

second edition

gilles deleuze's
difference and repetition

a critical introduction and guide



James Williams

Gilles Deleuze's
Difference and Repetition:
A Critical Introduction
and Guide
Second Edition

JAMES WILLIAMS

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Abbreviations

In the text, all references to passages from *Difference and Repetition* will be abbreviated as DR. Page references are given for the French original and for the English translation. The second page reference is to Gilles Deleuze's *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968) and the first page reference is to Paul Patton's translation, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994; London: Athlone, 1994). So a typical reference will be '(DR, pp. 21, 22)'. Some translations have been modified for reasons of clarity, accuracy or philosophical consistency and, where this is substantial, the changes are indicated and explained.

Preface

There is a surprising and yet important role for a new sense of risk in Deleuze's philosophy. In *Difference and Repetition* it appears through the concept of the 'dice throw'. Any act is entangled with an event constituted by multiple precursors and influences which determine the act and to which it is passive. Nonetheless, the act retains freedom with respect to its destiny. This freedom is translated into action as a risky and experimental dice throw rolled within an event. The act can replay its forerunners and its situation in a novel 'counter-actualisation'. It counters the determinations of the event in a new drama. This creative counter stages a re-enactment of the places and roles assigned to the act. It makes a new actual path for the event, consigning others to low degrees of virtual subsistence (*Could have been a contender. . .*).

The 'it' in this action and drama must not be associated with a free human being for two critical reasons. First, the *power* to introduce novelty and hence free-play into a system is not restricted to the human. Second, the *location* of novelty is never to be identified with a part of the event. So when small fissures on the face of a sacred building cohere to send a portentous frieze crashing to the ground, triggering a mass reaction to a desperate and unjust political state, the power to introduce novelty should not be associated with each political actor. It must be associated with a network of influences and counters responding to a new sign located in that facade then extended through society and history. (*Each fissure is all of time . . . and so, therefore, is each actor.*)

Without the sign there is neither human 'freedom' nor full historical 'meaning'. *Difference and Repetition* is then doubly revolutionary. The book sets revolution at the heart of philosophy and

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it redefines revolution. Deleuze constructs an association of transforming events, novelty and free-play as the primary form of existence. All is revolutionary becoming. Revolution moves beyond the dichotomies of historical determination *or* human freedom, and physical determination *or* dumb systemic luck. The catalyst is neither individual or group freedom, nor blind chance. Instead, every event is revolutionary due to an interaction of signs, acts and structures through the whole event. Events are distinguished in terms of the intensity of this revolution, rather than types of freedom or chance. Intensity is itself only decided, and then only temporarily, by a further counter-actualisation.

So had that fatal frieze fallen when all were looking away, there would still have been an event but one lost to a low degree of intensity (*until the sign was uncovered and remade many years later*). To have turned away is as much a counter-actualisation as violent enthusiasm. This means that one of the overriding problems posed by Deleuze's philosophy is how best to counter and affirm events. There is therefore something humbling and liberating in the problem as constructed by Deleuze, since we can neither adopt a guise of heroic single dominion nor one of tragic lone responsibility. They are both ridiculous and open to comic deflation due to the necessity of passivity to events and the shared nature of freedom. We do not even act as a small independent part of a system, but as a tentative factor in series of passive and active interactions and transformations extending forward and back in time. This does not mean we are freed from error and absolved of any responsibility for mistaken paths, but rather that error and decisions for the worse are also systemic rather than individual.

I was aware of all these factors when writing the first edition of this book ten years ago. The book was a dice throw – any book is. It might be intensely countered, not necessarily as an individual book, but as connected to a wider series of works. It might exist at a very low degree of actual and virtual reality, forgotten, not even dismissed. This is the fate of nearly all publications today, either ignored or given a shallow passing fame worse even than disregard. This fate sits alongside a strange desire for fame and power, as if a life-force had decided to fight an insurmountable weight of numbers by struggling even harder against it, rather than thinking life differently. A further gift of Deleuze's philosophy is that its deflation of individual heroism and responsibility provides a powerful critical remedy to these modern neuroses.

Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition

In truth, I have little idea whether the first edition of my book was counter-actualised. A work of introduction functions as a member of a much wider set of results and effects, which rightly cohere around the original work introduced to new readers. The fate of *Difference and Repetition* over the first dozen or so years of this century has been extraordinary, as befits one of the previous century's greatest works of philosophy. Many talented and perceptive interpreters have published further commentaries on or around the book. A vast range of practitioners have been inspired by its concepts and arguments. Artists, writers, academics, scientists and political activists have begun to operate in worlds drawn around Deleuze's philosophy.

When Carol Macdonald at Edinburgh University Press asked me whether there could be a second edition of my book, my concern was therefore to respond and interact with these exciting and at times disconcerting receptions of *Difference and Repetition*. I have worked through the book chapter by chapter to correct errors shown to me by other commentators, or in correspondence with students and colleagues, or at tutorials, seminars and conferences. The many moments where I failed to explain Deleuze's detailed passages have been answered by more careful exegesis. Finally, there is a new chapter drawing attention to my errors and omissions, while also responding to the leading interpreters of Deleuze's masterwork. It is not much of a dice throw, but what I like most is that the dice are still rolling in a Deleuzian century (*Yes, yes, yes, yes. . .*).

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Introduction

DELEUZE'S MASTERWORK

Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* was first published in French in 1968. It is nothing less than a revolution in philosophy and stands out as one of the great philosophical works of the twentieth century. As such, it shifts our idea of philosophy by introducing new methods and concepts and by revaluing older ones. Despite this revolution, it is still possible to situate the book's historical significance in terms of the line of other great works it adds to, reacts against and prolongs; these include the works of Plato, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson, Heidegger and Sartre.

Deleuze's outstanding achievement lies in the comprehensive and yet rigorous innovation *Difference and Repetition* implies for philosophical accounts of the structure of reality. The innovation extends to new ideas about values and action, responding to an original sense of life in terms of this new structure. The innovation is as much about how to live and how to create as it is about a philosophical view of the world. Deleuze is not working on a subsection of philosophy defined by an earlier moment, in the way, for example, some research projects can be described as Cartesian, even though they may have original discoveries of their own to impart. Instead, earlier philosophical structures and the worlds that they imply are profoundly shaken by *Difference and Repetition*.

