

Introduction

Deleuze and Post-Kantian Thought: Method, Ideas and Aesthetics

Without doubt, Immanuel Kant's transcendental idealism constituted a major event in philosophy – one that continues to be actualised in multifarious ways today. It has provided the terms of reference and inspiration for several philosophical traditions, most notably German Idealism and Romanticism, but also various currents across the spectrum of contemporary philosophy.¹ In the work of Gilles Deleuze, Kant's presence is pronounced. Despite Deleuze's famous remark that his book on Kant's critical philosophy was intended 'as a book about an enemy',² this proclaimed hostility towards Kant rather proves that he regarded Kant as an important 'intercessor'³ whose concepts could be made to work in a new problematic setting. In fact, Deleuze expresses a kind of involuntary admiration for Kant: 'there functions a sort of thinking machine, a sort of creation of concepts that is absolutely frightening'.⁴ And in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze compares Kant to 'a great explorer' since he is 'the one who discovers the prodigious domain of the transcendental'.⁵ Kant's transcendental philosophy meant turning away from metaphysical projects of grounding philosophy on transcendent principles and values; it replaces the concept of essence with the concept of sense or appearance and the search for the conditions of appearances;

¹ Indeed, for those who find value in the so-called 'analytic' and 'continental' divide, it is not uncommon for Kant to be identified as the branching point of these two trajectories (bearing in mind, of course, that this divergence is retrospectively fabricated).

² Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 6.

³ *Ibid.* p. 125.

⁴ Gilles Deleuze, 'Synthesis and Time', Lecture Course on Kant held at Vincennes, 14 March 1978, available at <www.webdeleuze.com>

⁵ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. 135.

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it introduces time as a structure of empirical consciousness. For Deleuze, the ‘greatest initiative of transcendental philosophy’ is the introduction of difference in the ‘I’: the subject is fractured in the transcendental ‘I’ that thinks, and thereby generates its own empirical passive self in the form of time.⁶ In this regard, Deleuze claims that Hölderlin, rather than Fichte or Hegel, is the true descendant to Kant,⁷ because he poses the problem of the pure and empty form of time on the level of Greek tragedy, showing its shattering effect in Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*. On Deleuze’s reading, Oedipus is guilty of committing a crime – specifically, the excessive act of separating himself from the gods and doing away with divine judgement – and is therefore compelled to err along the straight line of pure and empty time.⁸

Remarks like these on Kant’s descendants (such as Maimon, Fichte, Hölderlin, Schelling and Hegel) occur throughout Deleuze’s corpus; and yet, a close assessment of these connections remains missing. Thus, while Deleuze’s debt to Kant is clear and well acknowledged, a great deal remains to be said on both the manner of his relations to many post-Kantian thinkers and indeed the post-Kantian tenor of his own thought.

An exception is perhaps Deleuze’s relationship to Hegel, which has received much attention of late in Deleuze scholarship. Generally, Deleuze is seen as an anti-Hegelian thinker⁹ – an impression solidified by his book on Nietzsche, which is unambiguously written with an anti-Hegelian edge. As is often remarked, Deleuze criticises Hegel’s dialectic for its appeal to concepts of negation: ontological difference is misrepresented as contradiction, leading to a ‘negation of negation’ that precludes any affirmation of difference.¹⁰ Hegel is thus regarded as having betrayed the philosophy of difference – a result that is rectified in Nietzsche. However, a more favourable reading of Hegel can be found in Deleuze’s 1954 review of Jean Hyppolite’s book *Logic and Existence*. There, Deleuze affirms Hyppolite’s interpretation of Hegelian dialectic

⁶ Ibid. p. 87.

⁷ Ibid. pp. 58 and 87.

⁸ Deleuze, ‘Synthesis and Time’. See also Gregory Flaxman, ‘Chronos is Sick: Deleuze, Antonioni and the Kantian Lineage of Modern Cinema’, in this volume, pp. ???

⁹ Cf. Deleuze’s distaste for Hegel is clearly expressed in his ‘Letter to a Harsh Critic’: ‘What I most detested was Hegelianism and dialectics’, in *Negotiations*, p. 6. However, in spite of this frequently cited enmity, recent scholarship also highlights the thematic connections and points of convergence between Deleuze and Hegel. See Nathan Widder, ‘State Philosophy and the War Machine’, in this volume, pp. ???

¹⁰ Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 196.

as an ontology of sense, which is to say, an ontology of expression: ‘*Philosophy must be ontology, it cannot be anything else; but there is no ontology of essence, there is only an ontology of sense.*’¹¹ The main claim of the book, according to Deleuze, is that philosophy has to rid itself of anthropology. Thus Hegel criticised the Kantian conception of reality, which remains tied to subjective representational experience or self-consciousness. Kantian concepts are extrinsic to the thing-in-itself, Hegel says, and ‘no fit terms to *express* the Absolute’.¹² For Hegel, there is nothing outside the concept: it fully expresses the dialectical development of the Absolute, consisting in the stages of unity, difference and unity-in-difference. In Hyppolite’s words, it expresses the sense or meaning of the Absolute. While Deleuze endorses Hyppolite’s account of Hegel’s dialectics as a model of immanent self-differentiation, where the concept is revealed as the expression of the Absolute, he nonetheless asks ‘whether an ontology of difference couldn’t be created that would not go all the way to contradiction, since contradiction would be less and not more than difference’.¹³ This remark already anticipates Deleuze’s own elaboration of a philosophy of difference as well as his own logic of sense.

Deleuze’s engagement with post-Kantian philosophy owes much to his teachers: besides his lecturer Jean Hyppolite, this is most notably Martial Guérout. Olivier Revault, a longtime friend of Deleuze during his time as a Sorbonne student, reports that they admired Martial Guérout for his close readings and structural method: ‘I always found Gilles to be a great student of Guérout.’¹⁴ In fact, explicit traces of Guérout can be found in the footnotes of many of Deleuze’s books. When discussing the work of Maimon or Fichte, Deleuze usually refers to Guérout’s book *La Philosophie transcendantale de Salomon Maimon* (1929) or the two volumes of *L’Évolution et la structure de la doctrine de la science chez Fichte* (1930). It seems likely that Deleuze knew Maimon and Fichte first and foremost through reading Guérout. Of course, the most obvious homage to Guérout is Deleuze’s 1969 article ‘Guérout’s General Method for Spinoza’, which was

¹¹ Gilles Deleuze, ‘Jean Hyppolite’s *Logic of Existence*’, in David Lapoujade (ed.), *Desert Islands and Other Texts (1953–74)*, trans. Michael Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), p. 15.

