

## Introduction

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*Paul Patton*

Gilles Deleuze is best known for his collaborative work written with Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus*, *Kafka*, *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?* are extraordinary texts in their own right, but they are also singular components of one of this century's truly audacious experiments in thought. They constitute successive moments within a single thought-event, variations upon a unique intuition and exemplars of a novel concept of philosophy. In an interview which accompanied the publication of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze described this book as 'philosophy, nothing but philosophy, in the traditional sense of the word'.<sup>1</sup> However, as he and Guattari explain in *What is Philosophy?* the underlying conception of philosophy is far from traditional. In their view, the job of philosophers is to create new concepts, but philosophical concepts do not provide a truth which is independent of the plane of immanence upon which they are constructed. Rather, such concepts are the expression of thought, in a sense which owes much to Nietzsche, Heidegger and Blanchot. Deleuze accepts Nietzsche's view that thought is a matter of creation, and that far from defining thought in relation to truth, truth must be regarded 'as solely the creation of thought'.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the modernism of this position, Deleuze remains an anomalous figure within the contemporary philosophical landscape. He was never tempted by the idea of the death of philosophy or the overcoming of metaphysics. Jean-Luc Nancy points to the lack of sympathy with Hegel and Heidegger as indicative of the deep fold which separates Deleuze's orientation from his own. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Deleuze remained committed to the classical idea of philosophy as a system. The novelty of Deleuzian thought does not lie in its refusal of any systematic character but in the nature of the system

envisaged. In a 1980 interview, he claimed that 'systems have in fact lost absolutely none of their power. All the groundwork for a theory of so-called open systems is in place in current science and logic' . . .<sup>3</sup> *A Thousand Plateaus* provides an example of such an open system. It does not advocate an intellectual anarchism in which the only rule would be the avoidance of any rule. It deploys variable, local rules in order to construct a bewildering array of concepts such as assemblage, deterritorialization, order-word, faciality, ritornello, nomadism and different kinds of becoming. The successive plateaus each develop a particular assemblage of concepts in relation to a given subject matter. The conceptual architecture of this book obeys a logic of multiplicities in which the same concepts recur, but always in different relations to other concepts such that their nature in turn is transformed. In his comprehensive discussion of Deleuze's relation to Bergson, Constantin Boundas comments on this concept of intensive multiplicity.

In an interview published shortly after his death, Deleuze commented that *A Thousand Plateaus* was the best book he had written, alone or with Guattari.<sup>4</sup> It remains a book whose time has not yet come, its conceptual riches largely unexploited. Several of the essays included in this collection point to the transformative power of its concepts. Moira Gatens explores the Deleuze Spinoza concept of bodies and suggests the usefulness of this ethology for feminist theory and politics. She also suggests the interest of the pragmatics of language outlined in *A Thousand Plateaus* with regard to the role of language in sexual violence. The essay by Brian Massumi argues that a Deleuzian concept of affect may prove fruitful in the field of media and cultural studies. Eugene Holland demonstrates the literary critical potential of the schizoanalysis developed in *Anti-Oedipus*, by applying it to the work of Baudelaire. In the process, he indicates some of the conceptual transformations wrought upon schizoanalysis in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Perhaps even less understood than the concepts and structure of *A Thousand Plateaus* are the profound connections between this experimental work and Deleuze's earlier studies in the history of philosophy. A primary focus of several of the essays in this collection is Deleuze's complex relations to some of the figures with whom and against whom his own philosophical system was constructed: in particular Spinoza, Kant, Hegel and Bergson. In order to illustrate some features of Deleuze's use of the history of philosophy, I comment below on aspects of his relations to Kant. Throughout Deleuze's historical work, a remarkable consistency emerges not only with regard to the method, but also with regard to the underlying conception

