

gilles
DELEUZE

difference & repetition

ATHLONE CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN THINKERS

Difference and Repetition

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Gilles Deleuze

Difference and Repetition

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Translator's Preface

Difference and Repetition was first published in 1968. It was Deleuze's principal thesis for the Doctorat D'Etat. *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, published in the same year, was his accompanying secondary thesis. *The Logic of Sense* (Athlone, 1990) appeared the following year. This interrelated body of writing marks the border between two phases of Deleuze's career: one side facing the earlier texts of an unorthodox historian of philosophy, the other facing his subsequent work, alone and with Guattari. If the study of Spinoza is the more strictly scholarly undertaking, then *Difference and Repetition* is the first book in which Deleuze begins to write on his own behalf. As such, it occupies a pivotal place in his *œuvre*.

Difference and Repetition is a work of prodigious conceptual invention in which Deleuze draws upon his earlier readings of Plato, Hume, Bergson, Nietzsche and Kant, as well as elements of contemporary science and art, to weave together a physics and a metaphysics of difference. If this amounts to a critique of the philosophy of representation which has dominated European thought since Plato, then it does so in the same manner that *Anti-Oedipus* (Athlone, 1984) amounts to a critique of psychoanalysis – namely, by proposing a retrospective analysis on the basis of an alternative. The different kinds of multiplicity found in Bergson, the ontology of eternal return understood as the being of that which differs and a transcendental empiricism of the faculties are among the elements of Deleuze's earlier studies which are here woven into a systematic philosophy of difference. 'Representation' is replaced by the expression or actualization of Ideas, where this is understood in terms of the complex notion of 'different/ciation'. The system is 'grounded' only in the repetition of difference, or the repetition of Ideal problems, which precisely amounts to a non-ground or groundlessness.

As befits the exposition of a novel metaphysical system, there is occasional recourse to neologisms. These include some terms which are Deleuze's own inventions, and which I have attempted to render into appropriate English equivalents, such as 'a-presentation' (p.24) or the recurrent notion of 'the disparate' [*le dispaars*]. A more significant case arises from the need to make a terminological distinction in English where no equivalent exists for the corresponding French terms. Thus, Deleuze makes significant use of the distinction in French between *différencier*, to make or become different, and *différentier*, which is restricted to the mathematical operation. Because of the extent and significance of his use of this distinction (which becomes apparent in Chapter IV), I have had to

follow his terminology and introduce 'differentiate' as a term of art in English.

On the whole, however, *Difference and Repetition* achieves its effects by means of 'no typographical cleverness, no lexical agility, no blending or creation of words, no syntactical boldness...'.¹ The problems which it poses for the translator are of another order. These include, first, problems raised by the diversity of philosophical languages deployed in the course of this book. For the most part, I have followed the terminology employed in the standard English translations of the primary texts in question: for example, following the authorized translations of Bergson in using 'extensity' for *étendue* (see Chapter V). In some cases, however, where standard French terminology differs from the English in ways which relate to important aspects of Deleuze's project, I have followed the French. For example, Deleuze uses the term 'Ideas', in standard Platonic or Kantian senses, but then develops his own concept of Ideas which owes as much to Leibniz and contemporary structuralism as it does to Kant or Plato. In order to maintain the continuity in Deleuze's use of this term, I have used the term 'Ideas' with reference to Plato in some contexts where standard English translations would use 'Forms'.

Secondly, in the pursuit of his own distinctive style of philosophizing – which combines an extreme sobriety in the use of language with an extraordinary vitality in the use of concepts – Deleuze often draws upon existing words to create a terminology for concepts of his own making. In some cases, this involves the use of technical terms taken from the sciences or particular philosophies. For example, the term 'multiplicity', which is now well established in the translations of Deleuze's work, is derived from the French mathematical term [*multiplicité*] used to refer to those Riemannian objects which English mathematicians would call 'manifolds'. In other cases, Deleuze employs apparently ordinary words to designate important concepts of his own making. This is true of *point remarquable*, which I have rendered as 'distinctive point'. This term has been variously translated as 'prominent', 'exceptional' or 'remarkable' point. In fact, there is nothing remarkable about these points: they are the points or pre-individual singularities which distinguish one Idea, problem or multiplicity from another. Initially introduced alongside the mathematical concept of 'singular point', which is employed to designate those points which characterize or define a given function, 'distinctive point' takes on a life of its own as a non-mathematical term of art in Deleuze's work. It is not to be confused with the 'distinctive traits' referred to by structural linguistics. Nor should it be confused with the 'shining points' to which Bergson refers in his discussion of memory, although in this book and in *Bergsonism* Deleuze does establish a connection between these two terms.

A further difficulty arises in cases where a single word in French has multiple English equivalents. A frequently occurring word of this type is

moi, which may be rendered either as 'ego' or as 'self'. Here, the attempt to follow standard English terminology has led me to use 'self' in all contexts except those where it is explicitly a question of psychoanalysis, in which case I have used 'ego'. In this case, readers should be aware that I have maintained continuity with the existing English terminology for particular philosophies, at the cost of introducing a discontinuity into Deleuze's text which is not present in the original.

Another case of this type is the word *fond*, which may be either 'ground' or 'bottom'. This term occurs widely in conjunction and opposition with a series of cognate French words, *fondé*, *fondement*, *fondation*, as well as the important term *sans-fond* and Deleuze's own *effondement*. I have retained Deleuze's distinction between 'foundation' [*fondation*] and 'ground' [*fondement*]. However, while the French *fonder* often occurs in contexts in which the appropriate English term would be the verb 'to found', I have mostly preferred 'ground' in order to maintain the connection with Deleuze's important usage of *le fond* and *fondement*. Both these terms are connected with the philosophical concept which is regularly rendered as 'ground' in English translations of German philosophy, while his notion of the 'groundless' [*sans-fond*] is explicitly linked to the German *Ungrund* (p.229). For this reason, I have also used 'ungrounding' for *effondement*. This family of terms is further complicated by the occasional play upon *fond* (bottom or depths) and *profond* (deep, profound). However, since Deleuze contrasts a concept of depth [*profondeur*] with that of ground [*fond*] in Chapter V, I have used 'ground' for *le fond* throughout.

Additional translator's notes on particular points, along with references to texts cited, have been included in the Notes. These are indicated by an asterisk*.

Many colleagues have read sections, offered assistance or answered my queries in the course of preparing this translation. In particular, I would like to thank Genevieve Lloyd, Paul Crittenden, Kim Lycos and Paul Thom for their scholarly assistance; the dean, Richard Campbell, and the Faculty of Arts at The Australian National University for awarding me a Faculty Research Fund Grant; Rex Butler for his considerable efforts as research assistant and reader; Hugh Tomlinson, who suggested that I undertake this task; Constantin V. Boundas, who sent me his draft translation of the entire text, thereby providing me with an invaluable means of checking the accuracy of my own; Martin Joughin, Timothy S. Murphy and Amitavo Islam for their comments; and Brian Massumi for his scrupulous and helpful Reader's review. I am grateful to Peter Cook for his help with proof-reading and printing the final text, and with compiling the Index. Throughout the course of this project, I have been fortunate to enjoy the support, encouragement and scholarly assistance of Moira Gatens.

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Preface to the English Edition

There is a great difference between writing history of philosophy and writing philosophy. In the one case, we study the arrows or the tools of a great thinker, the trophies and the prey, the continents discovered. In the other case, we trim our own arrows, or gather those which seem to us the finest in order to try to send them in other directions, even if the distance covered is not astronomical but relatively small. We try to speak in our own name only to learn that a proper name designates no more than the outcome of a body of work – in other words, the concepts discovered, on condition that we were able to express these and imbue them with life using all the possibilities of language.

After I had studied Hume, Spinoza, Nietzsche and Proust, all of whom fired me with enthusiasm, *Difference and Repetition* was the first book in which I tried to 'do philosophy'. All that I have done since is connected to this book, including what I wrote with Guattari (obviously, I speak from my own point of view). It is very difficult to say why one becomes attached to a particular problem: why was it difference and repetition which preoccupied me rather than something else, and why the two together rather than separately? These were not exactly new problems, since the history of philosophy, and especially contemporary philosophy, dealt with them constantly. But perhaps the majority of philosophers had subordinated difference to identity or to the Same, to the Similar, to the Opposed or to the Analogous: they had introduced difference into the identity of the concept, they had put difference in the concept itself, thereby reaching a conceptual difference, but not a concept of difference.

We tend to subordinate difference to identity in order to think it (from the point of view of the concept or the subject: for example, specific difference presupposes an identical concept in the form of a genus). We also have a tendency to subordinate it to resemblance (from the point of view of perception), to opposition (from the point of view of predicates), and to analogy (from the point of view of judgement). In other words, we do not think difference in itself. With Aristotle, Philosophy was able to provide itself with an organic representation of difference, with Leibniz and Hegel an orgiastic representation: it has not, for all that, reached difference in itself.

The situation was perhaps no better with regard to repetition: in another manner, this too is thought in terms of the identical, the similar, the equal or the opposed. In this case, we treat it as a difference without concept: two things repeat one another when they are different even while they have exactly the same concept. Henceforth, everything which causes repetition

to vary seems to us to cover or hide it at the same time. Here again, we do not reach a concept of repetition. By contrast, might we not form such a concept once we realize that variation is not added to repetition in order to hide it, but is rather its condition or constitutive element, the interiority of repetition *par excellence*? Disguise no less than displacement forms part of repetition, and of difference: a common transport or diaphora. At the limit, might there not be a single power of difference or of repetition, but one which operates only in the multiple and determines multiplicities?

Every philosophy must achieve its own manner of speaking about the arts and sciences, as though it established alliances with them. It is very difficult, since philosophy obviously cannot claim the least superiority, but also creates and expounds its own concepts only in relation to what it can grasp of scientific functions and artistic constructions. A philosophical concept can never be confused with a scientific function or an artistic construction, but finds itself in affinity with these in this or that domain of science or style of art. The scientific or artistic content of a philosophy may be very elementary, since it is not obliged to advance art or science, but it can advance itself only by forming properly philosophical concepts from a given function or construction, however elementary. Philosophy cannot be undertaken independently of science or art. It is in this sense that we tried to constitute a philosophical concept from the mathematical function of differentiation and the biological function of differentiation, in asking whether there was not a statable relation between these two concepts which could not appear at the level of their respective objects. Art, science and philosophy seemed to us to be caught up in mobile relations in which each is obliged to respond to the other, but by its own means.

Finally, in this book it seemed to me that the powers of difference and repetition could be reached only by putting into question the traditional image of thought. By this I mean not only that we think according to a given method, but also that there is a more or less implicit, tacit or presupposed image of thought which determines our goals when we try to think. For example, we suppose that thought possesses a good nature, and the thinker a good will (naturally to 'want' the true); we take as a model the process of recognition – in other words, a common sense or employment of all the faculties on a supposed same object; we designate error, nothing but error, as the enemy to be fought; and we suppose that the true concerns solutions – in other words, propositions capable of serving as answers. This is the classic image of thought, and as long as the critique has not been carried to the heart of that image it is difficult to conceive of thought as encompassing those problems which point beyond the propositional mode; or as involving encounters which escape all recognition; or as confronting its true enemies, which are quite different from thought; or as attaining that which tears thought from its natural torpor and notorious bad will, and forces us to think. A new image of

thought – or rather, a liberation of thought from those images which imprison it: this is what I had already sought to discover in Proust. Here, however, in *Difference and Repetition*, this search is autonomous and it becomes the condition for the discovery of these two concepts. It is therefore the third chapter which now seems to me the most necessary and the most concrete, and which serves to introduce subsequent books up to and including the research undertaken with Guattari where we invoked a vegetal model of thought: the rhizome in opposition to the tree, a rhizome-thought instead of an arborescent thought.

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Preface

The weaknesses of a book are often the counterparts of empty intentions that one did not know how to implement. In this sense, a declaration of intent is evidence of real modesty in relation to the ideal book. It is often said that prefaces should be read only at the end. Conversely, conclusions should be read at the outset. This is true of the present book, the conclusion of which could make reading the rest unnecessary.

The subject dealt with here is manifestly in the air. The signs may be noted: Heidegger's more and more pronounced orientation towards a philosophy of ontological Difference; the structuralist project, based upon a distribution of differential characters within a space of coexistence; the contemporary novelist's art which revolves around difference and repetition, not only in its most abstract reflections but also in its effective techniques; the discovery in a variety of fields of a power peculiar to repetition, a power which also inhabits the unconscious, language and art. All these signs may be attributed to a generalized anti-Hegelianism: difference and repetition have taken the place of the identical and the negative, of identity and contradiction. For difference implies the negative, and allows itself to lead to contradiction, only to the extent that its subordination to the identical is maintained. The primacy of identity, however conceived, defines the world of representation. But modern thought is born of the failure of representation, of the loss of identities, and of the discovery of all the forces that act under the representation of the identical. The modern world is one of simulacra. Man did not survive God, nor did the identity of the subject survive that of substance. All identities are only simulated, produced as an optical 'effect' by the more profound game of difference and repetition. We propose to think difference in itself independently of the forms of representation which reduce it to the Same, and the relation of different to different independently of those forms which make them pass through the negative.

Modern life is such that, confronted with the most mechanical, the most stereotypical repetitions, inside and outside ourselves, we endlessly extract from them little differences, variations and modifications. Conversely, secret, disguised and hidden repetitions, animated by the perpetual displacement of a difference, restore bare, mechanical and stereotypical repetitions, within and without us. In simulacra, repetition already plays upon repetitions, and difference already plays upon differences. Repetitions repeat themselves, while the differentiator differentiates itself. The task of life is to make all these repetitions coexist in a space in which difference is distributed. Two lines of research lie at the origin of this book: one

concerns a concept of difference without negation, precisely because unless it is subordinated to the identical, difference would not extend or 'would not have to extend' as far as opposition and contradiction; the other concerns a concept of repetition in which physical, mechanical or bare repetitions (repetition of the Same) would find their *raison d'être* in the more profound structures of a hidden repetition in which a 'differential' is disguised and displaced. These two lines of research spontaneously came together, because on every occasion *these concepts of a pure difference and a complex repetition* seemed to connect and coalesce. The perpetual divergence and decentring of difference corresponded closely to a displacement and a disguising within repetition.

There are certainly many dangers in invoking pure differences which have become independent of the negative and liberated from the identical. The greatest danger is that of lapsing into the representations of a beautiful soul: there are only reconcilable and federative differences, far removed from bloody struggles. The beautiful soul says: we are different, but not opposed... . The *notion of a problem*, which we see linked to that of difference, also seems to nurture the sentiments of the beautiful soul: only problems and questions matter... . Nevertheless, we believe that when these problems attain their proper degree of *positivity*, and when difference becomes the object of a corresponding *affirmation*, they release a power of aggression and selection which destroys the beautiful soul by depriving it of its very identity and breaking its good will. The problematic and the differential determine struggles or destructions in relation to which those of the negative are only appearances, and the wishes of the beautiful soul are so many mystifications trapped in appearances. The simulacrum is not just a copy, but that which overturns all copies by *also* overturning the models: every thought becomes an aggression.

A book of philosophy should be in part a very particular species of detective novel, in part a kind of science fiction. By detective novel we mean that concepts, with their zones of presence, should intervene to resolve local situations. They themselves change along with the problems. They have spheres of influence where, as we shall see, they operate in relation to 'dramas' and by means of a certain 'cruelty'. They must have a coherence among themselves, but that coherence must not come from themselves. They must receive their coherence from elsewhere.

This is the secret of empiricism. Empiricism is by no means a reaction against concepts, nor a simple appeal to lived experience. On the contrary, it undertakes the most insane creation of concepts ever seen or heard. Empiricism is a mysticism and a mathematicism of concepts, but precisely one which treats the concept as object of an encounter, as a here-and-now, or rather as an *Erewhon* from which emerge inexhaustibly ever new, differently distributed 'heres' and 'nows'. Only an empiricist could say: concepts are indeed things, but things in their free and wild state, beyond

'anthropological predicates'. I make, remake and unmake my concepts along a moving horizon, from an always decentred centre, from an always displaced periphery which repeats and differentiates them. The task of modern philosophy is to overcome the alternatives temporal/non-temporal, historical/eternal and particular/universal. Following Nietzsche we discover, as more profound than time and eternity, the untimely: philosophy is neither a philosophy of history, nor a philosophy of the eternal, but untimely, always and only untimely – that is to say, 'acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time and, let us hope, for the benefit of a time to come'.¹ Following Samuel Butler, we discover *Erewhon*, signifying at once the originary 'nowhere' and the displaced, disguised, modified and always re-created 'here-and-now'. Neither empirical particularities nor abstract universals: a Cogito for a dissolved self. We believe in a world in which individuations are impersonal, and singularities are pre-individual: the splendour of the pronoun 'one' – whence the science-fiction aspect, which necessarily derives from this *Erewhon*. What this book should therefore have made apparent is the advent of a coherence which is no more our own, that of mankind, than that of God or the world. In this sense, it should have been an apocalyptic book (the third time in the series of times).

Science fiction in yet another sense, one in which the weaknesses become manifest. How else can one write but of those things which one doesn't know, or knows badly? It is precisely there that we imagine having something to say. We write only at the frontiers of our knowledge, at the border which separates our knowledge from our ignorance and transforms the one into the other. Only in this manner are we resolved to write. To satisfy ignorance is to put off writing until tomorrow – or rather, to make it impossible. Perhaps writing has a relation to silence altogether more threatening than that which it is supposed to entertain with death. We are therefore well aware, unfortunately, that we have spoken about science in a manner which was not scientific.

The time is coming when it will hardly be possible to write a book of philosophy as it has been done for so long: 'Ah! the old style...'. The search for new means of philosophical expression was begun by Nietzsche and must be pursued today in relation to the renewal of certain other arts, such as the theatre or the cinema. In this context, we can now raise the question of the utilization of the history of philosophy. It seems to us that the history of philosophy should play a role roughly analogous to that of *collage* in painting. The history of philosophy is the reproduction of philosophy itself. In the history of philosophy, a commentary should act as a veritable double and bear the maximal modification appropriate to a double. (One imagines a *philosophically* bearded Hegel, a *philosophically* clean-shaven Marx, in the same way as a moustached Mona Lisa.) It should be possible to recount a real book of past philosophy as if it were

an imaginary and feigned book. Borges, we know, excelled in recounting imaginary books. But he goes further when he considers a real book, such as *Don Quixote*, as though it were an imaginary book, itself reproduced by an imaginary author, Pierre Menard, who in turn he considers to be real. In this case, the most exact, the most strict repetition has as its correlate the maximum of difference ('The text of Cervantes and that of Menard are verbally identical, but the second is almost infinitely richer...'²). Commentaries in the history of philosophy should represent a kind of slow motion, a congelation or immobilisation of the text: *not only* of the text to which they relate, *but also* of the text in which they are inserted – so much so that they have a double existence and a corresponding ideal: the pure repetition of the former text and the present text *in one another*. It is in order to approach this double existence that we have sometimes had to integrate historical notes into the present text.

Introduction:

Repetition and Difference

Repetition is not generality. Repetition and generality must be distinguished in several ways. Every formula which implies their confusion is regrettable: for example, when we say that two things are as alike as two drops of water; or when we identify 'there is only a science of the general' with 'there is only a science of that which is repeated'. Repetition and resemblance are different in kind – extremely so.

Generality presents two major orders: the qualitative order of resemblances and the quantitative order of equivalences. Cycles and equalities are their respective symbols. But in any case, generality expresses a point of view according to which one term may be exchanged or substituted for another. The exchange or substitution of particulars defines our conduct in relation to generality. That is why the empiricists are not wrong to present general ideas as particular ideas in themselves, so long as they add the belief that each of these can be replaced by any other particular idea which resembles it in relation to a given word. By contrast, we can see that repetition is a necessary and justified conduct only in relation to that which cannot be replaced. Repetition as a conduct and as a point of view concerns non-exchangeable and non-substitutable singularities. Reflections, echoes, doubles and souls do not belong to the domain of resemblance or equivalence; and it is no more possible to exchange one's soul than it is to substitute real twins for one another. If exchange is the criterion of generality, theft and gift are those of repetition. There is, therefore, an economic difference between the two.

To repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent. And perhaps this repetition at the level of external conduct echoes, for its own part, a more secret vibration which animates it, a more profound, internal repetition within the singular. This is the apparent paradox of festivals: they repeat an 'unrepeatable'. They do not add a second and a third time to the first, but carry the first time to the 'nth' power. With respect to this power, repetition interiorizes and thereby reverses itself: as Péguy says, it is not Federation Day which commemorates or represents the fall of the Bastille, but the fall of the Bastille which celebrates and repeats in advance all the Federation Days; or Monet's first water lily which repeats all the others.¹ Generality, as generality of the particular, thus stands opposed to repetition as universality of the singular. The repetition of a work of art is like a singularity without concept, and it is not by chance that a poem must be

learned by heart. The head is the organ of exchange, but the heart is the amorous organ of repetition. (It is true that repetition also concerns the head, but precisely because it is its terror or paradox.) Pius Servien rightly distinguished two languages: the language of science, dominated by the symbol of equality, in which each term may be replaced by others; and lyrical language, in which every term is irreplaceable and can only be repeated.² Repetition can always be 'represented' as extreme resemblance or perfect equivalence, but the fact that one can pass by degrees from one thing to another does not prevent their being different in kind.

On the other hand, generality belongs to the order of laws. However, law determines only the resemblance of the subjects ruled by it, along with their equivalence to terms which it designates. Far from grounding repetition, law shows, rather, how repetition would remain impossible for pure subjects of law – particulars. It condemns them to change. As an empty form of difference, an invariable form of variation, a law compels its subjects to illustrate it only at the cost of their own change. No doubt there are as many constants as variables among the terms designated by laws, and as many permanences and perseverations as there are fluxes and variations in nature. However, a perseveration is still not a repetition. The constants of one law are in turn variables of a more general law, just as the hardest rocks become soft and fluid matter on the geological scale of millions of years. So at each level, it is in relation to large, permanent natural objects that the subject of a law experiences its own powerlessness to repeat and discovers that this powerlessness is already contained in the object, reflected in the permanent object wherein it sees itself condemned. Law unites the change of the water and the permanence of the river. Elie Faure said of Watteau: 'He imbued with the utmost transitoriness those things which our gaze encounters as the most enduring, namely space and forests.' This is the eighteenth-century method. Wolmar, in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, made a system of it: the impossibility of repetition, and change as a general condition to which all particular creatures are subject by the law of Nature, were understood in relation to fixed terms (themselves, no doubt, variables in relation to other permanences and in function of other, more general laws). This is the meaning of the grove, the grotto and the 'sacred' object. Saint-Preux learns that he cannot repeat, not only because of his own change and that of Julie, but also because of the great natural permanences, which assume a symbolic value and exclude him no less from true repetition. If repetition is possible, it is due to miracle rather than to law. It is against the law: against the similar form and the equivalent content of law. If repetition can be found, even in nature, it is in the name of a power which affirms itself against the law, which works underneath laws, perhaps superior to laws. If repetition exists, it expresses at once a singularity opposed to the general, a universality opposed to the particular, a distinctive opposed to the ordinary, an instantaneity opposed to variation

and an eternity opposed to permanence. In every respect, repetition is a transgression. It puts law into question, it denounces its nominal or general character in favour of a more profound and more artistic reality.