¹² G. W. F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia Logic*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975 [1830]), §44, p. 72.

¹³ Deleuze, ‘Jean Hyppolite’s *Logic of Existence*’, p. 18.

¹⁴ Cited in François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p. 97.

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published only one year after Guérout's extensive study of part I of the *Ethics*.¹⁵

So far, we have traced the autobiographical encounters by which certain ideas of German idealism – of Maimon, Fichte and Hegel – influenced Deleuze's philosophy. Beyond that, the aim of this volume is to show the common themes and concepts that Deleuze shares with post-Kantian thought. Deleuze is certainly not a post-Kantian thinker in the manner of German Idealism and Romanticism. Nevertheless, as Christian Kerslake has argued, many of his '*questions and problems* emerge from within the post-Kantian tradition of philosophy'.¹⁶ Indeed, Kerslake goes so far as to claim that 'Deleuze's own conception of his philosophical project is fundamentally post-Kantian in its assumptions' – a strong thesis that he justifies primarily with regard to Deleuze's 1956–7 lecture series *Qu'est-ce que fonder?*.¹⁷ This early lecture course is the most coherent and explicit engagement of Deleuze with the post-Kantian tradition and, as Kerslake claims, it already sets the course for Deleuze's attempt 'to transform Kantianism from within, and to produce a self-grounding post-Kantian system of complete self-differentiation'.¹⁸ Kerslake interprets Deleuze's philosophy as a continuation of the Kantian project, as carrying out a 'Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having its own concept'.¹⁹ But while Kerslake's careful and detailed argumentation has a lot to commend it, it is debatable whether Deleuze's philosophical thinking can be systematised to the extent that Kerslake suggests. The aim of this book is comparably modest: as a collection, the contributions seek to identify some significant common problems and interests that link Deleuze in various ways to the diverse tradition of post-Kantian thought.²⁰ As way of introduction, we will discuss a few themes that seem to entail eminent points of resonance between Deleuze's thought and post-Kantian philosophy:

¹⁵ Martial Guérout, *Spinoza/1, Dieu (Ethique, I)* (Paris: Aubier-Montaigne, 1968); Gilles Deleuze, 'Guerout's General Method for Spinoza', in David Lapoujade (ed.), *Desert Islands and Other Texts (1953–74)*, trans. Michael Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), pp. 146–155.

¹⁶ Christian Kerslake, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 26.

¹⁹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 40–1.

²⁰ Perhaps, Joe Hughes' contribution to this collection 'Ground, Transcendence and Method in Deleuze's Fichte' comes closest to Kerslake's suggestion, as the common problem that he identifies for both Deleuze and Fichte is 'the completion of the Kantian enterprise'. See this volume, p. ???

(1) the notion of a synthetic and constructive method; (2) the Idea or the Absolute; and (3) Aesthetics.

THE NOTION OF A SYNTHETIC AND CONSTRUCTIVE METHOD

The German Idealists were disappointed by Kant's attempt to ground experience and knowledge in the *a priori* mental structure of the transcendental subject. Kant presupposed *a priori* facts about cognition, i.e. forms and categories that were supposed to secure an objective standard of knowledge, but the German Idealists found his justification wanting. Kant's transcendental deduction of the pure concepts of the understanding is built on formal logic; it takes as its inspiration the Aristotelian table of logical forms of judgement and proceeds by formal logical inference. However, convinced by Jacobi, the German Idealists doubted that general logic is an adequate model for philosophy, since it is entirely formal and completely abstracts from all relation to empirical reality. Maimon was the first to ask: 'how is it conceivable that *a priori* concepts of the understanding like those of cause and effect can provide determinations of something *a posteriori*?'²¹ The underlying problem is the fundamental distinction between formal logic and the real. In fact, it was Kant's great achievement to have rejected traditional metaphysics by insisting on the distinction between 'logical' relations and 'real' relations. In the 'Remark to the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection', Kant accuses Leibniz of misrepresenting the real relations of space and time: Leibniz draws these representations into the concept and thus reduces them to merely logical and intelligible relations of things.²² However, in the wake of this distinction, Kant had to struggle with the hiatus between logical concepts and real relations. A possible solution to this predicament was sketched out by certain post-Kantian philosophers: 'Should not transcendental logic be deduced from its principle *independently* of general logic?'²³ Maimon, Hölderlin, Novalis, Schlegel, Schelling and Hegel, each in his own way, were searching for a more compelling derivation or sufficient reason which would provide a

²¹ Salomon Maimon, *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, trans. Nick Midgley, Henry Somers-Hall, Alistair Welchman and Merten Reglitz (London, New York: Continuum, 2010 [1790]), p. 41.

²² Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. and ed. Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), A275–26/B331–2.

²³ Paul Franks, 'Serpentine Naturalism and Protean Nihilism: Transcendental Philosophy in Anthropological Post-Kantianism, German Idealism, and Neo-Kantianism', in Brian Leiter and Michael Rosen (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Continental Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 258.

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basis for the real relations of space and time, no less than for the matter of experience itself. What was needed was a foundation for empirical reality as a whole. Ironically, the German Idealists returned to the pre-Kantian metaphysicians, and in particular to Spinoza, in order to improve on Kantian transcendental philosophy.²⁴

As Spinoza has argued, ‘the true method of discovery is to form thoughts from some given definitions’.²⁵ However, a complete or perfect definition must satisfy some requirements: it should not simply *postulate* the existence of the thing with all its properties. On the contrary, it must be possible to *deduce* the innermost essence of the thing including all its properties from the definition. As an example for an incomplete definition of a thing, Spinoza takes the nominal definition of a circle:

If a circle is defined as a figure, such that all straight lines drawn from the centre to the circumference are equal, every one can see that such a definition does not in the least explain the essence of a circle, but solely one of its properties.²⁶

Instead, a definition is required which provides an explanation for the *production* of the figure – that is, a real definition explaining how it arises. In the case of the circle it can be a dynamic rule of construction, such as ‘the figure described by any line whereof one end is fixed and the other free’.²⁷ Salomon Maimon discusses the example of the definition of the circle in his *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* and similarly comes to the conclusion that a nominal definition is insufficient, because we would only ‘know the meaning of the rule or condition of the circle’ but not its mode of genesis. As Maimon says: ‘Should it be incapable of fulfilment, then the concept here expressed in words would have no objective reality: its synthesis would be found only in words but not in the thing itself.’²⁸ He therefore demands a ‘real definition’, which supplies an explanation of the way that things arise, i.e. a method of generation that also provides the basis for the ‘material completeness’ of the thing. In analogy to the geometrical method by means of which synthetic concepts can be constructed, philosophy needs to find a genetic and synthetic method to explain the genesis of objects.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 256.