of philosophy. Pierre Macherey points out that Deleuze had already argued in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* that 'a philosophy's power is measured by the concepts it creates, or whose meaning it alters, concepts that impose a new set of divisions on things and actions'.<sup>5</sup> He goes on to argue that the concept of expressionism expounded in this book is as much Deleuze's own invention as it is Spinoza's. On the one hand, Macherey suggests, a concept of expression did enable Spinoza to conceptualize the power and actuality of a positive infinity. On the other, the concept of expression expounded by Deleuze involves components 'foreign' to Spinoza's thought, such as the distinction between numerical and real distinction drawn from Duns Scotus. This concept of expression allows Deleuze to compare and contrast Spinoza and Leibniz as twin poles of a generalized anti-Cartesian reaction. We encounter here the dual and paradoxical relation which characterizes all of Deleuze's accounts of other philosophers, and which involves both faithful rendering and deliberate forcing of the original text. Reflecting upon this manner of perverting the institutional norms of the history of philosophy, Deleuze suggested that it involved a doubling of the original text in a manner which subjects it to maximal modification: repetition and differentiation.<sup>6</sup> As François Zourabichvili suggests, this may be regarded as a form of free indirect discourse, a re-statement which transforms the sense of what has already been said. The point of doing so is not just to deconstruct the thought of other philosophers, but to create new concepts.

Deleuze was a pioneer of the deconstructive technique of reading philosophical texts against themselves. His demonstration that the means to overturn Platonism are provided by Plato himself was first published in 1967.<sup>7</sup> However, he always combined such critical reading with conceptual construction and systematisation. He employed this technique to produce among other things an anti-Platonist Plato, a systematic Nietzsche, and Kantian foundations for a transcendental empiricism. His reconstruction of a Nietzschean metaphysics of will to power in *Nietzsche and Philosophy* in 1962 is widely credited with having inaugurated the contemporary French philosophical enthusiasm for Nietzsche. In the pivotal third chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, he argues both that Kant reproduces aspects of a dogmatic image of thought which takes recognition as its model, and that he points the way to a non-representational and nomadic conception of thought. Nomad thought rejects above all the ideal of philosophy as a closed system. For this reason, throughout his work Deleuze remains resolutely opposed to one systematic thinker: 'What I most detested was Hegelianism and dialectics.'<sup>8</sup> However, as both Catherine

Malabou and Jean-Michel Salanskis point out, this antipathy does not exclude a certain proximity to Hegelian themes. Malabou's essay challenges Deleuze's reductive treatment of Hegel and succeeds in introducing what Derrida calls 'a few wolves of the type "indecidability"' into the relation between Deleuze and his philosophical nemesis.<sup>9</sup>

*We had never stopped asking this question previously, and we already had the answer, which has not changed: philosophy is the art of forming, inventing and fabricating concepts.*<sup>10</sup>

In *What is Philosophy?* 'concept' is a technical term which serves to distinguish philosophy from science and art. Science aims at the representation of states of affairs by means of mathematical or propositional functions, while art does not aim at representation but at the capture and expression of particular perceptions and affections or 'blocks of sensation'. In contrast to scientific functions and theories, philosophical concepts like works of art do not refer to objects or states of affairs outside themselves. They are autopoietic entities, defined not by their referential relations to things or states of affairs but by the relations between their elements as well as their relations to other concepts. As Deleuze and Guattari assert, the concept 'has no *reference*: it is self-referential, it posits itself and its object at the same time as it is created'.<sup>11</sup> On their view, the object of a philosophical concept is always an event. I comment further below on this internal relation between concepts and events.

Concepts as they define them are complex singularities, multiplicities whose self-identity is established by means of a certain 'communication' between their components. For example, the three components of the Cartesian Cogito – the doubting I, the thinking I and the existent I – are like so many intensive ordinates arranged in 'zones of neighbourhood or indiscernibility that produce passages from one to the other and constitute their inseparability'.<sup>12</sup> The claim that among its ideas the self has an idea of infinity provides a link to the idea of an infinite being and thus to the concept of God. Along this path, the subject certain of its own existence is transformed into one assured of the veracity of all its clear and distinct ideas. Concepts thus enjoy a range of virtual relations with other concepts which constitute their 'becoming'. Deleuze and Guattari devote a section of *A Thousand Plateaus* to the analysis of 'becomings'. Here, the term refers to the particular paths along which a concept might be transformed into something else. These derive from the manner in which components

of a given concept enter into zones of indiscernibility with other concepts. In addition, concepts may have a history as components of other concepts and in relation to other problems. For example, in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, Deleuze finds two distinct sources of the concept of expression, one in the ontological and theological traditions of thought relating to creation and the emanation of God, and another in the logical tradition of thought relating to what is expressed in propositions.<sup>13</sup>