As well as introducing the book through a systematic reading, I will show that this revolution has a philosophical legitimacy in terms of strength of methodological and conceptual invention

Gilles Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*

and in terms of the validity of the arguments that allow for a departure from preceding positions. I will also argue that the new arguments and methods of the philosophy call for strong critical reactions leading to a finely balanced debate on the validity of Deleuze's work. This focus on argument and validity is an invaluable tool for understanding *Difference and Repetition*. Like most works of great philosophical originality, the book is as difficult as it is important. On a first reading it can defy comprehension, to the point of appearing wilfully obstructive. Yet, powerful arguments and exciting ideas underlie the murky surface.

The appeal to arguments and to validity are essential traditional approaches to works of philosophy. It would be an error, though, to think that criteria for truth and validity are independent of Deleuze's masterwork. On the contrary, he puts forward and defends ideas about truth and thinking against the association of philosophical truth with logical validity and coherence. For him, truth is a matter of irresolvable problems. The greatest truths are those expressing those problems in all their aspects and applications, avoiding the dangerous illusions of false simple solutions. True thinking is to respond to problems in new ways, to re-invigorate life and thought through the problems that give rise to them: 'What is essential is that there occurs at the heart of problems a genesis of truth, a production of the true in thought' (DR, pp. 162, 210). But, in order to do justice to these demanding ideas, it is important to be able to understand the arguments that support them. This critical introduction and guide seeks to help this understanding but, in arriving at a better sense of Deleuze's text, it also seeks to invite the thought that truth and validity must now be reconsidered.

Difference and Repetition is not only significant for the development of the history of philosophy. It is also the keystone for Deleuze's work as a whole. It marks a shift from his original, off-beat and highly influential studies of other philosophers to a full account of the specifically Deleuzian ideas that gave those books their innovative flavour and sense of philosophical significance. *Difference and Repetition* brings to fruition ideas first glimpsed in *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Human Nature According to Hume* (first published in 1953), *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962), *Kant's Critical Philosophy* (1963) and *Bergsonism* (1966). That account is then projected forward in the concepts developed in Deleuze's more practical, interdisciplinary works: *Anti-Œdipus* (1972), *Kafka* (1975), *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) and, in

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1991, *What is Philosophy?* (all written with Félix Guattari). It is also important for a full understanding of the two important books on cinema, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image* (1983) and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (1985) as well as for the later and even looser historical works, *The Fold (Leibniz and the Baroque)* (1988) and *Foucault* (1986).

Finally, two works are contemporaneous with *Difference and Repetition – Spinoza and the Problem of Expression* (1969) and *The Logic of Sense* (1969). The former lays the ground for some of the most important arguments in *Difference and Repetition* and can be seen as part of the preparatory historical works. The work done there on Spinoza's synthetic method and on the concept of expression is all important. *The Logic of Sense* develops key concepts and ideas from *Difference and Repetition* in the fields of ethics, philosophy of language, philosophy of the event and psychoanalysis. Its development of the concept of sense is essential for a full understanding of the crucial concepts of the event and of signs from *Difference and Repetition*.

Infamously, Michel Foucault, a friend and inspiration to Deleuze, once asked in jest whether the twentieth century would be called Deleuzian. Given Deleuze's opposition to the cult of the origin, to the dominance of the human self in the definition of values, and to the limitation of thought to epochs, this was an ironic joke, designed to amuse and tease Deleuze and to provoke his readers. Yet Foucault's mock prediction is turning out to be accurate both in terms of applications of Deleuze's philosophy and, with greater delay, in terms of its influence on the development of philosophy as a discipline. His philosophy has already had and will continue to have a growing influence on the practical ways in which we study and react critically to the many disciplines, systems and habits of thought that dominate our lives. Researchers in as diverse subjects as literature, philosophy of science, biology, art, cinema and politics are carving out new ways of thinking that can be rightly named Deleuzian. The same is true of the philosophical reflection that guides that research, even if the line between research and practice has blurred and may blur further after his work.

Difference and Repetition is important in understanding this change in practices but no more so than Deleuze's other works, except in terms of questions concerning the claims to lasting truth of the change. In the book, we are given principles and structures that teach us to think in a new way. New methods for

Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition

thought are planned carefully alongside the perspectives they imply for our most important philosophical concepts: time, space, idea, sensation, reality, individuality. Concepts are introduced to the pantheon and lesser ones are elevated: difference, repetition, synthesis, virtual. The scope of these innovations makes the work particularly difficult and dense. This has led early works on Deleuze to channel enthusiasm for the practical direction of his work into the careful explanation of these concepts. This is a necessary moment but one that must remain stunted, even on its own terms. A full understanding of a philosophical revolution lies in a grasp of the *critical* relation of the main terms of that revolution to what they stand against. What are their claims to truth? What is the validity of the arguments that these stand upon? How do these claims and arguments change and respond to our definitions of truth and validity?

DELEUZIAN PRINCIPLES

It is perhaps incautious to speak of difficulty at the outset, as when the fateful words 'the route is very complicated' are uttered to the lost tourist. So what follows is an introductory and somewhat simplified account of the main characteristics of Deleuze's methods and concepts. This simplification suspends critical impulses in favour of exposition. These return later and must form the mainstay of any deep approach to Deleuze's difficult metaphysics and to its profound resistance to common sense and to the association of reality with representations based on the empirical sciences. *Difference and Repetition* searches for new ways of understanding the meaning and significance of methods in philosophy. It also searches for new methods that respond to this understanding. In particular, his innovations apply to some of the most familiar forms of philosophical thought: creation, learning, critique and the construction of methods itself.

Like all great works of philosophy, the book moves in a positive and necessary circle where its discoveries are applied to itself. Deleuze seeks to answer the questions: 'How do we move forward best?'; 'How do we learn best?'; 'What is critique and what should be criticised?'; and 'How should we give structure to our thoughts and acts?' The common thread to all his answers lies in a series of principles, neither laws nor rules, but ways of handling the complicated structure of things best. In this sense, principles accord with the following distinction between flexible principles, the

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universal claims of laws and the categorical form of rules. The *principle* 'It is best not to take important statements on trust' responds to a view of the world where the *law* 'Humans will lie where they see an advantage in it' may hold and where the *rule* 'Always trust authority' often leads to disaster.