²⁵ Benedict de Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding*, in Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding, The Ethics & Correspondence*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1955), §94, pp. 34–5.

²⁶ Ibid. §95, p. 35.

²⁷ Ibid. §96, p. 35.

²⁸ Maimon, *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy*, p. 50.

While this is not the place to engage in a full discussion of Maimon's solution to the problem of the genesis of things, we can nevertheless see the way in which geometry and its method of construction of concepts served as an inspiration for philosophy. This sympathy for the geometric method is largely due to Spinoza, which he had rendered reputable through the application of the *more geometrico* in his *Ethics*.

As Martial Guérout argued, Spinoza's use of definitions, propositions and demonstrations by no means follows a formal logic of inference. Spinoza does not begin with a self-evident principle from which all other beliefs are derived in a chain of deduction. Instead, Spinoza arrives at the definition of a single substance or God within the first eight propositions of the *Ethics*: in the beginning, he defines the attributes as qualified substances, which are distinct in reality but not numerically distinct. Together they constitute one and the same substance. In Guérout's words: 'God is motley, but unfragmentable, constituted of heterogeneous but inseparable attributes.'²⁹ According to this interpretation, the attributes are genealogical elements of substance whose definition is derived by means of a genetic and synthetic method. Thus, Spinoza's geometric method is essentially synthetic – and therefore resembles the geometric method in mathematical constructions. In his article on Guérout, Deleuze emphasises that Spinozism as a 'genetic and constructive philosophy is inseparable from a synthetic method'.³⁰ In the same article he also praises Guérout for having demonstrated a 'deep Spinozism of Fichte': Fichte also pursued a synthetic method, 'which is opposed to Kant's analytic method'.³¹ In his Lecture course *Qu'est-ce que fonder?*, Deleuze explains that the Kantian transcendental project is based on facts of consciousness, or at least makes use of a hypothesis: if we have objective experience, then the categories must be objectively valid.

In the Kantian attempt a simple hypothesis subsists. Kant remains tied to simple facticity, Fichte says, while he, Fichte, seeks genesis. . . . Therefore Fichte claims 'Kant has never elevated himself to the transcendental analysis. His analysis is only regressive.'³²

Fichte took issue with the Kantian presupposition of the transcendental 'I'. It seemed not acceptable that the unconditioned ground of

²⁹ Guérout, *Spinoza*, pp. 234, 447. Cited in Deleuze, 'Guérout's General Method for Spinoza', p. 150.

³⁰ Deleuze, 'Guérout's General Method for Spinoza', p. 151.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 147.

³² Deleuze, *Qu'est-ce que fonder?*, trans. Daniela Voss. The lecture series is available at <www.webdeleuze.com>

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experience and of all objects of experience was an unknowable self, and that this unknowable self was at the same time the necessary condition to render free action possible. Fichte demanded access to the unconditioned, self-grounding subject and developed a theory of intellectual intuition resorting to the theory of mathematical construction. ‘Just as we prove a proposition in geometry through the construction of a figure in pure intuition, so in philosophy we should demonstrate the forms of the mind by constructing them in a pure intuition.’³³

Ironically, Kant himself had written on the method of construction in the first chapter of ‘The Transcendental Doctrine of Method’, but he explicitly relegated this method of cognition to the field of mathematics and argued against any attempt to draw metaphysical conclusions by mathematical constructions.

Mathematics is thoroughly grounded on definitions, axioms and demonstrations. I will content myself with showing that none of these elements, in the sense in which the mathematician takes them, can be achieved or imitated by philosophy; and that by means of his method the geometrician [*Meßkünstler*] can build nothing in philosophy except houses of cards . . . [P]hilosophy consists precisely in knowing its bounds.³⁴

The main distinction between mathematics and philosophy, Kant argues, lies in two different uses of reason: The philosophical use ‘is called the use of reason in accordance with concepts’.³⁵ It can provide nothing but a rule of synthesis, a pure concept, under which possible empirical intuitions can be subsumed. Thus it only amounts to discursive knowledge achieved by mere concepts. The mathematical use of reason ‘is the use of reason through construction of concepts’:³⁶ it allows the construction of synthetic concepts in pure intuition – that is, the pure objects themselves as spatio-temporal magnitudes (*quanta*). According to Kant, there is a great difference ‘between the discursive use of reason in accordance with concepts and its intuitive use through the construction of concepts’.³⁷ However, the German Idealists did not seem to be convinced.

In his essay ‘Über die Konstruktion in der Philosophie’, Schelling argues that the Kantian distinction between philosophy and mathemat-

³³ Frederick Beiser, *German Idealism: The Struggle Against Subjectivism, 1781–1801* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 296. See also Frederick Amrine, “‘The magic formula we all seek’: Spinoza + Fichte = x’, in this volume, p. ???

³⁴ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A726–7/B754–5 (translation modified by Daniela Voss).

³⁵ *Ibid.* A723/B751.

³⁶ *Ibid.* A724/B752.

³⁷ *Ibid.* A719/B747.

ics cannot be upheld.³⁸ On the contrary, the geometrical method is supposed to be analogous to the method in philosophy. The mathematician, in constructing a geometrical figure, realises the universal within the particular, the ideal within the real, just as the philosopher's task is to abstract from the contingent features of the particular and see it as an instantiation of the Absolute. The only difference lies in the nature of the universal: in geometry, the universal is the pure forms of intuition (space and time), while philosophy is concerned with the universe as a whole, i.e. the Absolute. In order to grasp the Absolute, the philosopher has to resort to 'intellectual intuition', which is a means to construct the identity of all things as archetypes or manifestations of the absolute principle. For Schelling, the mathematical method of construction played a vital role in his late Jena philosophy of intellectual intuition.³⁹ No doubt, Kant would have insisted that Schelling regresses to pre-Kantian metaphysics, that he has given up reflective thinking and affirmed speculative thought. Indeed, 'as speculative philosophy, German Idealism speaks ontologically once more: it considers "what everything is in itself"'.⁴⁰

We have already referred to Deleuze's approval of the synthetic and constructive method and he explicitly praises it as an achievement of the post-Kantians. In his lecture course *Qu'est-ce que fonder?*, he declares that the common theme of Maimon and Fichte is the substitution of a synthetic and genetic method for the Kantian discursive method of gaining knowledge from mere concepts. Even Hegel understands the dialectic as a synthetic and genetic method – in fact, as an ontological, dialectical movement of the things themselves.⁴¹ In what way does Deleuze take up this synthetic and genetic method in his own philosophy?