Several of the essays in this collection point to the internal connections between Deleuze's philosophy and his writings on literature, painting and the cinema, among them those by Zourabichvili, Jean-Clet Martin, and Ronald Bogue. As Nancy points out, Deleuze's interest in the cinema is more than just an application or addendum of his philosophy but central to it: 'the word "concept" means this for Deleuze – making cinematic' (p. 110). In terms of the definition given in *What is Philosophy?*, a philosophical concept has more in common with a film or a piece of music than it does with a demonstrative statement. A film does not exist apart from its components (its shots, sequences, assemblages of sound and image), and like a concept it changes nature if one of the components is altered. A film also creates its own universe: it has a plane of consistency, characters and a style of composition which are like so many intensive features of the film as a whole. Deleuzian concepts are also intensive multiplicities which do not represent anything. Deleuze and Guattari could as well be describing a film or a piece of music when they say that a concept is the intensive and variable unity of all its components, or that it is like 'the point of coincidence, condensation or accumulation of its own components'.<sup>14</sup>

It follows from this account that philosophy does not produce knowledge in the manner of science, any more than it produces sensation or affects in the manner of art. Philosophy is not a referential discourse in the same manner as the sciences. Deleuze and Guattari also draw the conclusion that the criticism of one philosophical concept from the standpoint of another is a futile exercise. There is no point in arguing whether Descartes was right or wrong. Cartesian concepts can only be assessed as a function of their problems and the manner of their construction: 'a concept always has the truth that falls to it as a function of the conditions of its creation'.<sup>15</sup> This does not mean that criticism has no place in philosophy: it simply rules out a certain kind of dogmatic criticism. Nevertheless, the question arises, just what purpose is served by the creation of such concepts. At the beginning of *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari propose an

unequivocal definition of philosophy as 'knowledge through pure concepts'. Later, they insist that 'philosophy does not consist in knowing and is not inspired by truth'.<sup>16</sup> If philosophy does not consist in knowing and does not provide objective truth then what does it do? The answer to this question exposes another significant continuity throughout Deleuze's earlier work: he has always maintained a rigorous distinction between knowledge, understood as the recognition of truths or the solution of problems, and thinking understood as the creation of concepts or the determination of problems.

For Deleuze, philosophy is one form of thinking alongside others. The fact that it creates concepts gives it no preeminence in relation to science or art, but it does imply a distinction between thinking and knowing. The creation of concepts takes place only by means of the determination of problems, and only on the basis of a plane or set of pre-philosophical presuppositions which Deleuze and Guattari call the plane of immanence or the 'image of thought: the image thought gives itself of what it means to think'.<sup>17</sup> Distinct images of thought may be defined by reference to the presuppositions which define the nature of thought. These do not refer to its empirical character but to the nature of thought in principle. Thus, in the case of Descartes, the presuppositions which structure what he understands by thinking and which underpin the Cogito are those of a classical or 'dogmatic' image of thought. Among these presuppositions we find the conception of thought as a natural human capacity, possessed of a good will and an upright nature. Thought is supposed to have a natural affinity with the truth, such that it is error and not right thinking which needs to be explained. Of particular importance for Deleuze's critique of the dogmatic image is his claim that it takes its model from acts of recognition: good morning Theaetetus, this is a piece of wax, etc. The model of recognition, he argues, dominates the history of philosophy: 'whether one considers Plato's *Theaetetus*, Descartes' *Meditations* or Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, this model remains sovereign and defines the orientation of the philosophical analysis of what it means to think'.<sup>18</sup> In effect, this image involves a model of thinking which tends to collapse the distinction between thinking and knowing.

A recurrent concern throughout Deleuze's work, from *Proust and Signs* to *What is Philosophy?* via *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and *Difference and Repetition*, is the critique of this classical image and the attempt to constitute a new image of thought. Chapter Three of *Difference and Repetition*, provides the most developed analysis along with the outline of an alternative image of thought as creative and 'problematic'. In his retrospective comments on this book, Deleuze singles out this chapter

as the most important with respect to his subsequent practice of philosophy, describing it as 'the most necessary and the most concrete', and as the one which 'serves to introduce subsequent books up to and including the research undertaken with Guattari where we invoked a vegetal model of thought: the rhizome in opposition to the tree'.<sup>19</sup>

*... the question of when and to what extent philosophers are "disciples" of another philosopher and, on the contrary, when they are carrying out a critique of another philosopher by changing the plane and drawing up another image involves all the more complex and relative assessments because the concepts that come to occupy a plane can never be simply deduced.*<sup>20</sup>