Two principles dominate *Difference and Repetition*. They are in tension with one another. This is one of the reasons Deleuze has to deal in principles rather than laws, where a contradiction would have to be resolved. Each law should be followed but principles can be balanced against one another. The first principle of thought, or of reason, is 'It is best for our actions to connect with all the things that have brought them about and that they can bring about'. Later in this book I will show how, according to Deleuze, the genesis of something is in principle connected to all things that can bring about change. This means that the principle becomes 'Connect with everything'. However, the second principle 'It is best to select our thoughts so that everything is left behind' or, in a shorter version, 'Forget everything', implies a problem in following the first. It seems to counsel us to go against completeness, indeed, to move away from things in general. This is as if a philosopher encouraged us to leave behind all possessions, whilst also encouraging us to taste all things.

How can we remain pure and chaste whilst also possessing objects and currencies, in order to take pleasure in what they afford? The solution to this apparent contradiction lies in the terms 'us' and 'our' and in a link drawn between connecting and forgetting. The principles apply to individuals, where an individual is a perspective on the whole of reality, something that is connected in a singular way to the whole of reality (*You, an animal, anything capable of sensations that challenge its identity is the world but only from a perspective.*). Through thoughts, sensations and acts, individuals are irrevocably part of reality, to the point where it makes sense, from a Deleuzian point of view, to say that there is a different reality with each individual.

But that reality is ever changing and the challenge is how to live best with that change (*How will you respond to the changes in your world?*). This constant alteration means that it is a mistake to want to hold on to everything. Individuals must find ways of connecting well but the only way of doing this is by forgetting. To connect and to discard are joint actions – we cannot do well at one without doing well in the other. Deleuze's insight is, then, that tasting must be an ephemeral thing, at least at the level of

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actual possessions, whether they may be identifiable things or ideas – including our selves and our sense of acting as a free subject.

However, this simple version and explanation of his principles introduces a series of ideas that may later lead to misunderstandings because it couches Deleuze's work in a non-technical language. It makes sense to speak of individuals, things and everything when we think about principles but, in Deleuze's philosophy, this does not mean that the individuals are necessarily well-defined human individuals. On the contrary, the individual is a thing where thought takes place as an event but not necessarily the conscious thought of a human being. The individual is a take on the whole of reality, where reality is not restricted to actual things that we can show or identify in the world. The individual is, rather, a series of processes that connect actual things, thoughts and sensations to the pure intensities and ideas implied by them. *Why did such jealousy burst in me then? Why did it so exceed the facts? What did it signify for me (pure ideas)? Where did its power come from (pure intensities)?*

When you stand, daydreaming, looking out over your favourite land- or cityscape, or staring into another's eyes or flesh, or allowing your body to become an automaton through repeated work and exercise, allowing thought and sensation to drift through you, you are closer to Deleuze's idea of the individual than when you squeeze your head in your hand, reflect and consciously toil with a difficult question. An individual is not a self-conscious 'I', it is a location where thoughts may take place. It may take conscious decisions, played out in actual identifiable situations, to get you to your best daydream, to moments when you are 'sent' or 'in the zone'. You may be able to reflect back on it. But the conscious preparatory and self-analytical thoughts are not the daydream or the creative flow of thoughts and acts – think of the sense of loss when you snap out of a dream or out of creative inspiration. *I can't believe I did not turn off the phone . . .* This view of thought as independent of consciousness breaks down the difference between humans and other things. For Deleuze, the evolution of a line of animals or plants or a change in a rock formation can also be said to express ideas.

Furthermore, in the principle of connecting with everything, things must not be identified with actual physical things and fixed ideas, for they are what we have to leave behind. Individuals must connect to the changes that things may undergo. We must

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connect to the increases and decreases that flow through us, through our thoughts and sensations, when we are in the presence of things. For example, in order to allow children (and adults) to learn about the different consistencies of the plant world, botanical gardens allow them to touch hard, sticky, prickly, spongy plants through holes in an opaque screen. The children's ideas and sensations of these properties are heightened when they cannot see the plant and where there are elements of discovery in emerging sensual contrasts. Deleuze wants us to connect to the pure variations that ideas and sensations may connect to: becoming harder, softer, pricklier, spongier. This does not necessarily imply connecting more comprehensively to more actual cactuses and coconuts. For Deleuze, the things that operate in the processes that bring us about and make us into individuals are not actual objects and the knowledge we may gain of them but the sensual variations and the variations in ideas that take place in order for actual things to gain a living significance for us.

The view put forward with Deleuze's principles is that pure variations must not be confused with actual things. In order for these variations to enrich the way we may live with them in the future, we must leave behind the urge to identify the intensity of sensations with actual things and only those things (*Why does this collection of images and things matter so much to me?*). A pure difference is transferable through very different actual things and only depends on them for its expression and not for its essence. A pure difference has to be actualised but it is not only that which becomes actualised. This realm of pure 'becomings' is what he calls the virtual and the becomings are changing virtual 'intensities' and relations of pure movements constituting changes in 'Ideas'. According to Deleuze's principles, we must connect with these pure becomings but we can only do so through actual things that capture the variation in a particular way. When the children feel the skin of the coconut, less actual sight is more connection to a virtual becoming hard, becoming hairy, becoming grainy that apply through an unlimited range of actual things (*Your head is like a coconut but less grainy.*).

VIRTUAL AND ACTUAL

Deleuze gives us new concepts to account for what exists and for reality, in particular, in his definition of reality as both the virtual and the actual. For example, a coconut is both an actual

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coconut and the intensities or pure becomings it expresses in the encounter with the sensations of individuals (to become hard, to become grainy, to become hairy, to quench, to nourish). In the actual coconut, there is something of all the other things that can become hard or grainy – that something is their virtual side, the common intensities they express. Importantly, Deleuze deduces the structure of the relations that hold between the virtual and actual side of real things. This structure describes reality as a dynamic relation between the virtual and the actual.

He is, therefore, committed to the reality of things that are neither actual nor identifiable. These intensities or pure becomings are necessary for the explanation of significance and sensation in the realm of actual things. Yet, they cannot belong to that realm because, if they were identifiable – that is, measurable and comparable – then sensation and significance would be secondary to external structures of measurement and value. Deleuze wants to resist such moves because he believes that true sensation and significance are a matter of incomparable events, movements that are uniquely significant to individuals (*Well, it matters to me! How could this leave you cold?*). Many of the most important arguments of *Difference and Repetition* are developed either to show the reality and necessity of intensities as a condition for significant events or to show that there are such things as virtual intensities that cannot be accounted for in terms of actual identities. Intensities are a necessary condition for explanations of why life is significant but uniquely so for each individual. As such, intensities could not be identifiable as comparable qualities of actual experiences or objects.

