



Deleuze is said to have acquired his life-long love of philosophy from reading Being and Nothingness as a teenager. While his mature thought would obviously develop in a very different direction, away from phenomenology, toward structuralism and beyond, I wonder if his fundamental orientation remained Sartrean throughout. I see the basic aim of Difference & Repetition as ethical, addressing the question, How should one live?

Sartre notoriously represents the apotheosis of subjectivity, in which freedom becomes absolute. As a post-structuralist, Deleuze is supposed to have no truck with such cartesian naivetes. Yet looking at a passage like the one above, I can't make sense of it except as a claim for the absolute freedom of thought. Moreover, Deleuze's praise of immanence would seem to deny that there is any outside which orients (and constrains) thinking; this looks like a conception of subjectivity as hyperbolic and untenable as Sartre's.

In this sense it is not even clear that thought, in so far as it constitutes the dynamism peculiar to philosophical systems, may be related to a substantial, completed and well-constituted subject, such as the Cartesian Cogito: thought is, rather, one of those terrible movements which can be sustained only under the conditions of a larval subject

Foucault famously loved Deleuze's early books and, at a time when phenomenology was part of the philosophical establishment in France, said that they represented the extreme opposite of Merleau-Ponty's way of thinking.

Deleuze seems to have an entirely different model in mind. He begins chapter 3 by ridiculing common sense, the idea that there are things that everybody knows. He apparently wants to do Descartes one better. Not only can the world be doubted, it must be dissolved in a miasma of lunatic ideas. He stresses that it is only a violent encounter that sets us thinking. I'm reminded of Kant's notion of the sublime in the third critique: the point at which the categories of reason break down, and we are face to face with the formless. Such romanticism was only one annex in Kant's kingdom of thought, but Deleuze wants it to provide the basis for his entire philosophy.

Deleuze contrary to this approach which has historically conditioned philosophy from Plato up until Hegel and the present day, will dedicate himself to the task of forging a concept of difference and of repetition in-themselves, that is to say, what would we be speaking of, when conceiving of difference via its own positivity, or of repetition via its own internal positivity, outside of their being coordinated according to the value of identity?

The response to this question has something to do with what Deleuze calls "the science of the sensible" or "transcendental empiricism". Broadly speaking, Deleuze is in dialogue with the empiricist thesis, principally sustained by Hume, that our experience is a set of sensations, which possesses the appearance of causality but whose fundamental causal coherence would simply be a habit of thought.

Causality is a result of the habitual accumulation of these experiences which creates a commensurate habit of thought around these experiences. As such, Deleuze, as the name transcendental empiricism implies, intends on transcending the level of the conjunction of sensations, to go beyond this impasse in which Hume seems to place experience.

To this end Deleuze divides his explicative model between what he calls the actual, that is, the side on which our own experiential life resides and the virtual, which Deleuze describes as the cause of the effect of the actual.

While the virtual is transcendental in relation to the actual, it is immanent to itself across the differences which

constitute it. The actual in broad terms is everything that we know of as the qualitative and quantitative world within which we live.

The virtual is that condition which could bring about the genesis of the qualitative and quantitative contents of the actual world. In this way, Deleuze refers to the virtual as the being of the sensible, or the reason for the sensible, or finally the reason for qualitative diversity. The point however, is that the virtual is not, and never can be sensible; it is that basis of experience which cannot itself be experienced.

In this sense the virtual must properly remain the unconscious of thought, that which can never enter into thought as a given content, but only as the condition of possibility for that which is given, which strips the given of its own self evidence.

Deleuze will be more specific however saying that intensity is the particular form of difference as the reason for the sensible. The virtual, more specifically then, is the structure through which the diverse distributions of intensive singularities and the differential relations which can pertain between them can sustain a form of coexistence in a spatium which will not be reducible to the spatiotemporally given.

It becomes this spatiotemporally given in its actualization in the present world. That is, Deleuze will maintain that this intensive world of difference, or this world of implicated differences, these diverse distributions of differential relations, can virtually sustain coexistence amongst themselves within the virtual field. It is the fact that this difference as intensity is always asymmetrically or unequally distributed which leads to the processes of actualization which generate the formation of the actual world from the virtual coexistence of the differential elements.

