

**Deleuze's *Difference and  
Repetition***

*An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide*

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The inner principle which allows internal difference to emerge in the case of Kant's thought is the nature of space itself, and this remains the same whether space is taken to be absolute, as in Kant's early writings, or transcendental, as we find in his critical writings. Rather than remaining at the level of spatial difference itself, Deleuze will want to provide a transcendental account of the operation of this principle of difference which explains why cases such as left and right handedness appear in the first place. As well as the surface repetition of the incongruent counterparts themselves, therefore, there is a deeper repetition, 'the singular subject, the interiority and heart of the other, the depths of the other' (DR 24/27) that gives rise to this repetition. In other words, Deleuze wants to provide an account of the genesis of the kind of spatiality which Kant takes as his starting point.

The relationship between Leibniz and Kant sets out the project of *Difference and Repetition* clearly. Normally when we look at difference, we have two choices. Either we see it as conceptual difference, as in the case of Leibniz, in which case we have not really understood what difference is, or we take Kant's path, and recognise difference as non-conceptual. This then leads to the end of our enquiry since we lack the (conceptual) tools to do justice to it. In the two cases we have looked at here, what is responsible for repetition, whether atoms or space, is simply taken as given, rather than explained (and this holds true of Freud's account as well, which ultimately will presuppose the kind of physical repetition we find in law). Deleuze's project is therefore going to be to perform an enquiry into the principle of difference which neither sees it as conceptual nor sees its non-conceptuality as the end of our enquiry. In doing so, he will develop an account of difference which allows us to explain the kinds of differences presupposed but not explained by Kant and the atomists. Developing this new concept of difference is the primary aim of chapter one of *Difference and Repetition*.

## **Chapter 1. Difference in Itself**

### **1.1 Introduction (28–30/36–8)**

Chapter 1 begins with a discussion of indifference, or the absence of difference. Deleuze's aim in the opening few paragraphs is to provide an account of why representation emerges as an attempt to make difference 'leave its cave and cease to be a monster' (DR 29/38). What would a state of indifference involve? Deleuze gives two examples:

1. 'The undifferentiated abyss. The indeterminate animal in which everything is dissolved' (DR 28/36).
2. 'The white nothingness, the once more calm surface upon which float unconnected determinations like scattered members' (DR 28/36).

The first of these represents a space that has not been differentiated. Without difference, we cannot have anything other than pure abstract identity. Difference as a concept is what allows us to draw distinctions within this identity ('this differs from that'). The second quotation brings out the second role of difference: difference is a relation, and therefore allows things to be related to one another. Clearly, therefore, we need a concept of difference. Deleuze here outlines two ways in which we might understand difference. The first is that difference is imposed on the world, the second is that difference emerges of its own accord, or immanently from the world. Traditionally, difference has been conceived as operating in the first of these ways. The first of these is tied to representation and judgement, the second to immanence and univocity.

Deleuze associates representation with the question, 'what is it?', and this question implies an answer of the form, 'it is x'. This structure is the basic structure of judgement: the attribution of a predicate to a subject. The proper functioning of representation therefore requires two parts to it. First there is the subject (the 'it'), which defines the 'what' that is being asked about. Second there is the predicate, or property (the 'is x'), which is attributed to the subject. So in order to make a judgement about something, we need both a subject and a predicate. The undifferentiated abyss presents a situation whereby one of these conditions has not been met. There are no properties present in the subject, and so there is no possibility of making a judgement. In fact, we could take this further and say that as there are no limits to the abyss, there is no such thing as a subject present, either. The properties lacking a subject represent the second type of indifference. There are properties but no subjects to attribute them to. The process of representation therefore collapses again, and thinking is suspended.

The first of these possibilities, the abyss, brings us to the central problem of representation. While representation is able to qualify forms and subjects ('this square is red'), it is unable to account for the genesis of form itself. Form simply has to be imposed on something fundamentally non-representational; something that simply cannot be captured within the formal structures of judgement. Such an abyss is in a literal

sense unthinkable. This is the dialectic of representation which operates in the opening of Chapter 1. If form, and with it the structure of the world of subjects and properties, emerge from an abyss, and if this emergence cannot be explained in terms of representation, how can it be explained? The difference between the formless abyss and form must be something that falls outside of representation. Difference is therefore Deleuze's name for this process of the emergence of form, which cannot be captured within the structure of the already formed. The fact that representation cannot think its own ground presents a serious problem, and in order to escape from this dilemma, it attempts to think difference from within the structure of representation itself. It attempts to mediate this concept of difference through the structures of identity, analogy, opposition and resemblance ('to "save" difference by representing it' [DR 29/38]). Deleuze's aim in this chapter is to show the failure of this project. In the process, he will make the claim that underlying representation is a structure that is different in kind from it. Underneath the represented world of subjects and properties is a differential field of intensity.

The structure of Deleuze's argument is therefore as follows. First, he is going to give an account of Aristotle's theory of species and genera, a paradigm case of representation. Second, he will make explicit the problem with this conception. Third, he will provide an alternative to Aristotle's equivocal conception of being by tracing an alternative lineage moving from Duns Scotus through Spinoza to Nietzsche. Fourth, he will try to show how Leibniz and Hegel's attempts to save representation fail. Finally, Deleuze will conclude with a discussion of Plato as the thinker who founds representation, but in the process shows the possibility of an alternative ontology. With a few minor deviations, we will be following this trajectory in this chapter.

## 1.2 Aristotle's Conception of Difference (30–3/38–42)

So who is the main target of Deleuze's criticisms? Deleuze begins by giving a short exposition of Aristotle's philosophy as the first formulation of representation. Deleuze's analysis of Aristotle essentially focuses on his concept of difference. His aim is to show how Aristotle's formulation of difference as relational and oppositional ( $x$  differs from  $y$  if  $x$  is not  $y$ ) forces on him a certain conception of being. Deleuze's characterisation of Aristotle is central to Deleuze's own positive account, since it is the attempt to overcome its limitations that leads him to formulate

what he terms a univocal conception of being, and with it a conception of intensive difference. His aim is going to be to show that how we understand being and difference are fundamentally interrelated. Following on from the introduction, Deleuze's claim will be that if we see difference as spatial, then we have to see being as fragmented (analogical). Alternatively, if we see difference in terms of intensity, then our understanding of being will instead be univocal. In this section, I want to go through some of the key terms of Aristotle's ontology, namely genus, species, difference and accident, relying on the account that the early commentator, Porphyry, gives of them, before moving on to why Deleuze thinks Aristotle's approach leads him into difficulties.

Porphyry defines the genus as 'what is predicated in answer to "What is it?"', of several items which differ in species, for example, animal' (Porphyry 2003: 4). This follows from Aristotle's own definition: 'what is predicated in the category of essence of a number of things exhibiting differences in kind' (Aristotle 1984d: 102a). What does it mean to be predicated of items that differ in kind? If we take the case of Socrates, it should be clear that 'animal' can be predicated of him, to the extent that Socrates is a man (a rational animal). For Porphyry and Aristotle, however, there is no difference in kind between different men, but rather a difference in number. While it is the case that a given genus, such as animal, is predicated of an individual, such as Socrates, the genus cannot simply be directly used to define the individual. If it were used in this way, the genus would be the only function which was *essential* to each individual. This would mean that in essence each individual would be different only in number, whereas the definition of genus requires that it is predicated of what also differs in kind. We therefore need the intermediary category, which Aristotle and Porphyry call the species.

Porphyry first defines the species as 'that which is predicated, in answer to "What is it?"', of many things which differ in number' (Porphyry 2003: 5). This case would be the one reached so far, where we have one genus, one group of individuals, and one level of species (a genus cannot simply have one species since in this case we could not meet the definition of a genus as applying to a number of things differing in kind). We can see that a given genus can be predicated of a species, and both the species and the genus can be predicated of an individual. We can therefore say that Socrates is both animal (according to his genus) and man (according to his species). In fact, we might want to make a more fine-grained definition by adding in more terms. Porphyry writes that 'the intermediate

items will be species of the items before them and genera of the items after them. Hence these stand in two relations, one to the items before them (in virtue of which they are said to be their species), and one to the items after them (in virtue of which they are said to be their genera)' (Porphyry 2003: 6). A consequence of this is that we now need to define the species in terms of something other than the individual, since only the lowest species relates directly to things which differ only in number. Instead, we now define the species in terms of its genus. Thus we have a hierarchy, reaching from the highest genera to the individual, through which the individual is specified by a process of division from the genus through the various species, gaining determinations as it goes, since each genus will determine the essence of that below it. The last category we need to consider are accidents, which do not define a species. These can either be separable (as in the case of Socrates, who can be sitting or not sitting), or not separable (for instance, 'being black is an inseparable accident for ravens and Ethiopians' [Porphyry 2003: 12]), in that an Ethiopian could lose his skin colour without ceasing to be an Ethiopian, whereas a man without reason (at least potentially) is no longer a man.