Despite Deleuze and Guattari's later definition of philosophy as the creation of concepts in *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze's philosophical arguments are not only about the invention of concepts but about thinking according to principles, in the light of a structural account of what exists. The principles loosely relate creation and structure. *Because A is in the following relation to B and vice versa, it is best to follow these principles when we think and, indeed, when we invent concepts.* So what kind of structure do the principles given above react to? It is a two-sided one, rather than one of two realms – that is, it never makes full sense to speak of the virtual without the actual or the reverse. The sides involve different things – virtual ideas and intensities on the one hand, actual things on the other. Intensities form relations where they envelop or cover one another (*My jealousy has covered my love.*). These relations of

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envelopment bring different virtual ideas into greater clarity and obscurity (*As jealousy covered love the idea of humanity as conflict grew clearer and the idea of humanity as trusting receded into the depths.*).

Virtual ideas ('Ideas') are relations of pure becomings. They differ in terms of differences in intensity in the relations between these becomings. Ideal arrangements come about when pure becomings are illuminated differently or made more distinct by intensities as they emphasise some pure becomings while others recede into an obscure background, though never fully disappear (*The intensity that accompanied my actual jealousy made the idea of a trusting humanity impossible for me, impossible for me to actually embody.*). So, though actual things may fall into categories such as species, Deleuze claims that, as individuals, they must also be thought of as expressions of virtual intensities and ideas, in a way that cannot be fully accounted for in terms of species. Thus, the two sides of the individual, the virtual and the actual, are said to be asymmetrical. The principles that govern the formation of ideas (virtual Ideas, more precisely) are not the same as the causal laws governing species. Yet, an event among individuals and species implies an event among ideas. Indeed, for Deleuze, it only really makes sense to speak of events as, at the same time, virtual and actual.

Given this definition of reality, a full explanation of an event must involve a consideration of the virtual and of the actual and, more importantly, of the ways in which actual events touch on virtual events. Deleuze describes the parallels that allow us to think in terms of this 'touch'. For example, the way in which an individual resists complete insertion into a given species is by the 'individuating factors', the relations of sensations, intensities and ideas that each individual expresses in its particular way. According to Deleuze, you are not different from other humans because you differ in this or that actual characteristic but because your thoughts and sensations, the way you change, express a different relation of intensities and, therefore, ideas (becoming hardened, becoming receptive, becoming softer). Here, we can begin to see why the concept of difference is so important for *Difference and Repetition*. It is because he wants to distinguish actual differences, defined by characteristics that are ruled by the possibility of negation (*not-kind-hearted*), from pure differences or intensities (*Becoming hardened is not not-becoming softer and each one of us expresses becoming hardened in a different way – that is, sets it in a different relation to other becomings, including becoming softer.*).

Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition

Three pages from the end of the main body of *Difference and Repetition* (pp. 259–61, 332–4), Deleuze explains this two-sided structure in relation to death, drawing a few remarks about suicide that cannot fail to remind us of his own death by suicide at the term of a long illness (Deleuze was born in Paris in 1925 and died there in 1995). Death has two faces, an actual death, the ceasing of the heartbeat or of activity in the brain, but also a series of virtual deaths, the way in which our becomings lead us to change irrevocably (*As I became more hardened, the child in me died . . . as I became older, the adult in me died and the adolescent returned.*).

So, in terms of the two central principles of connecting and forgetting, there is an interplay between an actual death, which we flee and see as 'accidental' and 'violent' because it cuts our existence as an actual thing, and a series of small deaths and rebirths that dissolve the self – that is, express pure becomings in parts of actual minds and bodies. Both sides of death are part of dying. As we become, we die as this particular self and we move towards a final death. But there is something revivifying in the expression of becomings, they make a life that must end in death one that participates in intensities (*I just had to feel the whip of sea spray one last time.*). So the first principle guides us to our sensations, to seek out as greater expression of intensities as possible whilst having to live with the restriction implied by the limitation of our actual bodies and minds – *connect*. In order to do this, without letting our fear of actual death restrict us, we must pay heed to the second principle and learn to forget our attachments to any particular self and body – *forget*.

Hence the battle cry that Deleuze borrows from Spinoza 'We do not know what our bodies are capable of' – that is, experiment with your body and hence your mind in order to live intensely. Forget your attachment to this particular body and mind. Deleuze goes on to describe suicide as the attempt to bring together both faces of death, as if there was a right time and way to die. But he knows that this is not possible – the actual death of the self never coincides with the small deaths of an individual because the individual is not the self:

Every death is double, and represents the cancellation of large differences in extension as well as the liberation and swarming of little differences in intensity . . . Suicide is an attempt to make the two incommensurable faces correspond. However, the two sides do not meet, and every death remains double. (DR, pp. 259, 333)

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Suicide ends the life of an actual person and, thereby, it releases new intensities (sensations in others as intensities envelop one another in different ways) whilst cancelling others (the sensations of pain and suffering). But this does not mean that these intensities are different and better because they take place without the intermediary of that actual person. Suicide may both decrease connections and fail to create more intense ones. Perhaps, it can be only be said to fit with Deleuze's principles when the individual life associated with an actual person has become terribly restricted in what it can express.

DIFFERENCE AND REPETITION

Deleuze wants to give us arguments against the restriction of reality to actual identifiable things. This can be seen in the insistence on a twin but not symmetrical event: a side in pure difference and a side in actual things – a virtual death and an actual one. I have used the term pure difference, as opposed to Deleuze's preferred term 'difference in itself', in order to allow for a more simple sense of the difference between the virtual and the actual: pure difference is not actual. However, in later chapters, I will return to these terms in order to understand why pure difference is only an approximate, if useful, way of understanding Deleuze. His concern is to show how actual things alter due to their relation to pure differences or, better, to difference in itself. He also wants to show that, if we are to understand how to act in such a way as to make our lives intense and individual and to understand and react to the intensity of our environments, then we must experiment with our thoughts and bodies to turn to novel intensities, to difference in itself. But pure difference, or difference in itself, can only be thought of as well determined in relation to the actual – in Deleuze's words, there is a relation of 'reciprocal determination' between the virtual and the actual.