From the point of view of scientific experiment, it seems difficult to deny a relationship between repetition and law. However, we must ask under what conditions experimentation ensures repetition. Natural phenomena are produced in a free state, where any inference is possible among the vast cycles of resemblance: in this sense, everything reacts on everything else, and everything resembles everything else (resemblance of the diverse with itself). However, experimentation constitutes relatively closed environments in which phenomena are defined in terms of a small number of chosen factors (a minimum of two – for example, Space and Time for the movement of bodies in a vacuum). Consequently, there is no reason to question the application of mathematics to physics: physics is already mathematical, since the closed environments or chosen factors also constitute systems of geometrical co-ordinates. In these conditions, phenomena necessarily appear as *equal* to a certain quantitative relation between the chosen factors. Experimentation is thus a matter of substituting one order of generality for another: an order of equality for an order of resemblance. Resemblances are unpacked in order to discover an equality which allows the identification of a phenomenon under the particular conditions of the experiment. Repetition appears here only in the passage from one order of generality to another, emerging with the help of – or on the occasion of – this passage. It is as if repetition momentarily appeared between or underneath the two generalities. Here too, however, there is a risk of mistaking a difference in kind for a difference of degree. For generality only represents and presupposes a hypothetical repetition: 'given the same circumstances, then...'. This formula says that in similar situations one will always be able to select and retain the same factors, which represent the being-equal of the phenomena. This, however, does not account for what gives rise to repetition, nor for what is categorical or important for repetition in principle (what is important in principle is 'n' times as the power of a single time, without the need to pass through a second or a third time). In its essence, repetition refers to a singular power which differs in kind from generality, even when, in order to appear, it takes advantage of the artificial passage from one order of generality to another.

Expecting repetition from the law of nature is the 'Stoic' error. The wise must be converted into the virtuous; the dream of finding a law which would make repetition possible passes over to the moral sphere. There is always a task to recommence, a fidelity to be revived within a daily life indistinguishable from the reaffirmation of Duty. Büchner makes Danton say:

'It is so wearisome. First you put on your shirt, then your trousers; you drag yourself into bed at night and in the morning drag yourself out again; and always you put one foot in front of the other. There is little hope that it will ever change. Millions have always done it like that and millions more will do so after us. Moreover, since we're made up of two halves which both do the same thing, everything's done twice. It's all very boring and very, very sad.'³

However, what good is moral law if it does not sanctify reiteration, above all if it does not make reiteration possible and give us a legislative power from which we are excluded by the law of nature? Moralists sometimes present the categories of Good and Evil in the following manner: every time we try to repeat according to nature or as natural beings (repetition of a pleasure, of a past, of a passion) we throw ourselves into a demonic and already damned exercise which can end only in despair or boredom. The Good, by contrast, holds out the possibility of repetition, of successful repetition and of the spirituality of repetition, because it depends not upon a law of nature but on a law of duty, of which, as moral beings, we cannot be subjects without also being legislators. What is Kant's 'highest test' if not a criterion which should decide what *can* in principle be reproduced – in other words, what can be repeated without contradiction in the form of moral law? The man of duty invented a 'test' of repetition; he decided what in principle could be repeated. He thought he had thereby defeated both the demonic and the wearisome. Moreover, as an echo of Danton's concerns or a response to them, is there not a moralism in that repetition apparatus described with such precision by Kant's biographers, right down to the astonishing garters that he made for himself, and the regularity of his daily promenades (in the sense that neglecting one's toilet and missing exercise are among those conducts whose maxim cannot, without contradiction, be regarded as a universal law, nor, therefore, be the object of rightful repetition)?

Conscience, however, suffers from the following ambiguity: it can be conceived only by supposing the moral law to be external, superior and indifferent to the natural law; but the application of the moral law can be conceived only by restoring to conscience itself the image and the model of the law of nature. As a result, the moral law, far from giving us true repetition, still leaves us in generality. This time, the generality is not that of nature but that of habit as a second nature. It is useless to point to the existence of immoral or bad habits: it is the form of habit – or, as Bergson used to say, the habit of acquiring habits (the whole of obligation) – which is essentially moral or has the form of the good. Furthermore, in this whole or generality of habit we again find the two major orders: that of resemblance, in the variable conformity of the elements of action with a given model in so far as the habit has not been acquired; and that of

equivalence, with the equality of the elements of action in different situations once the habit has been acquired. As a result, habit never gives rise to true repetition: sometimes the action changes and is perfected while the intention remains constant; sometimes the action remains the same in different contexts and with different intentions. There again, if repetition is possible, it would appear only between or beneath the two generalities of perfection and integration, testifying to the presence of a quite different power, at the risk of overturning these two generalities.

If repetition is possible, it is as much opposed to moral law as it is to natural law. There are two known ways to overturn moral law. One is by ascending towards the principles: challenging the law as secondary, derived, borrowed or 'general'; denouncing it as involving a second-hand principle which diverts an original force or usurps an original power. The other way, by contrast, is to overturn the law by descending towards the consequences, to which one submits with a too-perfect attention to detail. By adopting the law, a falsely submissive soul manages to evade it and to taste pleasures it was supposed to forbid. We can see this in demonstration by absurdity and working to rule, but also in some forms of masochistic behaviour which mock by submission. The first way of overturning the law is ironic, where irony appears as an art of principles, of ascent towards the principles and of overturning principles. The second is humour, which is an art of consequences and descents, of suspensions and falls. Must we understand that repetition appears in both this suspense and this ascent, as though existence recommenced and 'reiterated' itself once it is no longer constrained by laws? Repetition belongs to humour and irony; it is by nature transgression or exception, always revealing a singularity opposed to the particulars subsumed under laws, a universal opposed to the generalities which give rise to laws.

There is a force common to Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. (Péguy would have to be added in order to form the triptych of priest, Antichrist and Catholic. Each of the three, in his own way, makes repetition not only a power peculiar to language and thought, a superior pathos and pathology, but also the fundamental category of a philosophy of the future. To each corresponds a Testament as well as a Theatre, a conception of the theatre, and a hero of repetition as a principal character in this theatre: Job—Abraham, Dionysus—Zarathustra, Joan of Arc—Clio). What separates them is considerable, evident and well-known. But nothing can hide this prodigious encounter in relation to a philosophy of repetition: *they oppose repetition to all forms of generality*. Nor do they take the word 'repetition' in a metaphorical sense: on the contrary, they have a way of taking it literally and of introducing it into their style. We can – or rather, must – first of all list the principal propositions which indicate the points on which they coincide:

1. Make something new of repetition itself: connect it with a test, with a selection or selective test; make it the supreme object of the will and of freedom. Kierkegaard specifies that it is not a matter of drawing something new from repetition, of extracting something new from it. Only contemplation or the mind which contemplates from without 'extracts'. It is rather a matter of acting, of making repetition as such a novelty; that is, a freedom and a task of freedom. In the case of Nietzsche: liberate the will from everything which binds it by making repetition the very object of willing. No doubt it is repetition which already binds; but if we die of repetition we are also saved and healed by it – healed, above all, by the other repetition. The whole mystical game of loss and salvation is therefore contained in repetition, along with the whole theatrical game of life and death and the whole positive game of illness and health (cf. Zarathustra ill and Zarathustra convalescent by virtue of one and the same power which is that of repetition in the eternal return).

2. In consequence, oppose repetition to the laws of nature. Kierkegaard declares that he does not speak at all of repetition in nature, of cycles and seasons, exchanges and equalities. Furthermore, if repetition concerns the most interior element of the will, this is because everything *changes* around the will, in accordance with the law of nature. According to the law of nature, repetition is impossible. For this reason, Kierkegaard condemns as aesthetic repetition every attempt to obtain repetition from the laws of nature by identifying with the legislative principle, whether in the Epicurean or the Stoic manner. It will be said that the situation is not so clear with Nietzsche. Nietzsche's declarations are nevertheless explicit. If he discovers repetition in the *Physis* itself, this is because he discovers in the *Physis* something superior to the reign of laws: a will willing itself through all change, a power opposed to law, an interior of the earth opposed to the laws of its surface. Nietzsche opposes 'his' hypothesis to the cyclical hypothesis. He conceives of repetition in the eternal return as Being, but he opposes this being to every legal form, to the being-similar as much as to the being-equal. How could the thinker who goes furthest in criticising the notion of law reintroduce eternal return as a law of nature? How could such a connoisseur of the Greeks be justified in regarding his own thought as prodigious and new, if he were content to formulate that natural platitude, that generality regarding nature well known to the Ancients? On two occasions, Zarathustra corrects erroneous interpretations of the eternal return: with anger, directed at his demon ('Spirit of Gravity ... do not treat this too lightly'); with kindness, directed at his animals ('O buffoons and barrel-organs ... you have already made a refrain out of it'). The refrain is the eternal return as cycle or circulation, as being-similar and being-equal – in short, as natural animal certitude and as sensible law of nature.

3. Oppose repetition to moral law, to the point where it becomes the suspension of ethics, a thought beyond good and evil. Repetition appears

as the logos of the solitary and the singular, the logos of the 'private thinker'. Both Kierkegaard and Nietzsche develop the opposition between the private thinker, the thinker-comet and bearer of repetition, and the public professor and doctor of law, whose second-hand discourse proceeds by mediation and finds its moralising source in the generality of concepts (cf. Kierkegaard against Hegel, Nietzsche against Kant and Hegel; and from this point of view, Péguy against the Sorbonne). Job is infinite contestation and Abraham infinite resignation, but these are one and the same thing. Job challenges the law in an ironic manner, refusing all second-hand explanations and dismissing the general in order to reach the most singular as principle or as universal. Abraham submits humorously to the law, but finds in that submission precisely the singularity of his only son whom the law commanded him to sacrifice. As Kierkegaard understands it, repetition is the transcendent correlate shared by the psychical intentions of contestation and resignation. (We rediscover the two aspects in Péguy's doubling of Joan of Arc and Gervaise.) In Nietzsche's striking atheism, hatred of the law and *amor fati* (love of fate), aggression and acquiescence are the two faces of Zarathustra, gathered from the Bible and turned back against it. Further, in a certain sense one can see Zarathustra's moral test of repetition as competing with Kant. The eternal return says: whatever you will, will it in such a manner that you also will its eternal return. There is a 'formalism' here which overturns Kant on his own ground, a test which goes further since, instead of relating repetition to a supposed moral law, it seems to make repetition itself the only form of a law beyond morality. In reality, however, things are even more complicated. The form of repetition in the eternal return is the brutal form of the immediate, that of the universal and the singular reunited, which dethrones every general law, dissolves the mediations and annihilates the particulars subjected to the law. Just as irony and black humour are combined in Zarathustra, so there is a within-the-law and a beyond-the-law united in the eternal return.

4. Oppose repetition not only to the generalities of habit but also to the particularities of memory. For it is perhaps habit which manages to 'draw' something new from a repetition contemplated from without. With habit, we act only on the condition that there is a little Self within us which contemplates: it is this which extracts the new – in other words, the general – from the pseudo-repetition of particular cases. Memory, then, perhaps recovers the particulars dissolved in generality. These psychological movements are of little consequence: for both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard they fade away in the face of repetition proposed as the double condemnation of habit and memory. In this way, repetition is the thought of the future: it is opposed to both the ancient category of reminiscence and the modern category of *habitus*. It is in repetition and by repetition that Forgetting becomes a positive power while the unconscious becomes a

positive and superior unconscious (for example, forgetting as a force is an integral part of the lived experience of eternal return). Everything is summed up in power. When Kierkegaard speaks of repetition as the second power of consciousness, 'second' means not a second time but the infinite which belongs to a single time, the eternity which belongs to an instant, the unconscious which belongs to consciousness, the 'nth' power. And when Nietzsche presents the eternal return as the immediate expression of the will to power, will to power does not at all mean 'to want power' but, on the contrary: whatever you will, carry it to the 'nth' power – in other words, separate out the superior form by virtue of the selective operation of thought in the eternal return, by virtue of the singularity of repetition in the eternal return itself. Here, in the superior form of everything that is, we find the immediate identity of the eternal return and the Overman.⁴

We are not suggesting any resemblance whatsoever between Nietzsche's Dionysus and Kierkegaard's God. On the contrary, we believe that the difference is insurmountable. But this is all the more reason to ask why their coincidence concerning this fundamental objective, the theme of repetition, even though they understand this objective differently? Kierkegaard and Nietzsche are among those who bring to philosophy new means of expression. In relation to them we speak readily of an overcoming of philosophy. Furthermore, in all their work, *movement* is at issue. Their objection to Hegel is that he does not go beyond false movement – in other words, the abstract logical movement of 'mediation'. They want to put metaphysics in motion, in action. They want to make it act, and make it carry out immediate acts. It is not enough, therefore, for them to propose a new representation of movement; representation is already mediation. Rather, it is a question of producing within the work a movement capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation; it is a question of making movement itself a work, without interposition; of substituting direct signs for mediate representations; of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind. This is the idea of a man of the theatre, the idea of a director before his time. In this sense, something completely new begins with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. They no longer reflect on the theatre in the Hegelian manner. Neither do they set up a philosophical theatre. They invent an incredible equivalent of theatre within philosophy, thereby founding simultaneously this theatre of the future and a new philosophy. It will be said that, at least from the point of view of theatre, there was no production: neither the profession of priest and Copenhagen around 1840, nor the break with Wagner and Bayreuth, was a favourable condition. One thing, however, is certain: when Kierkegaard speaks of ancient theatre and modern drama, the environment has already changed; we are no longer in the element of reflection. We find here a thinker who lives the problem of masks, who experiences the inner emptiness of masks and seeks to fill it, to

complete it, albeit with the 'absolutely different' – that is, by putting into it all the difference between the finite and the infinite, thereby creating the idea of a theatre of humour and of faith. When Kierkegaard explains that the knight of faith so resembles a bourgeois in his Sunday best as to be capable of being mistaken for one, this philosophical instruction must be taken as the remark of a director showing how the knight of faith should be *played*. And when he comments on Job or Abraham, when he imagines the variations of *Agnes and the Triton*, he rewrites the tale in a manner which is clearly that of a scenario. Mozart's music resonates even in Abraham and Job; it is a matter of 'leaping' to the tune of this music. 'I look only at movements' is the language of a director who poses the highest theatrical problem, the problem of a movement which would directly touch the soul, which would be that of the soul.⁵

Even more so with Nietzsche. *The Birth of Tragedy* is not a reflection on ancient theatre so much as the practical foundation of a theatre of the future, the opening up of a path along which Nietzsche still thinks it possible to push Wagner. The break with Wagner is not a matter of theory, nor of music; it concerns the respective roles of text, history, noise, music, light, song, dance and décor in this theatre of which Nietzsche dreams. Zarathustra incorporates the two attempts at dramatizing Empedocles. Moreover, if Bizet is better than Wagner, it is from the point of view of theatre and for Zarathustra's dances. Nietzsche's reproach to Wagner is that he inverted and distorted 'movement', giving us a nautical theatre in which we must paddle and swim rather than one in which we can walk and dance. *Zarathustra* is conceived entirely within philosophy, but also entirely for the stage. Everything in it is scored and visualised, put in motion and made to walk or dance. How can it be read without searching for the exact sound of the cries of the higher man, how can the prologue be read without staging the episode of the tightrope walker which opens the whole story? At certain moments, it is a comic opera about terrible things; and it is not by chance that Nietzsche speaks of the comic character of the Overman. Remember the song of Ariadne from the mouth of the old Sorcerer: here, two masks are superimposed – that of a young woman, almost of a *Korē*, which has just been laid over the mask of a repugnant old man. The actor must play the role of an old man playing the role of the *Korē*. Here too, for Nietzsche, it is a matter of filling the inner emptiness of the mask within a theatrical space: by multiplying the superimposed masks and inscribing the omnipresence of Dionysus in that superimposition, by inserting both the infinity of real movement and the form of the absolute difference given in the repetition of eternal return. When Nietzsche says that the Overman resembles Borgia rather than Parsifal, or when he suggests that the Overman belongs at once to both the Jesuit Order and the Prussian officer corps, we can understand these texts only by taking them

for what they are: the remarks of a director indicating how the Overman should be 'played'.

Theatre is real movement, and it extracts real movement from all the arts it employs. This is what we are told: this movement, the essence and the interiority of movement, is *not opposition*, *not mediation*, but repetition. Hegel is denounced as the one who proposes an abstract movement of concepts instead of a movement of the *Physis* and the *Psyche*. Hegel substitutes the abstract relation of the particular to the concept in general for the true relation of the singular and the universal in the Idea. He thus remains in the reflected element of 'representation', within simple generality. He represents concepts instead of dramatizing Ideas: he creates a false theatre, a false drama, a false movement. We must see how Hegel betrays and distorts the immediate in order to ground his dialectic in that incomprehension, and to introduce mediation in a movement which is no more than that of his own thought and its generalities. When we say, on the contrary, that movement is repetition and that this is our true theatre, we are not speaking of the effort of the actor who 'repeats' because he has not yet learned the part. We have in mind the theatrical space, the emptiness of that space, and the manner in which it is filled and determined by the signs and masks through which the actor plays a role which plays other roles; we think of how repetition is woven from one distinctive point to another, including the differences within itself. (When Marx also criticizes the abstract false movement or mediation of the Hegelians, he finds himself drawn to an idea, which he indicates rather than develops, an essentially 'theatrical' idea: to the extent that history is theatre, then repetition, along with the tragic and the comic within repetition, forms a condition of movement under which the 'actors' or the 'heroes' produce something effectively new in history.) The theatre of repetition is opposed to the theatre of representation, just as movement is opposed to the concept and to representation which refers it back to the concept. In the theatre of repetition, we experience pure forces, dynamic lines in space which act without intermediary upon the spirit, and link it directly with nature and history, with a language which speaks before words, with gestures which develop before organised bodies, with masks before faces, with spectres and phantoms before characters – the whole apparatus of repetition as a 'terrible power'.

It then becomes easy to speak of the differences between Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Even this question, however, must no longer be posed at the speculative level of the ultimate nature of the God of Abraham or the Dionysus of Zarathustra. It is rather a matter of knowing what it means to 'produce movement', to repeat or to obtain repetition. Is it a matter of leaping, as Kierkegaard believes? Or is it rather a matter of dancing, as Nietzsche thinks? He does not like the confusion of dancing and leaping (only Zarathustra's ape, his demon, his dwarf, his buffoon, leaps).⁶

Kierkegaard offers us a theatre of faith; he opposes spiritual movement, the movement of faith, to logical movement. He can thus invite us to go beyond all aesthetic repetition, beyond irony and even humour, all the while painfully aware that he offers us only the aesthetic, ironic and humoristic image of such a going-beyond. With Nietzsche, it is a theatre of unbelief, of movement as *Physis*, already a theatre of cruelty. Here, humour and irony are indispensable and fundamental operations of nature. And what would eternal return be, if we forgot that it is a vertiginous movement endowed with a force: not one which causes the return of the Same in general, but one which selects, one which expels as well as creates, destroys as well as produces? Nietzsche's leading idea is to ground the repetition in eternal return on both the death of God and the dissolution of the self. However, it is a quite different alliance in the theatre of faith: Kierkegaard dreams of an alliance between a God and a self rediscovered. All sorts of differences follow: is the movement in the sphere of the mind, or in the entrails of the earth which knows neither God nor self? Where will it be better protected against generalities, against mediations? Is repetition supernatural, to the extent that it is over and above the laws of nature? Or is it rather the most natural will of Nature in itself and willing itself as *Physis*, because Nature is by itself superior to its own kingdoms and its own laws? Has Kierkegaard not mixed all kinds of things together in his condemnation of 'aesthetic' repetition: a pseudo-repetition attributable to general laws of nature and a true repetition in nature itself; a pathological repetition of the passions and a repetition in art and the work of art? We cannot now resolve any of these problems; it has been enough for us to find theatrical confirmation of an irreducible difference between generality and repetition.

Repetition and generality are opposed from the point of view of conduct and from the point of view of law. It remains to specify a third opposition from the point of view of concepts or representation. Let us pose a question *quid juris*: a concept may be in principle the concept of a particular existing thing, thus having an infinite comprehension. Infinite comprehension is the correlate of an extension = 1. It is very important that this infinity of comprehension be supposed actual, not virtual or simply indefinite. It is on this condition that predicates in the form of moments of concepts are preserved, and have an effect on the subject to which they are attributed. Infinite comprehension thus makes possible remembering and recognition, memory and self-consciousness (even when these two faculties are not themselves infinite). The relation of a concept to its object under this double aspect, in the form that it assumes in this memory and this self-consciousness, is called representation. From this may be drawn the principles of a vulgarized Leibnizianism. According to a principle of difference,

every determination is conceptual in the last instance, or actually belongs to the comprehension of a concept. According to a principle of sufficient reason, there is always one concept per particular thing. According to the reciprocal principle of the identity of indiscernibles, there is one and only one thing per concept. Together, these principles expound a theory of difference as conceptual difference, or develop the account of representation as mediation.

However, a concept can always be blocked at the level of each of its determinations or each of the predicates that it includes. In so far as it serves as a determination, a predicate must remain fixed in the concept while becoming something else in the thing (animal becomes something other in man and in horse; humanity something other in Peter and in Paul). This is why the comprehension of the concept is infinite; having become other in the thing, the predicate is like the object of another predicate in the concept. But this is also why each determination remains general or defines a resemblance, to the extent that it remains fixed in the concept and applicable by right to an infinity of things. Here, the concept is thus constituted in such a fashion that, in its real use, its comprehension extends to infinity, but in its logical use, this comprehension is always liable to an artificial blockage. Every logical limitation of the comprehension of a concept endows it with an extension greater than 1, in principle infinite, and thus of a generality such that no existing individual *can* correspond to it *hic et nunc* (rule of the inverse relation of comprehension and extension). Thus, the principle of difference understood as difference in the concept does not oppose but, on the contrary, allows the greatest space possible for the apprehension of resemblances. Even from the point of view of conundrums, the question 'What difference is there?' may always be transformed into: 'What resemblance is there?' But above all, in classification, the determination of species implies and supposes a continual evaluation of resemblances. Undoubtedly, resemblance is not a partial identity, but that is only because the predicate in the concept is not, by virtue of its becoming other in the thing, a part of that thing.

We wish to indicate the difference between this type of artificial blockage and a quite different type which must be called a natural blockage of the concept. One refers to logic pure and simple, but the other refers to a transcendental logic or a dialectic of existence. Let us suppose that a concept, taken at a particular moment when its comprehension is finite, is forcibly assigned a place in space and time – that is, an existence corresponding normally to the extension = 1. We would say, then, that a genus or species passes into existence *hic et nunc* without any augmentation of comprehension. There is a rift between that extension = 1 imposed upon the concept and the extension = ∞ that its weak comprehension demands in principle. The result will be a 'discrete extension' – that is, a pullulation of individuals absolutely identical in

respect of their concept, and participating in the same singularity in existence (the paradox of doubles or twins).⁷ This phenomenon of discrete extension implies a natural blockage of the concept, different in kind from a logical blockage: it forms a true repetition in existence rather than an order of resemblance in thought. There is a significant difference between generality, which always designates a logical power of concepts, and repetition, which testifies to their powerlessness or their real limits. Repetition is the pure fact of a concept with finite comprehension being forced to pass as such into existence: can we find examples of such a passage? Epicurean atoms would be one: individuals localised in space, they nevertheless have a meagre comprehension, which is made up for in discrete extension, to the point where there exists an infinity of atoms of the same shape and size. The existence of Epicurean atoms may be doubted. On the other hand, the existence of words, which are in a sense linguistic atoms, cannot be doubted. Words possess a comprehension which is necessarily finite, since they are by nature the objects of a merely nominal definition. We have here a reason why the comprehension of the concept *cannot* extend to infinity: we define a word by only a finite number of words. Nevertheless, speech and writing, from which words are inseparable, give them an existence *hic et nunc*; a genus thereby passes into existence as such; and here again extension is made up for in dispersion, in discreteness, under the sign of a repetition which forms the real power of language in speech and writing.