In a paper given to the members of the French Society of Philosophy on 28 January 1967, Deleuze explains his conception of 'the method of dramatization'.⁴² With this method Deleuze picks up on the Kantian theory of schematisation, which is supposed to settle the difficulties of mediation between concepts and intuition, and sketches a solution in his own way: he 'dramatizes' the schema and renders it dynamical. What he has in mind is something akin to Maimon's 'ideas of the understanding'

³⁸ F. W. J. Schelling, 'Über die Konstruktion in der Philosophie', in H. M. Baumgartner, W. G. Jacobs, H. Krings and H. Zeltner (eds), *Werke: Historisch-Kritische Ausgabe* (Stuttgart–Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976–), vol. V, pp. 125–34.

³⁹ Cf. Beiser, *German Idealism*, p. 585–8.

⁴⁰ Franks, 'Serpentine Naturalism and Protean Nihilism', p. 268.

⁴¹ Cf. Deleuze, *Qu'est-ce que fonder?*, available at <www.webdeleuze.com>

⁴² Gilles Deleuze, 'The Method of Dramatization', in David Lapoujade (ed.), *Desert Islands and Other Texts (1953–74)*, trans. Michael Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), pp. 94–116.

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or ‘differentials’ – i.e. non-representational, intensive elements that generate spatio-temporal intuition through reciprocal determination.

In a certain way, all the post-Kantians have tried to elucidate the mystery of this hidden art [schematisation], according to which dynamic spatio-temporal determinations genuinely have the power to dramatize a concept, although they have a nature totally different from the concept.⁴³

Spatio-temporal dynamisms, according to Deleuze, create particular spaces and times; they generate both the quantitative and qualitative nature of things⁴⁴ as well as their generic and specific characteristics (e.g. the way that an animal inhabits its territory, organises space). Spatio-temporal dynamisms also specify concepts, but not in the Kantian sense of synthesising possible sensations under empty logical forms; rather, the concepts themselves are generated. In other words, concepts don’t pre-exist, they are not dependent on mental structures, nor are the concepts derived from logical forms of judgement. Rather, concepts are generated in practical encounters, in real experience.⁴⁵ More precisely, the genesis of the act of thinking has its sufficient cause in an intensive reality that impinges on the sensible and nervous system of the body. This is what Deleuze calls ‘a strange theatre’ that affects the body and soul of ‘larval subjects’ (alluding to Antonin Artaud’s theatre of cruelty⁴⁶). What it also shows is that spatio-temporal dynamisms are not completely without a relation to subjectivity. As is generally known, Deleuze – just like Hölderlin, Novalis, Schlegel, Schelling and Hegel – completely abandons the Cartesian conception of self-consciousness, or the autonomous and self-sufficient Kantian–Fichtean subject as the starting point of philosophy. For the German Idealists, the subject still has an important role to play as the highest manifestation of the Absolute, the implicit *telos* of its self-differentiation. For Deleuze, however, the subject is not inherent as a *telos*, it is a real thing, a ‘larval subject’ that is open to processes of individuation and metamorphoses.

⁴³ Ibid. p. 99.

⁴⁴ As an example, Deleuze refers to the ‘dynamics of the egg’, i.e. the ‘cellular migrations, foldings, invaginations, stretchings’ that constitute a field of individuation for the embryo. A possible example of spatio-temporal dynamisms concerning inorganic nature could be the foldings and stretchings of barrier reefs or, as Deleuze says, ‘the geographical dynamism of the island (island as rupture with the continent, and island as an eruption from the deep)’. Deleuze, ‘The Method of Dramatization’, pp. 96 and 98.

⁴⁵ For instance, the concept of truth gains its material signification through dramatic dynamisms that specify ‘*who wants the true, when and where, how and how much?*’ Cf. Deleuze, ‘The Method of Dramatization’, p. 98.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 98. See also Henry Somers-Hall, ‘Feuerbach and the Image of Thought’, in this volume p. ???

What Deleuze presents in his paper on ‘The Method of Dramatization’ is a model of genesis and differentiation that in many ways is constructed along the lines of post-Kantian ideas. He accepts the post-Kantian critique that ‘Kant held fast to the point of view of conditioning without attaining that of genesis.’⁴⁷ His own model therefore accounts for the genesis of objects and subjects, thought and concepts, and presupposes as sufficient reason or transcendental condition a field of intensive differences, ‘an intensive *spatium* that preexists every quality and every extension’.⁴⁸ In Deleuze’s system, this intensive field is the ‘virtual Idea’ and the function of spatio-temporal dynamisms is to ‘dramatize’ or actualise the Idea.

The answer perhaps lies in a direction that certain post-Kantians have indicated: pure spatio-temporal dynamisms have the power to dramatize concepts, because first they actualize incarnate Ideas.⁴⁹

THE IDEA OR THE ABSOLUTE

German Idealism, in spite of its variety and diverse tradition, can be regarded as a philosophy of the Absolute or the Idea, which must be interpreted as something unconditioned, infinite and impersonal. The German Idealists thought of it as a sufficient reason or self-grounding principle. They thereby followed their ‘mentor’ Spinoza who defined substance as ‘that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself’ and argued that from ‘the idea of God . . . an infinite number of things follow in infinite ways’.⁵⁰

Schelling often refers to his philosophy as ‘the doctrine of ideas’ (*Ideenlehre*), and in his 1804 *System der gesamten Philosophie* describes the Absolute as something which is ‘from itself and through itself’ (*von sich selbst und durch sich selbst*).⁵¹ Hegel held that all finite things exist in the ‘universal divine idea’, just as Spinoza argued that ‘modes . . . can neither be, nor be conceived without substance; wherefore they can only be in the divine nature, and can only through it be

⁴⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 170.

⁴⁸ Deleuze, ‘The Method of Dramatization’, p. 97.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 99.

⁵⁰ Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, in Spinoza, *On the Improvement of the Understanding, The Ethics & Correspondence*, trans. R. H. M. Elwes (New York: Dover, 1955), Book I, def. 3, p. 45 and Book II, prop. 4, p. 85.