For Deleuze, the classical image of thought is a profound betrayal of what it means to think. His fundamental objection is that it sustains a complacent conception of thought which is incapable of criticizing established values. Kant is his prime example of a thinker who proposed an all-encompassing critique but who in the end proved incapable of questioning the value of knowledge, faith or morality. In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, he had already contrasted Kantian critique with Nietzsche's untimely thought: 'There has never been a more conciliatory or respectful total critique.'<sup>21</sup> Yet in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze develops his alternative account of the transcendental conditions of thought with reference to Kant's theory of the faculties. Indeed, Deleuze's own problematic image of thought draws heavily upon Kant's conception of reason. The articles by Salanskis and Daniel Smith show the extent to which Deleuze proceeds along Kantian lines in sketching a genetic account of thought and experience. Without suggesting that Kant is Deleuze's only significant interlocutor, it may nevertheless be useful to outline some of the detail of Deleuze's engagement with Kant in *Difference and Repetition*, both to illustrate his manner of reading Kant against himself and to situate the distinction between thought and knowledge which informs his conception of philosophy.

Recognition is defined by the harmonious exercise of the different faculties in relation to the different representations (sensible, intellectual, memorial, etc.) of a single object. The model of recognition therefore implies a further presupposition, namely that of an underlying agreement among the faculties themselves. Typically, this accord is grounded in the unity of the thinking subject: 'For Kant as for Descartes, it is the identity of the Self in the "I think" which grounds the harmony of all the faculties and their agreement on the form of a

supposed Same object.<sup>22</sup> In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant explicitly identifies this presumption of accord among the faculties in terms of the existence of a 'common sense': he argues that the existence of an aesthetic common sense is required in order to account for the communicability and the presumption of universality which characterize judgments of beauty. Deleuze suggests that the idea of such a common sense, defined as an a priori accord under the governance of one faculty, is implicit throughout the preceding Critiques. Kant 'multiplies common senses', creating as many as there are 'interests of reason'.<sup>23</sup> In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, it is the imagination, understanding and reason which collaborate under the authority of the understanding to form an epistemological common sense, while in the *Critique of Practical Reason* it is reason which legislates. The values of knowledge, morality and beauty are thus presupposed by the terms of Kantian critique. Claims to knowledge, moral judgment or aesthetic value may be called into question, but not knowledge, morality or aesthetic value themselves.

In his 1963 book *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, and in his article published in the same year, 'L'Idée de genèse dans l'esthétique de Kant',<sup>24</sup> Deleuze presents the presumption of accord among the faculties as a problem which Kant goes some way towards solving in the *Critique of Judgment*. He argues that Kant's account of the sublime retraces the emergence of an accord between the faculties of imagination and reason, and suggests that this may serve as a model for genetic accounts of other such accords. By contrast, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze proposes an account of the transcendental operation of the faculties which rejects the harmonious accord implied by the recognition model. Here he offers a different interpretation of Kant's sublime as pointing towards a conception of the faculties freed from subjection to any common sense, where what is engendered is thought itself.<sup>25</sup> Deleuze objects that recognition offers a timid conception of thought which draws its exemplars from among the most banal acts of everyday thinking: 'this is a table, this is an apple . . . good morning Theaetetus . . . who can believe that the destiny of thought is at stake in these acts . . . ?'<sup>26</sup> When he points out that Kant's First Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* derives a model of the transcendental conditions of judgment by simply tracing this from a psychological theory of the operation of the faculties in cases of recognition, his objection is less to the procedure than to the particular operations which provide Kant with his paradigm. For Deleuze, it is not the reassuring familiarity of encounters with the known which should provide a paradigm of thinking, but the hesitant gestures which accompany our encounters with

the unknown: for example, those of the subject of contradictory perceptions which, as Plato says, 'provoke thought to reconsideration', or those of the novice athlete attempting to coordinate his or her bodily movement with a greater force.<sup>27</sup> It is from such acts of apprenticeship, Deleuze argues, that we must derive the transcendental conditions of thought.