The question is: are there other natural blockages besides those of discrete extension and finite comprehension? Let us assume a concept with indefinite comprehension (virtually infinite). However far one pursues that comprehension, one can always think that it subsumes perfectly identical objects. By contrast with the actual infinite, where the concept is sufficient by right to distinguish its object from *every* other object, in this case the concept can pursue its comprehension indefinitely, always subsuming a plurality of objects which is itself indefinite. Here again, the concept is the Same – indefinitely the same – for objects which are distinct. We must therefore recognise the existence of non-conceptual differences between these objects. It is Kant who best indicates the correlation between objects endowed with only an indefinite specification, and purely spatio-temporal or oppositional, non-conceptual determinations (the paradox of symmetrical objects).⁸ However, these determinations are precisely only the figures of repetition: space and time are themselves repetitive milieux; and real opposition is not a maximum of difference but a minimum of repetition – a repetition reduced to two, echoing and returning on itself; a repetition which has found the means to *define* itself. Repetition thus appears as difference without a concept, repetition which escapes indefinitely continued conceptual difference. It expresses a power peculiar to the existent, a stubbornness of the existent in intuition, which resists

every specification by concepts no matter how far this is taken. However far you go in the concept, Kant says, you can always repeat – that is, make several objects correspond to it, or at least two: one for the left and one for the right, one for the more and one for the less, one for the positive and one for the negative.

Such a situation may be better understood if we consider that concepts with indefinite comprehension are concepts of Nature. As such, they are always in something else: they are not in Nature but in the mind which contemplates it or observes it, and represents it to itself. That is why it is said that Nature is alienated mind or alienated concept, opposed to itself. Corresponding to such concepts are those objects which themselves lack memory – that is, which neither possess nor collect in themselves their own moments. The question is asked why Nature repeats: because it is *partes extra partes, mens momentanea*. Novelty then passes to the mind which represents itself: because the mind has a memory or acquires habits, it is capable of forming concepts in general and of drawing something new, of subtracting something new from the repetition that it contemplates.

Concepts with finite comprehension are nominal concepts; concepts with indefinite comprehension but without memory are concepts of Nature. Yet these two cases still do not exhaust the examples of natural blockage. Take an individual notion or a particular representation with infinite comprehension, endowed with memory but lacking self-consciousness. The comprehensive representation is indeed in-itself, the memory is there, embracing all the particularity of an act, a scene, an event or a being. What is missing, however, for a determinate natural reason, is the for-itself of consciousness or recognition. What is missing in the memory is remembrance – or rather, the working through of memory. Consciousness establishes between the I and the representation a relation much more profound than that which appears in the expression 'I have a representation': it relates the representation to the I as if to a free faculty which does not allow itself to be confined within any one of its products, but for which each product is already thought and recognised as past, the occasion of a determinant change in inner meaning. When the consciousness of knowledge or the working through of memory is missing, the knowledge in itself is only the repetition of its object: it is *played*, that is to say repeated, enacted instead of being known. Repetition here appears as the unconscious of the free concept, of knowledge or of memory, the unconscious of representation. It fell to Freud to assign the natural reason for such a blockage: repression or resistance, which makes repetition itself a veritable 'constraint', a 'compulsion'. Here, then, is a third case of blockage, one which concerns, this time, the concepts of freedom. Here too, from the standpoint of a certain Freudianism, we can discover the principle of an inverse relation between repetition and consciousness, repetition and remembering, repetition and recognition (the paradox of the

'burials' or buried objects): the less one remembers, the less one is conscious of remembering one's past, the more one repeats it – remember and work through the memory in order not to repeat it.⁹ Self-consciousness in recognition appears as the faculty of the future or the function of the future, the function of the new. Is it not true that the only dead who return are those whom one has buried too quickly and too deeply, without paying them the necessary respects, and that remorse testifies less to an excess of memory than to a powerlessness or to a failure in the working through of a memory?

There is a tragic and a comic repetition. Indeed, repetition always appears twice, once in the tragic destiny and once in the comic aspect. In the theatre, the hero repeats precisely because he is separated from an essential, infinite knowledge. This knowledge is in him, it is immersed in him and acts in him, but acts like something hidden, like a blocked representation. The difference between the comic and the tragic pertains to two elements: first, the nature of the repressed knowledge – in the one case immediate natural knowledge, a simple given of common sense, in the other terrible esoteric knowledge; second, as a result, the manner in which the character is excluded from this knowledge, the manner in which 'he does not know that he knows'. In general the practical problem consists in this: this unknown knowledge must be represented as bathing the whole scene, impregnating all the elements of the play and comprising in itself all the powers of mind and nature, but at the same time the hero cannot represent it to *himself* – on the contrary, he must enact it, play it and repeat it until the acute moment that Aristotle called 'recognition'. At this point, repetition and representation confront one another and merge, without, however, confusing their two levels, the one reflecting itself in and being sustained by the other, the knowledge as it is represented on stage and as repeated by the actor then being recognised as the same.

The discrete, the alienated and the repressed are the three cases of natural blockage, corresponding respectively to nominal concepts, concepts of nature and concepts of freedom. In all these cases, however, conceptual identity or Sameness of representation is invoked to account for repetition: repetition is attributed to elements which are really distinct but nevertheless share strictly the same concept. Repetition thus appears as a difference, but a difference absolutely without concept; in this sense, an indifferent difference. The words 'really', 'strictly', 'absolutely' are supposed to refer to the phenomenon of natural blockage, in opposition to logical blockage which only determines a generality. However, an important drawback compromises this whole endeavour. As long as we invoke absolute conceptual identity for distinct objects, we suggest a purely negative explanation, an explanation by default. The fact that this default should be grounded in

the nature of concepts or representations themselves changes nothing. In the first case, repetition occurs because nominal concepts naturally possess a finite comprehension. In the second case, repetition occurs because concepts of nature are naturally devoid of memory, alienated and outside themselves. In the third case, because the concept of freedom remains unconscious while memories and representations remain repressed. In all these cases, *that which* repeats does so only by dint of not 'comprehending', not remembering, not knowing or not being conscious. Throughout, the inadequacy of concepts and of their representative concomitants (memory and self-consciousness, remembrance and recognition) is supposed to account for repetition. Such is therefore the default of every argument grounded in the form of identity in the concept: these arguments give us only a nominal definition and a negative explanation of repetition. No doubt the formal identity which corresponds to simple logical blockage may be opposed to real identity (*the Same*) as this appears in natural blockage. But natural blockage itself requires a positive supra-conceptual force capable of explaining it, and of thereby explaining repetition.

Let us return to the example of psychoanalysis: we repeat because we repress ... Freud was never satisfied with such a negative schema, in which repetition is explained by amnesia. It is true that, from the beginning, repression was considered a positive power. However, he borrowed this positivity from the pleasure principle or from the reality principle: it was merely a derived positivity, one of opposition. The turning point of Freudianism appears in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: the death instinct is discovered, not in connection with the destructive tendencies, not in connection with aggressivity, but as a result of a direct consideration of repetition phenomena. Strangely, the death instinct serves as a positive, originary principle for repetition; this is its domain and its meaning. It plays the role of a transcendental principle, whereas the pleasure principle is only psychological. For this reason, it is above all silent (not given in experience), whereas the pleasure principle is noisy. The first question, then, is: How is it that the theme of death, which appears to draw together the most negative elements of psychological life, can be in itself the most positive element, transcendently positive, to the point of affirming repetition? How can it be related to a primordial *instinct*? But a second question immediately arises: Under what form is repetition affirmed and prescribed by the death instinct? Ultimately, it is a question of the relation between repetition and disguises. Do the disguises found in the work of dreams or symptoms – condensation, displacement, dramatisation – rediscover while attenuating a bare, brute repetition (repetition of the Same)? From the first theory of repression, Freud indicated another path: Dora elaborates her own role, and repeats her love for the father, only through other roles filled by others, which she herself adopts in relation to those others (K., Frau K., the governess ...). The disguises and the

variations, the masks or costumes, do not come 'over and above': they are, on the contrary, the internal genetic elements of repetition itself, its integral and constituent parts. This path would have been able to lead the analysis of the unconscious towards a veritable theatre. However, if it did not do so, this was because Freud was unable to prevent himself maintaining the model of a brute repetition, at least as a tendency. We see this when he attributes fixation to the Id: disguise is then understood from the perspective of a simple opposition of forces; disguised repetition is only the fruit of a secondary compromise between the opposed forces of the Ego and the Id. Even beyond the pleasure principle, the form of a bare repetition persists, since Freud interprets the death instinct as a tendency to return to the state of inanimate matter, one which upholds the model of a wholly physical or material repetition.

Death has nothing to do with a material model. On the contrary, the death instinct may be understood in relation to masks and costumes. Repetition is truly that which disguises itself in constituting itself, that which constitutes itself only by disguising itself. It is not underneath the masks, but is formed from one mask to another, as though from one distinctive point to another, from one privileged instant to another, with and within the variations. The masks do not hide anything except other masks. There is no first term which is repeated, and even our childhood love for the mother repeats other adult loves with regard to other women, rather like the way in which the hero of *In Search of Lost Time* replays with his mother Swann's passion for Odette. There is therefore nothing repeated which may be isolated or abstracted from the repetition in which it was formed, but in which it is also hidden. There is no bare repetition which may be abstracted or inferred from the disguise itself. The same thing is both disguising and disguised. A decisive moment in psychoanalysis occurred when Freud gave up, in certain respects, the hypothesis of real childhood events, which would have played the part of ultimate disguised terms, in order to substitute the power of fantasy which is immersed in the death instinct, where everything is already masked and disguised. In short, repetition is in its essence symbolic; symbols or simulacra are the letter of repetition itself. Difference is included in repetition by way of disguise and by the order of the symbol. This is why the variations do not come from without, do not express a secondary compromise between a repressing instance and a repressed instance, and must not be understood on the basis of the still negative forms of opposition, reversal or overturning. The variations express, rather, the differential mechanisms which belong to the essence and origin of that which is repeated. We should even overturn the relations between 'covered' and 'uncovered' within repetition. Take an uncovered or bare repetition (repetition of the Same) such as an obsessional ceremony or a schizophrenic stereotype: the mechanical element in the repetition, the

element of action apparently repeated, serves as a cover for a more profound repetition, which is played in another dimension, a secret verticality in which the roles and masks are furnished by the death instinct. Theatre of terror, Binswanger said of schizophrenia. There, the 'never seen' is not the contrary of the 'already seen': both signify the same thing, and are lived each in the other. Nerval's *Sylvie* already introduced us into this theatre, and the *Gradya*, so close to a Nervalian inspiration, shows us the hero who lives at once both repetition as such and the repeated which is always disguised in the repetition. In the analysis of obsession, the appearance of the theme of death coincides with the moment at which the obsessed has command of all the characters of his drama and brings them together in a repetition of which the 'ceremony' is only the external envelope. The mask, the costume, the covered is everywhere the truth of the uncovered. The mask is the true subject of repetition. Because repetition differs in kind from representation, the repeated cannot be represented: rather, it must always be signified, masked by what signifies it, itself masking what it signifies.

I do not repeat because I repress. I repress because I repeat, I forget because I repeat. I repress, because I can live certain things or certain experiences only in the mode of repetition. I am determined to repress whatever would prevent me from living them thus: in particular, the representation which mediates the lived by relating it to the form of a similar or identical object. Eros and Thanatos are distinguished in that Eros must be repeated, can be lived only through repetition, whereas Thanatos (as transcendental principle) is that which gives repetition to Eros, that which submits Eros to repetition. Only such a point of view is capable of advancing us in the obscure problems of the origin of repression, its nature, its causes and the exact terms on which it bears. For when Freud shows – beyond repression 'properly speaking', which bears upon *representations* – the necessity of supposing a primary repression which concerns first and foremost pure *presentations*, or the manner in which the drives are necessarily lived, we believe that he comes closest to a positive internal principle of repetition. This later appears to him determinable in the form of the death instinct, and it is this which, far from being explained by it, must explain the blockage of representation in repression properly speaking. This is why the law of an inverse relation between repetition and remembering is in every respect hardly satisfactory, in so far as it makes repetition depend upon repression.

Freud noted from the beginning that in order to stop repeating it was not enough to remember in the abstract (without affect), nor to form a concept in general, nor even to represent the repressed event in all its particularity: it was necessary to seek out the memory there where it was, to install oneself directly in the past in order to accomplish a living connection between the knowledge and the resistance, the representation

and the blockage. We are not, therefore, healed by simple anamnesis, any more than we are made ill by amnesia. Here as elsewhere, becoming conscious counts for little. The more theatrical and dramatic operation by which healing takes place – or does not take place – has a name: transference. Now transference is still repetition: above all it is repetition.¹⁰ If repetition makes us ill, it also heals us; if it enchains and destroys us, it also frees us, testifying in both cases to its 'demonic' power. All cure is a voyage to the bottom of repetition. There is indeed something analogous to scientific experimentation in transference, since the patient is supposed to repeat the whole of his disturbance in privileged, artificial conditions, taking the person of the analyst as 'object'. In transference, however, repetition does not so much serve to identify events, persons and passions as to *authenticate* the roles and select the masks. Transference is not an experiment but a principle which grounds the entire analytic experience. The roles themselves are by nature erotic, but the verification of these roles appeals to the highest principle and the most profound judge, the death instinct. In effect, reflection on transference was a determinant motive behind the discovery of a 'beyond'. In this sense, repetition constitutes by itself the selective game of our illness *and* our health, of our loss *and* our salvation. How can this game be related to the death instinct? No doubt in a sense close to that in which Miller, in his wonderful book on Rimbaud, says: 'I realized that I was free, that the death I had gone through had liberated me.'¹¹ It seems that the idea of a death instinct must be understood in terms of three paradoxical and complementary requirements: to give repetition an original, positive principle, but also an autonomous disguising power; and finally, to give it an immanent meaning in which terror is closely mingled with the movement of selection and freedom.

Our problem concerns the essence of repetition. It is a question of knowing why repetition cannot be explained by the form of identity in concepts or representations; in what sense it demands a superior 'positive' principle. This enquiry must embrace all the concepts of nature and freedom. Consider, on the border between these two cases, the repetition of a decorative motif: a figure is reproduced, while the concept remains absolutely identical However, this is not how artists proceed in reality. They do not juxtapose instances of the figure, but rather each time combine an element of one instance with *another* element of a following instance. They introduce a disequilibrium into the dynamic process of construction, an instability, dissymmetry or gap of some kind which disappears only in the overall effect. Commenting on such a case, Lévi-Strauss writes: 'These elements interlock with each other through dislocation, and it is only at the end that the pattern achieves a stability which both confirms and belies the dynamic

process according to which it has been carried out.¹² These remarks stand for the notion of causality in general. For it is not the elements of symmetry present which matter for artistic or natural causality, but those which are missing and are not in the cause; what matters is the possibility of the cause having less symmetry than the effect. Moreover, causality would remain eternally conjectural, a simple logical category, if that possibility were not at some moment or other effectively fulfilled. For this reason, the logical relation of causality is inseparable from a physical process of signalling, without which it would not be translated into action. By 'signal' we mean a system with orders of disparate size, endowed with elements of dissymmetry; by 'sign' we mean what happens within such a system, what flashes across the intervals when a communication takes place between dispartes. The sign is indeed an effect, but an effect with two aspects: in one of these it expresses, *qua* sign, the productive dissymmetry; in the other it tends to cancel it. The sign is not entirely of the order of the symbol; nevertheless, it makes way for it by implying an internal difference (while leaving the conditions of its reproduction still external).

The negative expression 'lack of symmetry' should not mislead us: it indicates the origin and positivity of the causal process. It is positivity itself. For us, as the example of the decorative motif suggests, it is essential to break down the notion of causality in order to distinguish two types of repetition: one which concerns only the overall, abstract effect, and the other which concerns the acting cause. One is a static repetition, the other is dynamic. One results from the work, but the other is like the 'evolution' of a bodily movement. One refers back to a single concept, which leaves only an external difference between the ordinary instances of a figure; the other is the repetition of an internal difference which it incorporates in each of its moments, and carries from one distinctive point to another. One could try to assimilate these two repetitions by saying that the difference between the first and the second is only a matter of a change in the content of the concept, or of the figure being articulated differently, but this would be to fail to recognise the respective order of each repetition. For in the dynamic order there is no representative concept, nor any figure represented in a pre-existing space. There is an Idea, and a pure dynamism which creates a corresponding space.

Studies on rhythm or symmetry confirm this duality. A distinction is drawn between arithmetic symmetry, which refers back to a scale of whole or fractional coefficients, and geometric symmetry, based upon proportions or irrational ratios; a static symmetry which is cubic or hexagonal, and a dynamic symmetry which is pentagonal and appears in a spiral line or in a geometrically progressing pulsation – in short, in a living and mortal 'evolution'. Now, the second of these is at the heart of the first; it is the vital, positive, active procedure. In a network of double squares, we discover radiating lines which have the centre of a pentagon or a

pentagram as their asymmetrical pole. The network is like a fabric stretched upon a framework, 'but the outline, the principal rhythm of that framework, is almost always a theme independent of the network': such elements of dissymmetry serve as both genetic principle and principle of reflection for symmetrical figures.¹³ The static repetition in the network of double squares thus refers back to a dynamic repetition, formed by a pentagon and 'the decreasing series of pentagrams which may be naturally inscribed therein'. Similarly, the study of rhythm allows us immediately to distinguish two kinds of repetition. Cadence-repetition is a regular division of time, an isochronic recurrence of identical elements. However, a period exists only in so far as it is determined by a tonic accent, commanded by intensities. Yet we would be mistaken about the function of accents if we said that they were reproduced at equal intervals. On the contrary, tonic and intensive values act by creating inequalities or incommensurabilities between metrically equivalent periods or spaces. They create distinctive points, privileged instants which always indicate a poly-rhythm. Here again, the unequal is the most positive element. Cadence is only the envelope of a rhythm, and of a relation between rhythms. The reprise of points of inequality, of inflections or of rhythmic events, is more profound than the reproduction of ordinary homogeneous elements. As a result, we should distinguish cadence-repetition and rhythm-repetition in every case, the first being only the outward appearance or the abstract effect of the second. A bare, material repetition (repetition of the Same) appears only in the sense that another repetition is disguised within it, constituting it and constituting itself in disguising itself. Even in nature, isochronic rotations are only the outward appearance of a more profound movement, the revolving cycles are only abstractions: placed together, they reveal evolutionary cycles or spirals whose principle is a variable curve, and the trajectory of which has two dissymmetrical aspects, as though it had a right and a left. It is always in this gap, which should not be confused with the negative, that creatures weave their repetition and receive at the same time the gift of living and dying.

Finally, to return to nominal concepts: is it the identity of the nominal concept which explains the repetition of a word? Take the example of rhyme: it is indeed verbal repetition, but repetition which includes the difference between two words and inscribes that difference at the heart of a poetic Idea, in a space which it determines. Nor does its meaning lie in marking equal intervals, but rather, as we see in a notion of strong rhyme, in putting tonal values in the service of tonic rhythm, and contributing to the independence of tonic rhythms from arithmetic rhythms. As for the repetition of a single word, we must understand this as a 'generalised rhyme', not rhyme as a restricted repetition. This generalisation can proceed in two ways: either a word taken in two senses ensures a resemblance or a paradoxical identity between the two senses; or a word

taken in one sense exercises an attractive force on its neighbours, communicating an extraordinary gravity to them until one of the neighbouring words takes up the baton and becomes in turn a centre of repetition. Raymond Roussel and Charles Péguy were the great repeaters of literature, able to lift the pathological power of language to a higher artistic level. Roussel takes ambiguous words or homonyms and fills the entire distance between their meanings with a story presented twice and with objects themselves doubled. He thereby overcomes homonymity on its own ground and inscribes the maximum difference within repetition, where this is the space opened up in the heart of a word. This space is still presented by Roussel as one of masks and death, in which is developed both a repetition which enchains and a repetition which saves – which saves above all from the one which enchains. Roussel creates an after-language where, once everything has been said, everything is repeated and recommenced.¹⁴ Péguy's technique is very different: it substitutes repetition not for homonymity but for synonymity; it concerns what linguists call the function of contiguity rather than that of similarity; it forms a before-language, an auroral language in which the step-by-step creation of an internal space within words proceeds by tiny differences. This time, everything leads to the problem of aging and premature deaths, but in relation to this problem also to the extraordinary chance to affirm a repetition which saves against that which enchains. Both Péguy and Roussel take language to one of its limits: in the case of Roussel, that of similarity and selection, the 'distinctive feature' between *billard* and *pillard*; in the case of Péguy, that of contiguity or combination, the famous *tapestry points*. Both substitute a vertical repetition of distinctive points, which takes us inside the words, for the horizontal repetition of ordinary words repeated. Both substitute a positive repetition, one which flows from the excess of a linguistic and stylistic Idea, for a repetition by default which results from the inadequacy of nominal concepts or verbal representations. How does death inspire language, given that it is always present when repetition is affirmed?

The reproduction of the Same is not a motor of bodily movements. We know that even the simplest imitation involves a difference between inside and outside. Moreover, imitation plays only a secondary and regulatory role in the acquisition of a behaviour: it permits the correction of movements being made, but not their instigation. Learning takes place not in the relation between a representation and an action (reproduction of the Same) but in the relation between a sign and a response (encounter with the Other). Signs involve heterogeneity in at least three ways: first, in the object which bears or emits them, and is necessarily on a different level, as though there were two orders of size or disparate realities between which the sign flashes; secondly, in themselves, since a sign envelops another 'object' within the limits of the object which bears it, and incarnates a

natural or spiritual power (an Idea); finally, in the response they elicit, since the movement of the response does not 'resemble' that of the sign. The movement of the swimmer does not resemble that of the wave, in particular, the movements of the swimming instructor which we reproduce on the sand bear no relation to the movements of the wave, which we learn to deal with only by grasping the former in practice as signs. That is why it is so difficult to say how someone learns: there is an innate or acquired practical familiarity with signs, which means that there is something amorous – but also something fatal – about all education. We learn nothing from those who say: 'Do as I do'. Our only teachers are those who tell us to 'do with me', and are able to emit signs to be developed in heterogeneity rather than propose gestures for us to reproduce. In other words, there is no ideo-motivity, only sensory-motivity. When a body combines some of its own distinctive points with those of a wave, it espouses the principle of a repetition which is no longer that of the Same, but involves the Other – involves difference, from one wave and one gesture to another, and carries that difference through the repetitive space thereby constituted. To learn is indeed to constitute this space of an encounter with signs, in which the distinctive points renew themselves in each other, and repetition takes shape while disguising itself. Apprenticeship always gives rise to images of death, on the edges of the space it creates and with the help of the heterogeneity it engenders. Signs are deadly when they are lost in the distance, but also when they strike us with full force. Oedipus receives a sign once from too far away, once from too close, and between the two a terrible repetition of the crime is woven. Zarathustra receives his 'sign' either from too near or from too far, and only at the end does he foresee the correct distance which will turn that which in eternal return makes him ill into a liberatory and redemptive repetition. Signs are the true elements of theatre. They testify to the spiritual and natural powers which act beneath the words, gestures, characters and objects represented. They signify repetition as real movement, in opposition to representation which is a false movement of the abstract.