What is the role of difference in this hierarchy? In order for two things to differ, Aristotle argues that they must also have something in common. We cannot have a difference between, for instance, a horse and an apple, as these two forms are too far apart from each other; they are what Aristotle calls 'other' to each other. Thus, a man and a horse differ in that a man is a rational animal and a horse is a non-rational animal. The difference of rational or non-rational makes sense because of the shared predicate of animal. If differences between things of different genera are too broad, how can we formulate a narrower conception of difference? Porphyry introduces three forms of difference: 'common difference', 'proper difference', and 'the most proper difference', but only the third of these is considered by him to be real difference. Common difference is the difference between two accidents, or non-essential predicates, and is not effective in determining a real difference between two entities. Proper differences deal with inseparable properties of things, and so do really serve to determine the difference between two things. The most proper difference, however, is specific difference. Specific difference is what allows species to be defined in Porphyry's tree by dividing the genus. So, if we take the genus, animal, we are able to determine the species, man, by dividing animals into two kinds: rational and non-rational animals. Difference is the criterion by which

we divide the genus into two species. Conceptually significant difference therefore occupies a middle point between the extremes of otherness and accidental difference: 'Specific difference refers only to an entirely relative maximum, a point of accommodation for the Greek eye – in particular for the Greek eye which sees the mean, and has lost the sense of Dionysian transports and metamorphoses' (DR 32/40).

Porphyry therefore provides an account of the determination of objects that allows us to characterise all of their essential determinations through a process of division. We begin with a property which belongs to everything, for instance, substance, and by a repeated process of division of things into contrary classes, we eventually arrive at a complete determination of the subject. He puts this point as follows:

For in the case of objects which are constituted of matter and form or which have a constitution at least analogous to matter and form, just as a statue is constituted of bronze as matter and figure as form, so too the common and special man is constituted of the genus analogously to matter and of the difference as shape, and these – rational mortal animal – taken as a whole are the man, just as they are the statue. (Porphyry 2003: 11)

Of course, Porphyry is not implying that what we have here is a temporal constitution (we don't find in the world beings that are only determined as animals, for instance). Rather, his point is that the series of genera and species provide an account of the logical order of determinations of a particular object.

### 1.3 Aristotle's Conception of Being (32–5/41–4)

I now want to look at some problems with the account of determination offered by Aristotle and Porphyry that Deleuze sets out. He divides the difficulties with Aristotle's model into problems of 'the Large', which arise from a difficulty related to characterising the top of the hierarchy of terms, the highest genus, and problems of 'the Small', which relate to the unity of empirical objects (DR 29–30/38). His claim is that such a model cannot deal with the extreme cases of determination. Thus, Aristotle's model relies on the 'extraction or cutting out of generic identities from the flux of a continuous perceptible series' (DR 34/43). This involves a problematic notion of resemblance between changing perceptions and an unchanging essence.

We can relate these difficulties to the two forms of indifference which are to be avoided. As we have seen, these are 'the black nothingness,

the indeterminate animal in which everything is dissolved – but also the white nothingness, the once more calm surface upon which float unconnected determinations like scattered members’ (DR 28/36). While Deleuze’s characterisation of these problems may seem obscure, they relate to two key issues with Aristotle’s theory. First, how do we determine the nature of the highest genus in the Aristotelian hierarchy (black nothingness), and second, how do we explain the constitution as well as the determination of the subject (the problem of white nothingness)? The problem of the highest genus is recognised by Aristotle. He sets it out in the *Metaphysics* as follows:

It is not possible that either unity or being should be a genus of things; for the differentiae of any genus must each of them both have being and be one, but it is not possible for the genus to be predicated of the differentiae taken apart from its species (any more than for the species of the genus to be predicated of the proper differentiae of the genus); so that if either unity or being is a genus, no differentiae will either be one or have being. (Aristotle 1984b: 998b)

Now, a genus is ‘what is predicated in the category of essence of a number of things exhibiting differences in kind’ (Aristotle 1984d: 102a). Therefore, a genus, along with the differentiae, determines what it is to be an *X*. It should be clear that a difference cannot be the same type of thing as that which it differentiates. We can show this by taking as an example the case of living bodies. If the difference between living bodies was itself a living body, then we would be caught in an infinite regress, as in order for *this* living body to function as a difference, we would need to differentiate it from other living bodies. Thus, we would require a further difference, which would in turn need to be differentiated and so on to infinity. What thus differentiates living bodies, the difference sensible/non-sensible, must itself not be a living body. This, however, presents a serious problem when we apply this criterion to the case of being, as it now means that what differentiates beings into different species cannot itself be a type of being. Therefore, if being is a genus, then difference itself cannot be a being. As Deleuze puts it, ‘Being itself is not a genus . . . because differences *are*’ (DR 32/41). It is not simply the difference in being that would lack being, but as differences are inherited (man is a rational animal, but also a material substance), all differences would lack being. For this reason, the ultimate categories through which being is understood must be multiple, as they themselves are species in relation to the undefined genus.

This solution itself is problematic from the point of view of the science of metaphysics, however, as for Aristotle, science must relate to a unified class of things. But as we have just seen, Aristotle argues that there are several different classes of being. It therefore appears that there cannot be a coherent formulation of the concept of metaphysics. In order to resolve this problem, Aristotle argues that while these different senses of being are not identical, neither is it a case of simple equivocation to relate these various concepts together. Instead, these different senses are related to one another paronymously.

If we are to be able to talk meaningfully about the world, it cannot be the case that species and genera merely define general 'heaps' of things. Instead, they must group things together according to criteria which capture something common to their essence. For this reason, Aristotle opens his *Categories* with a discussion of three terms, homonymy, synonymy and paronymy:

When things have only a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to that name is different, they are called *homonymous*. Thus, for example, both a man and a picture [of an animal] are animals.

When things have a name in common and the definition of being which corresponds to the name is called the same, they are called *synonymous*. Thus, for example, both a man and an ox are animals.

When things get their name from something, with a difference in ending, they are called *paronymous*. Thus, for example, the grammarian gets his name from grammar, the brave get theirs from bravery. (Aristotle 1984a: 1a)

What these definitions make clear is that some attempts to define species may not capture what is essential to the species itself. Since words apply to different objects, it might be the case that if we rely on the fact that the same term is used to designate different entities, we may be forced into a definition of a species which does not accurately capture what it is to be that particular thing. Thus, in the case above, the species, animal, may refer both to the man and the picture of a man, despite the fact that in these cases the term animal is being used in substantially different ways. Rather, we need to look for synonymous expressions, since it is these that capture something essential about the thing in question. How do these terms relate to the question of being? Being clearly cannot be synonymous, as the problem of the highest genus shows that it is impossible to give it a straightforward definition. Being could be

homonymous, but in this case, each of the different categories of being would be arbitrarily related to one another. Being would therefore just be a conjunction of different terms – in effect, a ‘heap’, rather than a unified concept. Instead, Aristotle proposes that we consider being to be a paronymous concept. What would such a concept look like? Aristotle gives the following example:

Just as that which is healthy all has reference to health – either because it preserves health, or because it produces it, or because it is a sign of health, or because it is capable of receiving health – . . . , so too that which *is* is said in several ways, but all with reference to a single principle. (Aristotle 1984b: 1003a)

If we take the case of health, we can see that a paronymous definition has several consequences:

First, different things can all be said to be healthy. Second, the definition of health will apply to each of these objects in different ways. Clearly health is different from, for instance, a healthy diet, or a medical instrument which is capable of promoting health. Third, each of these different meanings is related to a central meaning, known as a *focal meaning*. For instance, if we see health as the proper functioning of the organism, we can see that there is an asymmetry between our uses of the term. While a healthy diet will have reference to this proper functioning, perhaps the intake of foods which allow the proper functioning of the organism, the definition of health itself does not need to incorporate anything from these secondary definitions.

It is quite straightforward to relate this idea of paronymy to the concept of being. Rather than simply being a heap, the different categories of being are all related to a single concept. Things can therefore be said to be. For instance, properties, substance and differentia can all be said to exist, despite being different from one another. Second, the ways in which these things exist may well be different, and yet still be related to one another. Third, these different notions of being will all relate to a central concept of being. If we look at the notions of substance and properties, for instance, it is clear that a property can only exist as a property *of* something. Therefore it is going to be logically secondary to a focal meaning, in this case the notion of substance to which properties are attributed.