It is owing to this inequality of distribution that Deleuze names the fifth chapter of the book, "the asymmetrical synthesis of the sensible"; that is to say, the sensible contents of the world come to be via the asymmetrical distributions of intensity and the differences which result therein, which bring about actualization as sensible forms in the present, and habitually experienced world. Therefore the actual world for Deleuze is this constant explication of the implicated world of virtually coexistent differences.

These differences are ideally synthesized in the virtual world according to the title of the fourth chapter. The most important point for Deleuze however is that there is no form of resemblance which can be sustained between the virtual and the actual worlds. Within the virtual itself there are no processes which can be said to take place, which in any way conform to the notions of repetition of identical forms which we understand the actual world to be.

These differences are ideally synthesized in the virtual world according to the title of the fourth chapter. The most important point for Deleuze however is that there is no form of resemblance which can be sustained between the virtual and the actual worlds. Within the virtual itself there are no processes which can be said to take place, which in any way conform to the notions of repetition of identical forms which we understand the actual world to be.

Differences communicate in the virtual field by resonance and forced movement which mean that there are no actually given identities which persist, but only singularities which find themselves always maintained within the patterns of interaction in the coexistence of the virtual. As such, difference in the virtual is the pure un-grounding of all forms, or the informal itself. For this reason the Deleuzian idea is radically opposed to the Platonic idea.

The Platonic idea is the proposition of the notion of an ideal formality which can organize the appearance of particular cases in the actual world; Plato's ubiquitous "chairiness" which would maintain the nomination of actual chairs in the sensible world. For Deleuze, to the contrary, the ideal condition is the absence of formality, or informality in the field of pure difference as the condition of possibility for formality in the actual world. There are things which actually possess form because the cause of the virtual coexistence of intensive differences constantly produces the actualizations which produce all the forms of understanding which exist in the world of representation as conceived of via identity.

Deleuze's dense and vigorous attempt at providing the reader with a method of deduction towards several concepts each of which themselves form a larger theoretical framework around Difference and Repetition (Repetition here being significantly tied to Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche and his Eternal Return), is notable not just for the ideas presented but furthermore for the potential that lies dormant within its pages and pages.

This book is a helical transposition of certain concepts in philosophy which, through their augmentation and extension, turn the whole sordid enterprise upside down--which is good, I mean, standing on your head can feel sort of delirious but it's also great for balance and core strength in the longterm. These contrarian reversals--'what if the opposite was true?'--can be an exhilarating sugar rush with a febrile comedown or, if rigorously sustained, an index of embryonic territories fresh with inchoate possibilities. The skeleton key here, for Deleuze, is to give metaphysical priority to difference over identity. Easy right?

There's a reason difference comes before repetition--the exterior stamen of this book is repetition, and the fecund pistil is difference. Or something like that, Deleuze is better at horticultural conceits than I am. Anyway, the value of identity decreases as we understand the windswept morphology of substance, matter, energy, what-have-you, these are not engraved categories but differences-in-themselves which tilt, shift and change, and their so-called identity is a temporal assemblage of certain repeating traits. The coherence of identity is a 'habit of thought' more than a correspondence to the fathomless disparition of difference across our worlds and the inconceivably profuse worlds outside & beyond them. As Deleuze puts it;

'Everywhere couples and polarities presuppose bodies and networks, organized oppositions presuppose radiations in all directions. Stereoscopic images form no more than an even and flat opposition, but they depend on something quite different: an arrangement of coexistence, tired, mobile planes, a 'disparateness' within an original depth. Everywhere, the depth of difference is primary.'