We are right to speak of repetition when we find ourselves confronted by identical elements with exactly the same concept. However, we must distinguish between these discrete elements, these repeated objects, and a secret subject, the real subject of repetition, which repeats itself through them. Repetition must be understood in the pronominal; we must find the Self of repetition, the singularity within that which repeats. For there is no repetition without a repeater, nothing repeated without a repetitious soul. As a result, rather than the repeated and the repeater, the object and the subject, we must distinguish two forms of repetition. In every case repetition is difference without a concept. But in one case, the difference is taken to be only external to the concept; it is a difference between objects

represented by the same concept, falling into the indifference of space and time. In the other case, the difference is internal to the Idea; it unfolds as pure movement, creative of a dynamic space and time which correspond to the Idea. The first repetition is repetition of the Same, explained by the identity of the concept or representation; the second includes difference, and includes itself in the alterity of the Idea, in the heterogeneity of an 'a-presentation'. One is negative, occurring by default in the concept; the other affirmative, occurring by excess in the Idea. One is conjectural, the other categorical. One is static, the other dynamic. One is repetition in the effect, the other in the cause. One is extensive, the other intensive. One is ordinary, the other distinctive and singular. One is horizontal, the other vertical. One is developed and explicated, the other enveloped and in need of interpretation. One is revolving, the other evolving. One involves equality, commensurability and symmetry; the other is grounded in inequality, incommensurability and dissymmetry. One is material, the other spiritual, even in nature and in the earth. One is inanimate, the other carries the secret of our deaths and our lives, of our enchainments and our liberations, the demonic and the divine. One is a 'bare' repetition, the other a covered repetition, which forms itself in covering itself, in masking and disguising itself. One concerns accuracy, the other has authenticity as its criterion.

The two repetitions are not independent. One is the singular subject, the interiority and the heart of the other, the depths of the other. The other is only the external envelope, the abstract effect. The repetition of dissymmetry is hidden within symmetrical ensembles or effects; a repetition of distinctive points underneath that of ordinary points; and everywhere the Other in the repetition of the Same. This is the secret, the most profound repetition: it alone provides the principle of the other one, the reason for the blockage of concepts. In this domain, as in *Sartor Resartus*, it is the masked, the disguised or the costumed which turns out to be the truth of the uncovered. Necessarily, since this repetition is not hidden by something else but forms itself by disguising itself; it does not pre-exist its own disguises and, in forming itself, constitutes the bare repetition within which it becomes enveloped. Important consequences follow from this. When we are confronted by a repetition which proceeds masked, or comprises displacements, quickenings, slowdowns, variants or differences which are ultimately capable of leading us far away from the point of departure, we tend to see a mixed state in which repetition is not pure but only approximative: the very word repetition seems to be employed symbolically, by analogy or metaphor. It is true that we have strictly defined repetition as difference without concept. However, we would be wrong to reduce it to a difference which falls back into exteriority, because the concept embodies the form of the Same, without seeing that it can be internal to the Idea and possess in itself all the resources of signs, symbols

and alterity which go beyond the concept as such. The examples invoked above concern the most diverse kinds of case, from nominal concepts to concepts of nature and freedom, and we could be charged with having mixed up all kinds of physical and psychical repetitions, even with having run together stereotypical repetitions and latent, symbolic repetitions in the psychical domain. However, we wished to show the coexistence of these instances in every repetitive structure, to show how repetition displays identical elements which necessarily refer back to a latent subject which repeats itself through these elements, forming an 'other' repetition at the heart of the first. We therefore suggest that this other repetition is in no way approximative or metaphorical. It is, on the contrary, the spirit of every repetition. It is the very letter of every repetition, its watermark or constitutive cipher. It forms the essence of that in which every repetition consists: difference without a concept, non-mediated difference. It is both the literal and spiritual primary sense of repetition. The material sense results from this other, as if secreted by it like a shell.

We began by distinguishing generality and repetition. Then we distinguished two forms of repetition. These two distinctions are linked: the consequences of the first are unfolded only in the second. For if we were content to treat repetition abstractly and as devoid of any interior, we would remain incapable of understanding why and how a concept could be naturally blocked, allowing a repetition which has nothing to do with generality to appear. Conversely, when we discover the literal interior of repetition, we have the means not only to understand the outer repetition as a cover, but also to recapture the order of generality (and, following Kierkegaard's wish, to carry out the reconciliation of the singular with the general). For to the extent that the internal repetition projects itself through a bare repetition which covers it, the differences that it includes appear to be so many factors which oppose repetition, which attenuate it and vary it according to 'general' laws. Beneath the general operation of laws, however, there always remains the play of singularities. Cyclical generalities in nature are the masks of a singularity which appears through their interferences; and beneath the generalities of habit in moral life we rediscover singular processes of learning. The domain of laws must be understood, but always on the basis of a Nature and a Spirit superior to their own laws, which weave their repetitions in the depths of the earth and of the heart, where laws do not yet exist. The interior of repetition is always affected by an order of difference: it is only to the extent that something is linked to a repetition of an order other than its own that the repetition appears external and bare, and the thing itself subject to the categories of generality. It is the inadequation between difference and repetition which gives rise to the order of generality. Gabriel Tarde suggested in this sense that resemblance itself was only displaced repetition: real repetition is that which corresponds directly to a difference of the same

degree as itself. Better than anyone, Tarde was able to elaborate a new dialectic by discovering in mind and nature the secret effort to establish an ever more perfect correspondence between difference and repetition.¹⁵

So long as we take difference to be conceptual difference, intrinsically conceptual, and repetition to be an extrinsic difference between objects represented by the same concept, it appears that the problem of their relation may be resolved by the facts. Are there repetitions – yes or no? Or is every difference indeed intrinsic and conceptual in the last instance? Hegel ridiculed Leibniz for having invited the court ladies to undertake experimental metaphysics while walking in the gardens, to see whether two leaves of a tree could not have the same concept. Replace the court ladies by forensic scientists: no two grains of dust are absolutely identical, no two hands have the same distinctive points, no two typewriters have the same strike, no two revolvers score their bullets in the same manner ... Why, however, do we feel that the problem is not properly defined so long as we look for the criterion of a *principium individuationis* in the facts? It is because a difference can be internal, yet not conceptual (as the paradox of symmetrical objects shows). A dynamic space must be defined from the point of view of an observer tied to that space, not from an external position. There are internal differences which dramatise an Idea before representing an object. Difference here is internal to an Idea, even though it be external to the concept which represents an object. That is why the opposition between Kant and Leibniz seems much less strong to the extent that one takes account of the dynamic factors present in the two doctrines. If, in the forms of intuition, Kant recognised extrinsic differences not reducible to the order of concepts, these are no less 'internal' even though they cannot be regarded as 'intrinsic' by the understanding, and can be represented only in their external relation to space as a whole.¹⁶ In other words, following certain neo-Kantian interpretations, there is a step-by-step, internal, dynamic construction of space which must precede the 'representation' of the whole as a form of exteriority. The element of this internal genesis seems to us to consist of intensive quantity rather than schema, and to be related to Ideas rather than to concepts of the understanding. If the spatial order of extrinsic differences and the conceptual order of intrinsic differences are finally in harmony, as the schema shows they are, this is ultimately due to this intensive differential element, this synthesis of continuity at a given moment which, in the form of a *continua repetitio*, first gives rise internally to the space corresponding to Ideas. With Leibniz, the affinity between extrinsic differences and intrinsic conceptual differences already appealed to the internal process of a *continua repetitio*, grounded upon an intensive differential element which ensures the synthesis of continuity at a point in order to engender space from within.

There are repetitions which are not only extrinsic differences, just as there are internal differences which are neither intrinsic nor conceptual. We are thus in a better position to identify the source of the preceding ambiguities. When we define repetition as difference without concept, we are drawn to conclude that only extrinsic difference is involved in repetition; we consider, therefore, that any internal 'novelty' is sufficient to remove us from repetition proper and can be reconciled only with an approximative repetition, so-called by analogy. Nothing of the sort is true. For we do not yet know what is the essence of repetition, what is positively denoted by the expression 'difference without concept', or the nature of the interiority it may imply. Conversely, when we define difference as conceptual difference, we believe we have done enough to specify the concept of difference as such. Nevertheless, here again we have no idea of difference, no concept of difference as such. Perhaps the mistake of the philosophy of difference, from Aristotle to Hegel via Leibniz, lay in confusing the concept of difference with a merely conceptual difference, in remaining content to inscribe difference in the concept in general. In reality, so long as we inscribe difference in the concept in general we have no singular Idea of difference, we remain only with a difference already mediated by representation. We therefore find ourselves confronted by two questions: what is the concept of difference – one which is not reducible to simple conceptual difference but demands its own Idea, its own singularity at the level of Ideas? On the other hand, what is the essence of repetition – one which is not reducible to difference without concept, and cannot be confused with the apparent character of objects represented by the same concept, but bears witness to singularity as a power of Ideas? The meeting between these two notions, difference and repetition, can no longer be assumed: it must come about as a result of interferences and intersections between these two lines: one concerning the essence of repetition, the other the idea of difference.

Chapter I

Difference in Itself

Indifference has two aspects: the undifferentiated abyss, 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: a head without a neck, an arm without a shoulder, eyes without brows. The indeterminate is completely indifferent, but such floating determinations are no less indifferent to each other. Is difference intermediate between these two extremes? Or is it not rather the only extreme, the only moment of presence and precision? Difference is the state in which one can speak of determination *as such*. The difference 'between' two things is only empirical, and the corresponding determinations are only extrinsic. However, instead of something distinguished from something else, imagine something which distinguishes itself – and yet that from which it distinguishes itself does not distinguish itself from it. Lightning, for example, distinguishes itself from the black sky but must also trail it behind, as though it were distinguishing itself from that which does not distinguish itself from it. It is as if the ground rose to the surface, without ceasing to be ground. There is cruelty, even monstrosity, on both sides of this struggle against an elusive adversary, in which the distinguished opposes something which cannot distinguish itself from it but continues to espouse that which divorces it. Difference is this state in which determination takes the form of unilateral distinction. We must therefore say that difference is made, or makes itself, as in the expression 'make the difference'. This difference or determination *as such* is also cruelty. The Platonists used to say that the not-One distinguished itself from the One, but not the converse, since the One does not flee that which flees it; and at the other pole, form distinguishes itself from matter or from the ground, but not the converse, since distinction itself is a form. In truth, all the forms are dissolved when they are reflected in this rising ground. It has ceased to be the pure indeterminate which remains below, but the forms also cease to be the coexisting or complementary determinations. The rising ground is no longer below, it acquires autonomous existence; the form reflected in this ground is no longer a form but an abstract line acting directly upon the soul. When the ground rises to the surface, the human face decomposes in this mirror in which both determinations and the indeterminate combine in a single determination which 'makes' the difference. It is a poor recipe for producing monsters to accumulate heteroclite determinations or to overdetermine the animal. It is better to raise up the ground and dissolve the

form. Goya worked with aquatint and etching, the grisaille of the one and the severity of the other. Odilon Redon used *chiaroscuro* and the abstract line. The abstract line acquires all its force from giving up the model – that is to say, the plastic symbol of the form – and participates in the ground all the more violently in that it distinguishes itself from it without the ground distinguishing itself from the line.¹ At this point, in such a mirror, faces are distorted. Nor is it certain that it is only the sleep of reason which gives rise to monsters: it is also the vigil, the insomnia of thought, since thought is that moment in which determination makes itself one, by virtue of maintaining a unilateral and precise relation to the indeterminate. Thought 'makes' difference, but difference is monstrous. We should not be surprised that difference should appear accursed, that it should be error, sin or the figure of evil for which there must be expiation. There is no sin other than raising the ground and dissolving the form. Recall Artaud's idea: cruelty is nothing but determination *as such*, that precise point at which the determined maintains its essential relation with the undetermined, that rigorous abstract line fed by *chiaroscuro*.

To rescue difference from its maledictory state seems, therefore, to be the project of the philosophy of difference. Cannot difference become a harmonious organism and relate determination to other determinations within a form – that is to say, within the coherent medium of an organic representation? There are four principal aspects to 'reason' in so far as it is the medium of representation: identity, in the form of the *undetermined* concept; analogy, in the relation between ultimate *determinable* concepts; opposition, in the relation between *determinations* within concepts; resemblance, in the *determined* object of the concept itself. These forms are like the four heads or the four shackles of mediation. Difference is 'mediated' to the extent that it is subjected to the fourfold root of identity, opposition, analogy and resemblance. On the basis of a first impression (difference is evil), it is proposed to 'save' difference by representing it, and to represent it by relating it to the requirements of the concept in general. It is therefore a question of determining a propitious moment – the Greek propitious moment – at which difference is, as it were, reconciled with the concept. Difference must leave its cave and cease to be a monster; or at least only that which escapes at the propitious moment must persist as a monster, that which constitutes only a bad encounter, a bad occasion. At this point the expression 'make the difference' changes its meaning. It now refers to a selective test which must determine which differences may be inscribed within the concept in general, and how. Such a test, such a selection, seems to be effectively realised by the Large and the Small. For the Large and the Small are not naturally said of the One, but first and foremost of difference. The question arises, therefore, how far the difference can and must extend – how large? how small? – in order to remain within the limits of the concept, neither becoming lost within nor

escaping beyond it. It is obviously difficult to know whether the problem is well posed in this way: is difference really an evil in itself? Must the question have been posed in these moral terms? Must difference have been 'mediated' in order to render it both livable and thinkable? Must the selection have consisted in that particular test? Must the test have been conceived in that manner and with that aim? But we can answer these questions only once we have more precisely determined the supposed nature of the propitious moment.

Aristotle says: there is a difference which is at once the greatest and the most perfect, *megistē* and *teleios*. Difference in general is distinguished from diversity or otherness. For two terms differ when they are other, not in themselves, but in something else; thus when they also agree in something else: in genus when they are differences in species, in species for differences in number, or even 'in being, according to the analogy' for differences in genus. Under these conditions, what is the greatest difference? The greatest difference is always an opposition, but of all the forms of opposition, which is the most perfect, the most complete, that which 'agrees' best? Related terms belong to one another; contradiction already belongs to a subject, but only in order to make its subsistence impossible and to qualify the change by which it begins or ceases to be; privation again expresses a determinate incapacity on behalf of an existing subject. Contrariety alone expresses the capacity of a subject to bear opposites while remaining substantially the same (in matter or in genus). Under what conditions, however, does contrariety impart its perfection to difference? So long as we consider the concrete being with respect to its matter, the contrarieties which affect it are corporeal modifications which give us only the empirical, accidental concept of a still extrinsic difference [*extra quidditatem*]. Accidents may be separable from the subject, as 'white' and 'black' are from 'man'; or inseparable, as 'male' and 'female' are from 'animal': accordingly, the difference will be called either *communis* or *propria*, but in so far as it pertains to matter, it will always be accidental. Thus, only a contrariety in the essence or in the form gives us the concept of a difference that is itself essential [*differentia essentialis aut propriissima*]. Contraries in this case are modifications which affect a subject with respect to its genus. Genera are in effect divided by differences in essence which take the form of contraries, such as 'with feet' and 'with wings'. In short, contrariety in the genus is the perfect and maximal difference, and contrariety in the genus is specific difference. Above and below that, difference tends to become simple otherness and almost to escape the identity of the concept: generic difference is too large, being established between uncombinable objects which do not enter into relations of contrariety; while indi-

vidual difference is too small, being between indivisible objects which have no contrariety either.²

It seems indeed, on the other hand, that specific difference meets all the requirements of a harmonious concept and an organic representation. It is pure because it is formal, intrinsic because it applies to the essence. It is qualitative, and to the extent that the genus designates the essence, difference is even a very special quality 'according to the essence', a quality of the essence itself. It is synthetic, since the determination of species is composition, and the difference is actually added to the genus in which it was hitherto only virtually included. It is mediated, it is itself mediation, the middle term in person. It is productive, since genera are not divided into differences but divided by differences which give rise to corresponding species. That is why it is always a cause, the formal cause: the shortest distance is the specific difference of the straight line, compression the specific difference of the colour black, dissociation that of the colour white. That is also why it is a predicate of such a peculiar type, since it is attributed to the species but at the same time attributes the genus to it and constitutes the species to which it is attributed. Such a synthetic and constitutive predicate, attributive more than attributed, a veritable rule of production, has one final property: that of carrying with itself that which it attributes. In effect, the quality of the essence is sufficiently special to make the genus something other, and not simply of another quality.³ It is thus in the nature of genera to remain the same in themselves while becoming other in the differences which divide them. Difference carries with itself the genus and all the intermediary differences. The determination of species links difference with difference across the successive levels of division, like a transport of difference, a *diaphora* (difference) of *diaphora*, until a final difference, that of the *infima species* (lowest species), condenses in the chosen direction the entirety of the essence and its continued quality, gathers them under an intuitive concept and grounds them along with the term to be defined, thereby becoming itself something unique and indivisible [*atomon*, *adiaphoron*, *eidos*]. In this manner, therefore, the determination of species ensures coherence and continuity in the comprehension of the concept.

Return to the expression 'the greatest difference'. It is now evident that specific difference is the greatest only in an entirely relative sense. Absolutely speaking, contradiction is greater than contrariety – and above all, generic difference is greater than specific. Already, the manner in which Aristotle distinguishes between difference and diversity or otherness points the way: only in relation to the supposed identity of a concept is specific difference called the greatest. Furthermore, it is in relation to the form of identity in the generic concept that difference goes as far as opposition, that it is pushed as far as contrariety. Specific difference, therefore, in no way represents a universal concept (that is to say, an *Idea*) encompassing

all the singularities and turnings of difference, but rather refers to a particular moment in which difference is merely reconciled with the concept in general. Thus Aristotle's *diaphora* of the *diaphora* is only a false transport: it never shows difference changing its nature, we never discover in it a differentiator of difference which would relate, in their respective immediacy, the most universal and the most singular. 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. Here we find the principle which lies behind a confusion disastrous for the entire philosophy of difference: assigning a distinctive concept of difference is confused with the inscription of difference within concepts in general – the determination of the concept of difference is confused with the inscription of difference in the identity of an undetermined concept. This is the sleight of hand involved in the propitious moment (and perhaps everything else follows: the subordination of difference to opposition, to analogy, and to resemblance, all the aspects of mediation). Difference then can be no more than a predicate in the comprehension of a concept. Aristotle constantly reminds us of this predicative character of specific difference, but he is forced to lend it strange powers such as that of attributing as much as that of being attributed, or of altering the genus as much as of modifying its quality. All of the ways in which specific difference seems to satisfy the requirements of a distinctive concept (purity, interiority, productivity, transportivity ...) are thus shown to be illusory, even contradictory, on the basis of this fundamental confusion.

Specific difference is thus small in relation to a larger difference which concerns the genera themselves. Even in biological classification, it becomes quite small in relation to the large genera; no doubt not a material difference, but nevertheless a simple difference 'in' the material, one which works through the more and the less. The fact is that specific difference is maximal and perfect, but only on condition of the identity of an undetermined concept (genus). It is insignificant, by contrast, in comparison with the difference between genera as ultimate determinable concepts (categories), for these latter are not subject to the condition that they share an identical concept or a common genus. Remember the reason why Being itself is not a genus: it is, Aristotle says, because differences *are* (the genus must therefore be able to attribute itself to its differences in themselves: as if animal was said at one time of the human species, but at another of the difference 'rational' in constituting another species ...).⁴ It is therefore an argument borrowed from the nature of specific difference which allows him to conclude that generic differences are of *another* nature. It is as though there were two 'Logoi', differing in nature but intermingled with one another: the logos of Species, the logos of what we think and say, which rests upon the condition of the identity or univocity

of concepts in general taken as genera; and the logos of Genera, the logos of what is thought and said through us, which is free of that condition and operates both in the equivocity of Being and in the diversity of the most general concepts. When we speak the univocal, is it not still the equivocal which speaks within us? Must we not recognise here a kind of fracture introduced into thought, one which will not cease to widen in another atmosphere (non-Aristotelian)? But above all, is this not already a new chance for the philosophy of difference? Will it not lead towards an absolute concept, once liberated from the condition which made difference an entirely relative maximum?

Nothing of the kind, however, occurs with Aristotle. The fact is that generic or categorial difference remains a difference in the Aristotelian sense and does not collapse into simple diversity or otherness. An identical or common concept thus still subsists, albeit in a very particular manner. This concept of Being is not collective, like a genus in relation to its species, but only distributive and hierarchical: it has no content in itself, only a content in proportion to the formally different terms of which it is predicated. These terms (categories) need not have an equal relation to being: it is enough that each has an *internal* relation to being. The two characteristics of the concept of being – having no more than a distributive common sense and having a hierarchical primary sense – show clearly that being does not have, in relation to the categories, the role of a genus in relation to univocal species. They also show that the equivocity of being is quite particular: it is a matter of analogy.⁵ Now, if we ask what is the instance capable of proportioning the concept to the terms or to the subjects of which it is affirmed, it is clear that it is judgement. For judgement has precisely two essential functions, and only two: distribution, which it ensures by the *partition* of concepts; and hierarchization, which it ensures by the *measuring* of subjects. To the former corresponds the faculty of judgement known as common sense; to the latter the faculty known as good sense (or first sense). Both constitute just measure or 'justice' as a value of judgement. In this sense, every philosophy of categories takes judgement for its model – as we see in the case of Kant, and still even in the case of Hegel. With its common sense and first sense, however, the analogy of judgement allows the identity of a concept to subsist, either in implicit and confused form or in virtual form. Analogy is itself the analogue of identity within judgement. Analogy is the essence of judgement, but the analogy within judgement is the analogy of the identity of concepts. That is why we cannot expect that generic or categorial difference, any more than specific difference, will deliver us a proper concept of difference. Whereas specific difference is content to inscribe difference in the identity of the indeterminate concept in general, generic (distributive and hierarchical) difference is content in turn to inscribe difference in the quasi-identity of the most general determinable concepts; that is, in the analogy within

judgement itself. The entire Aristotelian philosophy of difference is contained in this complementary double inscription, both grounded in the same postulate and together drawing the arbitrary boundaries of the propitious moment.

Generic and specific differences are tied together by their complicity in representation. Not that they in any way share the same nature: genus is determinable only by specific difference from without; and the identity of the genus in relation to the species contrasts with the impossibility for Being of forming a similar identity in relation to the genera themselves. However, it is precisely the nature of the specific differences (the fact that they *are*) which grounds that impossibility, preventing generic differences from being related to being as if to a common genus (if being were a genus, its differences would be assimilable to specific differences, but then one could no longer say that they 'are', since a genus is not in itself attributed to its differences). In this sense, the univocity of species in a common genus refers back to the equivocity of being in the various genera: the one reflects the other. We see this clearly in the requirements of the ideal of classification: at once the large units – *genē megista*, which will eventually be called branches – are determined according to relations of analogy, which suppose a choice of characters carried out by judgement in the abstract representation, and the small units, the little genera or species, are determined by a direct perception of *resemblances*, which suppose a continuity of sensible intuition in the concrete representation. Even neo-evolutionism will rediscover these two related aspects of the categories of the Large and the Small, when it distinguishes the large precocious embryological differentiations from the small, tardy, adult, species or intraspecies differentiations. Alternatively, these two aspects enter into conflict according to whether the large genera or the species are taken to be concepts of Nature, both constituting the limits of organic representation, and the *requisites* equally necessary for classification: methodological continuity in the perception of resemblances is no less indispensable than systematic distribution in the judgement of analogy. However, from one point of view as from the other, Difference appears only as a *reflexive concept*. In effect, difference allows the passage from similar neighbouring species to the identity of a genus which subsumes them – that is, the extraction or cutting out of generic identities from the flux of a continuous perceptible series. At the other pole, it allows the passage from respectively identical genera to the relations of analogy which obtain between them in the intelligible. As a concept of reflection, difference testifies to its full submission to all the requirements of representation, which becomes thereby 'organic representation'. In the concept of reflection, mediating and mediated difference is in effect fully subject to the identity of the concept, the opposition of predicates, the analogy of judgement and the resemblance of perception. Here we rediscover the necessarily quadripartite

character of representation. The question is to know whether, under all these reflexive aspects, difference does not lose both its own concept and its own reality. In effect, difference ceases to be reflexive and recovers an effectively real concept only to the extent that it designates catastrophes: either breaks of continuity in the series of resemblances or impassable fissures between the analogical structures. It ceases to be reflexive only in order to become catastrophic. No doubt it cannot be the one without the other. But does not difference as catastrophe precisely bear witness to an irreducible ground which continues to act under the apparent equilibrium of organic representation?