As we shall see, this notion of paronymy is also central to the Scholastic tradition, where it takes the form of analogy. We can now return to the difficulty which Deleuze finds with this response to the problem of the

highest genus. To deal first with the question of black nothingness, we can see that even if we can now solve the logical problem of how the terms at the top of the hierarchy are related, we are still left with a question as to how we are able to define the concept of being. Being still cannot be defined without presupposing a yet higher concept. Being is therefore put outside of the world of species and genera. As Deleuze writes, 'it is as though there were two "Logoi", differing in nature, but intermingled with one another: the logos of species . . . which rests upon the condition of the identity or univocity of concepts in general taken as genera; and the logos of Genera . . . which is free of that condition and operates both in the equivocity of Being and in the diversity of the most general concepts' (DR 32–3/41).

Second, Deleuze argues that while Aristotle provides an account of the *determination* of objects, he cannot provide an account of the *constitution* of objects. As we saw, properties are understood as properties *of* something, and the same could be said of differences. When we ask the question, 'what is it?', we have already presupposed the existence of a logical subject to which predicates will be attributed by means of an answer. This rules out in advance any possible account of the genesis of the subject. It is for this reason that Deleuze introduces the indifference of white nothingness. He is going to argue that we need to think the faintly paradoxical notion 'unconnected determinations' if we are to think of the emergence of the subject itself.

#### 1.4 Duns Scotus (35–6/44–5, 39–40/48–9)

Aristotle's account is concerned with questions of what there is, that is, with questions of ontology. We have just seen that Deleuze finds substantial problems with this account. He therefore claims that 'there has only ever been one ontological proposition: Being is univocal' (DR 35/44). This claim is that the problems with the analogical conception of being cannot be solved, and hence we need to take an entirely new approach. In the next few sections, I want to trace Deleuze's development of this concept of univocity through the alternative tradition that he constructs. This tradition moves from Duns Scotus, through Spinoza, to Nietzsche. In the process, I hope it will become clear what exactly a 'univocal conception of being' entails.

Before discussing Scotus, we need to look at the conception of God presented by traditional theology. The central point to note is that medieval theologians saw a fundamental difference between the

concept of finite things, and the concept of an infinite being such as God. It was taken for granted by the scholastics that God's nature is essentially simple (it is not composed of parts), whilst at the same time, it possesses every perfection (God is infinitely good, infinitely wise, etc.). This highlights a fundamental limitation to our understanding of God because when we look at objects that we have access to, objects in the finite world, we see that an object having several properties is a complex object. Now the very fact that a term like 'good' operates in these different ways when we use it to describe an object or person in the world or to describe God implies that when we use this term, we are equivocating. That is, that the same term names two different concepts, good-for-God, and good-in-the-finite-world. Such a position has certain advantages – in that it makes clear that God is a transcendent entity that cannot be adequately understood according to our categories of thought – but is ultimately untenable as it renders any relation to or understanding of God impossible.

It is here that Aquinas brings in the notion of analogy. As we saw with Aristotle, analogy allows us to relate terms that have something in common (a focal meaning), but yet differ. Aquinas' use of analogy relies on the likeness of cause and effect (our goodness is caused by God, so there must be some analogy between infinite and finite goodness, since effects resemble their causes). In this instance, therefore, God's goodness is the focal meaning by which finite goodness gets its own meaning. It is against this view that Scotus develops his own position: a univocal theory of religious language. He defines univocity as follows: 'I designate that concept univocal which possesses sufficient unity in itself, so that to affirm or deny it of one and the same thing would be a contradiction' (Duns Scotus 1978b: 20). Effectively, univocity therefore means that a word is used in the same sense in all contexts, unlike 'health', for instance, whose meaning changes depending on what we are relating it to. Scotus has two main reasons for supposing that being fits this category of univocity. First, he claims that we can believe that God *exists* without knowing anything further about him, even whether he is finite or infinite. Second, the alternative theory of analogy suffers from a key problem: in order for the analogy to work, we seem to require some knowledge of the relationship between God's nature and his attributes. Such an analogical argument presupposes some form of understanding of God's nature. Scotus instead takes being to be univocal and 'indifferen[t] to what is infinite and finite' (Duns Scotus 1987a: 2). Now

this raises a problem, since we want to see God as separate from man. Deleuze raises this point as follows in one of his lectures:

Because I say: being is univocal, this means: there is no categorical difference between the assumed senses of the word 'being' and being is said in one and the same sense of everything which is. In a certain manner this means that the tick is God; there is no difference of category, there is no difference of substance, there is no difference of form. It becomes a mad thought. (L 14/01/74)

This view is clearly heretical, since it appears to be the case that as being is somehow prior to finite and infinite beings, being appears to operate as a genus, with finite and infinite beings as its species. Thus being would seem to occupy a place higher in the Porphyrian hierarchy than God. We might also want to ask how Scotus is able to explain the simplicity of the nature of God, given that God's nature seems to now be a compound of two different attributes: being and infinitude.

Scotus' resolution of these difficulties rests on his understanding of finitude and infinity. To return to Aquinas for a moment, in the *Summa Theologica*, Aquinas defines infinity as follows:

Something is said to be infinite from the fact that it is not limited. Now matter is in a certain way limited through form, and form in a certain way through matter. Matter is in fact limited through form inasmuch as before it receives a form, matter is in potency to many forms, but when it receives one, it is limited by it. Form however is limited through matter inasmuch as a form considered in itself is common to many things, but by being received in matter it becomes the form determinately of this thing. (Aquinas, cited by Tomarchio 2002: 176)

The concepts of finite and infinite are here *relational* concepts. The infinite is defined by not being limited, whereas the finite is defined through limitation (by matter). If the finite and infinite are understood in these terms, it is clear that we are going to end up with being as the highest genus, or at best an analogical conception of being, as these two terms are opposed to one another. Rather than finitude being defined by relation to a limit, Scotus instead therefore introduces the notion of an 'intrinsic degree' of being.

To see how such a concept can be formed, we can follow the account Richard Cross gives in his discussion of Scotus (Cross 1999: 40). Scotus first asks us to imagine an infinitely large magnitude. He then asks us to apply this model of extensive infinity to a qualitative perfection, such as goodness. The central claim is that much as we can determine spatial

magnitudes, we are also capable of ranking perfections in such a way that we can conceive of an infinite perfection. In the case of a perfection, however, it cannot be constituted of parts in the way that the extensive magnitude is. An infinite extensive magnitude is constituted from an infinite number of finite extensive parts, but a perfection would not be infinitely perfect if it were composed of finite (and hence imperfect) qualities. The notion of infinity that Scotus is developing is therefore of an intensive, indivisible form of infinity, rather than the extensive, divisible form that Aquinas favours.

God is not, therefore, superior to man in the quantitative extension of his being, but rather in the qualitative nature of his being's intensity. This ultimately allows Scotus to solve the two difficulties of the highest genus and the simplicity of God. Instead of understanding infinity and finitude as species of being, they are rather modes or ways in which being subsists. Scotus gives the following example in terms of colour:

When some reality is understood along with its intrinsic mode, that concept is not so absolutely simple that it is impossible that this reality be conceived apart from this mode, although it is then an imperfect concept of a thing. For example, if there were whiteness in the tenth degree of intensity, however simple it may be in reality, it is nonetheless possible that it be conceived under the concept of so much whiteness, and then it would be conceived perfectly by means of a concept adequate to the thing itself. Or, it is able to be conceived precisely under the concept of whiteness, and then it is conceived according to a concept that is imperfect and lacking in perfection in the thing. But the imperfect concept is common to this and that white, and the perfect concept is more proper. (Scotus, *Ord.* I, d. 8, pars 1, q. 3 n. 138–9, taken from Hall 2007: 107)

Infinite being is like infinite whiteness in this example. Finite being in turn is like a finite degree of whiteness. In neither case are the notions relational. Infinite whiteness is not defined by a lack of limitation, but positively, in terms of its own intensity. Likewise, a finite degree of whiteness is not defined in relation to some other quality, but is intrinsic to the colour itself. Finitude and infinity are therefore modes, rather than properties of being.

When we looked at Porphyry's theory of species and genera, we saw that Porphyry defines these as what are given in response to the question, 'what is it?' Man, for instance, is defined by the genus, animal, and the difference, rationality. Differences are, and so we can make a real, existential distinction between rationality and animality. The fact

that there is a real distinction between these two terms means that man shares something with another animal, such as a horse, whilst differing in another respect (rationality). If this kind of distinction was applied to finite and infinite being, then being would be the genus of God and man, as the identity under which they are distinguished. In this case, being would be higher than God. Scotus' notion of the distinction allows us to avoid this difficulty. Clearly there is a difference between whitenesses of different degrees of intensity.