Deleuze's objection to the recognition model is therefore normative. He does not deny that recognition occurs and that the faculties may be employed therein. Rather, he wants to retain the name of thinking for a different activity, namely that which takes place when the mind is provoked by an encounter with the unknown or the unfamiliar. Apprenticeship or learning is opposed to recognition at every point: it is not the application of a method, but rather an involuntary activity. Following Nietzsche, Deleuze proposes to understand thought as a human capacity which has developed, not of its own accord or as a result of its own goodwill but as the effect of a necessity or culture imposed from without: 'something in the world forces us to think'.<sup>28</sup> Notwithstanding this originary violence, thought is essentially creative and critical: it embodies the potential to controvert all received ideas along with established values. That is why, in *What is Philosophy?*, thinking is described as a form of absolute deterritorialization. Philosophy understood as the creation of concepts goes beyond the mere recognition of existing opinions, states of affairs and forms of life. It has the potential to remain untimely in Nietzsche's sense of that term: 'acting counter to our time, and therefore acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come'.<sup>29</sup>

Deleuze's alternative image of thought in *Difference and Repetition* relies upon a neo-Kantian theory of sensibility. In his lucid exposition of this theory, Smith describes the special kinds of sensation which Deleuze calls signs and which provoke the mind to further action, arousing a memory, an image or the awareness of a problem. In terms of this theory, each of the faculties encounters its own transcendental object in the sense that this is something peculiar to the faculty in question and not, as supposed by the model of recognition, something accessible to other faculties. These transcendent objects are not outside or beyond the experiential world but immanent to the domain of a given faculty. They are the essence of that which is grasped by each faculty: the being of the sensible, the rememberable, the imaginable or the thinkable. In each case, Deleuze defines these transcendental objects as differential: they are states of 'free or untamed difference'. Thus, objects of pure sensibility or signs are defined in terms of differences in intensity; objects of pure memory are defined in terms

of temporal difference; objects of pure or transcendental imagination are phantasms or simulacra; finally, objects of pure thought are Ideas or problems, where these are understood as structures defined by the reciprocal relations between their differential elements.

For Deleuze, it is problems or Ideas which are the specific objects of thought: they are that which can only be thought, yet remain in themselves empirically unthinkable. Problems are accessible to thought only by way of their particular conceptually determined forms. In opposition to the traditional view which defines problems in terms of the possibility of finding solutions, and which sees truth as essentially propositional and prior to problems, Deleuze argues that problems must be regarded as the source of all truths: 'problems are the differential elements in thought, the genetic elements in the true'.<sup>30</sup> He invokes Kant's conception of Transcendental Ideas in suggesting that problems must be understood not simply as questions to which thought provides answers but as the underlying and unanswerable questions which govern the production of knowledge in a given domain. Kant, he reminds us, refers to Ideas as 'problems to which there is no solution'.<sup>31</sup> However, Deleuzian Ideas are structures as well as problems. Deleuze also invokes mathematical notions and contemporary structuralism in describing Ideas as multiplicities defined by the internal relations between differential elements. In this regard, Salanskis points to the importance of Albert Lautmann's conception of problems as immanent and transcendent within a given mathematical field.

Kant's distinction between reason and understanding may be regarded as a prototype of the distinction between thought and knowledge in modern philosophy. For Kant, the understanding provides knowledge of objects while reason concerns itself with the conditions of any given conditioned. Since knowledge is itself conditioned by the syntheses of the imagination and understanding, it follows that reason can think through these pre-objective syntheses. In general, it might be argued that Deleuze redistributes Kant's faculties of understanding and reason on either side of the opposition between the dogmatic image and his own generative or productive conception of thought. On the one hand, in his account of the logical common sense presupposed by the operation of the faculties in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he suggests that reason is subordinate to the understanding and thus to the model of recognition. On the other hand, he draws upon Kant's conception of reason in formulating his own problematic conception of thought. However, it is open to argument whether Deleuze is simply highlighting an ambivalence that already exists in Kant, or whether he simply underestimates the role of reason in suggesting that the idea of

an epistemological common sense implies the subordination of the faculty of reason to the faculty of understanding. For every passage in which Kant suggests that the function of reason is dependent upon that of the understanding, there is another in which he insists that reason is indispensable for obtaining systematic theoretical knowledge. In the absence of the regulative principles and maxims of reason, Kant says, the understanding would provide no more than a 'mere contingent aggregate' of propositions. The law of reason which requires us to seek unity in nature is a necessary law without which there would be no reason and 'without reason no coherent employment of the understanding, and in the absence of this no sufficient criterion of empirical truth'.<sup>32</sup>

Recent Kant scholarship has tended to play down the differences between the faculties, suggesting that these are best understood simply as distinct capacities of the mind. There is also widespread support for a minimalist interpretation of the results of Kant's argument in the *Analytic*, which suggests that what is established is little more than the most general conditions necessary for knowledge of objects. Thus, the Second Analogy establishes that events have antecedent causes, but not any particular causal laws. What the understanding alone produces corresponds to the simplistic statement by statement conception of knowledge which Deleuze associates with the dogmatic image of thought.<sup>33</sup> However, if we take into account the role of the principles and maxims of reason in generating systematic knowledge, then Kant's conception of thought begins to accord less with the dogmatic image and more with Deleuze's own conception of thought as the systematic production of concepts.