Let's talk about 'the virtual' for a second because this idea seems to brutalize everyone who reads *Difference & Repetition* into helplessness. In Deleuze's own words, the virtual is a plane of difference which is 'the cause of the effect of the actual', an asymmetrically stacked plane of possible differences (an immanent condition of possibility, rather than eternal and universal ideality, the inverse of Plato's realm of forms) which exerts a phantom influence over the forms & formalization of reality, 'the actual'. I had a lot of trouble unpicking the state of the virtual--I mean, is it an a transcendental ontogeny in immanence's clothing? Because it seems like a crypto-transcendental lighthouse with tinted windows. I guess this tightrope between transcendence and immanence is necessary to zig-zag around the negative and neutralize its post-Hegelian monopoly on experiential differentiation, necessary for the individuation of forms in the actual world without tension, without contradiction, without the ruptures of history as the primary logic of autopoiesis. So instead we have the bodylock of transcendental empiricism, an incongruous ('different') conjugation of concepts, the ignition switch to the only possible 'science of the sensible' which can register but never know the informal / intensive singularities cohabitating the intangible spatium of the virtual. These intensive elements are embedded asymmetrically across the virtual and become sensible / formalized through several synthesized processes detailed in the second and fifth chapters of the book--and I have nothing to say about them. They are torturous to read and make you feel like an idiot baby.

At first glance, Deleuze's metaphysics is more conventional than that of Derrida. For Deleuze, presence is as primary as it ever was for Kant or Husserl, some might claim more so. Yet for Deleuze, subjectivity is nothing more than an incidental byproduct of a presence that is always in flux. It is a Deleuzian chest-nut to say that his presence is a becoming rather than a being, and it seems to me just so. The subject is a momentary manifestation of a churning world. The insecurities of such a manifestation do not concern Deleuze the philosopher, although those of Deleuze the momentary manifestation do, it seems to me, sometimes make themselves known through his writing. If Derrida is rebelling against the history of metaphysics, Deleuze is trying to rewrite the history.

Any book as bold and influential as *Difference & Repetition* is going to develop a cult proclaiming its otherworldly perfection- it's every perceived flaw being a secret source of wonder. I am not such a cultist and there were a few things about *Difference & Repetition* that I found quite frustrating which I truly believe to be results of weakness on the part of Deleuze rather than on myself as a reader. Simply as a well ordered and coherent presentation of related ideas, the book is a train-wreck. Similar complaints are often levied against the works of Derrida, Heidegger, and indeed philosophy itself. But Deleuze seemingly cannot complete discussion of any aspect of his (exceptionally rich and complex) argument without switching to another, barely related branch of reasoning. Descriptions of key concepts are spread out, seemingly at random, in every section of the book. Some are not fully fleshed-out until the Conclusion. Indeed, it seems to me almost impossible to have any understanding of any part of the text until one has read the whole thing, gone back, and tried to put the broken parts Deleuze offers back into some kind of systematic whole (as I have attempted to do below).

Compounding the problem is Deleuze's insistence on renaming key concepts willy-nilly. I've heard Deleuze's most ardent supporters claim that his refusal to adopt a consistent vocabulary is reflective of his concept of being as ever-changing. I'm going to call bullshit on that. Even according to Deleuze, the subject is a momentary manifestation of

being. One momentary manifestation has to communicate with another and that requires some attempt at consistency. For me, the constant changes to designations-of-concepts was just sloppy philosophizing.

Some of Deleuze's crudest detractors have pointed out that Deleuze's discussions of biology and physics are not scientifically sound. Deleuze's defenders content that the philosopher does not mean his utilization of scientific motifs to be taken literally but metaphorically, and I agree with that. I do, however, wonder if the metaphors deployed do not invite such criticism since it is clear at times that Deleuze's understanding of the science he is using as illustration is shaky at best. It would have been better, I dare say, to explicate a philosophical argument with philosophical language.

None of this is to say that Deleuze is not a gifted writer, but merely an undisciplined one. I enjoy Derrida's prose but one can tell that he was always striving for literary effect. Reading Deleuze, it seems like he was always writing off-the-cuff, trying to get the ideas in his head on to paper. Sometimes the resulting prose is quite sparse and utilitarian, but other times, particularly when he lets the personal shine through, it is sublime- revealing the deepest poetic instincts.