When we look at the concept of the intensity itself, however, it should be apparent that this notion of intensity cannot be grasped as really distinct from the whiteness itself. If we take away the concept of whiteness, we simply have the concept of 'degree', which is meaningless on its own – 'degree of what?' Nevertheless, the degree clearly does distinguish different 'whitenesses'. We can note however, that it is possible to formulate a concept of whiteness that does not make reference to its degree of intensity. Such a concept would, however, be 'an imperfect concept of a thing' as whiteness always shows itself with a given intensity. It should be clear that we can apply this conception to the notion of being. Scotus' claim would then be that being always presents itself with a given degree of intensity which is inseparable from it. While we can therefore formulate a concept of being without reference to its intensity, such a conception is only formal, as actual being is always finite or infinite.

Intensity as it stands is purely a difference in the degree of something's being, and is also pre-categorical. As such, it does not constitute the kind of distinction that would allow a proper separation between God and man. Such a position in fact is the one that Deleuze wants to develop in his own philosophy. For Scotus on the contrary, the difference in degree between God and his creation becomes a difference in kind once we recognise that infinite intensity is simply incommensurate with any form of finite intensity. The gap between finite and infinite is therefore still a chasm which allows the separation of God and his creation to be maintained. While being can conceptually be said univocally, in practice, we always encounter being with a given intensity, and so in reality being is always encountered in different forms:

As said of the ten categories, neither metaphysically nor naturally does the term 'being' signify one concept; and being is not a genus of these, neither naturally nor metaphysically. However, logically speaking, being is univocal. (Duns Scotus, *In De an.*, q. 22, n. 33 taken from Hall 2007: 20)

By making this difference a difference in kind, Scotus separates man from God, but at the cost of making the thesis of univocity a purely formal thesis. This is why Deleuze claims that Scotus ‘only *thought* univocal being’ (DR 39/49).

### 1.5 Spinoza (40/49–50)

Spinoza represents for Deleuze the second major thinker of univocity. Spinoza goes beyond Scotus by moving from a conception of univocal being as purely abstract to one whereby we in practice encounter one being. He makes it ‘an object of pure affirmation’ (DR 40/49). At this point it would be useful to go through three of the key terms in Spinoza’s philosophy (substance, attributes and modes) in order to highlight how the structures of univocity are taken up on Deleuze’s reading. Spinoza defines substance as follows: ‘By substance I understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, that the conception of which does not require the conception of another thing, from which it has to be formed’ (Spinoza 1992: Part I D3). Spinoza is here very close to Descartes’ definition of substance as ‘a thing which exists in such a way as to depend on no other thing for its existence’. At this point, however, an important difference arises in regard to how we distinguish substances. For Descartes, the fact that a substance exists implies that it is numerically distinct from other substances. Thus, for Descartes, the mind and the body are two actually distinct substances. In fact, we have more than just two substances. Each person has a separate mind, or soul, and so there are a number of real, numerically distinct, substances which share the same attribute. How does this relate to the question of how to distinguish or determine entities? For Descartes, ‘there are numerical distinctions which are at the same time real or substantial’ (EPS 30). Spinoza disputes this claim, arguing that substances with the same attribute could only be distinguished by their particular mode (i.e. whether the substance of thought is your or my thought). As substance is logically prior to its modes, it is impossible to distinguish substances with the same attributes numerically (Spinoza 1992: Part I P5). This does not just mean that there is only one substance, but as it falls outside of numerical distinctions, substance is better described as singular (without number). I want to turn to this theme now by introducing Spinoza’s notion of the attributes.

Spinoza defines an attribute as ‘that which the intellect perceives of substance as constituting its essence’ (Spinoza 1992: Part I D4).

In Descartes' terms, an attribute is the essence of a substance, so, for instance, the essence of material substance is extension. So in answer to the question, 'what is it to be a material substance?', we would reply, 'it is to be extended'. For Descartes, substances are individuated numerically, which means that we can distinguish them simply by indicating which one we are talking about ('this is my body, and that is yours'). Extension plays a purely definitional role in this case. For Spinoza, however, there is only one substance, and so he cannot simply rely on thought and extension being conceptual distinctions of two different substances. Given that the world contains (at least) both things and ideas, Spinoza has to explain how it is possible for the same substance to be expressed by two different essences, thought and extension.

As Deleuze recognises, this problem mirrors one which Scotus dealt with. The question for Scotus was how an infinite being could both be understood as simple, which was a standard part of the definition of God, yet at the same time be composed of a number of proper attributes: how could God be simple, yet still be one, true and good? Scotus' solution was to rely on the notion of a formal distinction between the different attributes so that while they were not actually distinct as things separate from one another, they were nevertheless formally distinct in that they picked out genuine differences for reason within the infinite being. Truth, goodness and unity were therefore formally, but not really, distinct features of the infinite being (Scotus uses a similar logic for the Trinity).

Attributes operate in a similar way for Spinoza. They are formally distinct from each other, but they cannot be really distinct, as they express the essence of the same substance. There are some key differences between Scotus' account of the attributes of God and Spinoza's account of the attributes of God or substance. First, Scotus' attributes are really just what Deleuze calls 'signs' for the intellect. They express a way in which the nature of God is to be taken up by the finite subject. It is to an extent ambiguous how they are to be read in Spinoza. His definition of 'what the intellect perceives of a substance, as constituting its essence' can be read both as subjective (by focusing on the intellect's perception) or as objective. Second, for Scotus, God is a separate entity to the world, whereas for Spinoza, as there is only one substance, the expression of the essence of God in the attribute cannot merely be a formal feature. Rather, the expression *is* the world. For Spinoza, therefore, the intellectual and physical realms are just the expression, or explication, of the

essence of God. In this sense, 'instead of understanding univocal being as neutral or indifferent, he makes it an object of pure affirmation' (DR 40/49). Whereas the essence of God is known formally for Scotus (as a 'sign'), it is now known expressively and concretely. We therefore have a progression between the nature of God being known analogically for Aquinas; univocally, but only in a formal manner for Scotus; and now univocally and affirmatively for Spinoza.

So Spinoza's metaphysics presents the world as the expression of the essence of God. This brings us to the final part of his system I want to discuss: the mode. If the world is the essence of God, and God is infinite, how do we account for the existence of finite things within the world, which Spinoza calls modes? Spinoza argues that finite things are modifications of infinite substance. He defines them as follows: 'By mode I mean the affections of substance; that is, that which is in something else and is conceived through something else' (Spinoza 1992: Part 1 D5). Here we rely on the second of Scotus' distinctions, the modal distinction. Earlier on, I mentioned how Spinoza disagrees with Descartes' equation of real and numerical distinction. Spinoza instead argues that substance is really distinct, but not numerically distinct. Modes operate in the opposite manner. Modes are modifications of a singular substance, and so are not really distinct. They are, however, numerically distinct from one another. If modes are to be distinct, but not seen as existentially distinct from one another (as they are all moments of a singular substance), we need some other way of distinguishing them. This is in essence the same problem that we found in Scotus' attempt to develop a univocal conception of being which was at the same time applicable to finite and infinite beings. Scotus' solution was to replace Aquinas' notion of the finite/infinite distinction (which was founded on limit) with a distinction founded on intensity. Thus being is like the concept of whiteness. While we can formulate a concept of whiteness separately from the intensity by which it manifests itself, such a concept would be inadequate. Intensity is the mode by which whiteness manifests itself. According to Deleuze, Spinoza develops a similar account of the nature of finite modes. Just as intensity is only modally distinct from whiteness, finite modes are only modally distinct from substance itself.

What is the role, therefore, that univocity is playing in Spinoza's philosophy? First, we can see that the nature of substance itself is not given according to a categorial form of definition. In order to define something for Aristotle, we need a genus and a difference. This led to the problem

of the highest genus, as the highest genus would seem to require a higher identity in order to be defined, but the presence of such a higher identity would imply that the highest genus was not, in fact, the highest genus. In such a case, determination relies on a numerical distinction between terms. We must be able to separate the rational animals from the non-rational animals (as separately existing entities) in order to define man as a rational animal. We define something by saying that it is 'this and not that'. Spinoza's substance, however, has an essence which is expressed through the attributes. This essence is not one that can be given in terms of the categories, however, as Spinoza's substance is not subject to any form of numerical distinction – it is singular. On this basis, it cannot be determined through the 'this and not that' structure of representation, even in relation to a possible but non-existent object. Substance does have a structure and an essence, however, as is shown by the finite modes which as a whole express substance, and which are distinguished from one another in terms of their intensity. Substance is determined by a difference, but it is not a difference between concepts (everything is substance), but rather a difference that is internal to substance. This is therefore one of the most difficult ideas in Deleuze's metaphysics: substance expresses its essence by differing from itself. This is made possible on the basis of the univocal conception of being, whereby all modes express *the same* being. Spinoza's system therefore makes no distinction between different ways in which things exist. Although the world appears to be made up of different substances, in actual fact, everything is simply an expression of the same substance.

