

Deleuze, Diversity, and Chance: A Response to McCumber and Ramey

HENRY SOMERS-HALL

ABSTRACT: The aim of this paper is to respond to the discussions by John McCumber and Joshua Ramey of my monograph, *Hegel, Deleuze, and the Critique of Representation*. In the first part of this paper, I analyse McCumber's claim that Deleuze's concept of difference is already present within Hegel's thought in the form of diversity. I make the claim that Deleuze formulates his concept of difference as the transcendental ground for Hegelian diversity, arguing that as such it differs in kind from it. I show how Deleuze's concept of difference leads him to develop an alternative solution to the one and the many to that of Hegel, and trace some of the systematic implications of this for both philosophers. In the second part of the paper, I engage with Ramey's analysis of chance within Deleuze's philosophy, arguing that Ramey wrongly looks for a model of chance in Deleuze in the category of the virtual, rather than in a transition between virtual and actual. I then show how a proper understanding of chance in Deleuze's thought allows us to develop a non-teleological account of Deleuze's ethics.

KEY WORDS: Deleuze, Hegel, difference, diversity, chance

First, I would like to thank John McCumber and Joshua Ramey for taking the time to read through my book, and to come up with such insightful comments throughout. In writing the book, I tried to be as balanced as possible, particularly in my reading of Hegel. I'm very pleased that both with John on the nature of difference, and Joshua on the question of implications, we are beginning from a recognition that both Deleuze and Hegel are worthy of genuinely philosophical discussion, even if one or both of them may lose out on the slaughter-bench of the history of philosophy.

In response to their papers, I want to go through John and Joshua's comments in the following order. First, I want to address John McCumber's diagnosis that it is the interpretation of the dialectic that is the problem with Deleuze's critique of

Hegel. Second, I want to look at the claim that difference is diversity. I will then turn to the question of multiplicity in Deleuze before concluding with some comments on chance, evolution, and ethics, to address Joshua Ramey's comments.

DIFFERENCES IN INTERPRETATION OF THE DIALECTIC

To begin, then, John McCumber, in his analysis of my critique of Hegel, holds that a different understanding of the dialectic could allow Hegel to sidestep the difficulties I present. On his reading of the dialectic, diversity does not immanently develop into contradiction, leaving the category free to operate as a Hegelian equivalent of Deleuze's concept of difference. I do not think, however, that our disagreement about the relationship between diversity and Deleuze's concept of difference can be put down to a difference in how we view the operation of dialectics. As McCumber notes, I consider the dialectic as a process of immanent development of categories, where the inherent limitations of a dialectical category lead to the emergence of new categories. On my reading, when we look at the determinations of reflection, we have a process whereby difference immanently develops into contradiction. As Hegel puts it, "difference as such is already *implicitly* contradiction; for it is the *unity* of sides which are, only in so far as they are *not one*—and it is the *separation* of sides which are, only as separated *in the same relation*."¹ Similarly, when Hegel talks about the concept of diversity, he notes that the indifference between beings in diversity is ultimately unupportable:

The usual tenderness for things, whose only care is that they do not contradict themselves, forgets here as elsewhere that in this way the contradiction is not resolved but merely shifted elsewhere, into subjective or external reflection generally.²

Ultimately, I do not think that differences in our reading of the dialectic are pertinent here, however. While Deleuze (and I) might argue that diversity immanently develops into contradiction for Hegel, this does not mean that diversity isn't a category that can be used to describe the world. It simply means that for Hegel, understanding the world in terms of diversity gives us a partial account of the nature of the world. In the *Philosophy of Nature*, the categories of physical magnitude are shown to be inadequate, and are eventually sublated into the more adequate categories of animal life. This doesn't prevent us from using the categories of physical magnitude to claim, for instance, that a giraffe is 18 feet tall. This is a partial description of the animal. If we took the statement, 'a giraffe is 18 feet tall' to be an adequate definition of what a giraffe is, however, we would fall into error. Similarly, Deleuze would have to accept that if his concept of difference *were* Hegelian diversity, then Hegel *would* have an affirmative concept of difference. More than this, Hegel would have shown, provided the dialectic was rigorous, that affirmative difference was just a moment within a broader system of

determinations. In fact, however, Hegel's concept of diversity is not what Deleuze means by difference.