There has only ever been one ontological proposition: Being is univocal. There has only ever been one ontology, that of Duns Scotus, which gave being a single voice. We say Duns Scotus because he was the one who elevated univocal being to the highest point of subtlety, albeit at the price of abstraction. However, from Parmenides to Heidegger it is the same voice which is taken up, in an echo which itself forms the whole deployment of the univocal. A single voice raises the clamour of being. We have no difficulty in understanding that Being, even if it is absolutely common, is nevertheless not a genus. It is enough to replace the model of judgement with that of the proposition. In the proposition understood as a complex entity we distinguish: the sense, or what is expressed in the proposition; the designated (what expresses itself in the proposition); the expressors or designators, which are numerical modes – that is to say, differential factors characterising the elements endowed with sense and designation. We can conceive that names or propositions do not have the same sense even while they designate exactly the same thing (as in the case of the celebrated examples: morning star – evening star, Israel–Jacob, *plan-blanc*). The distinction between these senses is indeed a real distinction [*distinctio realis*], but there is nothing numerical – much less ontological – about it: it is a formal, qualitative or semiological distinction. The question whether categories are directly assimilable to such senses, or – more probably – derive from them, must be left aside for the moment. What is important is that we can conceive of several formally distinct senses which none the less refer to being as if to a single designated entity, ontologically one. It is true that such a point of view is not sufficient to prevent us from considering these senses as analogues and this unity of being as an analogy. We must add that being, this common designated, in so far as it expresses itself, is said in turn in a single and same sense of all the numerically distinct designators and expressors. In the ontological proposition, not only is that which is designated ontologically the same for qualitatively distinct senses, but also the sense is ontologically the same for individuating modes, for numerically

distinct designators or expressors: the ontological proposition involves a circulation of this kind (expression as a whole).

In effect, the essential in univocity is not that Being is said in a single and same sense, but that it is said, in a single and same sense, of all its individuating differences or intrinsic modalities. Being is the same for all these modalities, but these modalities are not the same. It is 'equal' for all, but they themselves are not equal. It is said of all in a single sense, but they themselves do not have the same sense. The essence of univocal being is to include individuating differences, while these differences do not have the same essence and do not change the essence of being – just as white includes various intensities, while remaining essentially the same white. There are not two 'paths', as Parmenides' poem suggests, but a single 'voice' of Being which includes all its modes, including the most diverse, the most varied, the most differentiated. Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself.

No doubt there is still hierarchy and distribution in univocal being, in relation to the individuating factors and their sense, but distribution and even hierarchy have two completely different, irreconcilable acceptations. Similarly for the expressions *logos* and *nomos*, in so far as these refer to problems of distribution. We must first of all distinguish a type of distribution which implies a dividing up of that which is distributed: it is a matter of dividing up the distributed as such. It is here that in judgement the rules of analogy are all-powerful. In so far as common sense and good sense are qualities of judgement, these are presented as principles of division which declare themselves *the best distributed*. A distribution of this type proceeds by fixed and proportional determinations which may be assimilated to 'properties' or limited territories within representation. The agrarian question may well have been very important for this organisation of judgement as the faculty which distinguishes parts ('on the one hand and on the other hand'). Even among the gods, each has his domain, his category, his attributes, and all distribute limits and lots to mortals in accordance with destiny. Then there is a completely other distribution which must be called nomadic, a nomad *nomos*, without property, enclosure or measure. Here, there is no longer a division of that which is distributed but rather a division among those who distribute *themselves* in an open space – a space which is unlimited, or at least without precise limits.⁶ Nothing pertains or belongs to any person, but all persons are arrayed here and there in such a manner as to cover the largest possible space. Even when it concerns the serious business of life, it is more like a space of play, or a rule of play, by contrast with sedentary space and *nomos*. To fill a space, to be distributed within it, is very different from distributing the space. It is an errant and even 'delirious' distribution, in which things are deployed across the entire extensity of a univocal and

undistributed Being. It is not a matter of being which is distributed according to the requirements of representation, but of all things being divided up within being in the univocity of simple presence (the One – All). Such a distribution is demonic rather than divine, since it is a peculiarity of demons to operate in the intervals between the gods' fields of action, as it is to leap over the barriers or the enclosures, thereby confounding the boundaries between properties. Oedipus' chorus cries: 'Which demon has leapt further than the longest leap?' The leap here bears witness to the unsettling difficulties that nomadic distributions introduce into the sedentary structures of representation. The same goes for hierarchy. There is a hierarchy which measures beings according to their limits, and according to their degree of proximity or distance from a principle. But there is also a hierarchy which considers things and beings from the point of view of power: it is not a question of considering absolute degrees of power, but only of knowing whether a being eventually 'leaps over' or transcends its limits in going to the limit of what it can do, whatever its degree. 'To the limit', it will be argued, still presupposes a limit. Here, limit [*peras*] no longer refers to what maintains the thing under a law, nor to 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 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. This enveloping measure is the same for all things, the same also for substance, quality, quantity, etc., since it forms a single maximum at which the developed diversity of all degrees touches the equality which envelops them. This ontological measure is closer to the immeasurable state of things than to the first kind of measure; this ontological hierarchy is closer to the hubris and anarchy of beings than to the first hierarchy. It is the monster which combines all the demons. The words 'everything is equal' may therefore resound joyfully, on condition that they are said of that which is not equal in this equal, univocal Being: equal being is immediately present in everything, without mediation or intermediary, even though things reside unequally in this equal being. There, however, where they are borne by hubris, all things are in absolute proximity, and whether they are large or small, inferior or superior, none of them participates more or less in being, nor receives it by analogy. Univocity of being thus also signifies equality of being. Univocal Being is at one and the same time nomadic distribution and crowned anarchy.

Nevertheless, can we not conceive a reconciliation between analogy and univocity? For if being, as being, is univocal in itself, is it not 'analogous' in relation to its intrinsic modes or individuating factors (what we called above expressors or designators)? If it is equal in relation to itself, is it not unequal in relation to the modalities which reside within it? If it designates a common entity, is this not for existents which have nothing 'really' in

common? If its metaphysical state is univocal, does it not have a physical state of analogy? Finally, if analogy recognises an identical quasi-concept, does not univocity recognise a quasi-judgement of analogy, if only in order to relate being to these particular existents?⁷ However, such questions risk distorting the two theses they attempt to bring together. For analogy, as we have seen, rests essentially upon a certain complicity between generic and specific differences (despite their difference in kind): being cannot be supposed a common genus without destroying the reason for which it was supposed thus; that is, the possibility of *being* for specific differences. ... It is not, therefore, surprising that from the standpoint of analogy, everything happens in the middle regions of genus and species in terms of mediation and generality – identity of the concept in general and analogy of the most general concepts. It is henceforth inevitable that analogy falls into an unresolvable difficulty: it must essentially relate being to particular existents, but at the same time it cannot say what constitutes their individuality. For it retains in the particular only that which conforms to the general (matter and form), and seeks the principle of individuation in this or that element of the fully constituted individuals. By contrast, when we say that univocal being is related immediately and essentially to individuating factors, we certainly do not mean by the latter individuals constituted in experience, but that which acts in them as a transcendental principle: as a plastic, anarchic and nomadic principle, contemporaneous with the process of individuation, no less capable of dissolving and destroying individuals than of constituting them temporarily; intrinsic modalities of being, passing from one 'individual' to another, circulating and communicating underneath matters and forms. The individuating is not the simple individual. In these conditions, it is not enough to say that individuation differs in kind from the determination of species. It is not even enough to say this in the manner of Duns Scotus, who was nevertheless not content to analyse the elements of an individual but went as far as the conception of individuation as the 'ultimate actuality of form'. We must show not only how individuating difference differs in kind from specific difference, but primarily and above all how individuation properly *precedes* matter and form, species and parts, and every other element of the constituted individual. Univocity of being, in so far as it is immediately related to difference, demands that we show how individuating difference precedes generic, specific and even individual differences within being; how a prior field of individuation within being conditions at once the determination of species of forms, the determination of parts and their individual variations. If individuation does not take place either by form or by matter, neither qualitatively nor extensionally, this is not only because it differs in kind but because it is already presupposed by the forms, matters and extensive parts.

Thus it is not at all in the same manner that in the analogy of being,

generic and specific differences are in general mediated in relation to individuating differences, and that in univocity, univocal being is said immediately of individual differences or the universal is said of the most singular independently of any mediation. If it is true that analogy denies being the status of a common genus because the (specific) differences 'are', then conversely, univocal being is indeed common in so far as the (individuating) differences 'are not' and must not be. No doubt we shall see that they are not, in a very particular sense: if in univocal being they are not, it is because they depend upon a non-being without negation. With univocity, however, it is not the differences which are and must be: it is being which is Difference, in the sense that it is said of difference. Moreover, it is not we who are univocal in a Being which is not; it is we and our individuality which remains equivocal in and for a univocal Being.

There are three principal moments in the history of the philosophical elaboration of the univocity of being. The first is represented by Duns Scotus. In the greatest book of pure ontology, the *Opus Oxoniense*, being is understood as univocal, but univocal being is understood as neutral, *neuter*, indifferent to the distinction between the finite and the infinite, the singular and the universal, the created and the uncreated. Scotus therefore deserves the name 'subtle doctor' because he saw being on this side of the intersection between the universal and the singular. In order to neutralise the forces of analogy in judgement, he took the offensive and neutralised being itself in an abstract concept. That is why he only *thought* univocal being. Moreover, we can see the enemy he tried to escape in accordance with the requirements of Christianity: pantheism, into which he would have fallen if the common being were not neutral. Nevertheless, he was able to define two types of distinction which relate that indifferent, neutral being to difference. *Formal distinction* is, in effect, a real distinction, since it is grounded in being or in the object; but it is not necessarily a numerical distinction because it is established between essences or senses, between 'formal reasons' which may allow the persistence of the unity of the subject to which they are attributed. In this manner, not only is the univocity of being (in relation to God and to creatures) extended in the univocity of its 'attributes', but, given his infinity, God can possess his formally distinct univocal attributes without losing anything of his unity. The other type of distinction, *modal distinction*, is established between being or the attributes on the one hand, and the intensive variations of which these are capable on the other. These variations, like degrees of whiteness, are individuating modalities of which the finite and the infinite constitute precisely singular intensities. From the point of view of its own neutrality, univocal being therefore does not only implicate distinct attributes or qualitative forms which are themselves univocal, it also relates these and itself to intensive factors or individuating degrees which vary the mode of these attributes or forms without modifying their essence in so far as this is being. If it is true

that distinction in general relates being to difference, formal distinction and modal distinction are two types under which univocal being is related, by itself, to difference in itself.

With the second moment, Spinoza marks a considerable progress. Instead of understanding univocal being as neutral or indifferent, he makes it an object of pure affirmation. Univocal being becomes identical with unique, universal and infinite substance: it is proposed as *Deus sive Natura*. Moreover, the struggle undertaken against Descartes by Spinoza is not unrelated to that which Duns Scotus led against Saint Thomas. Against the Cartesian theory of substances thoroughly imbued with analogy, and against the Cartesian conception of distinctions which runs together the ontological, the formal and the numerical (substance, quality and quantity), Spinoza organises a remarkable division into substance, attributes and modes. From the opening pages of the *Ethics*, he shows that real distinctions are never numerical but only formal – that is, qualitative or essential (essential attributes of the unique substance); and conversely, that numerical distinctions are never real, but only modal (intrinsic modes of the unique substance and its attributes). The attributes behave like real qualitatively different senses which relate to substance as if to a single and same designated; and substance in turn behaves like an ontologically unique sense in relation to the modes which express it, and inhabit it like individuating factors or intrinsic and intense degrees. From this follows a determination of modes as degrees of power, and a single ‘obligation’ for such modes: to deploy all their power or their being *within* the limit itself. Attributes are thus absolutely common to substance and the modes, even though modes and substance do not have the same essence. Being itself is said in a single unique sense of substance and the modes, even though the modes and substance do not have the same sense or do not have that being in the same manner [*in se* and *in alio*]. Any hierarchy or pre-eminence is denied in so far as substance is equally designated by all the attributes in accordance with their essence, and equally expressed by all the modes in accordance with their degree of power. With Spinoza, univocal being ceases to be neutralised and becomes expressive; it becomes a truly expressive and affirmative proposition.

Nevertheless, there still remains a difference between substance and the modes: Spinoza’s substance appears independent of the modes, while the modes are dependent on substance, but as though on something other than themselves. Substance must itself be said *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. That identity not be first, that it exist as a principle but as a second principle, as a principle *become*; that it revolve around the Different: such would be the nature of a Copernican revolution which opens up the possibility of difference having

its own concept, rather than being maintained under the domination of a concept in general already understood as identical. Nietzsche meant nothing more than this by eternal return. Eternal return cannot mean the return of the Identical because it presupposes a world (that of the will to power) in which all previous identities have been abolished and dissolved. Returning is being, but only the being of becoming. The eternal return does not bring back 'the same', but returning constitutes the only Same of that which becomes. Returning is the becoming-identical of becoming itself. Returning is thus the only identity, but identity as a secondary power; the identity of difference, the identical which belongs to the different, or turns around the different. Such an identity, produced by difference, is determined as 'repetition'. Repetition in the eternal return, therefore, consists in conceiving the same on the basis of the different. However, this conception is no longer merely a theoretical representation: it carries out a practical selection among differences according to their capacity to produce – that is, to return or to pass the test of the eternal return. The selective character of eternal return appears clearly in Nietzsche's idea: it is not the Whole, the Same or the prior identity in general which returns. Nor is it the small or the large, either as parts of the whole or as elements of the same. Only the extreme forms return – those which, large or small, are deployed within the limit and extend to the limit of their power, transforming themselves and changing one into another. Only the extreme, the excessive, returns; that which passes into something else and becomes identical. That is why the eternal return is said only of the theatrical world of the metamorphoses and masks of the Will to power, of the pure intensities of that Will which are like mobile individuating factors unwilling to allow themselves to be contained within the factitious limits of this or that individual, this or that Self. Eternal return or returning expresses the common being of all these metamorphoses, the measure and the common being of all that is extreme, of all the realised degrees of power. It is the being-equal of all that is unequal and has been able to fully realise its inequality. All that is extreme and becoming the same communicates in an equal and common Being which determines its return. That is why the Overman is defined as the superior form of everything that 'is'. We must discover what Nietzsche means by noble: he borrows the language of energy physics and calls noble that energy which is capable of transforming itself. When Nietzsche says that hubris is the real problem of every Heraclitan, or that hierarchy is the problem of free spirits, he means one – and only one – thing: that it is in hubris that everyone finds the being which makes him return, along with that sort of crowned anarchy, that overturned hierarchy which, in order to ensure the selection of difference, begins by subordinating the identical to the different.⁸ In all these respects, eternal return is the univocity of being, the effective realisation of that univocity. In the eternal return, univocal being is not only thought and

even affirmed, but effectively realised. Being is said in a single and same sense, but this sense is that of eternal return as the return or repetition of that of which it is said. The wheel in the eternal return is at once both production of repetition on the basis of difference and selection of difference on the basis of repetition.

The test of the Small and the Large seemed to us to misconstrue selection because it renounced any concept of difference itself in favour of the requirements of the identity of the concept in general. By inscribing itself within the identical concept or within analogous concepts (minimum and maximum), it only fixed the limits within which determination became difference. That is why the selection which consists of 'making the difference' seemed to us to have another sense: to allow the extreme forms to appear and be deployed in the simple presence of a univocal Being, rather than to measure and to divide up the average forms according to the requirements of organic representation. Even so, can it be said that we have exhausted all the resources of the Small and the Large in so far as they apply to difference? Or will we not rediscover them as an alternative characteristic of the extreme forms themselves? For it seems that the extreme can be defined by the infinite, in the small or in the large. The infinite, in this sense, even signifies the identity of the small and the large, the identity of extremes. When representation discovers the infinite within itself, it no longer appears as *organic* representation but as *orgiastic* representation: it discovers within itself the limits of the organised; tumult, restlessness and passion underneath apparent calm. It rediscovers monstrosity. Henceforth it is no longer a question of a propitious moment which marks determination's entrance into and exit from the concept in general, the relative maximum and minimum, the *punctum proximum* and the *punctum remotum*. On the contrary, a short-sighted and a long-sighted eye are required in order for the concept to take upon itself all moments: the concept is now the Whole, either in the sense that it extends its benediction to all parts or in the sense that the division between the parts and their misery are reflected back on the Whole, granting them a kind of absolution. The concept thus follows and espouses determination in all its metamorphoses, from one end to the other, and represents it as pure difference in delivering it up to a *ground* in relation to which it no longer matters whether one is before a relative minimum or maximum, a large or a small, nor before a beginning or an end, since the two coincide in this ground which is like a single and unique 'total' moment, simultaneously the moment of the evanescence and production of difference, of disappearance and appearance.

In this sense, it is noticeable how far Hegel, no less than Leibniz, attaches importance to the infinite movement of evanescence as such – that is, to the moment at which difference both vanishes and is produced. 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. It no longer refers to the limitation of a form, but to the *convergence* towards a ground; no longer to the distinction of forms but to the correlation of the grounded and the ground; no longer to the arrestation of power but to the element in which power is effectuated, on which it is grounded. In effect, differential calculus no less than the dialectic is a matter of 'power' and of the power of the limit. If we consider the limits of finite representation to be two abstract mathematical determinations, the Small and the Large, we notice that it is a matter of complete indifference to Leibniz (as to Hegel) to know whether the determined is large or small, the largest or the smallest. By subjecting it to an architectonic element which discovers the most perfect or the best grounded in every case, consideration of the infinite renders the determined independent of that question.⁹ It is in this sense that orgiastic representation must be said to *make* the difference, because it selects it by introducing this infinite which relates it to the ground (either grounding by the Good which functions as a rule of the game or principle of choice, or grounding by negativity which functions as suffering and labour). Moreover, if the limits of finite representation, the Small and the Large, are considered with regard to the character or the concrete content given to them by the genus and species, then here again the introduction of the infinite into representation renders the determined independent of the genus as determinable and the species as determination, by retaining in a middle term both the true universality which escapes the genus and the authentic singularity which escapes the species. In short, orgiastic representation has the ground as its principle and the infinite as its element, by contrast with organic representation which retains form as its principle and the finite as its element. It is the infinite which renders determination conceivable and selectable: difference thus appears as the orgiastic representation of determination and no longer as its organic representation.

Instead of animating judgements about things, orgiastic representation makes things themselves so many expressions or so many propositions: infinite analytic or synthetic propositions. Why, then, is there a choice within orgiastic representation, given that the two points, the small and the large, the maximum and the minimum, have become indifferent or identical in the infinite, while difference has become completely independent of them in the ground? It is because the infinite is not the point at which finite determination disappears (that would be to project a mistaken conception of limit on to the infinite). Orgiastic representation can discover the infinite within itself only by allowing finite determination to subsist: better, by saying the infinite of that finite determination itself, by representing it not as having vanished and disappeared but as vanishing

and on the point of disappearing, thus as also being engendered in the infinite. This representation is such that the infinite and the finite have here the same 'restlessness', which is precisely what allows the one to be represented in the other. However, when the infinite is said of the finite itself under the conditions of representation, there are two ways in which it can be said: either as infinitely small or as infinitely large. These two ways, these two 'differences', are by no means symmetrical. Thus duality is reintroduced into orgiastic representation, no longer in the form of a complementarity or a reflection of two finite assignable moments (as was the case for specific difference and generic difference) but in the form of a choice between two infinite, unassignable processes – in the form of a choice between Leibniz and Hegel. If it is true that the small and the large become identical in the infinite, the infinitely small and the infinitely large separate once more, even more sharply in so far as the infinite is said of the finite. Leibniz and Hegel separately both escape the choice between the Large and the Small, but together they fall back into the choice between the infinitely small and the infinitely large. That is why orgiastic representation involves a duality which only increases its restlessness, or is even the real reason for it, and divides it into two kinds.

It seems that, according to Hegel, 'contradiction' poses very few problems. It serves a quite different purpose: contradiction resolves itself and, in resolving itself, resolves difference by relating it to a ground. Difference is the only problem. The criticism that Hegel addresses to his predecessors is that they stopped at a purely relative maximum without reaching the absolute maximum of difference, namely contradiction; they stopped before reaching the infinite (as infinitely large) of contradiction. They dared not go all the way:

Difference as such is already *implicitly* contradiction. ... Only when the manifold terms have been driven to the point of contradiction do they become active and lively towards one another, receiving in contradiction the negativity which is the indwelling pulsation of self-movement and spontaneous activity. ... More precisely, when the difference of reality is taken into account, it develops from difference into opposition, and from this into contradiction, so that in the end the sum total of all realities simply becomes absolute contradiction within itself.¹⁰

Like Aristotle, Hegel determines difference by the opposition of extremes or of contraries. However, opposition remains abstract so long as it does not extend to the infinite, and the infinite remains abstract every time it is posed outside of finite oppositions: the introduction of the infinite here entails the identity of contraries, or makes the contrary of the Other a contrary of the Self. It is true that contrariety represents only the movement of interiority in the infinite. This movement allows indifference to subsist, since each determination, in so far as it contains the other, is independent

of the other as though of a relation with the outside. Each contrary must further expel its other, therefore expel itself, and become the other it expels. Such is the movement of contradiction as it constitutes the true pulsation of the infinite, the movement of exteriority or real objectivation. This goes beyond the simple identity of contraries as the identity of the positive and negative. For it is not in the same manner that the positive and the negative are the Same: the negative is now at once both the becoming of the positive when the positive is denied, and the return of the positive when it denies or excludes itself. No doubt each of the contraries determined as positive and negative was already contradiction, 'But the Positive is only *implicitly* this contradiction, whereas the negative is the contradiction *posited*. ...'¹¹ Difference finds its own concept in the posited contradiction: it is here that it becomes pure, intrinsic, essential, qualitative, synthetic and productive; here that it no longer allows indifference to subsist. To maintain or to raise contradiction is the selective test which 'makes' the difference (between the effectively real and the passing or contingent phenomenon). In this manner, difference is pushed to the limit – that is, to the ground which is no less its return or its reproduction than its annihilation.