### 1.6 Nietzsche (36–7/45–7, 40–2/50–2, 52–5/63–7)

Despite the fact that Spinoza represents an advance over the work of Scotus, Deleuze claims that for Spinoza, 'substance must be said itself *of* the modes and only *of* the modes. Such a condition can be satisfied only at the price of a more general categorical reversal according to which being is said of becoming, identity of that which is different, the one of the multiple, etc.' (DR 40/50). Deleuze's point is that the relation of modes to being is still structured like the terms of a judgement. The modes are said *of* being, in the same way that we might say *of* a man that he is rational, and so we still understand being as if it were a subject, even if we know that in reality it is singular rather than one, and thus different in kind from the object of a judgement. In order to overcome this limitation, we need somehow to replace our account of

being as the highest term in our hierarchy with difference, whilst retaining the insights given by the intensive understanding of difference; it is Nietzsche, Deleuze claims, who provides the means to do this. I want to come back to his work in the next chapter, but there are two points in Nietzsche's writings that Deleuze is basing his argument on at this point. The first is section 13 of Essay I of the *Genealogy of Morality*, where Deleuze sees Nietzsche as opposing the subject–property view of reality, and the second is aphorism 341 of the *Gay Science*, where Nietzsche presents the eternal return. Deleuze sees the eternal return as Nietzsche's formulation of the univocity principle.

Let us begin by looking at the section from the *Genealogy of Morality*. Here, Nietzsche presents a contrast between two basic attitudes towards the world, that of the lamb and the bird of prey:

There is nothing strange about the fact that lambs bear a grudge towards large birds of prey: but that is no reason to blame the large birds of prey for carrying off the little lambs. And if the lambs say to each other, 'These birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a bird of prey and most like its opposite, a lamb, – is good, isn't he?', then there is no reason to raise objections to this setting-up of an ideal beyond the fact that the birds of prey will view it somewhat derisively, and will perhaps say: 'We don't bear any grudge at all towards these good lambs, in fact we love them, nothing is tastier than a tender lamb' . . . A quantum of force is just such a quantum of drive, will, action, in fact it is nothing but this driving, willing and acting, and only the seduction of language (and the fundamental errors of reason petrified within it), which construes and misconstrues all actions as conditional upon an agency, a 'subject', can make it appear otherwise . . . no wonder, then, if the entrenched, secretly smouldering emotions of revenge and hatred put this belief to their own use and, in fact, do not defend any belief more passionately than that *the strong are free* to be weak, and the birds of prey are free to be lambs: – in this way, they gain the right to make the birds of prey *responsible* for being birds of prey. (Nietzsche 2006a: §13)

Nietzsche is here presenting an argument which combines moral and ontological aspects. The natural state of affairs is that of the bird of prey, who exercises his strength, and sees itself as good. The lamb, however, sees the bird of prey as evil, and therefore sees itself as good. The symmetry between these two positions is misleading, however, and each rests on fundamentally different ways of seeing the world. For the bird of prey, its action is simply an expression of its strength, or, in more Nietzschean terms, we might say that the bird of prey itself is an

expression of strength: 'It is just as absurd to ask strength not to express itself as strength . . . as it is to ask weakness to express itself as strength' (Nietzsche 2006a: §13).

The lamb's reaction is a moral reaction, and one that is made possible by an illusion fostered by grammar: it posits a subject who is responsible for exercising its strength. Nietzsche gives the further example of lightning. When we say that 'lightning strikes', we are forced by the structure of language to posit a distinction between a subject ('lightning') and an act ('striking'). Now we might recognise in this case that in fact there is nothing other to the lightning than its striking itself – there is no hidden subject behind the act – but language opens up a way of thinking of the world in terms of agents and actions. Once the lamb understands the bird of prey as an agent acting, he can posit the (illusory) possibility of the agent withholding this action. Thus, the bird of prey, once it is seen as a subject, becomes culpable for what it does.

We can use this distinction between two different ways of understanding the world to clarify Deleuze's key distinction between sedentary and nomadic distributions. Distributions in this sense are for Deleuze ways of thinking about what something is essentially, or more generally, what kinds of things the world is composed of. Let us begin with a sedentary distribution: 'A distribution of this type proceeds by fixed and proportional determinations which may be assimilated to "properties" or limited territories within representation' (DR 36/45). Deleuze's conception here is that the world is cut up by applying pairs of predicates to the world, thus distinguishing, for instance, the rational from the non-rational, the animate from the non-animate. It is something like the Aristotelian division of the world into species and genera by dividing identities with differences. We can also see the scheme from the *Genealogy of Morality* at play. The sedentary distribution is agrarian, and encompasses the domesticated point of view of the lamb. Just as Aristotle sees the world in terms of subjects possessing properties, the lamb sees the world in terms of agents responsible for actions. Deleuze writes further that 'even among the gods, each has his domain, his category, his attributes, and all distribute limits and lots to mortals in accordance with destiny' (DR 36/45).

The notion of limit is important here, if we recall its centrality in Aquinas' division of the finite from the infinite. The limit is also what allows us to determine something as possessing one property and not another. Something cannot be both rational and non-rational at the

same time, and in this sense Aristotle uses these categories to define the logical space which something occupies. Each term limits the other, but also, to the same extent, defines it, so that the properties form reciprocal pairs. In other words, to determine something, we in effect characterise it as ‘this and not that’. This characterisation can also be related once again to the lamb. The lamb determines itself as good in opposition to the bird of prey, which it first determines to be evil. Difference in this sense is therefore fundamentally tied to the related notions of spatial metaphor (two objects differ in that we characterise them as occupying different delimited logical territories) and negation. Finally, it provides ‘a hierarchy which measures beings according to their limits, and according to their proximity or distance from a principle’ (DR 36/46); in other words, according to how closely a being conforms with its essence or is a degenerate instance of it. A sedentary distribution therefore is a way of ordering the world that is hierarchical, and proceeds by the delimitation of the world according to oppositional determinations. The notion of difference is grounded in negation and operates according to a spatial metaphor.

The second form of distribution is the nomadic distribution. Deleuze makes clear that this conception of a distribution relies on ‘a space which is unlimited, or at least without precise limits’ (DR 36/46). Rather than being defined by the ‘this and not that’ conception of difference that Deleuze finds in Aristotle, it is defined by the notion of intensive difference which, as Scotus showed, does not require definition in oppositional terms. It is therefore not a spatial conception of organisation. Deleuze introduces the univocal conception of being in order to explain those features of the world which escaped something like an Aristotelian conception of the world. The nomadic distribution is intimately connected to this univocal conception: ‘Oedipus’ chorus cries: “which demon has leapt further than the highest leap?” The leap here bears witness to the unsettling difficulties that nomadic distributions introduce into the sedentary structures of representation’ (DR 37/46). If a sedentary distribution is fundamentally tied to an understanding of the world in terms of subjects and properties, how are we to understand this notion of a nomadic distribution? The key point is Deleuze’s claim that everything goes to the limit of what it can do. He elaborates on this as follows:

Here limit [*peras*] no longer refers to what maintains a thing under a law, nor what delimits or separates it from other things. On the contrary, it refers to that on the basis of which it is deployed and deploys all of its power; hubris ceases to

be simply condemnable and *the smallest becomes equivalent to the largest* once it is not separated from what it can do. (DR 37/46)

When we separate the bird of prey from its action, or lightning from its striking, we institute the two moments of an ontology of judgement: the subject and the property. This moment of separation of something from what it can do is what gives us the Aristotelian idea of a world of fixed things. If something is not separated from what it can do, then instead of an ontology of being, we have an ontology of forces, or becoming. There are not static points from which movement originates, but rather just movement itself. We can tie together a number of results at this stage. Just as Scotus shows that analogy can only operate within a prior univocal framework, Nietzsche shows that the point of view of the lamb is derivative of that of the bird of prey. Deleuze similarly argues that 'negation results from affirmation: this means that negation arises in the wake of affirmation or beside it, *but only as the shadow of the more profound genetic element* – of that power or "will" which engenders the affirmation and the difference in affirmation' (DR 55/67). Difference is therefore primary in this scheme. This leads us to the last aspect of Deleuze's discussion of univocity: how are we to conceive of a univocal conception of becoming?