Difference and Repetition is, above all else, a critique of representation as it has operated within the history of western philosophy. In the book's conclusion, Deleuze states that the central goal of philosophy through that history has been to make representation as infinite as possible- to leave as little as possible outside of philosophical illumination. Representation, as we know it, requires a degree of stasis, actually rather a lot of it. Philosophical, and indeed prosaic, representation have traditionally revolved around identities. These figures of representation are not entirely static of course. They interact with other identities and effect the others while in turn being affected by them. Difference, we can say, has traditionally been subordinated to identity, treated as a byproduct of the latter. One of Deleuze's hopes for philosophy is that if difference can be freed from identity's shadow our thought might then not have to rely on opposition and contradiction- the thinking that, for Deleuze, takes its "highest" and most oppressive form in the Hegelian dialectic. Rather than synthesis and the negation that Deleuze associates with it, our thought could revel in a liberating multiplicity.

The prioritizing of representation goes back to the philosophers of ancient Greece. Plato distinguished three categories in relation to the Ideal: the model, which is to say the Idea, or Form, itself; the copy- that which represented the Ideal form in material reality; and simulacra- the phantasm of represented Ideality, the ghost-like doppelganger of the copy whose repetition of its appearance puts the relation between model and copy in question. If simulacra appears to be a copy of the Form but is not, then how can the copy itself be proven to be an authentic representation of the Idea? Simulacra would then be an anarchic and problematizing actor in the play of representation, one that would be best kept off stage.

Deleuze asks us early on to try to think of something we cannot represent. Difference is not, of course, anathema to representation, indeed it would seem to be a necessary aspect of it. I recognize thing x as such in part because it is different from thing y, and this conditions the representation of the world that I use to comprehend reality. But if difference is so central to our regimes of representation and understanding, why cannot we imagine difference in itself? Difference is subordinated to representation, to the "difference" (and therefor also the resemblance) between two (represented) things. Difference itself is faceless.

In the first chapter, Deleuze offers a "vulgar theory of difference" to demonstrate how clueless we really are in our day to day thinking about this essential concept. There is, according to this vulgar theory, an inverse relationship between conceptual extension, the number of related predicate-concepts that can be related to a concept, and comprehension, the set of necessary determinating attributes that define a concept. The larger a concept's extension, in other words the broader a concept is, the less specifics needed to comprehend it. A true singularity could only be comprehended as such through infinite comprehension. If something is truly one of a kind, it would have an infinite number of determinating attributes. Conceptual blockage occurs when a concept inevitably fails to fully describe and represent a singularity in its absolute uniqueness. Concepts can, however, point to determinating resemblances between things. The word/ concept "cat" describes nothing with great, little less infinite, comprehension but it does represent a real resemblance between, for instance, my pet kitty and a wild tiger. This "vulgar theory" of common-sense is, then, incredibly useful, but it actually brings us no closer to things in themselves, or of differences in themselves. It reveals only the resemblances that are the bread and butter of representation.

Deleuze offers a model of the ways in which difference in itself is subordinated to resemblance. In fact, he does so at three different instances in the book. I will try to condense these three descriptions into one account. The most detailed discussion occurs in the third chapter, "The Image of Thought". Philosophy always tries to represent the

truth and it always claims the title of truth for the representations that it offers. Thinkers as diverse as Plato, Descartes and Kant have all insisted in one way or another that a thinker knows what it is to think. Thought, for philosophy, is self-recognizing. Deleuze defiantly rejects this self-validating tradition. He characterizes this philosophical self-presentation as a malevolent stupidity that intentionally attacks genuine thought and turns it against itself. Genuine thinking, for Deleuze, is always a "lucky trespass" in which an intruder accidentally disturbs the self-satisfied peace of the image of thought. But to have any hope of engendering such a crisis/opportunity, we need to understand the edifice we are up against and its means of supporting itself.

Deleuze claims the image of thought is based on a series of eight postulates- pre-philosophical presumptions that shape the way philosophy will proceed. First, as we have already noted, it is presumed that we can all think and that thinking seeks out 'truth.' Secondly, it is assumed that sense, imagination, memory, and thought work together harmoniously when trying to ascertain an object. Next, it is assumed that the object this quartet confronts is a static object with a static identity. Then, it is assumed that this identity can be represented.