However, he must also explain how this interaction of creative experimentation (both passive and active) and of changing virtual intensity and ideas takes place. What processes explain change on both sides of reality, in the virtual and the actual? How do the virtual and the actual relate to one another as actual things change? This is where the inseparability of the two concepts from the book's title comes into play. Things acquire and lose an actual identity through repetition. Intensities come into relation with each other through repetition. Repetition allows us to explain

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the relation of virtual events to actual events and vice versa. Put simply, this means that things acquire fixity, that is, they acquire parts and hence boundaries through repetition. These parts and boundaries then allow us to see the individual as a member of a class or species. For example, the boundaries of an animal's territory come from the repeated prowling and marking of its perimeter. Or we acquire an accent from the repetition of particular intonations. Neither the actual territory nor the accent exist prior to the repetitions. Deleuze identifies this first repetition with habit. A second repetition explains recognition and its relation to memory. We come to recognise an actual thing and assign a fixed identity to it because habitual repetitions, recorded in memory, lead us to have a fixed representation of things. I recognise my territory and its fixed limits because I have a representation of it that has emerged from repetitions stored in memory (though Deleuze has a surprising and innovative account of memory that will be studied in greater depth later in this book).

Finally, a third type of repetition, albeit a profoundly counter-intuitive one, explains how things change in relation to virtual becomings, to difference in itself. The first two repetitions are, in fact, illusory when viewed as final accounts. According to Deleuze, repetition in habit and memory are only possible on a background of virtual differences. There is not only the repetition of the prowl round the territory and the memory of that prowl but a further infinite series of other repetitions that the particular territory abstracts from: the changing cycles of weather, the repeated paths of other animals, the cycle of aging of the animal, the flux of seasons, the encroachment of civilisation that beats to human and mechanical rhythms, the ebb and flow of conflicting desires and emotions, the mutation of vegetation and species.

In terms of these other series, each member of any given series is not the same as the others but different – each member is an individual with different relations to a wider environment. That difference, the change that runs through a repeated series, cannot be thought of in terms of a description of the actual relations between the position of two members with respect to the infinite number of other series since this cannot be grasped – hence the necessity of abstraction. The difference is resistant to actual identification. Neither can it be sensed in terms of specific differences without destroying the sense of continuity in the repetition. The difference runs through series and cannot be limited to a specific change at a specific place and time. Series are never a repetition

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of the same thing, nor a variation according to identifiable and limited differences.

For Deleuze, the condition for what we commonly understand as repetition in habit and memory is, in fact, the continuity afforded by the variation of an intensity in an idea or sensation. The marking of the same territory takes place against the background of a variation in intensities between one parade and another (becoming hot, becoming thirsty, becoming fearful, becoming impotent). It is these variations that give life, understood as the first two repetitions, intensity and value, but also risk and error. We can fight against this underlying expression of these variations and hence against life: always the same route to the end (*But doctor, I'm as fit as I've ever been!*) Or we can seek to re-intensify the patterns that give consistency to our actual lives (*How can this be done differently and better? How can a changing life be given greater significance?*) The two principles given above are Deleuze's first directions for following the second option. *Vary your life so that it expresses all deep intensities or differences in themselves (connect with everything).* But we know that the abstractions of habit and memory militate against the emergence of new sensations and hence against the expression of virtual intensities and ideas (*After the pain of separation, she built herself a protective wall of routines and safe places.*) So do not make your variation depend on representation, habit and memory. *Leave all actual things behind (forget everything).*

At this point, the extent of the ambitions and revolutionary aims of *Difference and Repetition* come into view. It is not only a book on 'how a life is lived best', rather, it is a book that claims that pure differences are the other face of all actual things – there is no such thing as a well-defined actual life. Even the focus on a life and on a notion of 'the best' risks missing the scope of the revolution suggested by Deleuze. The book goes beyond subjective concerns and beyond the limits of any living being. Instead, its claims should be seen as speculative and metaphysical about a cosmic dimension. He claims that *all* our representations, senses and concepts of identities are illusions (nothing fixed is real). The book provides principles for lifting those illusions and connecting best to difference in itself.

PASSIVE SYNTHESSES

Up to now, I have given descriptions of what Deleuze says, rather than a critical assessment. But how do we know that his

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description of reality in terms of the actual and the virtual is true? What is the claim to truth of his explanation of change in terms of difference in itself and repetition 'for itself', that is, in terms of repetition against the background of pure variations or difference in itself? What is wrong with causal explanations of events? Or theistic explanations? Or causal explanations allied to ones in terms of human free will? The first step in answering these questions lies in a further condition for the three repetitions outlined above in their relation to difference in itself. Any given actual circuit of an animal's territory or utterance in a given accent implies a *synthesis* of prior repetitions. Deleuze's account of the structure of reality depends on arguments for the necessity and universality of synthesis.

We only acquire habits by synthesising earlier members of a series in later ones. We only acquire representations in memory and in language by synthesising earlier memories that are themselves syntheses of experiences. So the concept 'chair', or our idea of a chair, depends on a synthesis of prior 'experiences' of chairs (it would be better to think of these as chair-events, in order to avoid any reliance on a well-defined 'subject of the experience' or even a phenomenological intentionality). More shockingly, with respect to causal explanations based on causal relations between well-defined things, an actual individual is only a synthesis of prior individuals. That synthesis is itself continually changing with respect to other series in which it is synthesised and with respect to the pure variations it synthesises. This fluid nature of synthesis can be understood in the same way as the third repetition outlined above: any series implies an infinity of other series, where an individual member of the series stands out due to the variations in intensity it expresses. That walk that you take everyday is different each time and significant each time because it involves variations in intensities with respect to earlier and later ones and changing relations with wider series. You change with the walk and with the sensations and their intensities (*I'm getting tired of this. Will she be at the balcony this time? Is this the last time this winter?*).

According to Deleuze, well-defined things are mere abstractions, or, in a more technical language, they are transcendental illusions. Causal explanations are, at best, incomplete illusions since they hide the continuous virtual syntheses that rumble on beneath a causal chain of events. This explains why the two main chapters of *Difference and Repetition*, chapters 4 and 5, are titled

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'Ideal synthesis of difference' and 'Asymmetrical synthesis of the sensible'. It is because the first explains and argues for the way in which singular variations, such as becoming fearful, become synthesised with others in an idea, such as the idea 'becoming fearful and becoming violent'. The chapter, therefore, explains why the virtual is not a pure chaos in contrast to actual things. It is instead determined through reciprocal relations with the actual. The virtual is not an undifferentiated mass of becomings but a changing series of relations: Deleuze's virtual 'Ideas' are structures of pure becomings.