THE QUESTION OF DIVERSITY

Deleuze explicitly discusses diversity at several points in *Difference and Repetition*, and makes it clear that the concept of difference he is investigating is not diversity (in making this claim, I disagree with Levi Bryant's reading of Deleuze, as cited by John McCumber³). I want to return briefly to John's characterisation of diversity (with which I agree), before looking at why diversity is not difference for Deleuze. Here is his summary of diversity:

A multiplicity of beings which, simply because they are multiple, differ from one another (SL 422, 428), but which are "indifferent to one another and to their determinateness" (SL 418–19). We can thus say that in diversity, beings affirm themselves as different from others, but not as opposed to them: diversity is the "indifference of difference" (SL 419). Though Hegel does not say so, it seems clear that such diversity could be continuous; for if each unit is "indifferent" to its distinction from others, there is nothing to keep that distinction from being infinitesimal. This is getting very close, then, to the determinacy without contrast that Somers-Hall assigns to Deleuzian difference (203).⁴

Hegel helpfully provides a more concrete account in the remarks following diversity, where he describes the principle of diversity as "All things are different," or "No two things are alike,"⁵ and takes it as a central premise of Leibniz's (describing an anecdote where he asked court ladies to compare leaves to see that no two were similar).

In *Hegel, Deleuze and the Critique of Representation*, I set out a number of aims of Deleuze's project, drawing on his readings of Aristotle, Kant, Bergson and others. One of the key aims of *Difference and Repetition* is to provide an account of the origin of experience. To do so is to move from a transcendental account of conditioning to one of genesis. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant asserts that the same faculty (the understanding) conditions experience as makes claims about it, thus ensuring that the world will be commensurate with the structure of judgement. In essence, Deleuze's criticism of Kant on this point is that Kant *presupposes* the structure of judgement on the transcendental level to explain it on the empirical. Judgment involves the attribution of a predicate to a subject, and Deleuze follows Kant in claiming that such an attribution relies on the notion of a pure subject and a transcendental object. This requires, prior to the attribution of properties themselves, a theory about what is to count as a substance or an individual. That is, prior to the specification of the properties of a subject, judgment already requires a subject to be individuated. Thus the theory of judgement can only provide a model for the conditioning, rather than the constitution of

subjects. A new account of determination is therefore required that doesn't rely on the kind of predication we find in judgement (or even, in a highly augmented form, in Hegel's philosophy) that is capable of explaining the genesis of a world of beings without presupposing the kind of characteristics individuating beings have.

Traditionally, the attempt to find the ground of the world of experience has either involved claiming that the structure of the world prefigures it or that the ground of the world is indeterminate. The first is in essence what Kant claims when he asserts that the same faculty conditions experience as makes claims about it. The other alternative would be something like the undifferentiated abyss that Hölderlin talks about in his essay on judgement and being.⁶ Here, the ground of the world differs from the subject-property structures we find in experience, but they do so by lacking any determinations whatsoever, and hence it becomes difficult to explain *why* this ground would express itself as the world of judgement. What Deleuze is doing in *Difference and Repetition* is investigating the possibility of subject-property structures in general, rather than just showing how empirical structures are conditioned by the transcendental field. What Deleuze suggests instead of the above approaches is a model of determination which is not "of the form, but neither is it that of the formless: it is rather that of the pure unformed."⁷ Form and formlessness cover the two traditional options provided by philosophy for understanding grounds: the reiteration of structure at a transcendental level, or the undifferentiated abyss. The third option represents the Deleuzian alternative: that which is unformed in itself, but which is capable of explaining the genesis of form. So how does this account of the aims of *DR* relate to the question of diversity? Well, Deleuze sees the category of diversity—a field of distinct beings indifferently related to one another—as at most that which needs to be explained, rather than the transcendental field itself. The kind of difference that Deleuze is talking about, therefore, is not a difference *between* beings, but rather a principle of determination that explains the constitution of beings themselves. In other words, Deleuze's difference is the transcendental that explains empirical diversity (in fact, Deleuze takes diversity to be a simplification, but for my purposes here, we can leave that to one side). Referring directly to Hegel's discussion, he writes:

So long as we take difference to be conceptual difference, intrinsically conceptual, and repetition to be an extrinsic difference between objects represented by the same concept, it appears that the problem of their relation may be resolved by the facts. Are there repetitions—yes or no? Or is every difference indeed intrinsic and conceptual in the last instance? Hegel ridiculed Leibniz for having invited the court ladies to undertake experimental metaphysics while walking in the gardens, to see whether two leaves of a tree could not have the same concept. Replace the court ladies by forensic scientists: no two grains of dust are absolutely identical, no two hands have the same distinctive

points, no two typewriters have the same strike, no two revolvers score their bullets in the same manner. . . . Why, however, do we feel that the problem is not properly defined so long as we look for the criterion of a *principium individuationis* in the facts?⁸

This claim that difference is the transcendental principle that generates diversity is even clearer when Deleuze writes that:

Even if difference tends to be distributed throughout diversity in such a manner as to disappear, and to render uniform the diversity it creates, it must first be sensed as that which gives diversity to be sensed. Moreover, it must be thought as that which creates diversity.⁹

Finally, here is a very explicit statement of the difference between difference and diversity:

Difference is not diversity. Diversity is given, but difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse.¹⁰

So what is difference for Deleuze if it isn't the diverse? I want to talk a little bit about this in terms of the one and the many and the question of determination, but here, I can only present a brief account of the differences between Deleuze and Hegel.

ONE AND THE MANY

The problem of the one and the many is central to both Hegel and Deleuze, and to the inverted world section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* that John McCumber highlighted. The basic problem that Hegel is addressing in the section is how one can think the unity of the one and the many. In order to gain an understanding of this dialectic, we need to backtrack somewhat to the dialectic of perception, where consciousness conceives of its object as a bundle of properties. If these properties are to be determinate, they must be seen as separate from one another (we must be able to say that the object is *x* and not *y*), but this leads to the difficulty that the object dissolves into a simple plurality of properties. The difficulty for perception is therefore how to reconcile the contrary traits of unity and multiplicity. Hegel essentially sees this need for reconciliation as the reason why we posit the transcendental. First of all as force, and then as law, the two moments of unity and multiplicity are divided between the empirical and the transcendental realms, thus allowing us to say that the object is *transcendentally* unified but empirically diverse, allowing the contrary aspects of the object to be attributed to two different aspects of the object. Ultimately, however, as the dialectic unfolds, Hegel argues that we can only resolve the difficulties this conception leads to through a recognition that the world has the structure of contradiction, by reincorporating the transcendental into the empirical. As he says, "The two distinguished moments both subsist; they are implicit and are opposites in themselves, i.e. each is

the opposite of itself; each has its other within it and they are only one unity.”¹¹ This moment of unification occurs at the end of Hegel’s discussion of the inverted world, where the world and its opposite are reunited.

The Hegelian approach to the problem of the one and the many is therefore to show that the indifference of the elements that make up the diverse is unsustainable. Ultimately, the contrary categories of the one and the many are reconciled through seeing the world in terms of the structure of contradiction, the necessary unity of opposite determinations. In making this move, Hegel gives an account of how it is possible to think totality (essentially by accepting Aristotle’s claim that a unified conception of being is contradictory by developing a more positive understanding of contradiction), but he does not provide a proper account of the individuation of bodies themselves. Determination which operates according to negation (the logic of ‘this is not that’) presupposes the existence of beings.

If we are to understand the origin of beings themselves, then our transcendental field cannot operate according to the model of determination we find in Hegel’s dialectic, since for Deleuze, that presupposes what he wants to explain. In the following couple of paragraphs, I want to explore Deleuze’s own account of determination, which he takes the differential calculus as a model for, before turning to Deleuze’s account of multiplicity to see how he resolves the problem of the one and the many. Beginning with the calculus, Deleuze claims that “just as we oppose difference in itself to negativity, so we oppose dx to not-A, the symbol of difference to that of contradiction.”¹² The calculus is essentially a way of determining the relationships between quantities. Taking the example of working out the relationship between time and distance travelled of an object (i.e., velocity), then provided the object is travelling at a constant velocity, we can just take an arbitrary distance, and divide it by the time taken to travel that distance. This gives us a velocity in the form, for instance, metres per second (m/s). If we are dealing with an object moving at a velocity which is not constant, then this procedure cannot be used, as the previous method relied on the velocity being the same at every point (in that case, the average velocity was always equal to the velocity at every instant). We could attempt to modify the previous procedure by determining the velocity at an instant of the object’s path, rather than over a distance, but such an approach is problematic because velocity is the time taken to traverse a distance, and in an instant, the object doesn’t cover any distance. The alternative, to draw a line through two points of the curve, is equally flawed, as although it gives us an accurate line, we are dealing with a curve, and so the tangent we are now drawing will not represent the velocity at one particular moment, but the average between the two points. Leibniz’s solution to this difficulty was to draw a line on a graph between the point whose velocity we wish to measure, and another arbitrary point on the curve, and then to imagine the distance between these two points decreasing to zero. As we now have a straight line between these two points, we