Deleuze first, and perhaps most clearly, breaks down the nature of philosophical representation in the first chapter of the book, so let us now turn to that section. It should be noted that some important clarifications are made in the Conclusion, in which he characterizes representation as a transcendental illusion. I will thus also be including some notes from the final section. Deleuze says that philosophy tames difference with four primary shackles of representation: identity, analogy, resemblance, and opposition.

Identity is manifested by the Platonic ideal. The Idea of the Beautiful and that of Ugliness are, according to the Platonic theory of the Forms, identified singularities that cannot overlap. The Ideas are identical to themselves, and therefore different from one another. The transcendental illusion of representation here pertains to thought. An identical thinking subject is posited that in turn grounds the identity of an ordinary concept. Deleuze will frequently refer to this paradigm as "common sense".

Analogy is the comparison of (the difference between) two things based on categories such as genus or genre. Difference is knowable in Aristotle only by what it divides into such categories, although this difference ultimately serves as a relation between things based on these categories. Here the transcendental illusion pertains to being. Difference is subordinated to judgment and everything is a "this" or "that" based on the categories.

Resemblance seeks to find similarities between things that seem to minimize difference. Leibnitz could be said to treat difference with resemblance when he claims that difference was created, or chosen, by God to create maximum compatibility and harmony in the universe. Difference, understood as compatibility, is not so much difference at all but the very manifestation of totality. Here, the illusion pertains to sensibility. This subordination of difference to resemblance is often referred to by Deleuze as "good sense."

Finally, opposition contrasts identities with each other. Hegel (Deleuze's old target) claims to find difference- or contradiction as he calls it- at the foundation of genesis, but this still assumes a beginning with two static identities in an antagonistic relation. The illusion here pertains to ideas. Difference is subordinated to a false image of itself as the negative, the limit, and as opposition.

Philosophical representation, then, can mediate difference, but cannot capture it. All of the shackles of representation listed above rely, in some way or another, on an identical and identified perspective. Representation can contain difference to that one point but it cannot capture (represent) it because representation is static and difference is ever flowing, even when contained in one point.

It is easy to forget, but the idea that an identity can be represented is, in fact, only the fourth of the eight postulates, if by far the most widely discussed. We still need to complete our survey of the image of thought. So, back to chapter 3. The fifth postulate is error, the acknowledgment that thought is sometimes mistaken, but only because of outside interference. The sixth postulate states that designation is a neutral expression of the "whatness" of an object. Next, it is postulated that problems are derived from their ability to be solved. The final postulate is that the result, the solution, is the purpose of thought.

So, what does Deleuze think is "really" going on? What is the image of thought obscuring? We've probably all figured out by now that the answer to this question is the same as that to "what is difference in itself?" Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to that question. Indeed, one could argue that it is, according to Deleuze, unanswerable because difference in itself is precisely that which cannot be represented, and representation is all philosophical language is good for. But much of this imposing tome is nonetheless dedicated to trying to explicate

difference in itself as far as it is able.

Difference & Repetition often doesn't even seem so much like philosophy as much as a kind of religious text or creation myth. It proposes a kind of radical cosmology. Indeed, one of the more obscure thinkers to heavily influence Deleuze in this work is the 13th century theologian John Duns Scotus and his notion of the univocity of being. Scotus argued that concepts that were applied to both God and humanity meant the same thing when applied to either. In other words, the differences between humanity and God were questions of quantity not quality. A good person was good in the same sense that God was good, God simply had way more good than any person. The entire cosmos, both its divine and mortal aspects, could be described in the same language.

Deleuze takes the outlines of this concept and actually takes it a step further. All aspects of the entire cosmos can be described with one word: "difference": a generic concept of being that forgoes all individuations and hierarchies. Part of the reason we have difficulty imagining difference in itself is because we've become so accustomed to opposing and subjugating difference to identity. Rather than even relating difference and identity, Deleuze relates difference only to indifference, or void. It is the presence which first distinguishes itself and does so by illuminating not just itself, but the void along with it. Difference breaks from the void, but also affirms it. It is almost as if difference and indifference collaborate to reveal each other.