It remains nonetheless that, for Kant, the field of knowledge is bounded by the Transcendental Ideas which stake out the forms of completeness in the order of conditions. For Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, the field of such Ideas is unbounded. As Boundas and Smith point out, the concept of Ideas developed here is a complex singularity of Deleuze's own invention, drawing upon aspects of Leibniz, Maimon and Bergson as well as Kant. Thought is the exploration of Ideas or problems which may be thrown up by history, social life or the development of particular sciences. There is no a priori limit to the Ideas or problems which thought may seek to determine: as a result, Deleuze's transcendental realm is answerable to a 'superior empiricism'. The transcendental empiricism outlined in *Difference and Repetition* implies a conception of thought as open-ended and bounded only by the historically variable set of problems with which it engages at any given time.

*The concept is obviously knowledge – but knowledge of itself, and what it knows is the pure event, which must not be confused with the state of affairs in which it is embodied. The task of philosophy when it creates concepts, entities, is always to extract an event from things and beings . . .*<sup>34</sup>

In *What is Philosophy?* philosophy is no longer described as the (empirical transcendental) search for Ideas but as the creation of concepts, where concepts provide knowledge of events. Although the event is only a minor concern in *Difference and Repetition*, where Ideas and problems are the primary ontological terms, there are nevertheless significant continuities between Deleuze's transcendental empiricism and the conception of philosophy as the creation of concepts. Like the constantly renewed attempt to create new images of thought, the concern with an ontology of events recurs throughout Deleuze's work. In a 1988 interview, he said: 'I've tried in all my books to discover the nature of events; it's a philosophical concept, the only one capable of ousting the verb "to be" and attributes.'<sup>35</sup> In effect, by its repeated attempts to formulate an ontology of open multiplicities whose mode of individuation is that of events rather than essences, Deleuze's work renews and recreates a metaphysical tradition that extends from the Stoics through Leibniz to Bergson and Whitehead. In *The Fold*, he argues that Leibniz was the inventor of one of the most important concepts of the event, and devotes a chapter to the comparison of Leibniz's and Whitehead's means of thinking beyond the logic of attribution.<sup>36</sup>

In *Difference and Repetition*, after having defined problems as the differential, virtual structures which are the transcendental conditions of thought, Deleuze suggests that 'problems are of the order of events'.<sup>37</sup> In other words, just as problems are not reducible to the particular solutions in which they become incarnated, so events may be supposed to subsist independently of their actualizations in bodies and states of affairs. It is as though actual events were doubled by a series of ideal or virtual events whose distinctive points 'anticipate and engender' the distinctive points of the first series. The interconnections among problems, Ideas and events in Deleuze's account of the transcendental conditions of thought emerge further when we consider that the objects of transcendental Ideas might equally be described as problems or events: the Idea of society refers to the event of social organization, the Idea of language to the event of linguistic communication, and so on. Deleuze's concept of events is not that of a restricted set of singular occurrences, such as points or rupture or irreversible change. All events have an inner complexity and structure

which includes decisive points as well as periods in which nothing occurs. Deleuze cites Péguy with regard to this dimension of events: 'There are critical points of the event just as there are critical points of temperature: points of fusion, freezing and boiling points, points of coagulation and crystallization . . .'<sup>38</sup>