can treat the case in the same manner as the case of constant velocity described above, measuring the change in values of both axes along a length of the line. Thus mathematically, we end up with two lines, one representing the change over the section in terms of distance, and one in terms of time, neither of which on its own will have any determinate value, as the lines are infinitely short, but when divided, one by the other, will give a vector at the particular point. Since the axes of the graph can represent more than simply time and distance, these values are referred to more generally as dy and dx , depending on whether they relate to the x or y axis.

One of Deleuze's main aims in giving his exposition of the calculus is to provide a metaphysics which will "take dx seriously."¹³ As I said earlier, Deleuze aims to develop an account of determination that doesn't rely on the logic of 'x is not y,' and hence does not operate in relation to already individuated beings. Following on from the example above, as the lines dy and dx are infinitesimally long, then strictly speaking, they fall outside of the categories of quantity that we use to determine beings—they have no magnitude. In this sense, the differential, dx , as a symbol of difference, is "completely undetermined,"¹⁴ and their values of 0 in respect to y and x therefore represent the annihilation of the quantitative within them in favour of the sub-representational. Whereas dy and dx are completely undetermined in relation to x and y , they are completely determinable in relation to one another. That is, when we bring together the two elements into a ratio, we do get a determinate value that can be represented: the velocity of the object at the point we are considering. In fact, the differential calculus does not simply give us the velocity of a point. By differentiating the formula for a curve, we get a formula that we can use to determine the gradient at any point along the curve. Deleuze's model of determination takes up this feature of the calculus, and sees genesis as operating in the reverse direction (a mathematical procedure known as integration). That is, the transcendental field is a field of pre-individual elements to which the categories of representation such as quantity and quality do not apply, but by bringing these into reciprocal relations with one another, determinations that apply to beings, and beings themselves, emerge. It should already be clear that differentials are not the indifferent elements of diversity. I want to briefly outline how this difference in the nature of elements leads to a different way of thinking about how these elements are organised, and hence an alternative to Hegel's solution to the one and the many.

When we are dealing with a spatial multiplicity (the kind of organisation we find with the diverse), we think of a multiplicity as a structure possessing many elements. In this sense, we can call it an adjectival notion of multiplicity. The 'many' in this case is a way of describing individuals that can be in a sense indifferent to being given the classification, 'many.' They are each determinate before they form a group. So, we might say, 'there are many philosophers in this

room.' In doing so, we don't really add anything to the philosophers themselves, but really impose on them an extrinsic form of organisation (we bring them under a concept). Here, then, we have Hegel's notion of diversity. Deleuze argues that a virtual multiplicity (a 'differential' multiplicity) is best understood as a substantive, rather than being adjectival: "Multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organisation belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system."¹⁵ If the many is understood in terms of a spatial multiplicity, 'the many,' as an adjectival excess of the elements themselves, becomes something like the medium within which the elements reside or the relations that hold between indifferent elements. It is that which allows the many indifferent elements to be brought together, through what is an extrinsic description. Understanding multiplicity in substantive terms means that we no longer talk in terms of the multiple x , but of a multiplicity itself.