⁵¹ F. W. J. Schelling, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. K. F. A. Schelling, 14 vols (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1856–61), vol. VI, p. 148, §7.

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conceived'.⁵² Of course, in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel criticised Spinoza's system, arguing that the modes are only affections without reality and that they completely disappear in the substance. Spinozism, according to Hegel, is 'acosmic' insofar as 'all this that we know as the world has been cast into the abyss of the one identity. There is therefore no such thing as finite reality.'⁵³ Although Hegel never mentions Maimon in this context, it seems that he fully adopted Maimon's view, who had first characterised Spinoza's system as an 'acosmism' in his autobiography. There, Maimon says that Spinoza denies the reality of the world of multiple diverse and finite things: 'In this system *unity* is real, but *multiplicity* is merely *ideal*.'⁵⁴ Whatever the correct interpretation of Spinoza (certainly, Deleuze would disagree emphatically), it is important to note that for Maimon and Hegel, as well as for Schelling or the early Romantics (Hölderlin, Novalis, Schlegel), the ideal is real. In other words, idealism and realism are not understood as oppositions.⁵⁵ In a similar vein, Deleuze defines the nature of virtual Ideas as real, borrowing a formulation of Proust: Ideas are 'real without being actual, ideal without being abstract'.⁵⁶ For Deleuze, the virtual Idea possesses a full intensive reality, consisting of differential elements and relations, singularities and poles. It does not merely have a regulative function like Kantian ideas, but acts as a sufficient reason: it is 'the reason of the sensible, the condition of that which appears'.⁵⁷ Virtual Ideas are also the indispensable conditions for the generation of thought: they are problems or problematic structures that need to be actualised in a corresponding field, be it a mathematical theory, a physical or biological system, the social field or an artwork. Deleuze's dialectic of Ideas is not connected with any particular example, but articulates the virtual matrix of any actual system or structure. According to Deleuze, virtual reality is not something transcendent, but rather a transcendental field, a genetic condition which generates the actual but does not resemble it. In his late text 'Immanence: A Life', Deleuze again talks of the transcendental field and defines it as a plane of immanence: 'The transcendental field then

⁵² Spinoza, *Ethics*, Book I, prop. 15, demonstration.

⁵³ G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Medieval and Modern Philosophy*, Part III, trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 281.

⁵⁴ Salomon Maimon, *Solomon Maimon: An Autobiography*, trans. J. Clark Murray (London: Gardener, 1888), p. 113.

⁵⁵ Cf. Beiser, *German Idealism*, p. 353.

⁵⁶ Deleuze, 'The Method of Dramatization', p. 101. See also *Difference and Repetition*, p. 208.

⁵⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 222.

becomes a genuine plane of immanence that reintroduces Spinozism into the heart of the philosophical process.⁵⁸ The plane of immanence is ‘absolute immanence’,⁵⁹ which is not *in* something; it is not immanent to anything other than itself, neither to a self-consciousness or transcendental subject, nor to an object. Rather, subjects and objects evolve from the plane of immanence; they are ontologically secondary. As the title of the essay already announces, Deleuze equates the plane of immanence with ‘a life’, an indeterminate and inorganic life, which is not yet individualised.

We will say of pure immanence that it is A LIFE, and nothing else. . . . A life is the immanence of immanence, absolute immanence: it is complete power, complete bliss. It is to the degree that he goes beyond the aporias of the subject and the object that Johann Fichte, in his last philosophy, presents the transcendental field as *a life*, no longer dependent on a Being or submitted to an Act – it is an absolute immediate consciousness whose very activity no longer refers to a being but is ceaselessly posed in a life.⁶⁰

Here Deleuze refers to Fichte’s late philosophy of his *Second Introduction to the Science of Knowledge* (1797), in which Fichte seems to rethink and redefine the starting point of transcendental philosophy. While in his Jena years he held that the principle of all philosophy lies in an original and reflective act (*Tathandlung*) of self-consciousness – i.e. in a free and self-positing ‘I’ – he later did not hesitate to evoke an ‘Absolute’ (Absolute Being or God) or ‘a life’, thereby abandoning the analysis of the self as a philosophical starting point. His new ‘Doctrine of Being, Life and Blessedness’⁶¹ clearly approaches speculative philosophy: ‘It is the living and efficient Ex-istence of the Absolute itself which alone has power *to be* and *to exist*, and beside which nothing *is*, nor truly *exists*.’⁶² This absolute Being, ‘which in itself and in God is pure activity and Life’,⁶³ can only be and exist through itself. Like Spinoza’s substance, it is an unconditioned, self-grounding principle or sufficient reason. Fichte, just like the young Romantics and Schelling had done long before him, *vitalised* Spinoza’s concept of substance: the Absolute becomes alive and

⁵⁸ Gilles Deleuze, ‘Immanence: A Life’, in *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), pp. 27–8.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 26.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p. 27.

⁶¹ Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *The Way towards the Blessed Life; or The Doctrine of Religion*, trans. William Smith (London: Chapman, 1849), p. 190, available online at <<https://archive.org/stream/waytowardsbless00fichgoog#page/n6/mode/2up>>.

⁶² *Ibid.* p. 54.

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 78.

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dynamic.⁶⁴ The pressing question then became: How can the Absolute, which is necessarily lasting, without beginning and end, be ‘formed and moulded into a particular World, and indeed into an infinitely varied World, flowing onward in a never-ending stream of new and changing forms’?⁶⁵ The conception of the organism served as a powerful model for the development of the Absolute. Hölderlin, Novalis, Schlegel, Schelling and (last but not least) Hegel all formulated the idea of dialectical development, which they found characteristic of all organic things: ‘it begins from a stage of inchoate unity; it then differentiates itself; and it then reintegrates itself, so that its development consists in the stages of unity, difference, and unity-in-difference’.⁶⁶

Although the ideas of self-differentiation, difference and differentials were of fundamental importance in the post-Kantian tradition, the concept of difference still remained subordinated to identity, organic unity, or totality. Deleuze compares Leibniz and Hegel, stating that they both pursued the thought of difference – the former as infinitely small differences, the latter as contradiction, the opposite extreme limit of difference. They therefore both entertained a model of ‘infinite representation’. However, the problem with infinite representation, according to Deleuze, is that

*it does not free itself from the principle of identity as a presupposition of representation. . . . Infinite representation invokes a foundation. While this foundation is not the identical itself, it is nevertheless a way of taking the principle of identity particularly seriously, giving it an infinite value and rendering it coextensive with the whole, and in this manner allowing it to reign over existence itself.*⁶⁷

Deleuze, by contrast, ascribes primacy to the concept of difference. Difference must receive its own concept, such that it is no longer negatively defined as a lack of identity. It must free itself from a primary unity. When Deleuze repudiates the concept of foundation, what he aims to prevent is the sublation or reconciliation of difference in a higher identity of ‘identity and difference’. It does not mean, however, that he completely abandons the idea of foundation. Rather, in *Difference and Repetition*, he modifies the idea and elaborates an account of ‘a universal ungrounding’ or ‘groundlessness’,⁶⁸ which tries to elude the

⁶⁴ Cf. Beiser, *German Idealism*, p. 367.

