what Deleuze

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[15] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 24.
[16] Gilles Deleuze and Félix, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. 327.
[17] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 20.

calls, following Ruyer, *un point en survol absolu*, a point that "hovers" absolutely over the traits of which it is composed, without any distance being introduced between them ("it does not have spatio-temporal coordinates, but only intensive ordinates").[18]

2. *Exo-consistency.* Every concept, a pure event, refers to other concepts; they coexist with other concepts on what Deleuze calls a "plane of immanence." Concepts thus have an exo-consistency both in terms of their "external" history (which changes when its components change, or when the plane of immanence or problematic to which it belongs changes) as well as their "internal" becoming (the components of a concept can in turn be taken as concepts, to infinity). The Cartesian cogito is not only composed internally of certain components that can themselves be taken as concepts (doubt, thought, being), but these components themselves establish internal bridges with other Cartesian concepts, almost like a hypertext. In Descartes, the "idea of infinity" is the bridge leading from the concept of cogito to the concept of God, which is a new concept which has three components forming the "proofs" for the existence of God. In turn, the third proof (the ontological proof) not only assures the closure of the concept of God, but also throws out a new bridge to the concept of extension, insofar as it is the closure of the concept of God that guarantees the truth value of our other clear and distinct ideas, such as the idea of the external world. Concepts of pure events can become modified or recast when they are brought into relation with new concepts or a new problematic field, or when a new component is added to a concept. When Kant "criticized" Descartes, he did so in the name of a problematic field what could not be occupied or completed by the Cartesian cogito. Kant argued that if the "I think" is a determination that implies an undetermined existence ("I am"), we still do not know how this undetermined comes to be determinable and hence in what form it appears as determined. Kant in this way introduces a new component into the cogito: it is only in *time* that my undetermined existence is determinable. In this way, he inserted the concept of the cogito into a new problematic field, resulting in its transformation into the concept of the transcendental subject. Concepts thus possess an internal history, a potential for transmutation into other concepts, which constitutes the history of philosophy. "The history of philosophy means that we evaluate not only the historical novelty of the concepts created by the philosopher, but also the power of their becoming when they pass into one another."[19]

These two aspects of concepts – their endo- and exo-consistency – are, however, purely formal characterizations, and the import of Deleuze's notion that concepts express pure events can perhaps be better illustrated by means of some specific examples. Here again, Paul Patton has provided a useful application of Deleuze's analytic of concepts to the familiar political notion of the *social contract*. Stated summarily, a Deleuzian analysis of the concept would analyze the following aspects: its intensive *components*, (e.g., the state of nature, the restless desire for power; the artificial person that results from the contract); its internal *consistency* (the zones of neighborhood that link these components together internally, e.g., it is the untenability

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[18] Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* p. 21. For the notion of *survol absolu*, see Raymond Ruyer, *Néo-finalisme* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1952), chapters 9-11, pp. 95-131.

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

of the state of nature that induces me to establish the social contract, etc.); its *plane of immanence* or exo-consistency (the way the concept of the social contract links up externally with related concepts such as sovereignty, legitimation, justice, etc.; the "exo-consistency" of concepts).[20] The *critique* of a concept can take place at any of these levels: one can add, subtract, or transform the components, or alter the relations between them. For instance, in Locke's version of the social contract, subjects are no longer determined by the desire for power, as in Hobbes, but rather by their ownership of property – a change in components – which in turn implies obligations toward oneself and others – a change in consistency. This is a good example of the transformative process through which concepts can be rejuvenated and renewed throughout history. Finally, Patton emphasizes the fact that, in all these aspects, concepts always derive their necessity from historically determined *problematics*: whereas Hobbes problematic was the constitution and legitimation of civil authority, for instance, John Rawls' problematic in *A Theory of Justice* concerns the principles of a just society, in the context of which Rawls himself would take up and transform the concept of the social contract yet again.[21]