*The Logic of Sense* might equally have been entitled 'The Logic of the Event'. In the course of outlining a Meinongian conception of sense as that which is expressed in propositions, Deleuze argues for the identity of sense and what he calls 'pure events': incorporeal entities which subsist over and above their spatio-temporal manifestations, and which are expressed in language. He relies upon the Stoic concept of the 'sayable' (*lekta*) in order to distinguish the sense or event expressed in a proposition from the mixtures of bodies to which these are attributed. The Stoics, he argues, were the first to create a philosophical concept of the event, discovering this along with sense or the expressed of the proposition: 'an incorporeal, complex and irreducible entity, at the surface of things, a pure event which inheres or subsists in the proposition'.<sup>39</sup> Deleuze and Guattari re-utilize this Stoic concept of events in *A Thousand Plateaus*, when they characterize language as the set of order-words current in a given milieu at a given time. By the order-word or command function of language, they mean the relation between statements and the events or incorporeal transformations effectuated by the utterance of those statements. Following the Stoics, Deleuze and Guattari argue that all events are incorporeal transformations: not just institutional events such as becoming a university graduate or a convicted felon, but also physical events such as being cut or becoming red. The state of being cut or being red is an attribute of bodies, whereas the event of becoming cut or becoming red is a change of state which does not inhere in the bodies but is attributed to them. Events are incorporeal transformations which are expressed in statements and attributed to bodies.<sup>40</sup> Their use of this Stoic conception of the event allows them to redescribe the relationship between language and the world in terms of effectivity rather than representation. Insofar as language expresses such incorporeal transformations, it does not simply represent the world but acts upon it or intervenes in it in certain ways. In all language use, Deleuze and Guattari argue, there is an effectivity which is of the order of deterritorialization.

In *What is Philosophy?*, philosophy is described as a form of thought rather than knowledge, and thought is described as a vector of deterritorialization. Philosophy as the creation of concepts is assigned a 'utopian' task, namely to express and thereby bring into consciousness significant or important events: 'Every concept shapes and reshapes

the event in its own way. The greatness of a philosophy is measured by the nature of the events to which its concepts summon us or that it enables us to release in concepts.<sup>41</sup> The account of concepts here combines aspects of both the earlier account of problems as events and the assimilation of event and sense. On the one hand, both concepts and events are defined as virtualities that have become consistent, entities 'formed on a plane of immanence that sections the chaos'. On the other hand, concepts are described as identical with events understood as the 'pure sense' that runs through their components.<sup>42</sup> In these terms, any philosophical concept will express an event: Hobbes's concept of the Social Contract expresses the event of incorporation of a legal and political system. This is a pure event which cannot be reduced to its historical actualizations; it is rather the sense or immanent cause of those actual events.

It follows that, while philosophy involves the determination of events and their attribution to bodies and states of affairs, the value of such thought lies outside itself. In this respect, philosophy is no different to art or science and certainly not superior to either. As we have already noted, the adequacy or inadequacy with which it performs this task is not assessable in terms of truth and falsity. Philosophy can offer guidelines for well-formed as opposed to flimsy concepts, but it cannot offer criteria for judging the importance of events, nor rules for the attribution of events to states of affairs. Ideally, the events which a great philosophy discovers are those which deterritorialize the present and point towards a different future. However, it is not for philosophy itself to decide which concepts express events of this kind. For this reason, Deleuze describes the act of thought as a dice-throw. Thinking is a form of experimentation, where the aim is to determine concepts of the events which determine our fate. The only criteria by which such concepts may be assessed are those of 'the new, remarkable and interesting that replace the appearance of truth and are more demanding than it is'.<sup>43</sup>

A final continuity in Deleuze's work and a further sense in which he remains a philosopher in the classical sense emerges in his discussions of the ethics of the event. When Deleuze asks in *The Logic of Sense*, 'why is every event a kind of plague, war wound or death?',<sup>44</sup> the force of his question is ethical rather than empirical. The point is not that there are more unfortunate than fortunate events, nor is it a matter of delimiting a special class of occurrences worthy of the name 'event'. Rather, he seeks to raise the question of our stance towards the events which befall us. Throughout all Deleuze's work there is an ethics of the event that owes as much to Spinoza and Nietzsche as it does to the

Stoics. It is a question of willing the event in such a manner or to such an extent that the quality of the will itself is transformed and becomes affirmation. Moreover, it is by means of the concept that this transmutation in the quality of the will is achieved. Ultimately, the purpose served by the creation of concepts is ethical rather than epistemological. Philosophy extracts events from bodies and states of affairs and in doing so enables us to affirm the sense of what happens. 'There is a dignity of the event that has always been inseparable from philosophy as *amor fati*,' Deleuze and Guattari proclaim: 'Philosophy's sole aim is to become worthy of the event.'<sup>45</sup>

## NOTES

Several people have offered invaluable assistance in the preparation of this Critical Reader. I would especially like to thank Jean-Clet Martin, David Wills, Kevin Mulligan, Moira Gatens and Daniel Smith for their advice, and Peter Cook for his work as editorial assistant.