From here, the book will, much like Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, attempt to navigate us from the unrepresentable "real"- pure difference- to the represented world that we all know. Indeed, the very structure of the rest of the book is modeled on the Critique of Pure Reason, albeit the (as the commentaries informed me) lesser-known original version of the Critique, not the "compromised" revision for which Husserl so harshly criticized Kant. Some of the language, unsurprisingly, is very un-Kantian. Indeed, the work seems an attempt to fuse the philosophies of Kant with that of the Nietzsche imagined by Deleuze in his earlier work, "Nietzsche & Philosophy."

In the second chapter, Deleuze proclaims that all phenomena are the result of contractions in time and space. In chapter five, these will come to be known as intensities, but the use of this term by Deleuze is very confusing because once an intensity becomes, well, intense enough it then constitutes an Intensity. For now, this little, random intensity that we begin following in chapter 2 is just an intensity of time and space in contraction, not an Intensity. The simplest intensity can be thought of as a presence or present. It is the primitive knowledge that "we/I am/ are" in a moment that we/I are in the presence of a moment known as the present. What kinds of questions can such a presence understand? Probably something along the lines of "we/I are thirsty or hungry- how does a thing like us/I satisfy thirst or hunger?"

A presence learns to satisfy such needs through habit- the generalization of the activity of what Deleuze calls larval selves that collectively constitute the multiplicity that is a self. At a certain point, habit starts not simply to generalize but to actively contemplate the activities of larval selves and we start to take the giant leap towards imagination and memory.

So then, what is a memory? On an abstract level, it is a synthesis of the present and the past. Presence is no longer only concerned with the present. That present is reshaped by the knowledge of the past. The two temporalities are successfully, and fairly simply synthesized by a passive presence. To get to a slightly less abstract understanding of memory, we should take notice that the title of the book is not "Difference..." and introduce ourselves to the second title-concept. For memory is, of course, a kind of repetition, in which a presence mentally returns to their impression of the past. Memory repeats the past in the form of the presence's mentally captured impression of that moment.

Within Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* it is as if we lived in a world without space or time and just had our pure intuition and feelings as a guide and as quoted by Deleuze *vicus is recirculation*, or in other words, history repeats itself. (a quick reminder, Joyce's first two pages of *Finnegans Wake* is jam packed with how he is going to tell the story as it relates to Ireland and he gives accolades to Giambattista Vico and his *New Science* and Vico's ('vicus') recirculation theory of history, or in plainer language history repeats itself, or in the context of this book Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence establishing repetition of a difference without a concept.

The 'negation of not being' does not necessarily exist as Being. All determinations are a negation of the infinite. Spinoza says that, and Duns Scotus needs the absolute being of being to be real such that all of the representations within the simulacra are part of the attributes of the one true substance and Scotus and Deleuze would argue that Thomas Aquinas analogical method is not sufficient for establishing the identity of the self or the nature of Being (the ultimate Good, the universe, or Plotinus' 'One' that which is not just an image of an Identity)

Plato gives us 'oneness', Aristotle brings us to 'one, two, three and so on', and the repetition of a sequence needs a negation of an idea (or Leibnitz's monad, a thing within itself for itself as opposed to a difference within itself or a repetition, that is a thing for itself with a difference without a concept, pure idea of an abstract or a virtual reality within itself).

Kant's pure reason gives us intensity and extension, in other words time and space by making them intuitions with coherence within us not outside of us and Kant will insist that effects come from causes because he says it must (Hume would disagree). Kant merges Leibnitz's abstract perfectly windowless building blocks of ideas (monads) with Hume's experience as the foundation for reality and gives us coherence through relationships with context, Deleuze takes Hume out of Kant for the most part and leaves Leibnitz in and puts in Bergson, Spinoza and Duns Scotus while leading to Nietzsche's self-proclaimed most important thought of all 'eternal recurrence of the same', but Deleuze won't allow a 'same' or 'similar' just a constant repetition of the same possessing a difference without a concept.