### 1.7 The Eternal Return (40–2/50–2)

Nietzsche formulates the eternal return as follows:

What if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: 'This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more' . . . Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have answered him: 'You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine.' (Nietzsche 2001: §341)

This principle has two important aspects for Deleuze at this point in *Difference and Repetition*. First, the question we need to ask is, what is it that eternally returns? Second, the eternal return seems to operate as a test; what is it a test for? Let us begin with the first question. Deleuze has laid down two different ways of understanding the world. A sedentary distribution essentially understands the world as a collection of things with properties. If Deleuze's aim is to give us a conception of difference that is not subordinated to identity, then understanding the return in terms

of subjects is clearly not going to be adequate in any case, since these are centres of identity. Instead, what returns is the nomadic distribution. Deleuze's analysis of Spinoza saw being as the ground for the modes. For Deleuze, taking up the eternal return, the ground (or, as we shall see, unground) for modes is going to be a pre-judicative field of becoming: it is the intensive, nomadic distribution which returns. 'Only the extreme, the excessive, returns; that which passes into something else and becomes identical . . . Eternal return or returning expresses the common being of all these metamorphoses . . . of all the realised degrees of power' (DR 41/51). The priority of difference does not, therefore preclude the existence of identities, but asserts that what returns is not these identities themselves, but something prior to identity, which Deleuze characterises as difference.

The eternal return appears as a test – whether we can bear the heaviest burden of the demon's truth. What is this a test for? The lamb and the bird of prey both see the world in terms of different distributions; the former according to the sedentary distribution, the latter according to the nomadic distribution. In this case, deciding between them is straightforward, but it may be difficult to see whether something is governed by a sedentary or nomadic distribution. The eternal return allows us to differentiate those two classes. Only that which is pure affirmation, or which is not separated from what it can do, can truly will the repetition of everything that makes it what it is. Those who cannot affirm this do not have their ground in the affirmative field of differences, but are instead, like the lamb, grounded in the sedentary distribution. The fact that they make a distinction between what can be done and what is done (they posit agency), means that they as agents are not the same as their actions. For the lamb, therefore, positing its own return is not identical with positing the return of everything which is. The eternal return therefore allows us to differentiate 'the superior form of everything that "is"' (DR 41/51) from those beings that are really not (as the sedentary distribution is not a well-founded way of understanding the world). In doing so, it allows us to characterise that set of entities which genuinely are, and are not merely secondary effects, just as the lamb's attitude is a secondary effect of the bird of prey's.

### **1.8 Infinite Representation (42–4/52–4, 48–54/59–65)**

Towards the conclusion of the chapter, Deleuze notes that the move to a univocal conception of being isn't the only response we can make

to Aristotle. At this point, he makes a distinction between two different ways in which we can characterise philosophies that are based on the notion of judgement. The first form, which we have been dealing with, is finite representation. This is based on the idea that judgements describe the essential structure of things. In other words, they set out the essential determinations which make up something. What makes it finite is the notion of limit. Aquinas' definition of limit, for instance, showed that finite things failed to properly express their form because they were limited by matter. This led to a distinction between the essence of something and its appearance, in that something expresses its essence to the degree that its actual finite form embodies its essence ('their degree of proximity or distance from a principle' [DR 37/46]). Deleuze's claim is that infinite representation replaces the notion of matter with a broader notion of representation. Rather than finite forms occurring in matter, everything that exists as a moment of an infinite concept which encompasses everything. In effect, this is the claim that the world is therefore conceptual 'all the way down': 'Instead of animating judgements about things, orgiastic representation makes things themselves so many expressions, or so many propositions: infinite analytic or synthetic propositions' (DR 43/53). I want to spend a bit of time outlining how these approaches might function. In relation to the discussion of representation so far, the following comment by Deleuze sums up the difference between finite and infinite representation:

The signification of the very notion of limit changes completely; it no longer refers to the limits of finite representation, but on the contrary to the womb in which finite determination never ceases to be born and to disappear, to be enveloped and deployed within orgiastic representation. (DR 42–3/53)

### 1.9 Hegel (44–6/54–6, 51–3/62–4)

There are two ways of putting this approach into practice. We can either take a synthetic approach, which is what Hegel does, or we can see objects as fully defined by an infinite number of properties, thus making truths about them analytic, which is Leibniz's proposal. In the case of Hegel, therefore, this means that the kind of thinking which has characterised representation so far is only a moment in a wider movement of thought. Thus, finite thinking, or 'the understanding' in Hegel's terms, the mode of thought of Aristotle, is really just a single moment in a broader process called speculative reason. It is only by reifying specu-

lative thought that we end up with the problems we have encountered so far; that is, by denying that there is a greater moment to representation than finite representation, we find ourselves unable to explain the concept of totality.

Central to Hegel's explanation of infinite representation is the notion of dialectic. Essentially, Hegel wants to argue that rather than the meanings of terms simply being given by definition, we find when we analyse the movement of thought thinking these terms that their meaning arises from the content itself. Hegel's *Science of Logic* therefore traces the development of concepts from the simplest concept, that of pure, undifferentiated being, through to what he calls the Absolute Idea, or the Notion. By tracing the development of ideas themselves, we are able to see the inherent connections between them. Philosophy is therefore this movement of concepts themselves. For Hegel, therefore, the problems of finite representation emerge when we ignore this movement, and assume that concepts are just given. In this way, Hegel criticises his predecessors as follows:

Such presuppositions that infinity is different from finitude, that content is other than form, that the inner is other than the outer, also that mediation is not immediacy (as if anyone did not know such things), are brought forward by way of information and narrated and asserted rather than proved. (Hegel 1999: 41)

Finite representation therefore emerges for Hegel from the fact that we take for granted the nature of the distinction between the finite and the infinite. We presume that: '*There are* two worlds, one infinite and one finite, and in their relationship the infinite is only the *limit* of the finite and is thus only a determinate infinite, an *infinite which is itself finite*' (Hegel 1999: 139–40). If we just view the infinite as a 'beyond' of the finite, and remain with finite thinking, however, we end up with an infinite which is itself limited, and hence is finite: 'Owing to the inseparability of the infinite and the finite – or because this infinite remaining aloof on its own side is itself limited – there arises a limit; the infinite has vanished, and its other, the finite, has entered' (Hegel 1999: 141). The heart of the difficulty is that the infinite is supposed to be that which is beyond limitation, but the basic structure of determining the infinite is by opposition, in other words by saying what the infinite is not. But by doing so, we introduce a limit into the notion of the infinite. Possessing a limit, however, is what defines finite things. For this reason, Hegel defines this understanding of the infinite as a 'spurious infinite' (Hegel 1999: 142).

We attempt to determine the infinite as a beyond, but in determining it, we limit it and make it finite. We thus have an infinite progression and alternation between finite and infinite terms. If we are truly to understand the infinite, and hence the finite, we need to see both as moments of one process:

The image of the progress to infinity is the *straight line*, at the two limits of which alone the infinite is, and always only is where the line – which is determinate being – is not, and which goes *out beyond* to this negation of its determinate being, that is, to the indeterminate; the image of true infinity, bent back into itself, becomes the *circle*, the line which has reached itself, which is closed and wholly present, without *beginning* and *end*. (Hegel 1999: 149)

The true infinite emerges when we step back from attempting to formulate the infinite through the progression, and recognise that the process of the circular movement of the finite into the infinite and back again is itself the infinite. Such a process involves seeing the infinite as essentially a contradictory structure – the identity of identity and difference. The finite is in a perpetual process of vanishing or negation, and this movement itself is seen as the infinite. Everything therefore falls under conceptual determination. Hegel's claim is thus that it is only by moving to a different way of understanding concepts, namely speculative reason, that we are able to truly understand either of the categories of finitude or infinitude.

What, therefore, is the relationship between the infinite and finite that Hegel develops? Deleuze's claim is that infinite representation is no better than finite representation. In distinguishing the two, he writes that 'it treats identity as a pure infinite principle instead of treating it as a genus, and extends the rights of the concept to the whole instead of fixing their limits' (DR 50/61). The finite and the infinite are still understood oppositionally, as each is not the other, but at the same time, they are united together, in that they are part of one process. Now, if two terms are opposed to each other, but are both asserted simultaneously, then we have a contradiction. This is why Deleuze claims (and Hegel would agree) that speculative reason operates by pushing difference past opposition to contradiction. In that everything is one element (the infinite), it appears as if we have a univocal theory much like Spinoza's. In actual fact, however, Hegel's theory preserves the central features of representation: 'Goethe, and even Hegel in certain respects, have been considered Spinozists, but they are not really Spinozists, because they

never ceased to link the plan[e of infinite representation] to the organization of a Form and to the formation of a Subject' (SPP 128–9).