In order to think this way, Deleuze does not mean we should take up the many elements into the one ("We can say 'the one is multiple, the multiple one' forever: we speak like Plato's young men who did not even spare the farmyard"¹⁶). Hegel's solution to the problem of the one and the many is to show how both moments dialectically imply one another. Deleuze's response to the problem of the one and the many is instead to recognize that these two concepts are necessarily intertwined, and therefore to reject both simultaneously. He therefore gives up the notion of the units of the multiplicity being discrete and closed. He also rejects the notion of an inherent moment of unity over and above the elements themselves. In order to formulate an account of determination that does not rely on elements in an indifferent medium, Deleuze takes up some ideas from differential geometry. This is the geometry of curved surfaces, rather than the homogeneous space of traditional geometry. Here the space itself is one in which the very fabric of its dimensions is no longer uniform but contains deformations and perturbations. Explicating and justifying this account of determination and multiplicities takes up the majority of the third, fourth, and sixth chapters of *Hegel, Deleuze and the Critique of Representation*, and so I have to apologise for the compressed account I have just given. Nonetheless, Deleuze believes that a transcendental logic developed around the differential and the virtual multiplicity allows us to understand the genesis of the world of subjects and properties without presupposing either structure: the virtual multiplicity is pre-individual, and is constituted from elements incommensurate with actuality, and hence cannot be equated with Hegelian diversity. In fact, my claim is that the virtual cannot be accommodated within Hegel's logic more generally. As such, Deleuze escapes the traditional trap of being *aufgehoben* into the system of absolute spirit. As the virtual does not contain any determinations we find in formed beings, it provides the basis for an account of the genesis of form itself.

To finish my account of multiplicities, I want to introduce Bergson's metaphor of the determination of colour (taken up by Deleuze) which, while still too close to the world of beings, nonetheless gives us some sense for how a virtual multiplicity operates. Bergson notes that we can develop a concept of colour on the one hand by extracting from each different colour only what is shared by all colours. This provides us with a negative, abstract account of colour that operates by the logic of exclusion. Bergson's alternative is to take the "thousand and one different shades of blue, violet, green, yellow and red, and, by having them pass through a convergent lens, bring them to a single point."¹⁷ This generates a "white light in which [each shade] participates, the common illumination from which it draws its colouring."¹⁸ What is central to this approach to the universal is that the different shades are unified in the white light. As Deleuze puts it, "the different colours are no longer objects *under* a concept, but nuances and degrees of the concept itself."¹⁹ Here, then, the differential elements interpenetrate within the light itself. They are, loosely, modifications of a heterogeneous colour space, rather than distinct elements within a homogeneous space. If the transcendental field is understood in these terms, there are no longer distinguishable diverse elements, nor is there a unity other than the light itself, which simply is the various intensities of the colours that it defines.

For Deleuze, therefore, the Hegelian attempt to collapse the transcendental into the empirical ultimately fails because it operates according to concepts such as the one and the many, and the singular and the universal—concepts which already presuppose an individuated realm. In attempting to show how beings themselves develop, Deleuze aims to show that there is a deeper level of determination than that governed by the interaction of beings, whether the elements of the diverse or the actors of history. In developing a logic to account for the emergence of beings themselves, Deleuze thus provides an analysis prior to the interactions of beings in history, or in the manifold of the diverse. Hegel's dialectic therefore does not explain the genesis of the world, but merely its complication. It is in this respect that Deleuze calls the *Phenomenology* an epiphenomenology.²⁰ The dialectic of history becomes the surface effect of a deeper dialectic, and its principles of determination transcendental illusions generated from cutting beings off from their principles of individuation. It is in this respect that Deleuze's difference is not diversity, but that by which the diversity of the world around us is given.

CHANCE AND ORGANIC FORM

For the remainder of this response, I want to turn to Joshua Ramey's comments on my book. Ramey's main question concerned whether the role of chance in Deleuze's philosophy commits him to some kind of meta-teleology, or normative account of chance. Ramey takes it that my own reading of Deleuze in *Hegel, Deleuze*