Propelling this bustle of philosophical activity however, is nothing less than the construction of a 'philosophy of difference': a philosophy which, rather than thinking of difference in terms of identity (i.e. difference as the difference 'between' one thing and another), aims to free the concept of difference from any reference to the identical, understanding it on its own terms in order to think a 'difference-in-itself', a 'pure' difference that isn't simply 'between' two already-existing things, but rather and more profoundly, constitutive of any one 'thing' at all. To speak of a philosophy of difference then, is to speak of a philosophy of Becoming (rather than 'Being').

Such are the stakes involved in this reconception of difference, one which refuses to take for granted the nature of 'what is', and aims to open the question of how things come to be as they are in the first place. Indeed, the philosophical power of *Difference and Repetition* is drawn not merely from its offering up of new answers to old questions, but from rethinking the very questions that have defined philosophy so far. Thus against the Platonic tendency to ask after 'What Is?' ('What is Justice?', 'What is Beauty?'), Deleuze will substitute an entirely new set of questions - How? Where? In which case? How many? From what point of view? - genetic questions, so-called insofar as they ask after the genesis of things, the manners and fashions in which any-one-thing is engendered to begin with. It's in this light that one ought to understand the call, sounded within, for an 'overturning of Platonism' - a call marked by Deleuze to be the very task of all modern philosophy.

Deleuze is using a lot of Bergsonian, Nietzschean and Freudian terminology in this book. The concept seems very heavily drawn from Nietzsche's Eternal Return (eternal recurrence), Bergson, Blanchot and Proust. The main pillar of the differences and reputation is a critic of representation. Nomadic distribution or crowned anarchy is opposed to the sedentary distribution of analogy. Deleuze interprets the Eternal Return as the moment in which extremity of 'differences' is reached. The book also has an underlying duality of Nietzsche versus Kierkegaard in relation to mortality, god and repetition.

Early Deleuze's eclectic style is put on display as he writes with ease through several competing discourses, synthesizing Freud, Spinoza, Marx, and Nietzsche as if they are all equally correct in their assertions. And that's what I love about Deleuze, he rarely beats anyone up rowdy style like some philosophers, he simply 'buggers them in the arse' and turns their theories into producing monstrous offspring that are undoubtedly theirs, but completely different (As Deleuze once famously said in an interview)...

In the most simple way to put it, *Difference and Repetition* shows exactly what makes philosophy interesting. It isn't representing the true, making the world correspond to propositions or taking simple given sides; instead it's that creative engagement with that ineffability in the world which forces us to think in the first place, that transcendental exercise which moves us to new meadows.

Taking the above into consideration, Deleuze conducts several critiques against prominent Enlightenment philosophers like Hegel to assert that consciousness is not a genus of species but an effect of existence. This is to say, that the thinking does not place an individual above another because bodies have other ways to think. It is here where Deleuze's work first introduces what would go on to become affect theory. Deleuze asserts that sensations and affective field around us constitute as forms of knowledge production and that our understanding of consciousness (in Western philosophy for him) is limited if we only focus on consciousness as devoid of knowledge from the senses. I highly recommend this book for philosophy readers and scholars in that field. If you are not a fan of Deleuze, I'm afraid this book will not "win you over."

On a personal level I felt that Chapter II: Repetition for itself was by far the most difficult, and therefore the least

enjoyable, but this probably due to my lack of background in Bergson, while I thought Chapter IV: Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference was the most enjoyable--the unification of differential calculus and metaphysics into a theory of the actualisation of the virtual Ideas, constituted in their multiplicity of differential relations and singular points is pure genius.

The adventure demands very strong common sense and rewards background in science; in particular, a tourist lacking fundamental command of Leibniz' calculus is relegated to intuitive comprehension. Manuel DeLanda's [Intensive Science & Virtual Philosophy](#) is a helpful prerequisite for the mildly mathematically challenged.

Pure difference, complex repetition, the image of thought, etc. are foundational concepts of Deleuze's thought, and they return in many of his subsequent publications. It may be easier to get a feel for them through later compositions, and work your way back to [Difference and Repetition](#).