Even though it is said of opposition or of finite determination, this Hegelian infinite remains the infinitely large of theology, of the *Ens quo nihil majus*. We should even consider that the nature of real contradiction, in so far as it distinguishes a thing from *everything that it is not*, was formulated for the first time by Kant, under the name of 'complete determination'. He made it depend upon the positing of a whole of reality as an *Ens summum*. There is therefore no reason to expect a mathematical treatment of this theological infinitely large, this sublime of the infinitely large. This is not the case with Leibniz. For in order to avoid any admixture of God and his creatures, for the modesty of those creatures, Leibniz introduces the infinite into the finite only in the form of the infinitely small. Nevertheless, we hesitate to say that he does not go as far as Hegel in this sense. He too goes beyond organic representation towards orgiastic representation, albeit by another route. If Hegel discovers in serene representation the intoxication and restlessness of the infinitely large, Leibniz discovers in the clear, finite idea the restlessness of the infinitely small, a restlessness also made up of intoxication, giddiness, evanescence and even death. It seems, therefore, that the difference between Hegel and Leibniz is a matter of two ways of going beyond the organic. Certainly, the essential and the inessential are inseparable: they are like the one and the many, the equal and the unequal, the identical and the different. However, Hegel begins with the essential as a genus, and treats the infinite as that which divides the genus and suppresses division in the species. The genus is thus itself and the species, the whole is itself and the part. Henceforth, it contains the other essentially, it contains it *in*

essence.¹² Leibniz, on the other hand, begins with the inessential so far as phenomena are concerned, with movement, inequality and difference. By virtue of the infinitely small, it is the inessential which is now posed as species and genus, and terminates as such in the 'opposing quasi-species'. This implies that it does not contain the other in essence but only with respect to properties, in *cases*. It is a mistake to impose upon infinitesimal analysis the alternative of being either a language of essences or a convenient fiction. For the subsumption under 'cases', or the language of properties, has its own originality. This procedure of the infinitely small, which maintains the distinction between essences (to the extent that one plays the role of inessential to the other), is quite different to contradiction. We should therefore give it a special name, that of 'vice-diction'. In the infinitely large, the equal contradicts the unequal to the extent that it possesses it in essence, and contradicts itself to the extent that it denies itself in denying the unequal. In the infinitely small, however, the unequal vice-dicts the equal and vice-dicts itself to the extent that it includes in the case what it excludes in essence. The inessential includes the essential in the case, whereas the essential contains the inessential in essence.

Must we say that vice-diction does not go as far as contradiction, on the grounds that it concerns only properties? In reality, the expression 'infinitely small difference' does indeed indicate that the difference vanishes so far as intuition is concerned. Once it finds its concept, however, it is rather intuition itself which disappears in favour of the differential relation, as is shown by saying that dx is minimal in relation to x , as dy is in relation to y , but that dy/dx is the internal qualitative relation, expressing the universal of a function independently of its particular numerical values. However, if this relation has no numerical determinations, it does have degrees of variation corresponding to diverse forms and equations. These degrees are themselves like the relations of the universal, and the differential relations, in this sense, are caught up in a process of reciprocal determination which translates the interdependence of the variable coefficients.¹³ But once again, *reciprocal determination* expresses only the first aspect of a veritable principle of reason; the second aspect is *complete determination*. For each degree or relation, regarded as the universal of a given function, determines the existence and distribution of distinctive points on the corresponding curve. We must take great care here not to confuse 'complete' with 'completed'. The difference is that, for the equation of a curve, for example, the differential relation refers only to straight lines determined by the nature of the curve. It is already a complete determination of the object, yet it expresses only a part of the entire object, namely the part regarded as 'derived' (the other part, which is expressed by the so-called primitive function, can be found only by integration, which is not simply the inverse of differentiation. Similarly, it is integration which defines the nature of the previously determined distinctive points). That is

why an object can be completely determined – *ens omni modo determinatum* – without, for all that, possessing the integrity which alone constitutes its actual existence. Under the double aspect of reciprocal determination and complete determination, however it appears already as if the limit coincides with the power itself. The limit is defined by convergence. The numerical values of a function find their limit in the differential relation; the differential relations find their limit in the degrees of variation; and at each degree the distinctive points are the limits of series which are analytically continued one into the other. Not only is the differential relation the pure element of potentiality, but the limit is the power of the continuous, as continuity is the power of these limits themselves. Difference thus finds its concept in a negative, but a negative of pure limitation, a *nihil respectivum* (dx is nothing in relation to x). From all these points of view, the distinction between the distinctive and the ordinary, the singular and the regular, forms the two categories of the inessential in the continuous. They inform the whole language of limits and properties, they constitute the structure of phenomena as such. We see in this sense all that philosophy must expect from a distribution of distinctive points and ordinary points for the description of experience. But already the two kinds of point prepare and determine, in the inessential, the constitution of the essences themselves. 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 the essences are finally made.

In effect, Leibniz, for his part, never saw any contradiction between the law of continuity and the principle of indiscernibles. The one governs properties, affections or complete cases; the other rules essences understood as completed individual notions. We know that each one of these completed notions (monads) expresses the totality of the world: but it expresses it precisely under a certain differential relation and around certain distinctive points which correspond to this relation.¹⁴ It is in this sense that the differential relations and distinctive points already indicate centres of envelopment within the continuum, centres of possible implication or involution which are brought about by individual essences. It suffices to show that the continuum of affections and properties in a sense precedes the constitution of these individual essences (which amounts to saying that the distinctive points are themselves pre-individual singularities; this in no way contradicts the idea that individuation precedes the actual determination of species, even though it is preceded by the whole differential continuum). This condition is fulfilled in Leibniz's philosophy in the following manner: the world, as that which is expressed in common by all monads, pre-exists its expressions. It is nevertheless true that it does not *exist* apart from that which expresses it, apart from the monads themselves; but these expressions refer to the expressed as though to the

requisite of their constitution. It is in this sense (as Leibniz constantly reminds us in his letters to Arnauld) that the inherence of predicates in each subject supposes the compossibility of the world expressed by all these subjects: God did not create Adam as a sinner, but rather the world in which Adam sinned. It is undoubtedly continuity which defines the compossibility of each world; and if the real world is the best, this is to the extent that it presents a maximum of continuity in a maximum number of cases, in a maximum number of relations and distinctive points. That is to say: for each world a series which converges around a distinctive point is capable of being continued in all directions in other series converging around other points, while the impossibility of worlds, by contrast, is defined by the juxtaposition of points which would make the resultant series diverge. We can see why the notion of impossibility in no way reduces to contradiction and does not even imply real opposition: it implies only divergence, while compossibility is only an analytic continuation which translates the originality of the process of vice-diction. In the continuum of a compossible world, differential relations and distinctive points thus determine expressive centres (essences or individual substances) in which, at each moment, the entire world is contained from a certain point of view. Conversely, the action and unfolding of these centres restores the world in which they themselves play the role of simple distinctive points and of 'cases' in the expressed continuum. The law of continuity appears here as a law of properties or cases of the world, a law of development which applies to the expressed world, but also to the monads in the world themselves. The principle of indiscernibles is a principle of essences and a principle of envelopment which applies to expressions – that is, to monads and to the world within the monads. The two languages continually translate into one another. Together they relate difference, both as infinitely small difference and as finite difference, to sufficient reason as the foundation which selects or chooses the best world – in this sense, the best of all worlds does indeed imply a comparison, but it is not a comparative: since each world is finite, it is a superlative which carries difference to an absolute maximum through the very test of the infinitely small. Finite difference is determined in a monad as that part of the world clearly expressed, infinitely small difference as the confused ground which underpins that clarity. In these two ways, orgiastic representation mediates determination and makes it a concept of difference by assigning it a 'reason'.

Finite representation is that of a form which contains a matter, but a secondary matter in so far as it is defined by contraries. We have seen that it represented difference by mediating it, by subordinating it to identity as the genus, and by ensuring that subordination by means of analogy among the genera themselves, by means of the logical opposition of determinations and the resemblance of properly material contents. It is not

the same with infinite representation, since this includes the Whole or ground as primary matter and the essence as subject, absolute form or Self. Infinite representation relates at once both the essence and the ground, and the difference between the two, to a foundation or sufficient reason. Mediation itself has become foundation. However, in the one case the ground is the infinite continuity of the properties of the universal which is itself contained in finite particular Selves considered as essences. In the other case, particulars are only properties or figures which are developed in the infinite universal ground, but refer to essences as the true determinations of a pure Self, or rather a 'Self' enveloped by this ground. In both cases, infinite representation is the object of a double discourse: that of properties and that of essences – that of physical points and metaphysical points or points of view in the case of Leibniz; that of figures and moments or categories in the case of Hegel. It cannot be said that Leibniz does not go as far as Hegel: there is even a greater depth in his case, more orgiastic or bacchanalian delirium, in the sense that the ground plays a greater role. In both cases, as well, it seems that infinite representation does not suffice to render the thought of difference independent of the simple analogy of essences, or the simple similarity of properties. The point is that in the last resort *infinite representation does not free itself from the principle of identity as a presupposition of representation*. That is why it remains subject to the condition of the convergence of series in the case of Leibniz and to the condition of the monocentrism of circles in the case of Hegel. Infinite representation invokes a foundation. While this foundation is not the identical itself, it is nevertheless a way of taking the principle of identity particularly seriously, giving it an infinite value and rendering it coextensive with the whole, and in this manner allowing it to reign over existence itself. It matters little whether identity (as the identity of the world and the self) be considered analytic, in the form of the infinitely small, or synthetic, in the form of the infinitely large. In the former case, the foundation or sufficient reason is that which vice-dicts identity; in the latter case, it is that which contradicts it. In all cases, however, the foundation or sufficient reason employs the infinite only to lead the identical to *exist* in its very identity. Moreover, what is apparent here with Leibniz is no less so with Hegel. Hegelian contradiction does not deny identity or non-contradiction: on the contrary, it consists in inscribing the double negation of *non-contradiction* within the existent in such a way that identity, under that condition or on that basis, is sufficient to think the existent as such. Those formulae according to which 'the object denies what it is not', or 'distinguishes itself from everything that it is not', are logical monsters (the Whole of everything which is not the object) in the service of identity. It is said that difference is negativity, that it extends or must extend to the point of contradiction once it is taken to the limit. This is true only to the extent that difference is

already placed on a path or along a thread laid out by identity. It is true only to the extent that it is identity that pushes it to that point. Difference is the ground, but only the ground for the demonstration of the identical. Hegel's circle is not the eternal return, only the infinite circulation of the identical by means of negativity. Hegel's innovation is the final and most powerful homage rendered to the old principle. Between Leibniz and Hegel it matters little whether the supposed negative of difference is understood as a vice-dicting limitation or a contradicting limitation, any more than it matters whether infinite identity be considered analytic or synthetic. In either case, difference remains subordinated to identity, reduced to the negative, incarcerated within similitude and analogy. That is why, in infinite representation, the delirium is only a pre-formed false delirium which poses no threat to the repose or serenity of the identical. Infinite representation, therefore, suffers from the same defect as finite representation: that of confusing the concept of difference in itself with the inscription of difference in the identity of the concept in general (even though it treats identity as a pure infinite principle instead of treating it as a genus, and extends the rights of the concept in general to the whole instead of fixing their limits).

There is a crucial experience of difference and a corresponding experiment: every time we find ourselves confronted or bound by a limitation or an opposition, we should ask what such a situation presupposes. It presupposes a swarm of differences, a pluralism of free, wild or untamed differences; a properly differential and original space and time; all of which persist alongside the simplifications of limitation and opposition. A more profound real element must be defined in order for oppositions of forces or limitations of forms to be drawn, one which is determined as an abstract and potential multiplicity. Oppositions are roughly cut from a delicate milieu of overlapping perspectives, of communicating distances, divergences and disparities, of heterogeneous potentials and intensities. Nor is it primarily a question of dissolving tensions in the identical, but rather of distributing the disparities in a multiplicity. Limitations correspond to a simple first-order power – in a space with a single dimension and a single direction, where, as in Leibniz's example of boats borne on a current, there may be collisions, but these collisions necessarily serve to limit and to equalise, but not to neutralise or to oppose. As for opposition, it represents in turn the second-order power, where it is as though things were spread out upon a flat surface, polarised in a single plane, and the synthesis itself took place only in a false depth – that is, in a fictitious third dimension added to the others which does no more than double the plane. In any case, what is missing is the original, intensive depth which is the matrix of the entire space and the first affirmation of difference: here, that which only afterwards appears as

linear limitation and flat opposition lives and simmers in the form of free differences. Everywhere, couples and polarities presuppose bundles and networks, organised oppositions presuppose radiations in all directions. Stereoscopic images form no more than an even and flat opposition, but they depend upon something quite different: an arrangement of coexistent, tiered, mobile planes, a 'disparateness' within an original depth. Everywhere, the depth of difference is primary. It is no use rediscovering depth as a third dimension unless it has already been installed at the beginning, enveloping the other two and enveloping itself as third. Space and time display oppositions (and limitations) only on the surface, but they presuppose in their real depth far more voluminous, affirmed and distributed differences which cannot be reduced to the banality of the negative. It is as though we were in Lewis Carroll's mirror where everything is contrary and inverted on the surface, but 'different' in depth. We shall see that it is the same with every space: geometrical, physical, biophysical, social and linguistic (in this respect, how unlikely Trubetzkoy's declaration of principle appears: 'the idea of difference presupposes the idea of opposition ...'). There is a false profundity in conflict, but underneath conflict, the space of the play of differences. The negative is the image of difference, but a flattened and inverted image, like the candle in the eye of the ox – the eye of the dialectician dreaming of a futile combat?

In this sense, too, Leibniz goes further or deeper than Hegel when he distributes the distinctive points and the differential elements of a multiplicity throughout the ground, and when he discovers a play in the creation of the world. It seems, therefore, as though the first dimension, that of the limit, despite all its imperfection, remains closest to the original depth. 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, or that the impossibles belonged to the same world and were affirmed as the greatest crime and the greatest virtue of the one and only world, that of the eternal return.

It is not difference which presupposes opposition but opposition which presupposes difference, and far from resolving difference by tracing it back to a foundation, opposition betrays and distorts it. Our claim is not only that difference in itself is not 'already' contradiction, but that it cannot be reduced or traced back to contradiction, since the latter is not more but less profound than difference. On what condition is difference traced or projected on to a flat space? Precisely when it has been forced into a previously established identity, when it has been placed on the slope of the identical which makes it reflect or desire identity, and necessarily takes it where identity wants it to go – namely, into the negative.¹⁵ The imprint of the Hegelian dialectic on the beginnings of Phenomenology has often been noted: the here and the now are posited as empty identities, as abstract

universalities which claim to draw difference along with them, when in fact difference does not by any means follow and remains attached in the depths of its own space, in the here-now of a differential reality always made up of singularities. It is said that there were thinkers who explained that movement was impossible, but that this did not prevent movement from occurring. With Hegel it is the other way round: he creates movement, even the movement of the infinite, but because he creates it with words and representations it is a false movement, and nothing follows. It is the same every time there is mediation or representation. The representant says: 'Everyone recognises that ...', but there is always an unrepresented singularity who does not recognise precisely because it is not everyone or 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. The misfortune in speaking is not speaking, but speaking *for others* or representing something. The sensitive conscience (that is, the particular, difference or *ta alla*) refuses. One can always mediate, pass over into the antithesis, combine the synthesis, but the thesis does not follow: it subsists in its immediacy, in its difference which itself constitutes the true movement. Difference is the true content of the thesis, the persistence of the thesis. The negative and negativity do not even capture the phenomenon of difference, only the phantom or the epiphenomenon. The whole of Phenomenology is an epiphenomenology.

This is what the philosophy of difference refuses: *omnis determinatio negatio*. ... We refuse the general alternative proposed by infinite representation: the indeterminate, the indifferent, the undifferentiated or a difference already determined as negation, implying and enveloping the negative (by the same token, we also refuse the particular alternative: negative of limitation or negative of opposition). In its essence, difference is the object of affirmation or affirmation itself. In its essence, affirmation is itself difference. At this point, does the philosophy of difference not risk appearing as a new version of the beautiful soul? The beautiful soul is in effect the one who sees differences everywhere and appeals to them only as respectable, reconcilable or federative differences, while history continues to be made through bloody contradictions. The beautiful soul behaves like a justice of the peace thrown on to a field of battle, one who sees in the inextinguishable struggles only simple 'differends' or perhaps misunderstandings. Conversely, however, it is not enough to harden oneself and invoke the well-known complementarities between affirmation and negation, life and death, creation and destruction (as if these were sufficient to ground a dialectic of negativity) in order to throw the taste for pure differences back at the beautiful soul, and to weld the fate of real differences to that of the negative and contradiction. For such complementarities as yet tell us nothing about the relation between one term and the other (does the

determined affirmation result from an already negative and negating difference, or does the negative result from an already differential affirmation?). In very general terms, we claim that there are two ways to appeal to 'necessary destructions': that of the poet, who speaks in the name of a creative power, capable of overturning all orders and representations in order to affirm Difference in the state of permanent revolution which characterizes eternal return; and that of the politician, who is above all concerned to deny that which 'differs', so as to conserve or prolong an established historical order, or to establish a historical order which already calls forth in the world the forms of its representation. The two may coincide in particularly agitated moments, but they are never the same. No one passes less for a beautiful soul than Nietzsche. His soul is extremely beautiful, but not in the sense of the beautiful soul: no one is more endowed than he with a sense for cruelty or a taste for destruction. Moreover, throughout his work he never ceases to contrast two conceptions of the affirmation-negation relation.

In one case, it is negation which is the motor and driving force. Affirmation results from it – like an ersatz, as it were. It may well be that two negations are not too many to produce a phantom of affirmation. But how would affirmation result from negation unless it conserved that which is denied? Accordingly, Nietzsche indicates the terrifying conservatism of such a conception. Affirmation is indeed produced, but in order to say yes to all that is negative and negating, to all that *can be denied*. Thus Zarathustra's Ass says yes, but for him to affirm is to bear, to assume or to shoulder a burden. He bears everything: the burdens with which he is laden (divine values), those which he assumes himself (human values), and the weight of his tired muscles when he no longer has anything to bear (the absence of values).¹⁶ This Ass and the dialectical ox leave a moral aftertaste. They have a terrifying taste for responsibility, as though one could affirm only by expiating, as though it were necessary to pass through the misfortunes of rift and division in order to be able to say yes. It is as though Difference were evil and already negative, so that it could produce affirmation only by expiation – that is, by assuming at once both the weight of that which is denied and negation itself. Always the same old malediction which resounds from the heights of the principle of identity: alone will be saved not that which is simply represented, but the infinite representation (the concept) which conserves all the negative finally to deliver difference up to the identical. Of all the senses of *Aufheben*, none is more important than that of 'raise up'. There is indeed a dialectical circle, but this infinite circle has everywhere only a single centre; it retains within itself all the other circles, all the other momentary centres. The reprises or repetitions of the dialectic express only the conservation of the whole, all the forms and all the moments, in a gigantic Memory. Infinite representation is a memory which conserves. In this case, repetition is no

more than a conservatory, a power of memory itself. There is indeed a circular dialectical selection, but one which always works to the advantage of that which is conserved in infinite representation – that which bears and that which is borne. The selection works in reverse, and mercilessly eliminates whatever would render the circle tortuous or shatter the transparency of memory. In infinite representation, the bearer and the borne incessantly enter, leaving only to re-enter, like the shadows in the cave, and by this means they claim to have assumed themselves the properly dialectical power.

According to the other conception, difference is primary: it affirms difference and distance. Difference is light, aerial and affirmative. To affirm is not to bear but, on the contrary, to discharge and to lighten. It is no longer the negative which produces a phantom of affirmation like an ersatz, but rather a No which results from affirmation. This is also in turn a shadow, but rather in the sense of a consequence – one could say a *Nachfolge*. The negative is an epiphenomenon. Negation, like the ripples in a pond, is the effect of an affirmation which is too strong or too different. Perhaps two affirmations are necessary in order to produce the shadow of negation as a *Nachfolge*. Moreover, perhaps there are two moments at which the shadow disappears: difference as midnight and as noon. It is in this sense that Nietzsche opposes the Yes and the No of the Ass to the Yes and the No of Dionysus-Zarathustra: the point of view of the slave who draws from 'No' the phantom of an affirmation, and the point of view of the 'master' who draws from 'Yes' a consequence of negation and destruction; the point of view of the conservers of old values and that of the creators of new values.¹⁷ Those whom Nietzsche calls masters are certainly powerful men, but not men of power, since power is in the gift of the values of the day. A slave does not cease to be a slave by taking power, and it is even the way of the world, or the law of its surface, to be led by slaves. Nor must the distinction between established values and creation be understood as implying an historical relativism, as though the established values were new in their day, while the new ones had to be established once their time had come. On the contrary, the difference is one of kind, like the difference between the conservative order of representation and a creative disorder or inspired chaos which can only ever coincide with a historical moment but never be confused with it. The most profound difference in kind is between the average forms and the extreme forms (new values): the extreme is not reached by carrying the average forms to infinity or by using their opposition in the finite to affirm their identity in the infinite. Pseudo-affirmation in infinite representation does not escape the average forms. Thus Nietzsche reproaches all those selection procedures based upon opposition or conflict with working to the advantage of the average forms and operating to the benefit of the 'large number'. Eternal return alone effects the true selection, because it

eliminates the average forms and uncovers 'the superior form of everything that is'. The extreme is not the identity of opposites, but rather the univocity of the different; the superior form is not the infinite, but rather the eternal formlessness of the eternal return itself, throughout its metamorphoses and transformations. Eternal return 'makes' the difference because it creates the superior form. Eternal return employs negation like a *Nachfolge* and invents a new formula for the negation of the negation: *everything which can be denied* is and must be denied. The genius of eternal return lies not in memory but in waste, in active forgetting. All that is negative and all that denies, all those average affirmations which bear the negative, all those pale and unwelcome 'Yeses' which come from 'Nos', *everything which cannot pass the test of eternal return* – all these must be denied. If eternal return is a wheel, then it must be endowed with a violent centrifugal movement which expels everything which 'can' be denied, everything which cannot pass the test. Nietzsche announces only a light punishment for those who do not 'believe' in eternal return: they will have, and be aware of, only an ephemeral life! They will be aware of themselves and know themselves for what they are: epiphenomena. This will be their absolute Knowledge. In this manner, negation as a consequence, as the result of full affirmation, consumes all that is negative, and consumes itself at the mobile centre of eternal return. For if eternal return is a circle, then Difference is at the centre and the Same is only on the periphery: it is a constantly decentred, continually tortuous circle which revolves only around the unequal.

Negation is difference, but difference seen from its underside, seen from below. Seen the right way up, from top to bottom, difference is affirmation. This proposition, however, means many things: that difference is an object of affirmation; that affirmation itself is multiple; that it is creation but also that it must be created, as affirming difference, as being difference in itself. It is not the negative which is the motor. Rather, there are positive differential elements which determine the genesis of both the affirmation and the difference affirmed. It is precisely the fact that there is a genesis of affirmation as such which escapes us every time we leave affirmation in the undetermined, or put determination in the negative. 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 the affirmation. Those who bear the negative know not what they do: they take the shadow for the reality, they encourage phantoms, they uncouple consequences from premisses and they give epiphenomena the value of phenomena and essences.

Representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference. Representation has only a single centre, a unique and receding perspective, and in consequence a false depth. It mediates everything, but mobilises and

moves nothing. Movement, for its part, implies a plurality of centres, a superposition of perspectives, a tangle of points of view, a coexistence of moments which essentially distort representation: paintings or sculptures are already such 'distorters', forcing us to create movement – that is, to combine a superficial and a penetrating view, or to ascend and descend within the space as we move through it. Is it enough to multiply representations in order to obtain such effects? 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. In either case it maintains a unique centre which gathers and represents all the others, like the unity of a series which governs or organises its terms and their relations once and for all. The fact is that infinite representation is indissociable from a law which renders it possible: the form of the concept as a form of identity which constitutes on the one hand the in-itself of the represented (A is A) and on the other the for-itself of the representant (Self = Self). The prefix RE- in the word representation signifies this conceptual form of the identical which subordinates differences. The immediate, defined as 'sub-representative', is therefore not 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. The object must therefore be in no way identical, but torn asunder in a difference in which the identity of the object as seen by a seeing subject vanishes. Difference must become the element, the ultimate unity; it must therefore refer to other differences which never identify it but rather differentiate it. Each term of a series, being already a difference, must be put into a variable relation with other terms, thereby constituting other series devoid of centre and convergence. Divergence and decentering must be affirmed in the series itself. Every object, every thing, must see its own identity swallowed up in difference, each being no more than a difference between differences. Difference must be shown *differing*. We know that modern art tends to realise these conditions: in this sense it becomes a veritable *theatre* of metamorphoses and permutations. A theatre where nothing is fixed, a labyrinth without a thread (Ariadne has hung herself). The work of art leaves the domain of representation in order to become 'experience', transcendental empiricism or science of the sensible.