Deleuze makes three main criticisms of this approach. First, '[Hegel] creates movement, even the movement of the infinite, but because he creates it with words and representations, nothing follows' (DR 52/63). Deleuze's claim is that Hegel has misunderstood the cause of the movement of thought by continuing to represent it, rather than seeing it as escaping representation. The aspect of representation which Deleuze takes to be critical here is the universal. "'Everyone" recognises the universal because it is itself the universal, but the profound sensitive conscience which is nevertheless presumed to bear the cost, the singular, does not recognise it' (DR 52/63). The singular, or singularity, which is neither particular nor universal, is excluded by beginning with a term which is essentially universal. We can return to the figure of Abraham. Abraham cannot be understood within the framework of the universal, which is the precise reason for Kierkegaard's introduction of him in *Fear and Trembling*.

The second criticism is that this movement is always around a particular point. Deleuze is claiming that Hegel relies on a 'monocentring of circles' (DR 49/60) which Deleuze claims comes about through Hegel's adherence to the species–genus model. In the case of the finite and the infinite, movement 'revolves' around the central moment of the true infinite. Hegel has not got rid of the idea of a central identity, therefore.

The third point, which relates the previous two, is that the idea of opposition, which Hegel uses to unite the particular and universal, is too rough to provide an adequate description of the world. 'Oppositions are roughly cut from a delicate milieu of overlapping perspectives, of communicating distances, divergences and disparities, of heterogeneous potentials and intensities' (DR 50/61). That is, Deleuze asserts that simply relying on a reinvigorated understanding of the distinction between finite and infinite will not provide the kinds of fine-grained distinctions needed to describe the world adequately. It's worth noting that whilst there are a number of structural parallels between Hegel's work and that of Aristotle, there are also a number of conceptual innovations. The fact that these parallels exist is not enough, therefore, to refute Hegel's philosophical position. Exploring possible Hegelian responses to these criticisms would take us far beyond the scope of this guide, however.

**1.10 Leibniz (43–4/54, 46–52/56–63)**

If Hegel is seen by Deleuze as dealing with the Large by introducing infinity into it (the notion of contradiction as the largest difference), Leibniz is characterised as introducing the infinite into the finite by concentrating on the very small. I have already spent some time talking about Leibniz in the last chapter when we looked at Deleuze's use of the incongruent counterparts argument (0.5–0.6), and we will discuss Leibniz further in relation to the calculus when we look at Chapter 4 (4.2). For now, I just want to give an outline of the reasons why Deleuze classifies Leibniz as a thinker of infinite representation. At the beginning of this chapter, we saw how Deleuze's central claim is that we need to find an alternative way of conceptualising the world to that provided by judgement. Now Leibniz holds to the view that all truths take the form of subject-predicate judgements: 'In every categorical proposition (for from them I can show elsewhere that other kinds of propositions can be dealt with by changing a few things in the calculus) there are two terms, the subject and the predicate' (Leibniz 1989b: 11). It is certainly the case that some truths take this form, such as the claim that 'man is a rational animal', or that 'seven is a prime number'. If we hold that our judgements are able to accord with the world, then it is going to be the case that the basic elements of existence are also going to be substances of some form possessing properties (what Leibniz calls monads). If we see the basic substances in existence as purely defined in terms of substances and properties, however, we encounter a problem when we deal with relations between substances, since these don't seem to fit this structure. If we say, for instance, that 'Paul is taller than John', then it doesn't seem clear what is the subject and what is the predicate (we might want to say that 'Paul' is the subject, and 'is taller than John' is the property, but what about if we rephrase the proposition as 'John is shorter than Paul?'). Similarly, relations of cause and effect seem to involve two subjects and a relation between them. If all propositions can be reduced to judgements, therefore, we seem to be left with a world of non-causally interacting entities – 'the monads have no windows through which something can enter or leave' (Leibniz 1989a: §7). We now have to deal with two problems. First, how do we explain interactions without relations, given that we appear to live in a world of causally interacting substances; and second, how do we differentiate different monads? The solution to the first problem is to see each of these monads as somehow containing the relations between different substances as properties. This

means that 'taller than John' will be a property of Paul, and 'shorter than Paul' will be a property of John. If causal interactions are going to be understood purely as properties of each subject, then each monad will have to contain all of its causal interactions with the rest of the world. Leibniz therefore writes that:

This interconnection or accommodation of all created things to each other, and each to all others, brings it about that each simple substance has relations that express all the others, and consequently, that each simple substance is a perpetual, living mirror of the universe. (Leibniz 1989a: §56)

Each monad is therefore made up of an infinite number of properties which together describe the totality of what would be its relations with the universe, and hence, in a sense, the universe itself. To this extent, the infinite, in the sense of even the smallest elements of the universe, is contained within each monad. The whole variety of difference is therefore brought into the notion of the essence of each particular monad. Deleuze writes that: 'The inessential here refers not to that which lacks importance but, on the contrary, to the most profound, to the universal matter or continuum from which essences are finally made' (DR 47/58). The second question was, how do we differentiate monads given that each expresses the whole of the universe? While each monad expresses the entire universe, each does so from a particular perspective, and so only that which is proximal to the monad is expressed distinctly. Events which are at some remove from the monad are only perceived confusedly:

Monads are limited, not as to their objects, but with respect to the modifications of their knowledge of them. Monads all go confusedly to infinity, to the whole; but they are limited and differentiated by the degrees of their distinct perceptions. (Leibniz 1989a: §60)

The difference between monads is therefore the difference between different perspectives on the world. Different perspectives are not opposed to each other, and so Leibniz appears to have succeeded in coming up with a form of non-oppositional difference which explains all of the accidents of entities. If he had done so, then he would have developed a conception of non-oppositional difference founded on judgement, thus providing an alternative to Deleuze's philosophy. In the end, however, this project fails, because the concept of difference is still founded on an identity. If we ask what these different perspectives

are perspectives of, then we are given the answer that they are perspectives of the universe. The notion of the universe itself has to pre-exist the different perspectives of it, since it is through this notion that God determines which of the monads can exist and which cannot. Only those which are compossible, that is, can simultaneously co-exist within the same world, can exist. We cannot have a world in which Adam both sinned and did not sin, as this would be a contradiction, nor a world in which different monads see the world in such radically different ways, as then the impression of causality would break down. 'There are, as it were, just as many different universes [as there are monads], which are, nevertheless, only perspectives on a single one' (Leibniz 1989a: §57). Leibniz's notion of difference therefore still relies on the convergence of these different perspectives on a single identity, the universe itself:

Leibniz's only error was to have linked difference to the negative of limitation, because he maintained the dominance of the old principle, because he linked the series to a principle of convergence, without seeing that divergence itself was an object of affirmation. (DR 51/62)

### 1.11 Phenomenology (55–7/67–9)

Now Deleuze does have a place for the notion of difference as opposition, although he says that 'negation is difference seen from its underside, seen from below' (DR 55/67). He also argues that it is only 'the shadow of the more profound genetic element' (DR 55/67). As we shall see, the notion of law dealt with in the introduction (0.2) relies on a spatial way of thinking (5.1–5.3). We can see that the same is true of the concept of negation. If we think about something not being something else, then we normally think of them as being spatially separated from one another. This pencil is not this piece of paper to the extent that they occupy different positions within the same space. Deleuze argues that extensive space is an illusion, but one that emerges quite naturally from the way in which we relate to the world. Intensive difference is generative of our notion of objective space, and it is this space which forms the basis of oppositional difference. If we forget the fact that this conception of space is generated from something more primitive, then we end up in a situation where it is possible to introduce the notions of opposition and negation. The world thus has a tendency towards oppositional difference, but we make a mistake when we take this tendency to be a completed state of things.

In order to explain how we generate the illusion of identity, Deleuze now presents a revision of one of the central claims of the phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*. In order to explain how this genetic account functions, we need to look at three statements from *Difference and Repetition*:

1. Infinite representation includes precisely an infinity of representations – either by ensuring the convergence of all points of view on the same object or the same world, or by making all moments properties of the same Self. (DR 56/67)
2. The immediate, defined as ‘sub-representative’, is not therefore attained by multiplying representations and points of view. On the contrary, each composing representation must be distorted, diverted and torn from its centre. Each point of view must itself be the object, or the object must belong to the point of view. (DR 56/68)
3. Difference must become the element, the ultimate unity. (DR 56/68)

The section of Merleau-Ponty's text to which Deleuze is referring here is his account of the movement from our own perspective on the world to a positing of objective being. Merleau-Ponty writes as follows:

But, once more, my human gaze never *posits* more than one facet of the object, even though by means of horizons it is directed towards all of the others . . . If I conceive in the image of my own gaze those others which, converging from all directions, explore every corner of the house and define it, I have still only a harmonious and indefinite set of views of the object, but not the object in its plenitude . . . If it is to reach perfect density, in other words, if there is to be an absolute object, it will have to consist in an infinite number of different perspectives compressed into a single coexistence, and to be presented, as it were, to a host of eyes all engaged in one concerted act of seeing . . . The positing of the object therefore makes us go beyond the limits of our actual experience which is brought up against and halted by an alien being, with the result that finally experience believes that it extracts all its own teaching from the object. It is the *ek-stase* of experience which causes all perception to be perception of something.