Chapter 5, on the other hand, explains and argues for the way in which individuals are syntheses of virtual ideas and intensities through a reciprocal determination of the actual and the virtual. Furthermore, both chapters argue that the virtual syntheses in ideas drive actual syntheses in habit, memory or creation – *Why have becoming fearful and becoming violent become so strongly linked? Because of actual repetitions. Why have these actual repetitions happened? Because they express the relation of virtual intensities. In Deleuze's usage of 'idea', they express and deepen the becoming fearful and becoming violence idea.* So, from the point of view of Deleuze's search for a new view of thought and in terms of his principles, these chapters must be seen as difficult twins: there is a reciprocal relation between the ideal synthesis of difference and the asymmetrical synthesis of sensibility, between virtual and actual syntheses. So any event implies: (i) a synthesis of virtual repetitions; (ii) the synthesis of actual repetitions (in habit and memory); and (iii) a synthesis of the reciprocal determinations of the virtual and actual in what Deleuze calls the third synthesis. This last synthesis corresponds to the third repetition outlined above. It leads to the principles of connecting and forgetting. The third synthesis and repetition connect the actual world to the intense virtual one and overcome the tendency of the first two repetitions to stasis (*There is no other way. We have always done it that way. You are what we say you are.*).

But isn't there a contradiction between the notion of synthesis and the second principle? Do we not have to build up knowledge and plan in order to synthesise? Isn't synthesis a conscious activity that depends on representations? Aren't the capacity to represent and self-consciousness pre-conditions for synthesis? Therefore, aren't they things that we ought not to 'forget' according to the second principle? No. When Deleuze uses the term synthesis he means a *passive* synthesis, that is, one that does not

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require a representation of the series to be synthesised in an active consciousness. He also means a *disjunctive* synthesis; a synthesis where a series is cut and assembled in new and heterogeneous ways. This view is relatively uncontroversial with respect to habit, the first repetition (*I cannot explain fully how I came to be able to do this – it just happened with practice and evolved in different directions over time.*). Things are more complicated with respect to the second repetition or synthesis in memory but, here too, Deleuze claims that the representation occurs prior to conscious activity; that is, we acquire the idea of a chair before we turn our conscious attention to the idea or concept of a chair. It is, of course, true that our decision to investigate different types of chairs appears to be conscious, but the way in which the idea is then organised, extended and altered in multiple directions in the presence of chairs is passive. For instance, we have many more memories than we are conscious of at a given time or that we have been conscious of collecting (*Haven't I been here before?*).

The third repetition or synthesis is even more resistant. Do we not choose to *seek out* intensity? Aren't Deleuze's principles dependent on freedom as a ground that denies passive synthesis since we must choose to follow principles and represent the different possibilities they imply? No. The senses of self and of possibilities have emerged out of prior passive syntheses in habit and memory – they cannot represent them fully to themselves. As individuals we express pure differences and intensities, but many more and differently than we can be conscious of, or can capture in representations (*You are much more than you think you are. Your conscious choice of actual possibilities does not capture what you really are as a virtual and actual event. The future can't be caught full on.*). So the third synthesis happens irrespective of conscious choices – again, there is no reason to separate plants, animals and humans on the grounds that humans are fully conscious of their becomings. So we must be very cautious in interpreting Deleuze's principles and be aware of the great difficulties, he would say the insoluble problems, they emerge out of. *It is best for our thoughts to connect with everything, but we cannot know what we connect to, it connects to us. It is best to select our thoughts so that we forget everything, including ourselves and our sense of selecting between possibilities.*

So passive synthesis allows Deleuze to explain the necessity of the three repetitions and the relation of difference to repetition. It provides a consistent ground for the principles by cancelling the pervasive philosophical and common-sense temptation to seek a

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grounding in consciousness. It also cancels the presupposition that the choices implied by the principles are actual identifiable possibilities that we shall be able to divide into well-defined categories (*These things will always be bad for me.*). However, this benefit comes at the price of making the principles much more problematic. We have to seek an openness to difference in itself. We have to allow passive synthesis of the third kind to occur. Rather than selecting a pure variation, an intensity, an idea, these must happen to us and make us individuals. More seriously, we have to find ways to escape the hold of our senses of self, identities and categories in order for this happening to take place. This is why Deleuze describes the third repetition as a ‘dice throw’, a risky, creative and experimental act that does not know its outcome. It is also why he describes and gives value to a ‘broken self’ and a ‘dissolved self’ that underlie the self we are conscious of: ‘That is why the individual in intensity finds its psychic image neither in the organisation of the self nor in the determination of species of the I, but rather in the fractured I and the dissolved self’ (DR, pp. 259, 332).

These moves, dependent on passive synthesis, return us to the critical question concerning truth and validity. Why is this account in terms of passive syntheses true? What is the nature and validity of the argument for that truth? What evidence can Deleuze give, against common sense, science and technology, that well-defined things in causal chains are merely illusions? *Don't things have biochemical properties that explain actual causal reactions?*

DIALECTICS

The arguments supporting Deleuze’s account of the structure of virtual and actual, of difference and repetition and of the relation between the three passive syntheses take two forms. They can already be seen in the explanations I have used in the previous sections. First, Deleuze’s structure grows by asking what the conditions are for a given thing. For example: ‘What is the condition for change in actual things?’ or ‘What is the condition for the first and second type of repetition?’ Second, in asking these questions, Deleuze seeks to move towards a complete account of any structure, one where no event is left unexamined with respect to its condition. In terms of classical arguments from the history of philosophy, Deleuze provides transcendental deductions, that is,

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arguments that deduce the form of appearance by asking what the conditions have to be for something to be given or to appear as it is. These deductions then allow us to know more about the way a given thing must appear. He also provides synthetic arguments based on a principle of reason, that is, any event must have a reason and an event is known better the more is known of its reasons, that is, its conditions. As will be seen later in the book, Deleuze provides original twists on both these forms and together they become his full method: Deleuzian dialectics.

Transcendental deductions allow Deleuze to describe the structure of virtual and actual without having to conflate the two. We do not have to have an actual experience of the condition in order to know truths about it. So we do not have to have an experience of the virtual. The event given as the starting point for a deduction can turn out to be very different from its first appearance and our common-sense views about it. This is because many of the common-sense impressions regarding what is given are not necessary for the deduction of the condition and, once that deduction has taken place, we discover many counter-intuitive truths about the given or about how we must think about its appearance given the nature of the condition. So the common-sense view of things and causality, or the demands of scientific method regarding causality and the need to think in terms of well-defined objects, data or properties, can both be avoided as necessary presuppositions for a philosophical reflection on reality. The questions asked at the end of the previous section, regarding the nature of objects and the validity of syntheses are, therefore, blunted by this kind of argument, if successful.