It is strange that aesthetics (as the science of the sensible) could be founded on what *can* be represented in the sensible. True, the inverse procedure is not much better, consisting of the attempt to withdraw the pure sensible from representation and to determine it as that which remains once representation is removed (a contradictory flux, for example, or a rhapsody of sensations). Empiricism truly becomes transcendental, and aesthetics an apodictic discipline, only when we apprehend directly in the

sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being of the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity. It is in difference that movement is produced as an 'effect', that phenomena flash their meaning like signs. The intense world of differences, in which we find the reason behind qualities and the being of the sensible, is precisely the object of a superior empiricism. This empiricism teaches us a strange 'reason', that of the multiple, chaos and difference (nomadic distributions, crowned anarchies). It is always differences which resemble one another, which are analogous, opposed or identical: difference is behind everything, but behind difference there is nothing. Each difference passes through all the others; it must 'will' itself or find itself through all the others. That is why eternal return does not appear second or come after, but is already present in every metamorphosis, contemporaneous with that which it causes to return. Eternal return relates to a world of differences implicated one in the other, to a complicated, properly chaotic world *without identity*. Joyce presented the *vicus of recirculation* as causing a *chaosmos* to turn; and Nietzsche had already said that chaos and eternal return were not two distinct things but a single and same *affirmation*. The world is neither finite nor infinite as representation would have it: it is completed and unlimited. Eternal return is the unlimited of the finished itself, the univocal being which is said of difference. With eternal return, chao-errancy is opposed to the coherence of representation; it excludes both the coherence of a subject which represents itself and that of an object represented. *Re-petition* opposes *re-presentation*: the prefix changes its meaning, since in the one case difference is said only in relation to the identical, while in the other it is the univocal which is said of the different. Repetition is the formless being of all differences, the formless power of the ground which carries every object to that extreme 'form' in which its representation comes undone. The ultimate element of repetition is the disparate [*dispars*], which stands opposed to the identity of representation. Thus, the circle of eternal return, difference and repetition (which undoes that of the identical and the contradictory) is a tortuous circle in which Sameness is said only of that which differs. The poet Blood expresses transcendental empiricism's profession of faith as a veritable aesthetic:

Nature is contingent, excessive and mystical essentially. ... We have realised the highest divine thought of itself, and there is in it as much of wonder as of certainty. ... Not unfortunately the universe is wild – game flavoured as a hawk's wing. Nature is miracle all. She knows no laws; the same returns not, save to bring the different. The slow round of the engraver's lathe gains but the breadth of a hair, but the difference is distributed back over the whole curve, never an instant true – ever not quite.¹⁸

It is sometimes argued that a considerable philosophical change took place between pre- and post-Kantianism – the former being defined by the negative of limitation, the latter by the negative of opposition; the one by analytic identity, the other by synthetic identity; the one from the point of view of infinite substance, the other from the point of view of the finite Self. In the grand Leibnizian analysis, it is the finite Self which is introduced into the development of the infinite, whereas in the grand Hegelian synthesis, it is the infinite which is reintroduced into the operation of the finite Self. However, the importance of such changes is open to question. For a philosophy of difference, it matters little whether the negative is understood in terms of limitation or opposition, or whether identity is taken to be analytic or synthetic, once difference is already reduced to the negative and subordinated to identity. The oneness and identity of the divine substance are in truth the only guarantee of a unique and identical Self, and God is retained so long as the Self is preserved. Finite synthetic Self or divine analytic substance: it amounts to the same thing. That is why the Man-God permutations are so disappointing, and do not advance matters one step. Nietzsche seems to have been the first to see that the death of God becomes effective only with the dissolution of the Self. What is then revealed is being, which is said of differences which are neither in substance nor in a subject: so many subterranean affirmations. If eternal return is the highest, the most intense thought, this is because its own extreme coherence, at the highest point, excludes the coherence of a thinking subject, of a world which is thought of as a guarantor God.¹⁹ Rather than being concerned with what happens before and after Kant (which amounts to the same thing), we should be concerned with a precise moment within Kantianism, a furtive and explosive moment which is not even continued by Kant, much less by post-Kantianism – except, perhaps, by Hölderlin in the experience and the idea of a ‘categorical abduction’. For when Kant puts rational theology into question, *in the same stroke* he introduces a kind of disequilibrium, a fissure or crack in the pure Self of the ‘I think’, an alienation in principle, insurmountable in principle: the subject can henceforth represent its own spontaneity only as that of an Other, and in so doing invoke a mysterious coherence in the last instance which excludes its own – namely, that of the world and God. A Cogito for a dissolved Self: the Self of ‘I think’ includes in its essence a receptivity of intuition in relation to which *I* is already an other. It matters little that synthetic identity – and, following that, the morality of practical reason – restore the integrity of the self, of the world and of God, thereby preparing the way for post-Kantian syntheses: for a brief moment we enter into that schizophrenia in principle which characterises the highest power of thought, and opens Being directly on to difference, despite all the mediations, all the reconciliations, of the concept.

The task of modern philosophy has been defined: to overturn Platonism. That this overturning should conserve many Platonic characteristics is not only inevitable but desirable. It is true that Platonism already represents the subordination of difference to the powers of the One, the Analogous, the Similar and even the Negative. It is like an animal in the process of being tamed, whose final resistant movements bear witness better than they would in a state of freedom to a nature soon to be lost: the Heraclitan world still growls in Platonism. With Plato, the issue is still in doubt: mediation has not yet found its ready-made movement. 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. The Idea has therefore not yet chosen to relate difference to the identity of a concept in general: it has not given up hope of finding a pure concept of difference in itself. The labyrinth or chaos is untangled, but without thread or the assistance of a thread. Aristotle indeed saw what is irreplaceable in Platonism, even though he made it precisely the basis of a criticism of Plato: the dialectic of difference has its own method – division – but this operates without mediation, without middle term or reason; it acts in the immediate and is inspired by the Ideas rather than by the requirements of a concept in general. It is true that division is a capricious, incoherent procedure which jumps from one singularity to another, by contrast with the supposed identity of a concept. Is this not its strength from the point of view of the Idea? Far from being one dialectical procedure among others which must be completed or relayed by others, is not division the one which replaces all the other procedures from the moment it appears, and gathers up all the dialectical power in favour of a genuine philosophy of difference? Is it not simultaneously the measure of both Platonism and the possibility of overturning Platonism?

Our mistake lies in trying to understand Platonic division on the basis of Aristotelian requirements. According to Aristotle, it is a question of dividing a genus into opposing species: but then this procedure not only lacks 'reason' by itself, it lacks a reason in terms of which we could decide whether something falls into one species rather than another. For example, we divide art into arts of production and arts of acquisition: but then why is fishing among the arts of acquisition? What is missing here is mediation – that is, the identity of a concept capable of serving as middle term. However, this objection clearly fails if Platonic division in no way proposes to determine the species of a genus – or if, rather, it proposes to do so, but superficially and even ironically, the better to hide under this mask its true secret.²⁰ Division is not the inverse of a 'generalisation'; it is not a determination of species. It is in no way a method of determining species, but one of selection. It is not a question of dividing a determinate genus into definite species, but of dividing a confused species into pure lines of

descent, or of selecting a pure line from material which is not. We could speak of 'Platons' as opposed to 'Aristotelons', in the same manner that biologists oppose 'Jordanons' and 'Linnaeons', since Aristotelian species are large, whereas Platonic division deals with small species or lines of descent. Even the indivisible, *infima species* in Aristotle remains a large species, while Platonic division operates in a quite different domain. Its point of departure can therefore be either a genus or a species, but this genus or this large species is understood as an undifferentiated logical matter, an indifferent material, a mixture, an indefinite representing multiplicity which must be eliminated in order to bring to light the Idea which constitutes a pure line of descent. The search for gold provides the model for this process of division. Difference is not between species, between two determinations of a genus, but entirely on one side, within the chosen line of descent: there are no longer contraries within a single genus, but pure and impure, good and bad, authentic and inauthentic, in a mixture which gives rise to a large species. Pure difference, the pure concept of difference, not difference mediated within the concept in general, in the genus and the species. The meaning and the goal of the method of division is selection among rivals, the testing of claimants – not *antiphrasis* but *antibetesis* (we can see this clearly in Plato's two principal examples of division: in *The Statesman*, where the statesman is defined as the one who knows 'the pastoral care of men', but many introduce themselves by saying 'I am the true shepherd of men', including merchants, farmers, bakers, as well as athletes and the entire medical profession; and in the *Phaedrus*, where it is a question of defining the good madness and the true lover, but many claimants cry: 'I am love, I am the lover'). There is no question here of species, except ironically. There is nothing in common with the concerns of Aristotle: it is a question not of identifying but of authenticating. The one problem which recurs throughout Plato's philosophy is the problem of measuring rivals and selecting claimants. This problem of distinguishing between *things and their simulacra* within a pseudo-genus or a large species presides over his classification of the arts and sciences. It is a question of making the difference, thus of operating in the depths of the immediate, a dialectic of the immediate. It is a dangerous trial without thread and without net, for according to the ancient custom of myth and epic, false claimants must die.

Our question is not yet that of knowing whether the selective difference is indeed between the true and false claimants, as Plato says it is, but rather of knowing how Plato establishes the difference thanks to the method of division. To the reader's great surprise, he does so by introducing a 'myth'. It is as though division, once it abandons the mask of determining species and discloses its true goal, nevertheless renounces the realisation of this goal and is instead relayed by the simple 'play' of a myth. In effect, once the question of the claimants is reached, *The Statesman* invokes the image

of an ancient God who ruled the world and men: strictly speaking, only this God deserves the name of shepherd-King of mankind. None of the claimants is his equal, but there is a certain 'care' of the human community which devolves to the statesman *par excellence*, since he is closest to the model of the archaic shepherd-God. The claimants find themselves in a sense measured according to an order of elective participation, and among the statesman's rivals we can distinguish (according to the ontological measure afforded by the myth) parents, servants, auxiliaries and, finally, charlatans and counterfeits.²¹ The procedure in the *Phaedrus* is the same: when it becomes a question of distinguishing the different 'madnesses', Plato suddenly invokes a myth. He describes the circulation of souls before their incarnation, along with the memory which they carry of the Ideas they have been able to contemplate. It is the nature and degree of this mythic contemplation, but also the kind of occasions necessary for remembering, which determine the value and the order of different types of present madness. We can determine who is the false lover and who is the true lover. We can even determine which – lover, poet, priest, soothsayer or philosopher – is elected to participation in reminiscence and contemplation: which is the true claimant, the true participant, and in what order the others follow. (It will be objected that the third important text concerning division, the *Sophist*, presents no such myth. The point is that in this text, by a paradoxical utilisation of the method, a counter-utilisation, Plato proposes to isolate the false claimant *par excellence*, the one who lays claim to everything without any right: the 'sophist'.)

This introduction of myth appears, however, to confirm all Aristotle's objections: in the absence of any mediation, division lacks probative force; it has to be relayed by a myth which provides an imaginary equivalent of mediation. Here again, however, we betray the sense of this so-mysterious method. For if it is true that, within Platonism in general, myth and dialectic are distinct forces, this distinction no longer matters once dialectic discovers its true method in division. Division overcomes this duality and integrates myth into the dialectic; it makes myth an element of the dialectic itself. The structure of this myth in Plato is clear: it is a circle, with two dynamic functions – namely, turning and returning, distributing and allocation: the allocation of lots is carried out by the turning wheel of an eternally recurring metempsychosis. The reasons which establish that Plato is certainly not a protagonist of eternal return do not concern us here. It is nevertheless true that in the *Phaedrus* – as in *The Statesman* and elsewhere – myth establishes the model of a partial circulation in which appears a suitable ground on which to base the difference, on which to measure the roles or claims. In the *Phaedrus*, this ground appears as the Ideas, such as these are contemplated by the souls which circulate above the celestial vault. In *The Statesman*, it appears in the form of the shepherd-God who

presides over the circular movement of the universe. The ground may be either the centre or the motor of the circle. It is constituted by the myth as the principle of a test or selection which imparts meaning to the method of division by fixing the degrees of an elective participation. Thus, in accordance with the oldest tradition, the circular myth is indeed the story-repetition of a foundation. Division demands such a foundation as the ground capable of making the difference. Conversely, the foundation demands division as the state of difference in that which must be grounded. Division is the true unity of dialectic and mythology, of the myth as foundation and of the logos as *logos tomeus*.

This role of the ground appears in all clarity in the Platonic conception of participation. (And no doubt it is this foundation which provides division with the mediation it seems to lack and, at the same time, relates difference to the One, but in such a peculiar manner...). To participate means to have part in, to have after, to have in second place. What possesses in first place is the ground itself. Justice alone is just, says Plato. As for those whom we call the just, they possess the quality of being just in second, third or fourth place ... or in simulacral fashion. That justice alone should be just is not a simple analytic proposition. It is the designation of the Idea as the ground which possesses in first place. The function of the ground is then to allow participation, to give in second place. Thus, that which participates more or less in varying degrees is necessarily a claimant. The claimant calls for a ground; the claim must be grounded (or denounced as groundless). Laying claim is not one phenomenon among others, but the nature of every phenomenon. The ground is a test which permits claimants to participate in greater or lesser degree in the object of the claim. In this sense the ground measures and makes the difference. We must therefore distinguish between Justice, which is the ground; the quality of justice, which is the object of the claim possessed by that which grounds; and the just, who are the claimants who participate unequally in the object. That is why the Neo-Platonists provide us with such a profound understanding of Platonism in setting out their sacred triad: the Imparticipable, the Participated, and the Participants. The grounding principle is imparticipable but nevertheless provides something to be participated in, which it gives to the participant, who is the possessor in second place, the claimant who has been able to pass the grounding test. One could say: the father, the daughter and the suitor. Moreover, since the triad is reproduced throughout a whole series of participations, and since the claimants participate within an order and in degrees which represent difference in action, the Neo-Platonists indeed saw the essential point: that the aim of division was not the broad distinction among species but the establishment of a serial dialectic, of series or lines of descent in depth which mark the operations of a selective foundation or an elective participation (Zeus I, Zeus II, etc.). It seems, then, that contradiction, far

from signifying the founding test itself, represents instead the state of an ungrounded claim at the limit of participation. If the true claimant (the first grounded, the well grounded, the authentic) has rivals who are like parents, auxiliaries or servants, all participating in his claim in various capacities, he also has simulacra or counterfeits who would be exposed by the test. Such, according to Plato, is the 'sophist', the buffoon, centaur or satyr who lays claim to everything, and who, in laying such claims to everything, is never grounded but contradicts everything, including himself ...

However, in what, exactly, does the grounding test consist? Myth tells us that it always involves a further task to be performed, an enigma to be resolved. The oracle is questioned, but the oracle's response is itself a problem. The dialectic is ironic, but irony is the art of problems and questions. Irony consists in treating things and beings as so many responses to hidden questions, so many cases for problems yet to be resolved. We recall that Plato defined the dialectic as proceeding by 'problems', by means of which one attains the pure grounding principle – that is, the principle which measures the problems as such and distributes the corresponding solutions. Memory is discussed in the *Meno* only in connection with a geometric problem which must be understood before it can be resolved, and must have the solution it deserves according to the manner in which the rememberer has understood it. We are not concerned at the moment with the distinction which should be drawn between the two instances of the problem and the question, but rather with the essential role which both together play in the Platonic dialectic – a role comparable to that which the negative will play later, for example in the Hegelian dialectic. However, it is precisely *not* the negative which plays this role in Plato – so much so that we must consider whether or not the celebrated thesis of the *Sophist*, despite certain ambiguities, should be understood as follows: 'non' in the expression 'non-being' expresses *something other than the negative*. On this point, the mistake of the traditional accounts is to impose upon us a dubious alternative: in seeking to dispel the negative, we declare ourselves satisfied if we show that being is full positive reality which admits no non-being; conversely, in seeking to ground negation, we are satisfied if we manage to posit, in being itself or in relation to being, some sort of non-being (it seems to us that this non-being is necessarily the being of the negative or the ground of negation). The alternative is thus the following: either there is no non-being and negation is illusory and ungrounded, or there is non-being, which puts the negative in being and grounds negation. Perhaps, however, we have reasons to say *both* that there is non-being *and* that the negative is illusory.

Neither the problem nor the question is a subjective determination marking a moment of insufficiency in knowledge. Problematic structure is part of objects themselves, allowing them to be grasped as signs, just as the

questioning or problematising instance is a part of knowledge allowing its positivity and its specificity to be grasped in the act of *learning*. More profoundly still, Being (what Plato calls the Idea) 'corresponds' to the essence of the problem or the question as such. It is as though there were an 'opening', a 'gap', an ontological 'fold' which relates being and the question to one another. In this relation, being is difference itself. Being is also non-being, *but non-being is not the being of the negative*; rather, it is the being of the problematic, the being of problem and question. Difference is not the negative; on the contrary, non-being is Difference: *heteron*, not *enantion*. For this reason non-being should rather be written (non)-being or, better still, ?-being. In this sense, it turns out that the infinitive, the *esse*, designates less a proposition than the interrogation to which the proposition is supposed to respond. This (non)-being is the differential element in which affirmation, as multiple affirmation, finds the principle of its genesis. As for negation, this is only the shadow of the highest principle, the shadow of the difference alongside the affirmation produced. Once we confuse (non)-being with the negative, contradiction is inevitably carried into being; but contradiction is only the appearance or the epiphenomenon, the illusion projected by the problem, the shadow of a question which remains open and of a being which corresponds as such to that question (before it has been given a response). Is it not already in this sense that for Plato contradiction characterises only the so-called aporetic dialogues? Beyond contradiction, difference – beyond *non-being*, (non)-being; beyond the negative, problems and questions.

Note on Heidegger's Philosophy of Difference

It seems that the principal misunderstandings which Heidegger denounced as misreadings of his philosophy after *Being and Time* and 'What is Metaphysics?' have to do with the following: the Heideggerian *Not* refers not to the negative in Being but to Being as difference; it refers not to negation but to questioning. When Sartre analysed interrogation at the beginning of *Being and Nothingness*, he made it a preliminary to the discovery of the negative and negativity. This was, in a sense, the opposite of Heidegger's procedure. None the less, it involved no misunderstanding, since Sartre did not set out to write a commentary on Heidegger. Merleau-Ponty, on the other hand, undoubtedly followed a more thoroughly Heideggerian inspiration in speaking of 'folds' and 'pleating' (by contrast with Sartrean 'holes' and 'lakes of non-being') from *The Phenomenology of Perception* onwards, and in returning to an ontology of difference and questioning in his posthumous book *The Visible and the Invisible*.

It seems that Heidegger's theses may be summarised as follows:

1. The *not* expresses not the negative but the difference between Being and being. See the preface to *The Essence of Reasons*, 3rd edn, 1949, transl.

Terrence Malick, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1969, p. 3: 'The Ontological Difference is the Not between being and Being'; and the postscript to 'What is Metaphysics?', in *Existence and Being*, London: Vision Press, 1949, p. 384, where Heidegger asks: 'whether that which never and nowhere "is" discloses itself as that which differs from everything that "is", i.e. what we call "Being"'.

2. This difference is not 'between' in the ordinary sense of the word. It is the Fold, *Zwiefalt*. It is constitutive of Being and of the manner in which Being constitutes being, in the double movement of 'clearing' and 'veiling'. Being is truly the differentiator of difference – whence the expression 'ontological difference'. See 'Overcoming Metaphysics', transl. Joan Stambaugh, in *The End of Philosophy*, New York: Harper & Row, 1973, pp. 91 ff.
3. Ontological Difference corresponds to questioning. It is the being of questions, which become problems, marking out the determinant fields of existence. See *The Essence of Reasons*.
4. Understood in this manner, difference is not an object of representation. As the element of metaphysics, representation subordinates difference to identity, if only in relating it to a third term as the centre of a comparison *between* two supposedly different terms (Being and being). Heidegger recognises that this point of view of metaphysical representation is still present in *The Essence of Reasons* (see the French translation, p. 59, where the third term is found in the 'transcendence of being-there'). But metaphysics is unable to think difference in itself, or the importance of that which separates as much as of that which unites (the differentiator). There is no synthesis, mediation or reconciliation in difference, but rather a stubborn differentiation. This is the 'turning' beyond metaphysics: 'Being itself can open out in its truth the difference of Being and beings preserved in itself only when the difference explicitly takes place' ('Overcoming Metaphysics', p. 91). On this point, see Beda Alleman, *Hölderlin et Heidegger*, French translation, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, pp. 157–62, 168–72; Jean Beaufret, Introduction to *Poème de Parménide*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955, pp. 69–72, 455.
5. Difference cannot, therefore, be subordinated to the Identical or the Equal but must be thought as the Same, in the Same. See *Identity and Difference*, transl. Joan Stambaugh, New York: Harper & Row, 1969; and 'Poetically Man Dwells...' in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, transl. Albert Hofstadter, New York: Harper & Row, 1971, pp. 218–19.

The same never coincides with the equal, not even in the empty indifference of what is merely identical. The equal or identical always moves toward the absence of difference, so that everything may be reduced to a common denominator. The same, by contrast, is the belong-

ing together of what differs, through a gathering by way of the difference. We can only say 'the same' if we think difference. ... The same banishes all zeal always to level what is different into the equal or identical. The same gathers what is distinct into an original being-at-one. The equal, on the contrary, disperses them into the dull unity of mere uniformity.

We regard as fundamental this 'correspondence' between difference and questioning, between ontological difference and the being of the question. It can nevertheless be asked whether Heidegger did not himself encourage the misunderstandings, by his conception of 'Nothing' as well as by his manner of 'striking through' Being instead of parenthesising the (non) of non-Being. Moreover, is it enough to oppose the Same and the Identical in order to think original difference and to disconnect this from all mediations? If it is true that some commentators have found Thomist echos in Husserl, Heidegger, by contrast, follows Duns Scotus and gives renewed splendour to the Univocity of Being. But does he effectuate the conversion after which univocal Being belongs only to difference and, in this sense, revolves around being? Does he conceive of *being* in such a manner that it will be truly disengaged from any subordination in relation to the identity of representation? It would seem not, given his critique of the Nietzschean eternal return.