- 1 '8 ans après: Entretien 1980', *L'Arc* 49: *Deleuze* (revised edition) 1980, p. 99.
- 2 *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 54.
- 3 *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995, pp. 31-2. In a recent letter-preface to *Variations: La philosophie de Gilles Deleuze*, by Jean-Clet Martin, Paris: Payot, 1993, p. 7, Deleuze offers the following characterization of his idea of system: 'For me, the system must not only be in perpetual heterogeneity, it must be a heterogenesis. This, it seems to me, has never before been attempted.' See also Philippe Mengue, *Gilles Deleuze ou le système du multiple*, Paris: Éditions Kimé, 1994, pp. 11-13, 47.
- 4 Interview with Didier Eribon, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, No. 1619, du 16 au 22 novembre 1995, pp. 50-1.
- 5 *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin, New York: Zone Books, 1990, p. 321. Cf. *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, New York: Columbia University Press, 1990, p. 6: 'The genius of a philosophy must first be measured by the new distribution which it imposes on beings and concepts.'
- 6 *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton, London: Athlone Press, 1994, p. xxi.
- 7 'Renverser le Platonisme' in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 71: 4 oct.-dec. 1966, pp. 426-38. Reprinted in revised form as an appendix to *Logique du sens* (1969). The latter version appears in English as an appendix to *The Logic of Sense*, 'Plato and the simulacrum'.

- 8 *Negotiations*, p. 6.
- 9 Jacques Derrida, *Limited Inc.*, trans. Samuel Weber, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988, p. 75.
- 10 *Negotiations*, p. 2.
- 11 *What is Philosophy?*, p. 22.
- 12 *Ibid.*, p. 25.
- 13 *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, p. 323.
- 14 *What is Philosophy?*, p. 20.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 27.
- 16 *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 82.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 37.
- 18 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 134. In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that both contemporary analytic and communicational or conversational images of thought remain bound to the recognition model. Cf. pp. 138–9, 145–6.
- 19 *Difference and Repetition*, p. xvii. Cf. *Negotiations*, p. 149; *Variations: La philosophie de Gilles Deleuze*, p. 8.
- 20 *What is Philosophy?*, p. 58.
- 21 *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 89. Throughout this section (pp. 88–94), Deleuze endorses Nietzsche's criticism of Kant and argues that Nietzsche provides himself with the conceptual means to successfully carry out a total critique.
- 22 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 133. Cf. 'L'Idée de genèse dans l'esthétique de Kant', *Revue d'Esthétique*, 1963, p. 135.
- 23 *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 136–7.
- 24 *La Philosophie Critique de Kant*, Paris: PUF, 1963; translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam as *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, London: Athlone, 1984; 'L'Idée de genèse dans l'esthétique de Kant', *Revue d'Esthétique*, 1963, pp. 113–36.
- 25 In his comments on Kant's analysis of the sublime, Deleuze substitutes 'thought' where Kant uses 'reason'. *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 146, 321, fn. 10.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 135.
- 27 Deleuze uses the example of someone learning to swim, *ibid.*, p. 165. For the example from Plato, cf. *Republic*, 523b–c, and *Difference and Repetition*, pp. 138–9.
- 28 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 139.
- 29 Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 60.
- 30 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 162.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 168; Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A328/B385.
- 32 *Critique of Pure Reason*, A651/B679.
- 33 Following this line of interpretation, Susan Neimann points out that the operation of the understanding alone is little more than the mechanical synthesis of the manifold of intuition in accordance with the categories.

She comments that 'it is clear that the outcome of this automatic procedure is knowledge, but it is equally clear that it is not science'. Cf. *The Unity of Reason: Rereading Kant*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 59.

- 34 *What is Philosophy?*, p. 33.
- 35 *Negotiations*, p. 141.
- 36 *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley, Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 41-58, 76-84.
- 37 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 188. This equivalence between transcendental problems and pure events is reaffirmed in *The Logic of Sense*, p. 123, in the account of the logical genesis of propositions.
- 38 *Difference and Repetition*, p. 189.
- 39 *The Logic of Sense*, p. 19.
- 40 *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p. 86.
- 41 *What is Philosophy?*, p. 34.
- 42 *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 144, 156.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 111. Cf. p. 82.
- 44 *The Logic of Sense*, p. 151.
- 45 *What is Philosophy?*, p. 160.