and the Critique of Representation is that there is no ethical aspect to Deleuze's prioritisation of the virtual in *Difference and Repetition*. The focus of *Hegel, Deleuze and the Critique of Representation* is on how Hegel and Deleuze respond to Kant's transcendental philosophy, in order to provide a common problematic on which to stage an engagement between Deleuze and Hegel. Deleuze often, with a degree of irony, uses Hegelian terms such as 'concrete universal,' 'Idea,' and even 'spirit,' but these are often used in ways that differ radically from Hegel's own usage. In showing how Hegel and Deleuze logically develop their positions as differing responses to the problem of representation, I develop a framework within which we can begin to assess the adequacy of their conceptions of the world. As such, while Ramey calls the book's greatest virtue its final two chapters, the most important and difficult sections of the book to write are much earlier, and particularly in the first and second chapters, where I set out the basis for these later confrontations. One of Kant's most profound philosophical developments was to conceive of philosophy as a form of (transcendental) logic rather than metaphysics. In this sense, *Hegel, Deleuze and the Critique of Representation* is very much an enquiry into the nature and limits of thinking. In *Bergsonism*, Deleuze calls for a return to Bergson, and credits Bergson with having developed a method of thought that divides up the world according to its natural articulations.²¹ In setting this up as the cornerstone of a return to Bergson, Deleuze explicitly refers to a quotation from Plato cited by Bergson himself: that we must "cut up each kind according to its species along its natural joints, and to try not to splinter any part, as a bad butcher might do."²² Philosophy is therefore engaged in the task of attempting to think the world appropriately. In *Hegel, Deleuze and the Critique of Representation*, I focused on the claim that representation presented a way of thinking the world that did not cut up the world according to its natural articulations, and I bracketed questions about the ethical implications of the various philosophical positions under discussion. Nonetheless, just as Plato's metaphysics brings with it a model of how one should live, exemplified by Socrates, Deleuze's overturning of Platonism²³ itself suggests an ethical attitude to the world. In order to clarify this ethical project, I want to turn to Deleuze's account of chance, and relatedly, his account of evolution, in order to explicate both this account of chance itself, and also show how this relates to the question of ethics.

Joshua Ramey's comments provide a helpful summary of some of the key themes of the final chapter of *Hegel, Deleuze and the Critique of Representation*, and in particular, how these themes relate to the question of chance. In Ramey's comments, he presents a number of terms as synonyms (chance, contingency, randomness, possibility), and for a full reply to Ramey, these would need to be separated out from one another. In the space I have here, I just want to show that the questions of chance and possibility are intimately connected with the ethical, but also with the questions I addressed in the first part of this response, about the

structure of beings and the genesis of form. As Joshua notes, my argument in the final chapter is that Hegel's development of an augmented Aristotelianism in his metaphysics leads to an account of the organism that precludes incorporating evolutionary theory.²⁴ The basic claim is that Hegel understands the parts of an organism to be distinguished, and determined, by their function. This means that if two parts perform different functions, then they are different kinds of parts. Evolutionary theory relies on the possibility of the same part performing different functions in different species, and so it rules out the kind of teleological account put forward by Aristotle and Hegel (and also by Hegel's major source on the nature of the organism in the *Philosophy of Nature*, Georges Cuvier, who himself argued strenuously against the possibility of the transformation of species).

One of the key conceptual developments that made the theory of evolution possible was Geoffroy St. Hilaire's positing of homologies between different parts of organisms. Rather than seeing an organism as defined by the form or function of parts, Geoffroy, a contemporary of Cuvier, saw it as defined by the multiplicity of relations between parts. By focusing on relations rather than functions, Geoffroy was able to provide an account that explains one of the key results of evolutionary theory—that the *same* structure can change its function in different organisms (fins becoming arms, for instance). Geoffroy didn't relate organisms to one another directly to generate his account of homologies, but rather argued that all organisms were instantiations of the same transcendental structure of an ideal organism (an approach he called 'transcendental anatomy'). What Geoffroy aimed at, according to Deleuze, with his emphasis on connections is a field of differential elements (the ideal correlates of the bones) forming specific types of relations (the connections which are central to Geoffroy's account). Deleuze emphasises that homologies do not exist directly between actual terms, "but are understood as the actualisation of an essence, in accordance with reasons and at speeds determined by the environment, with accelerations and interruptions."²⁵ That is, we discover a homology between two creatures by recognising that the actual parts of both organisms are actualisations of the same multiplicity, the unity of composition, rather than by an analogical correlation of actual terms, as in comparative anatomy. Here, then, we have an account of the kind of genesis that I discussed in relation to John McCumber's comments. We have a transcendental field that is determined, yet differs from the kinds of determinations that it gives rise to. How does this relate to the question of chance?