The four figures of the Platonic dialectic are therefore: the selection of difference, the installation of a mythic circle, the establishment of a foundation, and the position of a question-problem complex. However, difference is still related to the Same or to the One through these figures. No doubt the *same* should not be confused with the identity of the concept in general: rather, it characterises the Idea as the thing itself. Nevertheless, to the extent that it plays the role of a true ground, it is difficult to see what its effect is if not to make that which is grounded 'identical', to use difference in order to make the identical exist. In reality, the distinction between the same and the identical bears fruit only if one subjects the Same to a conversion which relates it to the different, while at the same time the things and beings which are distinguished in the different suffer a corresponding radical destruction of their *identity*. Only on this condition is difference thought in itself, neither represented nor mediated. The whole of Platonism, by contrast, is dominated by the idea of drawing a distinction between 'the thing itself' and the simulacra. Difference is not thought in itself but related to a ground, subordinated to the same and subject to mediation in mythic form. Overturning Platonism, then, means denying the primacy of original over copy, of model over image; glorifying the reign of simulacra and reflections. Pierre Klossowski has clearly noted this point in the articles

referred to above: taken in its strict sense, eternal return means that each thing exists only in returning, copy of an infinity of copies which allows neither original nor origin to subsist. That is why the eternal return is called 'parodic': it qualifies as simulacrum that which it causes to be (and to return).²² When eternal return is the power of (formless) Being, the simulacrum is the true character or form – the 'being' – of that which is. When the identity of things dissolves, being escapes to attain univocity, and begins to revolve around the different. That which is or returns has no prior constituted identity: things are reduced to the difference which fragments them, and to all the differences which are implicated in it and through which they pass. In this sense, the simulacrum and the symbol are one; in other words, the simulacrum is the sign in so far as the sign interiorises the conditions of its own repetition. The simulacrum seizes upon a constituent *disparity* in the thing from which it strips the rank of model. If, as we have seen, eternal return serves to establish a difference in kind between the average and the superior forms, then there is also a difference in kind between the average or moderate positions of the eternal return (whether these involve partial cycles or approximate global return *in specie*) and its strict or categorical position. For eternal return, affirmed in all its power, allows no installation of a foundation-ground. On the contrary, it swallows up or destroys every ground which would function as an instance responsible for the difference between the original and the derived, between things and simulacra. It makes us party to a universal *ungrounding*. By 'ungrounding' we should understand the freedom of the non-mediated ground, the discovery of a ground behind every other ground, the relation between the groundless and the ungrounded, the immediate reflection of the formless and the superior form which constitutes the eternal return. Every thing, animal or being assumes the status of simulacrum; so that the thinker of eternal return – who indeed refuses to be drawn out of the cave, finding instead another cave beyond, always another in which to hide – can rightly say that he is himself burdened with the superior form of everything that is, like the poet 'burdened with humanity, even that of the animals'. These words themselves have their echo in the superposed caves. Moreover, that cruelty which at the outset seemed to us monstrous, demanding expiation, and could be alleviated only by representative mediation, now seems to us to constitute the pure concept or Idea of difference within overturned Platonism: the most innocent difference, the state of innocence and its echo.

Plato gave the establishment of difference as the supreme goal of dialectic. However, difference does not lie between things and simulacra, models and copies. Things are simulacra themselves, simulacra are the superior forms, and the difficulty facing everything is to become its own simulacrum, to attain the status of a sign in the coherence of eternal return. Plato opposed eternal return to chaos as though chaos were a

contradictory state which must be subject to order or law from outside, as it is when the Demiurge subjugates a rebellious matter. He reduced the Sophist to contradiction, to that supposed state of chaos, the lowest power and last degree of participation. In reality the 'nth' power does not pass through two, three or four: it is immediately affirmed in order to constitute the highest power; it is affirmed of chaos itself and, as Nietzsche said, chaos and eternal return are not two different things. The sophist is not the being (or the non-being) of contradiction, but the one who raises everything to the level of simulacra and maintains them in that state. Was it not inevitable that Plato should push irony to that point – to parody? Was it not inevitable that Plato should be the first to overturn Platonism, or at least to show the direction such an overturning should take? We are reminded of the grand finale of the *Sophist*: difference is displaced, division turns back against itself and begins to function in reverse, and, as a result of being applied to simulacra themselves (dreams, shadows, reflections, paintings), shows the impossibility of distinguishing them from originals or from models. The Eleatic Stranger gives a definition of the sophist such that he can no longer be distinguished from Socrates himself: the ironic imitator who proceeds by brief arguments (questions and problems). Each moment of difference must then find its true figure: selection, repetition, ungrounding, the question–problem complex.

We have contrasted representation with a different kind of formation. The elementary concepts of representation are the categories defined as the conditions of possible experience. These, however, are too general or too large for the real. The net is so loose that the largest fish pass through. No wonder, then, that aesthetics should be divided into two irreducible domains: that of the theory of the sensible which captures only the real's conformity with possible experience; and that of the theory of the beautiful, which deals with the reality of the real in so far as it is thought. Everything changes once we determine the conditions of real experience, which are not larger than the conditioned and which differ in kind from the categories: the two senses of the aesthetic become one, to the point where the being of the sensible reveals itself in the work of art, while at the same time the work of art appears as experimentation. The fault of representation lies in not going beyond the form of identity, in relation to both the object seen and the seeing subject. Identity is no less conserved in each component representation than in the whole of infinite representation as such. Infinite representation may well multiply points of view and organise these in series; these series are no less subject to the condition of converging upon the same object, upon the same world. Infinite representation may well multiply figures and moments and organise these into circles endowed with self-movement; these circles no less turn around a single centre which is that of the great circle of consciousness. By contrast, when the modern work of art develops its permutating series and

its circular structures, it indicates to philosophy a path leading to the abandonment of representation. It is not enough to multiply perspectives in order to establish perspectivism. To every perspective or point of view there must correspond an autonomous work with its own self-sufficient sense: what matters is the divergence of series, the decentring of circles, 'monstrosity'. The totality of circles and series is thus a formless *ungrounded* chaos which has no law other than its own repetition, its own reproduction in the development of that which diverges and decentres. We know how these conditions are already satisfied in such works as Mallarmé's *Book* or Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*: these are by nature problematic works.²³ The identity of the object read really dissolves into divergent series defined by esoteric words, just as the identity of the reading subject is dissolved into the decentred circles of possible multiple readings. Nothing, however, is lost; each series exists only by virtue of the return of the others. Everything has become simulacrum, for by simulacrum we should not understand a simple imitation but rather the act by which the very idea of a model or privileged position is challenged and overturned. The simulacrum is the instance which includes a difference within itself, such as (at least) two divergent series on which it plays, all resemblance abolished so that one can no longer point to the existence of an original and a copy. It is in this direction that we must look for the conditions, not of possible experience, but of real experience (selection, repetition, etc.). It is here that we find the lived reality of a sub-representative domain. If it is true that representation has identity as its element and similarity as its unit of measure, then pure presence such as it appears in the simulacrum has the 'disparate' as its unit of measure – in other words, always a difference of difference as its immediate element.

Chapter II

Repetition for Itself

Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it. Hume's famous thesis takes us to the heart of a problem: since it implies, in principle, a perfect independence on the part of each presentation, how can repetition change something in the case of the repeated element? The rule of discontinuity or instantaneity in repetition tells us that one instance does not appear unless the other has disappeared – hence the status of matter as *mens momentanea*. However, given that repetition disappears even as it occurs, how can we say 'the second', 'the third' and 'it is the same'? It has no in-itself. On the other hand, it does change something in the mind which contemplates it. This is the essence of modification. Hume takes as an example the repetition of cases of the type AB, AB, AB, A Each case or objective sequence AB is independent of the others. The repetition (although we cannot yet properly speak of repetition) changes nothing in the object or the state of affairs AB. On the other hand, a change is produced in the mind which contemplates: a difference, something new in the mind. Whenever A appears, I expect the appearance of B. Is this the for-itself of repetition, an originary subjectivity which necessarily enters into its constitution? Does not the paradox of repetition lie in the fact that one can speak of repetition only by virtue of the change or difference that it introduces into the mind which contemplates it? By virtue of a difference that the mind *draws from* repetition?

What does this change comprise? Hume explains that the independent identical or similar cases are grounded in the imagination. The imagination is defined here as a contractile power: like a sensitive plate, it retains one case when the other appears. It contracts cases, elements, agitations or homogeneous instants and grounds these in an internal qualitative impression endowed with a certain weight. When A appears, we expect B with a force corresponding to the qualitative impression of all the contracted ABs. This is by no means a memory, nor indeed an operation of the understanding: contraction is not a matter of reflection. Properly speaking, it forms a synthesis of time. A succession of instants does not constitute time any more than it causes it to disappear; it indicates only its constantly aborted moment of birth. Time is constituted only in the originary synthesis which operates on the repetition of instants. This synthesis contracts the successive independent instants into one another, thereby constituting the lived, or living, present. It is in this present that time is deployed. To it belong both the past and the future: the past in so

far as the preceding instants are retained in the contraction; the future because its expectation is anticipated in this same contraction. The past and the future do not designate instants distinct from a supposed present instant, but rather the dimensions of the present itself in so far as it is a contraction of instants. The present does not have to go outside itself in order to pass from past to future. Rather, the living present goes from the past to the future which it constitutes in time, which is to say also from the particular to the general: from the particulars which it envelops by contraction to the general which it develops in the field of its expectation (the difference produced in the mind is generality itself in so far as it forms a living rule for the future). In any case, this synthesis must be given a name: passive synthesis. Although it is constitutive it is not, for all that, active. It is not carried out by the mind, but occurs *in* the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and all reflection. Time is subjective, but in relation to the subjectivity of a passive subject. Passive synthesis or contraction is essentially asymmetrical: it goes from the past to the future in the present, thus from the particular to the general, thereby imparting direction to the arrow of time.

In considering repetition in the object, we remain within the conditions which make possible an idea of repetition. But in considering the change in the subject, we are already beyond these conditions, confronting the general form of difference. The ideal constitution of repetition thus implies a kind of retroactive movement between these two limits. It is woven between the two. This is the movement which Hume so profoundly analyses when he shows that the cases contracted or grounded in the imagination remain no less distinct in the memory or in the understanding. Not that we return to the state of matter which produces one case only when the other has disappeared. Rather, on the basis of the qualitative impression in the imagination, memory reconstitutes the particular cases as distinct, conserving them in its own 'temporal space'. The past is then no longer the immediate past of retention but the reflexive past of representation, of reflected and reproduced particularity. Correlatively, the future also ceases to be the immediate future of anticipation in order to become the reflexive future of prediction, the reflected generality of the understanding (the understanding weights the expectation in the imagination in proportion to the number of distinct similar cases observed and recalled). In other words, the active syntheses of memory and understanding are superimposed upon and supported by the passive synthesis of the imagination. The constitution of repetition already implies three instances: the in-itself which causes it to disappear as it appears, leaving it unthinkable; the for-itself of the passive synthesis; and, grounded upon the latter, the reflected representation of a 'for-us' in the active syntheses. Associationism possesses an irreplaceable subtlety. It is not surprising that Bergson rediscovers Hume's analyses once he encounters an

analogous problem: four o'clock strikes ... each stroke, each disturbance or excitation, is logically independent of the other, *mens momentanea*. However, quite apart from any memory or distinct calculation, we contract these into an internal qualitative impression within this living present or *passive synthesis* which is duration. Then we restore them in an auxiliary space, a derived time in which we may reproduce them, reflect on them or count them like so many quantifiable external-impressions.¹

No doubt Bergson's example is not the same as Hume's. One refers to a closed repetition, the other to an open one. Moreover, one refers to a repetition of elements of the type A A A A ... (tick, tick, tick, tick ...), the other to a repetition of cases such as AB AB AB A ... (tick-tock, tick-tock, tick-tock, tick ...). The principal distinction between these two forms rests upon the fact that in the second case difference not only appears in the contraction of the elements in general but also occurs in each particular case, between two elements which are both determined and joined together by a relation of opposition. The function of opposition here is to impose a limit on the elementary repetition, to enclose it upon the simplest group, to reduce it to a minimum of two (tock being the inverse of tick). Difference therefore appears to abandon its first figure of generality and to be distributed in the repeating particular, but in such a way as to give rise to new living generalities. Repetition finds itself enclosed in the 'case', reduced to the pair, while a new infinity opens up in the form of the repetition of the cases themselves. It would be wrong, therefore, to believe that every repetition of cases is open by nature, while every repetition of elements is closed. The repetition of cases is open only by virtue of the closure of a binary opposition between elements. Conversely, the repetition of elements is closed only by virtue of a reference to structures of cases in which as a whole it plays itself the role of one of the two opposed elements: not only is four a generality in relation to four strokes, but 'four o'clock' enters into a duality with the preceding or the following half-hour, or even, on the horizon of the perceptual universe, with the corresponding four o'clock in the morning or afternoon. In the case of passive synthesis, the two forms of repetition always refer back to one another: repetition of cases presupposes that of elements, but that of elements necessarily extends into that of cases (whence the natural tendency of passive synthesis to experience tick-tick as tick-tock).

That is why what matters even more than the distinction between the two forms is the distinction between the levels on which *both* operate, separately and in combination. Hume's example no less than Bergson's leaves us at the level of sensible and perceptual syntheses. The sensed quality is indistinguishable from the contraction of elementary excitations, but the object perceived implies a contraction of cases such that one quality may be read in the other, and a structure in which the form of the object allies itself with the quality at least as an intentional part. However, in the

order of constituent passivity, perceptual syntheses refer back to organic syntheses which are like the sensibility of the senses; they refer back to a primary sensibility that we *are*. We are made of contracted water, earth, light and air – not merely prior to the recognition or representation of these, but prior to their being sensed. Every organism, in its receptive and perceptual elements, but also in its viscera, is a sum of contractions, of retentions and expectations. At the level of this primary vital sensibility, the lived present constitutes a past and a future in time. Need is the manner in which this future appears, as the organic form of expectation. The retained past appears in the form of cellular heredity. Furthermore, by combining with the perceptual syntheses built upon them, these organic syntheses are redeployed in the active syntheses of a psycho-organic memory and intelligence (instinct and learning). We must therefore distinguish not only the forms of repetition in relation to passive synthesis but also the levels of passive synthesis and the combinations of these levels with one another and with active syntheses. All of this forms a rich domain of *signs* which always envelop heterogeneous elements and animate behaviour. Each contraction, each passive synthesis, constitutes a sign which is interpreted or deployed in active syntheses. The signs by which an animal ‘senses’ the presence of water do not resemble the elements which its thirsty organism lacks. The manner in which sensation and perception – along with need and heredity, learning and instinct, intelligence and memory – participate in repetition is measured in each case by the combination of forms of repetition, by the levels on which these combinations take place, by the relationships operating between these levels and by the interference of active syntheses with passive syntheses.

What is in question throughout this domain that we have had to extend to include the organic as such? Hume says precisely that it is a question of the problem of habit. However, how are we to explain the fact that – in the case of Bergson’s clock-strokes no less than with Hume’s causal sequences – we feel ourselves in effect so close to the mystery of habit, yet recognise nothing of what is ‘habitually’ called habit? Perhaps the reason lies in the illusions of psychology, which made a fetish of activity. Its unreasonable fear of introspection allowed it to observe only that which moved. It asks how we acquire habits in acting, but the entire theory of learning risks being misdirected so long as the prior question is not posed – namely, whether it is through acting that we acquire habits ... *or whether, on the contrary, it is through contemplating?* Psychology regards it as established that the self cannot contemplate itself. This, however, is not the question. The question is whether or not the self itself is a contemplation, whether it is not in itself a contemplation, and whether we can learn, form behaviour and form ourselves other than through contemplation.

Habit *draws* something new from repetition – namely, difference (in the first instance understood as generality). In essence, habit is contraction.

Language testifies to this in allowing us to speak of 'contracting' a habit, and in allowing the verb 'to contract' only in conjunction with a complement capable of constituting a habitude. It will be objected that the heart no more has (or no more is) a habit when it contracts than when it dilates. This, however, is to confuse two quite different kinds of contraction: contraction may refer to one of the two active elements, one of the two opposing moments in a tick-tock type series, the other element being relaxation or dilation. But contraction also refers to the fusion of successive tick-tocks in a contemplative soul. Passive synthesis is of the latter kind: it constitutes our habit of living, our expectation that 'it' will continue, that one of the two elements will appear after the other, thereby assuring the perpetuation of our *case*. When we say that habit is a contraction we are speaking not of an instantaneous action which combines with another to form an element of repetition, but rather of the fusion of that repetition in the contemplating mind. A soul must be attributed to the heart, to the muscles, nerves and cells, but a contemplative soul whose entire function is to contract a habit. This is no mystical or barbarous hypothesis. On the contrary, habit here manifests its full generality: it concerns not only the sensory-motor habits that we have (psychologically), but also, before these, the primary habits that we are; the thousands of passive syntheses of which we are organically composed. It is simultaneously through contraction that we are habits, but through contemplation that we contract. We are contemplations, we are imaginations, we are generalities, claims and satisfactions. The phenomenon of claiming is nothing but the contracting contemplation through which we affirm our right and our expectation in regard to that which we contract, along with our self-satisfaction in so far as we contemplate. We do not contemplate ourselves, but we exist only in contemplating – that is to say, in contracting that from which we come. Whether pleasure is itself a contraction or a tension, or whether it is always tied to a process of relaxation, is not a well-formed question: elements of pleasure may be found in the active succession of relaxations and contractions produced by excitants, but it is a quite different question to ask why pleasure is not simply an element or a case within our psychic life, but rather a *principle* which exercises sovereign rule over the latter in every case. Pleasure is a principle in so far as it is the emotion of a fulfilling contemplation which contracts in itself cases of relaxation *and* contraction. There is a beatitude associated with passive synthesis, and we are all Narcissus in virtue of the pleasure (auto-satisfaction) we experience in contemplating, even though we contemplate things quite apart from ourselves. We are always Actaeon by virtue of what we contemplate, even though we are Narcissus in relation to the pleasure we take from it. To contemplate is to draw something from. We must always first contemplate

something else – the water, or Diana, or the woods – in order to be filled with an image of ourselves.

No one has shown better than Samuel Butler that there is no continuity apart from that of habit, and that we have no other continuities apart from those of our thousands of component habits, which form within us so many superstitious and contemplative selves, so many claimants and satisfactions: 'for even the corn in the fields grows upon a superstitious basis as to its own existence, and only turns the earth and moisture into wheat through the conceit of its own ability to do so, without which faith it were powerless ...'.² Only an empiricist can happily risk such formulae. What we call wheat is a contraction of the earth and humidity, and this contraction is both a contemplation and the auto-satisfaction of that contemplation. By its existence alone, the lily of the field sings the glory of the heavens, the goddesses and gods – in other words, the elements that it contemplates in contracting. What organism is not made of elements and cases of repetition, of contemplated and contracted water, nitrogen, carbon, chlorides and sulphates, thereby intertwining all the habits of which it is composed? Organisms awake to the sublime words of the third *Ennead*: all is contemplation! Perhaps it is irony to say that everything is contemplation, even rocks and woods, animals and men, even Actaeon and the stag, Narcissus and the flower, even our actions and our needs. But irony in turn is still a contemplation, nothing but a contemplation. ... Plotinus says that one determines one's own image, and appreciates it, only by turning back to contemplate that from which one comes.

It is easy to multiply reasons which make habit independent of repetition: to act is never to repeat, whether it be an action in process or an action already completed. As we have seen, action has, rather, the particular as its variable and generality as its element. However, while generality may well be quite different from repetition, it nevertheless refers to repetition as the hidden basis on which it is constructed. Action is constituted, in the order of generality and in the field of variables which correspond to it, only by the contraction of elements of repetition. This contraction, however, takes place not in the action itself, but in a contemplative self which doubles the agent. Moreover, in order to integrate actions within a more complex action, the primary actions must in turn play the role of elements of repetition within a 'case', but always in relation to a contemplative soul adjacent to the subject of the compound action. Underneath the self which acts are little selves which contemplate and which render possible both the action and the active subject. We speak of our 'self' only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says 'me'. These contemplative souls must be assigned even to the rat in the labyrinth and to each muscle of the rat. Given that contemplation never appears at any moment during the action – since it is always hidden, and since it 'does'

nothing (even though something is done through it, something completely novel) – it is easy to forget it and to interpret the entire process of excitation and reaction without any reference to repetition – the more so since this reference appears only in the relation in which both excitations and reactions stand to the contemplative souls.

The role of the imagination, or the mind which contemplates in its multiple and fragmented states, is to draw something new from repetition, to draw difference from it. For that matter, repetition is itself in essence imaginary, since the imagination alone here forms the 'moment' of the *vis repetitiva* from the point of view of constitution: it makes that which it contracts appear as elements or cases of repetition. Imaginary repetition is not a false repetition which stands in for the absent true repetition: true repetition takes place in imagination. Between a repetition which never ceases to unravel itself and a repetition which is deployed and conserved for us in the space of representation there was difference, the for-itself of repetition, the imaginary. Difference inhabits repetition. On the one hand – lengthwise, as it were – difference allows us to pass from one order of repetition to another: from the instantaneous repetition which unravels itself to the actively represented repetition through the intermediary of passive synthesis. On the other hand – in depth, as it were – difference allows us to pass from one order of repetition to another and from one generality to another within the passive syntheses themselves. The nods of the chicken's head accompany its cardiac pulsations in an organic synthesis before they serve as pecks in the perceptual synthesis with grain. And already in the series of passive syntheses, the generality originally formed by the contraction of 'ticks' is redistributed in the form of particularities in the more complex repetition of 'tick-tocks', which are in turn contracted. In every way, material or bare repetition, so-called repetition of the same, is like a skin which unravels, the external husk of a kernel of difference and more complicated internal repetitions. *Difference lies between two repetitions.* Is this not also to say, conversely, that repetition lies between two differences, that it allows us to pass from one order of difference to another? Gabriel Tarde described dialectical development in this manner: a process of repetition understood as the passage from a state of general differences to singular difference, from external differences to internal difference – in short, repetition as the differentiator of difference.³

The synthesis of time constitutes the present in time. It is not that the present is a dimension of time: the present alone exists. Rather, synthesis constitutes time as a living present, and the past and the future as dimensions of this present. This synthesis is none the less intratemporal, which means that this present passes. We could no doubt conceive of a perpetual present, a present which is coextensive with time: it would be sufficient to consider contemplation applied to the infinite succession of instants. But such a present is not physically possible: the contraction

implied in any contemplation always qualifies an order of repetition according to the elements or cases involved. It necessarily forms a present which may be exhausted and which passes, a present of a certain duration which varies according to the species, the individuals, the organisms and the parts of organisms under consideration. Two successive presents may be contemporaneous with a third present, more extended by virtue of the number of instants it contracts. The duration of an organism's present, or of its various presents, will vary according to the natural contractile range of its contemplative souls. In other words, fatigue is a real component of contemplation. It is correctly said that those who do nothing tire themselves most. Fatigue marks the point at which the soul can no longer contract what it contemplates, the moment at which contemplation and contraction come apart. We are made up of fatigues as much as of contemplations. That is why a phenomenon such as need can be understood in terms of 'lack', from the point of view of action and the active syntheses which it determines, but as an extreme 'satiety' or 'fatigue' from the point of view of the passive synthesis by which it is conditioned. More precisely, need marks the limits of the variable present. The present extends between two eruptions of need, and coincides with the duration of a contemplation. The *repetition of need*, and of everything which depends upon it, expresses the time which belongs to the synthesis of time, the intratemporal character of that synthesis. Repetition is essentially inscribed in need, since need rests upon an instance which essentially involves repetition: which forms the for-itself of repetition and the for-itself of a certain duration. All our rhythms, our reserves, our reaction times, the thousand intertwinings, the presents and fatigues of which we are composed, are defined on the basis of our contemplations. The rule is that one cannot go faster than one's own present – or rather, one's presents. *Signs* as we have defined them – as habitudes or contractions referring to one another – always belong to the present. One of the great strengths of Stoicism lies in having shown that every sign is a sign of the present, from the point of view of the passive synthesis in which past and future are precisely only dimensions of the present itself. A scar is the sign not of a past wound but of 'the present fact of having been wounded': we can say that it is the contemplation of the wound, that it contracts all the instants which separate us from it into a living present. Or rather, that we find here the true meaning of the distinction between natural and artificial: natural signs are signs founded upon passive synthesis; they are signs of the present, referring to the present in which they signify. Artificial signs, by contrast, are those which refer to the past or the future as distinct dimensions of the present, dimensions on which the present might in turn depend. Artificial signs imply active syntheses – that is to say, the passage from spontaneous imagination to the active faculties of reflective representation, memory and intelligence.