⁶⁵ Fichte, *The Way towards the Blessed Life*, p. 79.

⁶⁶ Beiser, *German Idealism*, p. 367.

⁶⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 49.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 91.

trap of identity, unity or totality, and along with it, the mystical idea of a universal organism or rational plan, a purposiveness or teleology in nature. In this sense, he keeps closer to Spinoza and his banishment of final causes. However, besides difference, the second most fundamental ‘transcendental principle’, or condition of genesis, for Deleuze, is repetition. Repetition, production and reproduction are the major functions of the faculty of imagination, which for the German Romantics becomes a constitutive faculty of central importance. As Deleuze writes in his early lecture course *Qu’est-ce que fonder?*, after he has talked about the post-Kantian account of genesis and in particular about Novalis’ philosophy of the imagination:

What is unveiled (in the last chapter) is the true structure of the imagination, that is its meaning which can only be understood through the enterprise of grounding, which far from supposing the point of view of the infinite, is nothing other than the principle of the imagination.⁶⁹

The faculty of imagination not only produces images; it also corresponds to a movement of reproduction in nature. It thus acts as a constitutive principle, that is a real movement of things themselves or a pure dynamism in nature. For the German Romantics, therefore, the boundary between philosophy and art, especially poetry, becomes blurred.

AESTHETICS

In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant ranks the faculty of the imagination among the lower cognitive faculties and ascribes to it a mediating role. Its task is the synthesis of reproduction, which remains subject to the determining, *a priori* concepts of the understanding. It is only in his third *Critique* that Kant allows a certain ‘free play’ of the imagination. The faculty of the imagination reflects the aesthetic form of the beautiful object and, beyond that, exercises a spontaneous and inventive production of images, entirely unrestrained by determining concepts. In fact, it cannot be taken merely ‘as reproductive, as subjected to the laws of association, but as productive and self-active (as the authoress of voluntary forms of possible intuitions)’.⁷⁰ By way of example, Kant refers to English landscape gardens or baroque furniture whose extravagant

⁶⁹ Cf. Deleuze, *Qu’est-ce que fonder?*, trans. Daniela Voss.

⁷⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, ed. Paul Guyer, trans. Paul Guyer and Eric Matthews (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 5: 240. (The pagination corresponds to the standard German edition of Kant’s works, *Kant’s Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences.)

variety of forms ‘pushes the freedom of the imagination almost to the point of the grotesque’.⁷¹ Likewise, in natural instances such as ‘the changing shapes of a fire in a hearth or of a rippling brook’ imagination sustains its free play.⁷² In the Kantian theory of the sublime, the faculty of the imagination also plays a crucial role, because its failure to represent the infinite (the mathematically sublime) or its powerlessness in view of violent natural forces (the dynamically sublime) gives us, in the last resort, the feeling of something supernatural: Ideas of reason. This is to say that the imagination makes us aware of the superiority of reason and its regulative Ideas. Although it can never fully represent rational Ideas and therefore remains in stark contrast to reason, it attains a certain harmony with the higher cognitive faculties, because it acts in agreement with the moral interest of reason: it strives to incarnate rational Ideas in sensible nature by creating aesthetic Ideas.

Kant’s reflections on beautiful objects in art and nature, as well as on the sublime, certify a certain Kantian ‘Romanticism’. As Deleuze says: in his aesthetic of the Beautiful and of the Sublime, Kant gives access to a realm ‘in which the sensible is valid in itself and unfolds in a *pathos* beyond all logic’.⁷³ The German Romantics were looking for just that: a form of knowledge which is nonconceptual and indemonstrable, but which we know to be true through direct experience. They found it in immediate aesthetic intuition, thereby ascribing enormous power to the imagination. What they had done was to transfer the traditional concept of intellectual intuition as an exercise of the infinite intellect into the aesthetic sphere. The Romantics claimed that we could know the absolute through aesthetic experience. Poetry, painting and music became the province of the ineffable, i.e. that which is inexpressible in words from the point of view of logic. The same goes for our ordinary sense perception: our sensuous experience of colours, sounds and tastes also cannot be verbalised adequately or proved by means of formal logical inference. Nature as a whole was considered as a work of art and as the expression of the absolute or infinite. Thus, Schlegel said in his lectures on transcendental philosophy: ‘Idealism regards nature as a work of art, as a poem.’⁷⁴ The German Romantics no longer separated aesthetics as rigor-

⁷¹ Ibid. 5: 242.

⁷² Ibid. 5: 244.

⁷³ Gilles Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2008), p. xi.

⁷⁴ Friedrich Schlegel, *Vorlesungen über Transzendentalphilosophie*, in Ernst Behler, Jean-Jacques Anstett and Hans Eichner (eds), *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1958–), vol. XII, p. 105 (translation by Daniela Voss).

ously as Kant had done into a doctrine of objective sense experience on the one hand, and on the other a theory of the beautiful and the sublime. Kant's critical claims about the limitation of our cognitive powers were put into question by reintroducing a sort of intellectual intuition, a transcendent exercise of the imagination. As Deleuze says, Kant's theory of the free and unregulated play of imagination paved the way for Romanticism and, against his intention, became its 'foundation'.⁷⁵

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze himself develops a theory of the transcendent exercise [*exercice transcendant*] of the faculties, according to which each faculty is unhinged and ceases to collaborate with the other faculties in 'common sense'. That is to say, the faculties no longer converge with the aim of recognising one and the same object, which can be sensed, recalled, imagined or conceived. Rather they are confronted with something that is not communicable within the context of a common sense: the 'imperceptible' or 'the being of the sensible'.⁷⁶ This something, according to Deleuze, 'moves the soul, "perplexes" it – in other words, forces it to pose a problem: as though the object of encounter, the sign, were the bearer of a problem'.⁷⁷ What impinges on the senses and forces their transcendent exercise, is a transcendental Idea or problem. In this sense, Deleuze agrees with the post-Kantian Idealists who 'insist that their ideas play the same transcendental role as the categories: they too are necessary conditions of possible experience'.⁷⁸ Or, more precisely, they are genetic conditions of real experience and of thought.