Deleuze's strange assertions concerning difference in itself and pure variations or intensities that we cannot experience depend on transcendental deductions. But how should these arguments be deployed? What events need to be explained in terms of their conditions and, more importantly, what things can we know well enough to be sure that we can deduce their conditions? Deleuze turns to Leibniz and Spinoza in order to answer these questions. Put simply, he intends to seek completeness according to a principle of reason (Leibniz) and he intends to seek understanding by giving priority to a full understanding of the conditions for a given thing over a full understanding of the thing itself (Spinoza's synthetic method). That is, a thing is known better through its conditions (Spinoza would say causes) or through what it expresses, than through an isolated examination

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of what it is, followed by a less secure investigation of its causes and effects. In the language set out earlier, Deleuze asks, 'What does this actual thing repeat or synthesise, in habit and memory?' and, more importantly, 'What is it driven to repeat or synthesise, in terms of intensities or difference in itself?' These questions are justified on the basis of arguments that show that the three repetitions are necessary conditions for a given thing and that thing is only thought properly, according to a principle of reason, through a complete approach to the three syntheses.

The work on conditions allows for a Deleuzian definition of reasons as the necessary conditions for a thing to appear. This puts great pressure on the work on conditions. If these do not take a form that allows for specific conditions for specific things to emerge, then he will be left with a highly sceptical philosophy that merely has some general and abstract conditions for the appearance of things that limit any further higher knowledge. Higher knowledge would apply to conditions as opposed to a merely speculative and insecure commitment to causality or other laws at the level of the things independent of how they must appear, or things in themselves. For example, if the sole condition for an appearance turns out to be that there is an abstract form of intuition that allows for any appearance and this form is the same for all appearances, then the highest reasons would be the same very thin reason for all appearances. In fact, for Deleuze, in great contrast to Kant's work in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, we will see that conditions are appearance-specific in the sense that the abstract form of conditions turns out to be that there must be specific conditions for each thing, rather than general ones for all of them. It is as if the conditions for seeing things turned out to be specific vision apparatuses for each viewer and thing, as opposed to a single form of apparatus for all viewers and viewed things (*Cézanne's 'eyes', different from Van Gogh's, different from mine, different from yours.*).

In practice, Deleuze's method can be seen as guided by the principles of maximising connections defined in terms of reasons and of forgetting those things, including connections, that hinder this maximisation. These principles allow his philosophy to be seen in its widest scope. From a more theoretical point of view, concerning the method specific to the development of his own work and arguments, these principles have to be translated into a more precise conception of Deleuzian dialectics that includes the following methods:

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1. Critique
2. The reciprocal search for actual and virtual conditions
3. The search for completeness in terms of reasons determined by conditions
4. The dice throw, or creative and destructive forgetting, that moves beyond what is already discovered or expressed

These methods can be seen as components of a method that allows us to express the intensities of life, of individuals, as best we can. The methods have to be seen as interdependent, that is, each one cannot be fully understood, indeed, gives a mistaken view of Deleuze's dialectics, if it is considered or applied separately from the others.

The role of critique is to ensure the passivity of the synthesis; that is, through a critique of illusions of identity we allow ourselves to become open to the expression or thought of virtual becomings and to their structural relation to actual individuals. Critique clears the way for the other methods by allowing us to divest ourselves of the strong tendency of thought to return to identity and representation. This explains why so much of *Difference and Repetition* is spent on critical work in the history of philosophy and on the methods from the history of philosophy. Deleuze seeks to undermine the strong relation between common-sense views of the world as based on fixed things (selves, objects and values) and the philosophical reliance on identity (in representation, in the concept, of the subject or object). In particular, chapter 3 and the concluding chapter of the book insist on this critical work within the history of philosophy and with respect to the sciences, allowing only rapid and somewhat mysterious allusions to the other components of Deleuze's method. Chapter 3 criticises the dominance of a particular 'image of thought' in the history of philosophy, an image based on the subjection of our differing senses (imagination, sensibility, memory and so on) to a unified self-consciousness and to its capacity to represent and reflect on representations. The conclusion goes over the many ways in which difference in itself and repetition for itself have been missed or seen as secondary to the illusions of identity that result from this dominance of representation.

The search for conditions has already been outlined above in terms of the search for the intensities that are expressed through the sensations of any actual identity. 'What are the signs of intensity here?' is the important question. This explains why, in both

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Difference and Repetition and *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze spends a lot of time on the relation between intensities or difference in itself and signs or 'dark precursors'. Put very simply, this is somewhat like the questions asked by someone seeking to quell or tease an unruly individual or mob when they wonder, 'What rising and falling emotions are driving this situation?' This focus on unsure signs of intensity and on precursors also explains why Deleuze puts so much weight on the concept of learning in *Difference and Repetition*. He wants to show how real learning and teaching involve a search for signs and a creative experimentation with them that triggers learning as radical change in another or in oneself, as opposed to the concepts of learning by rote or acquiring knowledge of facts and procedures associated with correct moves on those facts. This explains the relation between critique and the search for conditions, followed by an experimental and creative work with signs. He criticises learning through the repetition of the same, in order to clear the way for learning as the triggering of intensities. The only way we move towards a complete learning is by expressing the intensities locked up in a situation in a new way (*How can I make the industrial revolution live for them?*). An interesting paradox is worth pointing out at this point. It may be that forcing someone to repeat and learn by rote is the best way of setting down signs for a more intense learning. This explains Deleuze's longstanding interest in humour in the way an overly mechanical repetition undermines the act that it repeats (*Charlie Chaplin on the assembly line in Modern Times.*).

Through its repetitions, through the way it creates the new by selecting what to repeat, any individual is not only the expression of virtual intensities and ideas but also an event that alters them. Deleuze does not explain the way in which things occur repeatedly on the basis of actual relations of cause and effect (*Their brains came to associate flowers and pain as the neural pathways became more fixed.*) but on the basis of the connection between individuals and the virtual (*Her resistance to jealousy diminished its intensity and made the idea of trust live more strongly.*). So the search for conditions takes place in both directions of the construction of reality: from the virtual to the actual (what Deleuze calls 'differentiation') and from the actual to the virtual (differentiation). The use of 'from' here indicates the way in which different intensities are related in an idea as they are expressed in actual individuals – the chaos of the virtual becomes determined in this way. It also indicates the way in which a given individual comes into existence

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and becomes a sign for other individuals: chaotic series become determined in an individual. The search for conditions is then a search for the reciprocal determination of the virtual and the actual. It is justified by Deleuze's transcendental deductions and by his view that the complete view of a thing must be actual and virtual. Hence the third method given above: we must search for complete determination.