Ramey's claim is that there are two senses of chance in Deleuze's work—one that relates to actuality, which is the traditional concept of possibility, and one that relates to the virtual, which Ramey calls compossibility (though Deleuze would perhaps be happier with the term impossibility²⁶). In fact, I think this misrepresents Deleuze's position on chance. Rather than seeing chance as relating to either the virtual or the actual, Deleuze is concerned with what gives rise

to this particular event or individual. Deleuze's claim is not that chance resides in either of these domains, but rather than we can understand the genesis of the present form or situation in the movement *between* the virtual and actual. Understanding possibility purely in terms of the actual is the result of a transcendental illusion that everything can be understood in terms of representation. In terms of evolutionary theory, the question would be whether the genesis of the form of the organism is best understood in terms of the chance accumulation of actual properties, as we might find in a mechanistic view of Darwinism (here we have chance as operating from the actual to the actual), or as the actualisation of something like Geoffroy's unity of composition into a particular organism (here chance is the movement from the virtual to the actual, in that the same unity of composition could be actualised in a number of different structures). Chance is therefore intimately connected to the question of genesis for Deleuze. To see why the question is also ethical in nature, I want to briefly explore Deleuze's account of the dice throw before talking a little about a Spinozist reading of the relationship of teleology and chance.

CHANCE AND ETHICS

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze presents two ways of understanding the chance of a dice throw. The first involves understanding it in terms of actual states of affairs. Understanding the relation in terms of possibilities, or rather probabilities, relies on "a great number of throws"²⁷ for the player to achieve the correct result. This method of understanding the relation of potentiality to actuality is for Deleuze illegitimate, as it understands the possible and actual in the same terms. What are affirmed are possibilities as "fragments of chance."²⁸ In essence, we understand possibility in terms of a number of 'cases,' one of which will be realised. We should be able to see already that this account of the dice throw bears a strong resemblance to the traditional metaphysical accounts of genesis that Deleuze criticises, as here, the form of the result is presupposed in the possible. Deleuze asks, "what difference can there be between the existent and the non-existent if the non-existent is already possible, already included in the concept and having all the characteristics that the concept confers upon it as a possibility? Existence is *the same as* but outside the concept."²⁹ The point here is that the possible cannot be used to explain the genesis of the structures of the world, since a possible hundred Thalers only differ from a real hundred Thalers in terms of existence. Deleuze's criticism of possibility here is that we cannot understand the process of the emergence of one possibility on this account. If the possible differs from the real only in terms of existence, then the actualisation of a possibility must be understood as happening all at once, rather than from emerging within time. To follow Deleuze in taking up a theme from Bergson,

possibility represents more, rather than less, than reality. It is the real with the added concept of non-existence, and hence lacks the difference in kind in the way it is determined that his account of difference possesses. Deleuze instead claims that he wishes to affirm the whole of chance. Deleuze's claim here is that as in the case of white light introduced above, rather than understanding chance in terms of the selection of actual possibilities, we need to see it as the actualisation of a virtual multiplicity. Affirming the whole of chance does not mean affirming all, or each possible outcome in turn, but rather affirming the virtual multiplicity that gives rise to each particular actual situation. In effect, Deleuze is claiming that much as Geoffroy Saint Hilaire didn't compare organisms directly to one another to determine that they are similar, but showed that they both are actualisations of the same unity of composition, we should see any potential throw of the dice as an actualisation of the same transcendental field. On the one hand, "the dice which are thrown once are the affirmation of *chance*,"³⁰ and on the other, "the combination which they form on falling is the affirmation of *necessity*."³¹ The word 'chance' here is used to describe the fact that the virtual multiplicity (from which the dice are thrown) captures the total possibilities of a system (just as the white light contained all colours), whereas only one trajectory is *actualised*. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze makes clear that he thinks that there is an ethical aspect to how we conceive of chance, as well as a transcendental illusion that leads us to often think of it purely in terms of the actual. The logic of the actual, or the diverse, has its "root in reason,"³² which is the terrain of "the spirit of revenge, the spider."³³ Thinking chance purely in terms of actuality is therefore tied by Deleuze to a form of Nietzschean *ressentiment*.

In addressing possibility, therefore, Deleuze is interested in whether the possible provides an account of genesis. *Contra* Ramey, therefore his question is not one of reconciling two different accounts of chance—virtual chance and actual chance—but rather seeing whether chance should be understood purely in terms of the actual (as possibility), or should instead be seen as the movement between the virtual to the actual (as actualisation). The two forms of chance that Deleuze talks about relate essentially to whether we see the world in terms of individuated bodies, or in terms of the pre-individual field of difference responsible for generating the world we find around us. Ultimately, I think that Deleuze would understand an attempt to read this 'ethics' in normative terms as equivalent to Adam's misunderstanding of God's objective statement about the apple as an ethical prohibition:

'Thou shalt not eat of the fruit . . .': the anxious, ignorant Adam understands these words as the expression of a prohibition. And yet, what do they refer to? To a fruit that, as such, will poison Adam if he eats it. This is an instance of an encounter between two bodies whose characteristic relations are not compatible: the fruit will act as a poison: that is, it will determine the parts of Adam's

body (and paralleling this, the idea of the fruit will determine the parts of his mind) to enter into new relations that no longer accord with his own essence. Because Adam is ignorant of causes, he thinks God morally forbids him to do something, whereas God only reveals the natural consequence of ingesting the fruit. Spinoza is categorical on this point: all the phenomena we group under the concept of Evil, illness and death are of this type: bad encounters, poisoning, intoxication, relational decomposition.³⁴

Deleuze repeats this minimal notion of ethics in his *Logic of Sense*, where he notes that “either ethics makes no sense at all, or this is what it means and has nothing else to say: not to be unworthy of what happens to us.”³⁵ Here he asks us to see our encounters with the world not in terms of actual entities, and chance and teleology, but in terms of an engagement with the world that recognizes we are determined both in terms of the diverse, but also in terms of difference. Here, Deleuze does, and I believe, should reject the kind of purposive and teleological account of nature Joshua Ramey suggests we need. Rather, to once again quote Deleuze, we should “[strive], insofar as [we are] capable, to organize [our] encounters, to join with whatever agrees with [our] nature, to combine [our] relation with relations that are compatible with [ours], and thereby to increase [our] power. For goodness is a matter of dynamism, power, and the composition of powers.”³⁶

CONCLUSION: WHY DIFFERENCE?

Turning to Joshua Ramey’s final claim. Towards the end of his comments, he claims that Deleuze would not be satisfied with the answer, ‘because difference is all there is’ to the question, ‘why difference?’ My suspicion is that Deleuze’s response to Ramey’s question would be rather to investigate why this question is being raised. It is not difficult to see in the question ‘why difference rather than identity?’ a relative of Leibniz’s theological question, ‘why something rather than nothing?’, a question which calls into play a whole series of theological and metaphysical (and, as Heidegger would say, ontotheological) assumptions about the nature of the world, beings, and grounds. As such, Deleuze would perhaps see such a question as one that is only asked in terms of the categories of the actual and *ressentiment*. We only feel the need to justify the world when we have cut it up with the wrong categories of thought, according to articulations which are not immanent to it. As I hope to have shown here (and more so in *Hegel, Deleuze, and the Critique of Representation*), to respond to Joshua Ramey’s question by saying, ‘because difference is all there is,’ is not tautologous. In calling for an answer that renounces the transcendental illusion of the thought of the same, Deleuze’s philosophy of difference is in fact rather a *para-dox*: a thinking against opinion.

Royal Holloway, University of London

NOTES

1. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1998), 431.
2. *Ibid.*, 423.
3. McCumber cites Levi Bryant, *Difference and Givenness: Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism and the Ontology of Difference* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press 2008), 25.
4. See pp. 722–23, above.
5. G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969), 365.
6. See Friedrich Hölderlin, “Judgement and Being,” in *Friedrich Hölderlin: Essays and Letters on Theory*, ed. Thomas Pfau (New York: SUNY Press, 1988), 37–38.
7. Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (London: Continuum, 2001), 107.
8. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 26.
9. *Ibid.*, 227.
10. *Ibid.*, 222.
11. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. J. N. Findlay and Arnold V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), 100.
12. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 170.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Ibid.*, 171.
15. *Ibid.*, 182.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. M. L. Anderson (New York: Wisdom Library, 1946), 225.
18. *Ibid.*
19. Gilles Deleuze, “Bergson's Conception of Difference,” in Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Mike Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 32–51, 43.
20. Cf. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 52.
21. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (New York: Zone, 1988), 22.
22. Plato, “Phaedrus,” in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 506–56, 265e.
23. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 59.
24. This discussion of Cuvier and Geoffroy Saint Hilaire here is based on a longer discussion in my *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 144–46.
25. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 185.
26. Cf. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 48.
27. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone Press, 1983), 26.
28. *Ibid.*, 28.

29. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 211.
30. Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 26.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 27.
33. Ibid., 28.
34. Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza, Practical Philosophy*, trans. R. Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 22.
35. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 149.
36. Deleuze, *Spinoza, Practical Philosophy*, 23.