Deleuze's dialectic of Ideas combines the two halves of the aesthetic treated separately by Kant: differential or intensive Ideas serve at the same time as genetic conditions of experience and of the production of the work of art.⁷⁹ As Deleuze explicates in his book on Francis Bacon, the challenge of a work of art is to capture the invisible, intensive forces – that by which the sensible is given, or the condition of sensation.⁸⁰ In aesthetic experience, we are encouraged to an activity of thought beyond empirical representation, i.e. an exploration of the transcendental domain of sensibility. In spite of the obvious parallels to German Romanticism, there are considerable differences. The Romantics, for

⁷⁵ Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, p. xi.

⁷⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 140.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Beiser, *German Idealism*, p. 166.

⁷⁹ See Daniel Smith, 'Deleuze, Kant and the Transcendental Field', in this volume, p. ???

⁸⁰ Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 56–7.

instance, claim that aesthetic contemplation reveals purposiveness, rationality and values that are intrinsic to nature itself; they took the second part of Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* on teleological judgement in a metaphysical sense and introduced a form of teleology into the natural order. Of course, from a postmodern point of view the presupposition of an inherent harmony or beauty, rationality or purposiveness in nature is not tenable. For Deleuze, the transcendental field is rather a violent 'chaosmos' that forces transformations and metamorphoses, which can only be sustained by larval subjects at the border of the liveable: 'it would entail the death of any well-constituted subject endowed with independence and activity'.⁸¹ Thus, Deleuze does not outline a theory of aesthetic contemplation but rather one of violent encounter. Moreover, it is not the Absolute which reveals itself: Deleuze's transcendental empiricism eschews any reassuring transcendence and totality. It is not a speculative idealism of the Absolute, but a philosophy of immanence: the immanence of a multiplicity of transcendental, differential and problematic Ideas.

OUTLINE OF THE VOLUME

The contributions of this volume are divided into three parts. Part I focuses directly on the engagement between Deleuze and Kant's philosophy, with particular emphasis on Maimon's intermediary role. Part II explores Deleuze's relation to key thinkers and concepts in post-Kantian Romanticism and Idealism, while the final part of this collection pursues various lines of post-Kantian thought and the manner in which they transverse and are augmented by Deleuze.

Part I: Deleuze, Kant and Maimon

For the volume's opening chapter, 'Deleuze, Kant and the Transcendental Field', Daniel W. Smith explores the way in which Deleuze takes up yet inverts the Kantian critical project by rethinking Kant's definition of the transcendental. Deleuze's major source of inspiration, Smith argues, is Salomon Maimon's account of differentials, which was not pursued as such by post-Kantian philosophy. This Deleuzian-Maimonian redefinition of the transcendental condition has significant effects in each of the five domains that structure the critical project: dialectics, aesthetics, analytics, politics and ethics.

⁸¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. 118.

In Chapter 2, Anne Sauvagnargues investigates the different sources that inspired Deleuze's account of 'transcendental empiricism', focusing on Maimon and his central role in the critique of the Kantian method of conditioning and the invention of a method of genesis. Deleuze appropriates Maimon's theory of differentials or Ideas, while abandoning the transcendental idealism of the divine understanding. But as Sauvagnargues shows, Deleuze alters the definition of Ideas through an engagement with structuralism, as well as the works of Albert Lautman and Gilbert Simondon, giving rise to the definition of Ideas as virtual and differentiated structures that solicit the creation of concepts through processes of differentiation.

In her chapter 'Maimon, Kant, Deleuze: The Concepts of Difference and Intensive Magnitude', Daniela Voss analyses Maimon's account of difference and identity as the transcendental conditions of perception in general. Following a historical-critical and exegetical analysis, Voss discusses the questions of the nature of difference as differential and intensive magnitudes, as well as its precise status as a regulative or constitutive principle. While the post-Kantian philosophers still ascribed primacy to the principle of identity, Deleuze embraces Maimon's challenge and renders the notion of difference the fundamental principle of his own transcendental philosophy.

Rounding off the opening section of the Volume, Beth Lord's contribution, 'Deleuze and Kant's *Critique of Judgment*', critically examines Deleuze's reading of Kant's third *Critique* and his emphasis on the free accord of the faculties as a presupposition of the genesis of thought. What is completely missing in Deleuze's seemingly psychological and romantic account of the faculties, Lord suggests, is the political dimension of the *Critique of Judgment*, which Hannah Arendt has famously pointed out in her 1970 *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*. Lord juxtaposes both readings and thereby elucidates Deleuze's particular interest that guided his interpretation of Kant.

Part II: Deleuze, Romanticism and Idealism

Heinrich von Kleist experienced Kantian philosophy as a crisis in his life and thought. As a response, Brent Adkins argues, Kleist created a literary 'war machine' against Kant's statist image of thought, which subordinates thought to the interiority of the concept. For Kleist, thought must be opened to an outside – to external forces – only then can it produce something new. In his stories and plays he puts this idea into practice. As Adkins shows in his chapter 'What is a Literature of War?':

Kleist, Kant and Nomadology’, both Kleist and Deleuze turn to affects in an attempt to deterritorialise Kant’s philosophy.

In Chapter 6 ‘The Calculable Law of Tragic Representation and the Unthinkable: Rhythm, Caesura and Time, from Hölderlin to Deleuze’, Arkady Plotnitsky presents a rich investigation of Friedrich Hölderlin’s place within Deleuze’s scholarship, moving across the fields of science, art and philosophy. Plotnitsky’s aim is to explore Hölderlin’s concept of rhythm, as it is developed in his analysis of ancient Greek tragedy, and to outline its major philosophical contribution: the invention of a nonclassical, Romantic ontology. This ontology, Plotnitsky says, is concerned with the unthinkable – that which is beyond the reach of thought and cannot be captured by classical ontological concepts. The unthinkable is the ultimate efficacy of all rhythmic effects and counter-rhythmic movements on the level of actual events. It also bears important links, Plotnitsky elaborates, with Deleuze’s concept of chaos as the virtual.