Obsessed with being, and forgetful of the perspectivism of my experience, I henceforth treat it as an object, and deduce it from a relationship between objects. (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 69–70)

Merleau-Ponty's point is that perception is always originally from and of a certain perspective. I can never see such a thing as a totalised object. As I move around the object, I begin to notice that although my

perspective on the object changes, when I return to my original position, something similar to the original perspective returns. On this basis of the fact that my own memory appears to preserve some perspectives, I posit what Merleau-Ponty calls 'the memory of the world' (Merleau-Ponty 1962: 70), which includes all possible perspectives on the object. Now, with an understanding of the object based on an infinite number of possible perspectives, my own view ceases to be relevant (I become 'forgetful of the perspectivism of my experience'). I now suppose that rather than the object emerging from the accumulation of perspectives on it, the perspectives are in fact inessential, and logically posterior to the object itself.

The final stage is to recognise that now the object is not considered to be constituted by perception, we need another explanation of how it is constituted. We thus alight on the idea that it can be deduced 'from a relationship between objects'. This relationship is, of course, the relationship of opposition and limit. At this point, therefore, negation enters our world, as a precondition for limit. This account is therefore the account of the generation of an illusion, which, as Deleuze puts it, is nonetheless well founded. It shows how negation and limit enter the world through representation ignoring its genetic conditions (perspectivism). How does this then fit in with Deleuze's account?

Such an account fits with Deleuze's characterisation of infinite representation as the convergence of all points of view (quotation 1). Opposition comes into play through the gradual elimination of perspectives. It also fits with Deleuze's desire that each point of view instead be the object, or the object must belong to the point of view (quotation 2). Such a view is a return to a form of perspectivism such as that found in Merleau-Ponty. What about Deleuze's final claim that 'difference must become the element, the ultimate unity'? In the next paragraph, Deleuze claims that 'the intense world of differences, in which we find the reason behind the qualities and the being of the sensible, is precisely the object of a superior empiricism' (DR 57/68–9). This suggests that Deleuze's analysis is going to go beyond the kind of perspectivism Merleau-Ponty proposes.

For Merleau-Ponty, what makes possible the field of perspectives is the body, but the notion of a body operates as an identity. Instead, Deleuze is going to try to explore what makes possible the kind of account Merleau-Ponty gives. Such an account will be what Deleuze calls elsewhere a 'transcendental empiricism', since it will deal with the

conditions of real experience. Intensive difference will therefore take the place of identity as being generative of our experience of the world. This means that while Deleuze can accept the phenomenological criticism of the objective understanding of the world, he can also reject phenomenology's own account as not truly explaining the genesis of its own account. Phenomenology rejects the notion that the self-identical object gives coherence to perception, but fails to recognise that perspective itself still needs an explanation, this time in terms of difference. Phenomenology provides a description of phenomena, but what is needed is a genealogy of phenomena. Thus, Deleuze claims that 'the whole of Phenomenology is an epiphenomenology' (DR 52/63).

### 1.12 Plato (59–69/71–83)

The close of Chapter 1 introduces the figure of Plato into Deleuze's discussion, taking up Nietzsche's slogan, 'to overturn Platonism' (DR 59/71). Plato represents an important but ambivalent figure in Deleuze's history of philosophy. On the one hand, Plato holds that everything partakes in being. On the other, Aristotle's central concern, the question, 'what is it?', is already present in Plato's dialogues, for instance, when Socrates attempts to answer the question, 'what is justice?' in the *Republic*. At first glance, it appears as if Plato's approach to this question mirrors that of Aristotle. For instance, in the *Sophist*, the visitor defines the nature of an angler by a progressive method of dividing classes into smaller and smaller groupings, distinguishing between acquisitive and productive arts, and within acquisitive arts between willing exchange and taking possession, and so on down to distinguishing between fishing with nets and spear fishing (Plato 1997c: 218a-221d). Deleuze notes, however, that we cannot see this procedure as operating in the same way as species and genera were determined for Aristotle. Aristotle criticises Plato's method of division, for instance, by noting that 'someone who states the definition as a result of the division does not state a deduction' (Aristotle 1984c: 91b35). Aristotle's point is that the determination of entities according to genera and species is a purely taxonomical procedure that allows us to classify entities of a similar kind. It seems that when we read a Platonic dialogue such as the *Sophist*, or the *Statesman*, a much more significant project is going on, however. If we look at the *Statesman*, for instance, the definition of statesmanship as 'knowledge of the collective rearing of human beings' (Plato 1997d: 267d) occurs quite early in the dialogue. Once we have this definition, however, we are still faced with

the real difficulty, since it appears that there are a large number of people who fulfil this description: 'merchants, farmers, millers and bakers' for instance (Plato 1997d: 267e). As Deleuze puts it, for Plato, 'difference is not between species, between two determinations of a genus, but entirely on one side, within the chosen line of descent' (DR 60/72).

Plato's question is rather, which candidate is truly the statesman? Whereas Plato is normally understood as using myth to allow non-philosophical readers to understand the point of the dialogue, Deleuze gives it a more philosophical role. The *Statesman* introduces the fable of two cosmic eras, that of Cronos, and the present age of Zeus. Each of these gods allows ordered existence to carry on in the world by ensuring that the universe continues to revolve around its circle. These gods' governance of the universe provides us with a model by which to assess which of the claimants is the true statesman. We can see in the god a metaphor for Plato's theory of Ideas, the theory that what determines the nature of something temporal is its relation to an eternal super-sensible entity. So actions are just in so far as they participate in, or resemble, the Idea of justice. The true statesman is therefore the one who participates in (or best represents in the temporal world) the eternal Idea of statesmanship, whereas the false claimant does not. Now, obviously a statesman cannot be a god, but there are two ways in which he can resemble one, which Plato outlines in the *Sophist*:

Visitor: One type of imitation I see is the art of likeness-making. That's the one we have whenever someone produces an imitation by keeping to the proportions of length, breadth, and depth of his model, and also by keeping to the appropriate colours of its parts.

Theaetetus: But don't all imitators try to do that?

Visitor: Not the ones who sculpt or draw very large works. If they reproduced the true proportions of their beautiful subjects, you see, the upper parts would appear smaller than they should, and the lower parts would appear larger, because we see the upper parts from further away and the lower parts from closer. (Plato 1997c: 235d-236a)

The true statesman resembles the Idea of the statesman in the first of these senses, as the form itself cannot be given in appearance, since it is not spatio-temporal. The pretender only resembles the appearance of the Idea, not the Idea itself. They are instead tied to the world of appearance. The problem, therefore, is to distinguish the candidates who bear a true likeness from those which merely appear to do so.

For Aristotle, the essential nature of something was determined by a process of division much like that of Plato. For Plato himself, however, we have just seen that the definition alone does not determine whether something partakes in the relevant form. “The Idea is not yet the concept of an object which submits the world to the requirements of representation, but rather a brute presence which can be invoked in the world only in function of that which is not “representable” in things’ (DR 59/71). Deleuze therefore sees Plato as situated at a decisive moment in the history of philosophy, as he instigates the kind of genealogical project which will later make Aristotle’s notion of representation possible.

Deleuze presents Plato’s procedure as follows: ‘The four figures of the Platonic dialectic are therefore: the selection of a difference, the installation of a mythic circle, the establishment of a foundation, and the position of a question-problem complex’ (DR 66/79). We therefore begin by determining the definition through the method of division. The mythic circle to which Deleuze refers is either the myth of the *Statesman*, or more generally the Platonic doctrine of anamnesis, that we have knowledge of Ideas because we remember them from our existence prior to our birth. The foundation is then given by the relation of appearance to the realm of Ideas, allowing us to ask the question of descent. Plato therefore ultimately grounds the world of becoming on the world of being. We should note that there are a number of parallels between Plato and Nietzsche. For both, the question is one of genealogy (in Nietzsche’s case, whether something is based on a sedentary or nomadic distribution), and they both involve tests of selection. Plato selects genuine copies, and real knowledge which is based on being or the Ideas. Nietzsche selects those entities whose existence is founded on a principle of becoming. Both rely on myth (the demon) and a relation between questions and problems. Deleuze’s project therefore parallels Plato’s, with his account of superior empiricism, as determining the differential origin of perspective, mirroring Plato’s own project of tracing appearances to their Ideal origins. Rather than an investigation in search of a primal identity (the Ideas), Deleuze is attempting to trace phenomena to their origin in a field of difference.

## **Chapter 2. Repetition for Itself**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Chapter 2 draws together two themes that we have already encountered. In the introduction, we saw how the argument from incongruent