One finds an early example of such a conceptual analysis in Deleuze's own work – namely his analysis of the clinical concept of "sado-masochism." Long before the publication of the book of the same name, Deleuze had often spoken of a project in which he would link the "critical" and the "clinical." "The critical (in the literary sense) and the clinical (in the medical sense)," he predicted, "may be destined to enter into a new relationship of mutual learning."[22] In psychiatry, the names of Sade and Masoch had been used to designate two "perversions," and Deleuze suggests that the principles behind this labeling process deserve close analysis. While some diseases are named after typical patients, such as Lou Gehrig's disease, more often they are designated by the name of the doctor who first constructed a clinical concept of the illness: Parkinson's disease, Roger's disease, Alzheimer's disease, Kreutzfeld-Jacob's disease. The doctor does not invent the disease; rather, he or she forms a clinical picture of a new disorder or illness by dissociating symptoms, that were previously grouped together and juxtaposing them with others that were previously dissociated. The doctor, in short, constructs a *concept*. In the language of Deleuze's analytic, the *components* of concept of the disease are the symptoms, the signs of the illness; and the concept becomes the name of a "syndrome," which marks the meeting-place of these symptoms (their point of "absolute survey"). In medicine, an accurate etiology depends first of all on rigorous symptomatology, since it is on the basis of a symptomtological analysis that the concept of the disease is established, and the inseparability of its components (symptoms) is recognized. The thesis of Deleuze's study, however, is that the oft-utilized notion of sado-masochism is a crude concept that fails to satisfy the demands of a rigorous symptomatology. The belief in a sado-masochistic entity, Deleuze suggests,

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[20] We have not discussed the crucial Deleuzian notion of *conceptual personae*, which in the context of political philosophy might include the Leviathan, the Noble Savage, the Prince, and so on.
[21] Patton, *Deleuze and the Political*, pp. 13, 21.
[22] Gilles Deleuze: *Masochism. Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1989), p. 14.

was grounded in pre-Freudian thinking that relied on hasty symptomatological assimilations and faulty etiological interpretations – which psychoanalysis, rather than questioning, simply helped to make more convincing. Basing his analyses instead on a close reading of the texts of Sade and Masoch, Deleuze offers a sharp conceptual critique of the concept of sado-masochism, showing that it is a false concept that does not meet the criteria of his own conceptual analytic. *Coldness and Cruelty* is the book in which Deleuze engages most directly in a sustained conceptual analysis, and as such it provides a useful case study of the theory of the concept provided in *What is Philosophy?*. Each of its eleven chapters examines a specific component of sado-masochistic concept (the nature of the ideal, their use of language, the role of descriptions, their relationship to the law, etc.), and shows that, in each case, the concept of sado-masochism illegitimately unites components (symptoms) that are in fact specific to "sadism" and "masochism" – each of which are irreducible concepts that define separate universes, between which there is *no* communication. The most general presumed component of sado-masochism, for example, is the transformative or dialectical assumption that the sadistic partner enjoys inflicting pain while the masochist enjoys suffering it (hence the popular joke in which the masochist says "Hurt me," and the sadist replies, "No"). But a differential reading shows that a genuine sadist could no more tolerate a masochistic victim than a masochist could tolerate a sadistic torturer: the sadistic libertine does not allow his victims to experience pleasure (the sadistic victim can never be a masochist), and the masochist requires a mistress willing to be molded and educated in accordance with his contractual project (the masochistic torturer can never be sadistic).[23] There is no possible "zone of neighborhood" that could justify the inclusion of both in a single concept.

This clinical example, taken from Deleuzes own work, points to the fecundity of the notion that concepts express pure events. In effect, Deleuze's analytic of concepts presents several aspects under which one can comprehend the relation between concepts and events. One can examine the way in which a concept is created by being extracted from a state of affairs through the process of "counter-actualization." Or one can examine the "becoming" of the concept as such, both internally, in relation to its components (the change of a component alters the concept, and constitutes a critique of the concept), and externally, in relation to the problematic field that gave rise to it (the concept of the social contract changes when it moves from the problem of legitimation in Hobbes to the problem of justice in Rawls). Or, finally, one can examine the way in which the concept, as a pure event, can nonetheless be actualized – or made to intervene – in a state of affairs. It is this latter aspect that Deleuze and Guattari have thematized, in part, with their notion of "incorporeal transformations." Such incorporeal transformations do not "refer" to bodies or states of things, nor do they "represent" them. Drawing partially on Austin's theory of the performative, Deleuze and Guattari show that, in expressing an incorporeal event and attributing it to bodies, one is neither representing nor refering, but "intervening" in bodies in a particular way.[24] For instance, in a juridical act of sentencing, what takes place before