But what does complete mean here? We have already seen the kind of problems raised by this question in the paradox and problem that lie between the two principles of connection and forgetting and between the first and second synthesis or repetition and the third. Complete determination cannot mean knowing the thing as something fixed and well determined. A learning that moves towards complete determination cannot mean knowing something in all its parts and in terms of what species and categories it belongs to (*If you know yourself, you know yourself as dying. Know your love and lose it.*). On the contrary, if we are to move to a sense of completeness and learning that capture the virtual side of things, then it is exactly not as actual identities or fixed things. We have to learn about them and ourselves as things that are the expression of difference in itself, of pure intensities. This can only be done by the risk-laden dice throw, that is, by experimenting with ways of repeating and synthesising differently. That is why Deleuze's dialectics tempers the first three methods of critique – the critical and constructive search for conditions and completeness. It adds a creative method that is destructive of the results they arrive at. We have to forget in order to be truly complete, in order to experiment with the ways in which individuals are reciprocal determinations of the actual and the virtual and the ways in which they resist representation and identity.

I have followed Deleuze in naming the conjunction of these methods a dialectics. This is despite the fact that dialectics as a method is connected with philosophers that he is assumed to be opposed to: Hegel and Aristotle. Deleuzian dialectics captures the intricate calculations and reciprocal relations that must govern thought as it works with the four sub-methods in order to emerge as an overall method. Unlike Hegel and Aristotle's dialectics, Deleuze's method cannot be seen as progressive either through a logic dependent on a movement from contradiction to synthesis or through a refinement of categories. In the first case, this is because of the demand to destroy any emergent progress

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or refinement, to forget it, in the risk-laden dice throw. In the second case, it is because categories are illusory from the point of view of the emergence of individuals with respect to difference in itself – no matter how refined and mobile your categories, they will not capture reality. So, though Deleuze draws a strong distinction between Nietzsche's affirmation and Hegel's dialectics in his *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, this dialectics, as contradiction and negation, is not the destructive and creative one of Deleuzian dialectics.

READING DIFFERENCE AND REPETITION

How should we read *Difference and Repetition*? The most important point, in answering this question, is to realise that the book is an application of the methods it explains and justifies. *Difference and Repetition* is a series of varying repetitions. These involve a critical method against representation, a learning of the reciprocal determination of actual individuals and virtual intensities, a search for completeness and a chance-driven experimentation with new concepts and ways of expressing intensities. This experimentation deliberately complicates the outcomes of the first three methods. In each of these, the book also involves justifications for the methods, through transcendental deductions and arguments based on the principle of reason as applied to a synthetic method. So the book is a product of Deleuzian dialectics – an intricate combination of critique, synthesis with a view to completion, and destructive creativity.

We are presented with a complicated work, not only in the sense that it does not proceed linearly, building on secure foundations and then proceeding, secure step by secure step, upwards to a conclusion, but in the sense of a work that undermines its partial achievements with a view to more complete ones. This means that a reading that takes any specific section of the book as the last word on a given matter (for example, by concluding that Deleuze is, above all, a critical philosopher) is likely to miss the significant input of other methods and sections of the book on that section. In practice, this kind of reductive reading is rather difficult and unsatisfactory anyway, since each section and chapter of *Difference and Repetition* involves elements from later sections and chapters and from all his methods. To use an expression favoured by Deleuze when he explains how a member of a repeated series harks back to and looks forward to other

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members, each section of the book is a 'contraction' of the rest of the book. That is, each section develops others to lesser or greater degrees of density. So each section is the complete book, but more or less distinct (and obscure) on each aspect. In particular, this contraction into greater distinctness and obscurity demands that similar points are made very differently in terms of style and context throughout the book. *The book is, therefore, like the world, each living thing – each individual – is a contraction of the world, a connection with all of the world. But it is individual through the way it connects by forgetting different perspectives on the world, by the way it selects a world.*

The importance of contraction means that the rather standard conclusion to the book is to be treated with considerable suspicion. The concept of finally summing up a given application of Deleuze's method runs counter to its spirit – it cannot be securely summed up in terms of specific conclusions about actual matters of fact. In order to respond to this problem, I have chosen to introduce the book through a study of principles, structures and methods. Specific conclusions about this or that real thing or event or faculty are always open to a different repetition, one that must take account of those conclusions but that must risk them anew in a differing repetition (*How can these conclusions be intensified again?*). The continuity of the book and of Deleuze's philosophy, the way it hangs together, is methodological and structural rather than a matter of knowledge or specific findings about things. This mirrors his views regarding learning set out above. In this context, his comment in the preface that readers need only read the conclusion are a sign of Deleuze's humour and irony – frequently encountered traps in *Difference and Repetition*. Readers need only read any part of the book, since each is a contraction of the others, but, if they read that part as the final word, then they will have fatally missed the point.

However, these views concerning the priority of methods over actual facts are controversial and must be approached critically. *Difference and Repetition* spends a lot of time on topics in the sciences, social sciences and the arts. This time has to be viewed as justified in terms of inspiration, illustration and exemplification rather than as a core foundation for Deleuze's argument or philosophical methods and structure. He does not touch on biology, literature, mathematics, psychology or linguistics in order to validate the philosophy, either in terms of sources of truth, justification through successful applications, or as a source of

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correct methodology. His recourse to other disciplines does not depend on the foundational validity of specific scientific discoveries, mathematical deductions or the relative value of art-works.

On the contrary, his turn to them is in terms of conceptual construction and exemplification – the science and art-works give rise to a set of ideas and illustrate them. So, if it appears that Deleuze is critical of a given theory or work in another discipline, it is solely on the grounds that it appears to depart from his philosophically justified principles, methods and structures. The critique is not made on the grounds of a deeper scientific or artistic understanding or sense – that is for scientists and artists. There is a temptation to view him as arguing for a philosophy–science–arts hybrid that overcomes the specificity of each. To give into it is a mistake, since it commits us to the theory that the hybrid, general thinker, covering scores of topics, has a better grasp of truth, validity and value than the individual specialist. Deleuze’s philosophy embraces the singularity of each individual and individual discipline as places for creative thought but it advocates a structure and series of principles for the extension of that thought to a thought about the lives and values of individuals.