While Deleuze rarely comments directly on Johann Gottlieb Fichte, a connection between both can nevertheless be established when reading Fichte’s own texts. In his chapter, ‘Ground, Transcendence and Method in Deleuze’s Fichte’, Joe Hughes shows how, outlining several parallel structures that emerge with regard to their respective methods and conceptions. Specifically, Hughes elicits and examines the resonances between their conceptions of subjectivity, transcendence and real experience, and he further points out the affinities between their methods of genesis and the absolute positing of a self-grounding principle. What he shows is that both engage with a common problem: the completion of the Kantian project.

Continuing the volume’s exploration of Deleuze and Fichte, Frederick Amrine’s chapter “‘The magic formula we all seek’: Spinoza + Fichte = x”, reintroduces the figure of Spinoza to the equation, elucidating the thematic connections in all three thinkers. Several points of convergence are identified, including the ontology of expression, the priority of imagination, the privileging of intuition over discursive thinking or logic, self-positing concepts and the conception of a pure life. Amrine concludes that those three thinkers ‘are deeply connected by a Deleuzian rhizome stretching across four centuries’.⁸²

In Chapter 9, ‘State Philosophy and the War Machine’, Nathan Widder undertakes a fresh analysis of Hegel’s political philosophy with respect to Deleuze and Guattari. As he reveals, beyond the common presumption of Deleuze’s anti-Hegelianism lies a complex and subtle set

⁸² Amrine, “‘The magic formula we all seek’: Spinoza + Fichte = x”, in this volume, p. ???

of connections – including, Widder claims, a shared understanding of political structure as an assemblage of desire. In explicating a series of affinities as well as departures, Widder ultimately argues that the relation between Hegel and Deleuze and Guattari is best described as one of a ‘disjunctive synthesis’.

Sean Bowden’s chapter, ‘Tragedy and Agency in Hegel and Deleuze’, sheds light on Deleuze’s largely implicit account of action and agency in *The Logic of Sense* and compares it with Hegel’s view, as interpreted by thinkers such as Speight, Brandom and Pippin. It argues that both Hegel and Deleuze share an *expressivist* understanding of action and agency, which comes to the fore in their respective interpretations of Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*. The account of expressivist action and agency is summarised in three structural features: retrospectivity, publicness and heroism.

Part III: Deleuzian Lines of Post-Kantian Thought

The final part of this collection, which embarks on a number of post-Kantian adventures under the guidance of Deleuze, begins with Alistair Welchman’s piece ‘Schopenhauer and Deleuze’. It could be noted that Deleuze’s engagement with Schopenhauer is rather limited and arguably encapsulated by his criticism of the ascetic and pessimistic tone of Schopenhauerian philosophy. But as Welchman provocatively suggests, Deleuze’s rejection is premature; indeed, Schopenhauer’s break with Kant, along with his critique of representation, could be said to have much in common with Deleuze’s own post-Kantian project. For instance, both of them pose the question of what lies beyond representational experience. Furthermore, Schopenhauer’s metaphysical conception of the will, Welchman argues, traverses Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* and opens the space for the Deleuzo-Guattarian notion of a transcendental, impersonal and productive unconscious.

Taking up the problem of ‘beginnings’ in philosophy and the nature of philosophical critique, Henry Somers-Hall’s chapter ‘Feuerbach and the Image of Thought’ carries out an appraisal and comparison of Feuerbach’s critique of Hegel with Deleuze’s criticism of the ‘dogmatic image of thought’ – the chapter of *Difference and Repetition* nominated by Deleuze as his most important and enduring.⁸³ What Somers-Hall finds is a striking resemblance between the two. In the closing passages of his chapter, however, Somers-Hall also isolates a key moment of

⁸³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p. xvii.

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divergence in their conception of the ‘encounter’ – that which provides the opening onto truly philosophical thought.

In Chapter 13, ‘Deleuze’s “Power of Decision”, Kant’s =X and Husserl’s Noema’, Jay Lampert analyses the nature and time-structure of decisions. Following a consideration of the Kantian object=X, the Fichtean-Hegelian-Husserlian understanding of ‘=’, and Deleuze’s account of decision as a divergence-point of impossible timelines, Lampert arrives at what could be referred to as an ethical account of a ‘decision=X’. In doing so, the following challenge is advanced: What is our relation to decisions made in the past, and the multiple paths that appear to stem from them? In what sense have we lived them all, or not?

In the penultimate chapter of the collection, Gregg Lambert explores the family history of contemporary French philosophy, analysing in particular the kinship between Kant and two of his bastard children – Deleuze and Lyotard. As Lambert puts it, these two thinkers are ‘pure bastards’, insofar as they refuse much of their philosophical inheritance and similarly nurture an ambivalent relation to the vogue of Hegelianism and twentieth-century phenomenology. In order to explain, Lambert zeros in on Deleuze and Lyotard’s peculiar breed of Kantianism, and in particular their engagement with Kant’s third *Critique*. From this he shows how Deleuze and Lyotard succeed in reworking Kantianism, and further how the culture of modernist art produces the conditions for a new understanding of the Kantian sublime.

Finally, Gregory Flaxman’s chapter ‘Chronos is Sick: Deleuze, Antonioni and the Kantian Lineage of Modern Cinema’, explores the way in which modern European cinema repeats, on its own terms and under its own conditions, the ‘revolution’ that took place in philosophy through Kant’s concept of the pure and empty form of time. By way of Hölderlin’s conception of time, which according to Deleuze elaborates Kantian time on the level of Greek tragedy, Flaxman outlines three figures of time and traces them in Antonioni’s mature works of the 1960s and 70s. As Flaxman argues, Antonioni realises the three figures in the expression of three types of time-image.

Immanuel Kant is an 18th century German philosopher whose work initiated dramatic changes in the fields of epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, aesthetics, and teleology. Like many Enlightenment thinkers, he holds our mental faculty of reason in high esteem; he believes that it is our reason that invests the world we experience with structure. In his works on aesthetics and teleology, he argues that it is our faculty of judgment that enables us to have experience of beauty and grasp those experiences as part of an ordered, natural world with purpose. After the Introduction, each of the above sect If Deleuze's inversion of Kant offers to Ranci re's politics, first, its affirmation as a potential within being as such and, second, an amplification of its claim to a crucial correlation between aesthetics and politics, what is to be done with Ranci re's critique of Deleuze? Where Ranci re's aesthetics of politics leads him ultimately to Deleuze, Deleuze, according to Ranci re, leads politics ultimately to an impasse.