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[23] See Deleuze: *Masochism. Coldness and Cruelty*, pp. 40-41.
[24] See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 86-87.

the sentencing (the crime) and what takes place afterward (the punishment) are actions and passions affecting bodies (the body of the property, the victim, the accused, the prison, and so on); but the transformation of the accused person into a convict is a pure instantaneous act or incorporeal attribute that is the "expressed" of the judge's sentence. In a hijacking, the brandishing of a revolver or the execution of hostages are actions between bodies; but the transformation of passengers into hostages, and of the plane-body into a prison-body, is an incorporeal transformation (a "media event," which testifies to the power of journalists to "create" an event by attributing a sense to it). Several recent studies have shown how concepts in the human sciences, expressed as pure events, can intervene in bodies in a similar way. Ian Hacking has not only analyzed the "counter-actualization" process by which concepts such as "child abuse" and "split personality" invented, but has also shown how such concepts, once created, had the effect of "making up people" (who *became* split personalities), thereby *creating* phenomena through an act of what he calls "dynamic nominalism."[25] Arnold Davidson, under a Foucauldian inspiration, has similarly analyzed the emergence of the psychiatric concept of "sexuality" in the nineteenth century, and the related concepts of perversion (as deviant forms of "sexuality") that is produced.[26] And David Halperin has explored the means by which the concept of "homosexuality" was created in 1892 by Chaddock, and that the effect it produced, through its intervention in bodies and their corresponding states of affairs, was to make possible a new "mode of existence" (the gay person).[27] In effect, Deleuze suggests that philosophical concepts can have the same effect: "To read philosophy is to do two things at the same time: to be very attentive to the linking of concepts, this is the philosophical reading, but there is no philosophical reading that isn't doubled in a nonphilosophical reading. And the nonphilosophical reading, without which the philosophical reading remains dead, implies all sorts of sensible intuitions that you must give birth to within yourself, but extremely rudimentary sensible intuitions, and for that reason, extremely living [*vivante*]."[28] In this sense, this distinction between pure events and states of affairs is

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[25] Ian Hacking, "Making Up People", in: *Reconstructing Individualism: Autonomy, Individuality, and the Self in Western Thought*, ed. Thomas C. Heller, Morton Sosna, and David E. Wellbery, with Arnold I. Davidson, Ann Swidler, And Ian Watt (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), pp. 222-236; "The Invention of Split Personalities," in *Human Nature and Natural Knowledge*, ed. Alan Donagan, Anthony N. Perovich, Jr., and Michael V. Wedlin (Dordrecht, 1986), pp. 63-85; "Biopower and the Avalanche of Printed Numbers," in *Humanities in Society* 5 (1982), pp. 279-295. Hacking has utilized this notion of "intervening" in a similar fashion in *Representing and Intervening* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

[26] Arnold I. Davidson, "Closing Up the Corpses: Diseases of Sexuality and the Emergence of the Psychiatric Style of Reasoning," in *Meaning and Method: Essays in Honor of Hilary Putnam*, ed. George Boolos (Cambridge: CUP, 1990), pp. 295-325; "Sex and the Emergence of Sexuality," in *Critical Inquiry* 14, pp. 16-48; "How to Do the History of Psychoanalysis: A Reading of Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*," in *The Trial(s) of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Françoise Meltzer (Chicago UP, 1988), pp. 39-64.

[27] David M. Halperin, "One Hundred Years of Homosexuality," in *One Hundred Years of Homosexuality and Other Essays on Greek Love* (New York: Routledge, 1990), pp. 15-53.

[28] Gilles Deleuze, seminar of 16 December 1986, on-line at WebDeleuze.

hardly an exclusive one: concepts, even though they express pure events, are nonetheless veritable sketches of sensible intuitions.