The Cambridge Companion
to
DELEUZE

EDITED BY

DANIEL W. SMITH AND
HENRY SOMERS-HALL

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Daniel W. Smith
Purdue University

and

Henry Somers-Hall
Royal Holloway, University of London

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Each volume of this series of companions to major philosophers contains specially commissioned essays by an international team of scholars, together with a substantial bibliography, and will serve as a reference work for students and non-specialists. One aim of the series is to dispel the intimidation such readers feel when faced with the work of a difficult and challenging thinker.

Gilles Deleuze (1925–95) was an influential and provocative twentieth-century thinker who developed and presented an alternative to the image of thought found in traditional philosophy. This volume offers an extensive survey of Deleuze's philosophy by some of his most influential interpreters. The essays give lucid accounts of the fundamental themes of his metaphysical work and its ethical and political implications. They clearly situate his thinking within the philosophical tradition, with detailed studies of his engagements with phenomenology, post-Kantianism, and the sciences, and also his interventions in the arts. As well as offering new research on established areas of Deleuze scholarship, several essays address key themes that have not previously been given the attention they deserve in the English-speaking world.

New readers will find this the most convenient, accessible guide to Deleuze currently available. Advanced students and specialists will find a conspectus of recent developments in the interpretation of Deleuze.

Continued at the back of the book

CONTRIBUTORS

RONALD BOGUE, Distinguished Research Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Georgia, is the author of *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History* (2010), *Deleuze's Way* (2007), and *Deleuze on Literature* (2003).

ROSI BRAIDOTTI is Distinguished University Professor at Utrecht University in the Netherlands and Director of the Centre for the Humanities. She is the author of a trilogy on nomadic thought: *Nomadic Subjects* (1994 and 2011 [second edn.]), *Metamorphoses* (2002), and *Transpositions* (2006) and has recently published a collection of papers entitled *Nomadic Theory* (2011).

MIGUEL DE BEISTEGUI is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Warwick. He is the author of *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (2005) and *Immanence and Philosophy: Deleuze* (2010). *The Joy of Proust* and *Aesthetics after Metaphysics: From Mimesis to Metaphor* are also forthcoming in 2012.

MANUEL DELANDA is Professor of Philosophy in the Department of Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (1991), *A Thousand Years of Non-Linear History* (1997), *A New Philosophy of Society* (2002), *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (2006), and *Philosophy and Simulation: The Emergence of Synthetic Reason* (2011).

FRANÇOIS DOSSE is a Professor at the University of Paris 12, research associate at the IHTP, and historian. He is the author of works on intellectual history and historiography and of biographies of Paul Ricoeur (1997; 2008), Michel de Certeau (2002), Gilles Deleuze and

Félix Guattari (2007), and Pierre Nora (2011). He has in addition published on the genre of biography itself: *Le pari biographique* (2005).

GARY GENOSKO, Professor of Communication at University of Ontario Institute of Technology, is the author of *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction* (2002), *The Party without Bosses* (2003), *Félix Guattari: A Critical Introduction* (2009), and editor of *The Guattari Reader* (1996) and *Deleuze and Guattari: Critical Assessments* (2001). He has edited a special issue of *Deleuze Studies* on *Félix Guattari in the Age of Semiocapitalism* (2012).

EUGENE W. HOLLAND, Professor and Chair of Comparative Studies at the Ohio State University, is author of *Baudelaire and Schizoanalysis* (1993), *Deleuze and Guattari's "Anti-Oedipus": Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (1999), and *Nomad Citizenship* (2011).

LEONARD LAWLOR is Edwin Erle Sparks Professor of Philosophy at Penn State University. He is the author of seven books: *Early Twentieth Century Continental Philosophy* (2011), *This is not Sufficient: An Essay on Animality in Derrida* (2007), *The Implications of Immanence: Towards a New Concept of Life* (2006), *Thinking Through French Philosophy: The Being of the Question* (2003), *The Challenge of Bergsonism: Phenomenology, Ontology, Ethics* (2003), *Derrida and Husserl: The Basic Problem of Phenomenology* (2002), and *Imagination and Chance: The Difference between the Thought of Ricoeur and Derrida* (1992). He is one of the co-editors and co-founders of *Chiasmi International: Trilingual Studies Concerning the Thought of Merleau-Ponty*.

BETH LORD is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Dundee. She is author of *Kant and Spinozism: Transcendental Idealism and Immanence from Jacobi to Deleuze* (2011) and *Spinoza's Ethics: An Edinburgh Philosophical Guide* (2010), and has recently edited the collection *Spinoza beyond Philosophy* (2012).

DOROTHEA OLKOWSKI is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs and Director of the Cognitive Studies Minor. Her publications include *Gilles Deleuze and the Ruin of Representation* (1999) and *The Universal (In the Realm of the Sensible)* (2007). Her most recent books are *Time in Feminist*

Phenomenology (with Christina Schües and Helen Fielding, 2011) and *Postmodern Philosophy and the Scientific Turn* (2012).

PAUL PATTON is Professor of Philosophy at the University of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. He is the author of *Deleuze and the Political* (2000) and *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics* (2010). He is the translator of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1994) and editor of *Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory* (1993) and *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (1996). He is co-editor of *Political Theory and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (with Duncan Ivison and Will Sanders, 2000), *Between Deleuze and Derrida* (with John Protevi, 2003), and *Deleuze and the Postcolonial* (with Simone Bignall, 2010).

JOHN PROTEVI is Phyllis M. Taylor Professor of French Studies and Professor of Philosophy at Louisiana State University. He is the author of *Time and Exteriority* (1994), *Political Physics* (2001), and *Political Affect* (2009). He is editor of the *Edinburgh Dictionary of Continental Philosophy* (2005) and co-editor of *Between Deleuze and Derrida* (with Paul Patton, 2003).

DANIEL W. SMITH, Associate Professor in the Department of Philosophy at Purdue University, is the author of *Essays on Deleuze* (2012) and has published widely on topics in contemporary philosophy. He is the translator of Gilles Deleuze's *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (2003) and *Essays Critical and Clinical* (with Michael A. Greco, 1998), as well as Pierre Klossowski's *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (1997) and Isabelle Stenger's *The Invention of Modern Science* (2000).

HENRY SOMERS-HALL is Lecturer in Philosophy at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of *Hegel, Deleuze, and the Critique of Representation* (2012) and the co-translator (with Nick Midgley, Alistair Welchman and Merten Reglitz) of Salomon Maimon's *Essay on Transcendental Philosophy* (2010).

JAMES WILLIAMS, Professor in European Philosophy at the University of Dundee, is the author of *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time* (2011), *Gilles Deleuze's "Logic of Sense"* (2008), *The Transversal Thought of Gilles Deleuze* (2005), and *Gilles Deleuze's "Difference and Repetition"* (2003).

ABBREVIATIONS

Works by Gilles Deleuze

ABC   Pierre-André Boutang (director), *Gilles Deleuze from A to Z*, 3-DVD set, trans. Charles J. Stivale (New York: Semiotext(e), 2011)

B   *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988)

DI   *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004)

DR   *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

ECC   *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998)

EPS   *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990)

ES   *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991)

F   *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988)

FB   *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (New York: Continuum, 2003)

FLB   *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)

KCP   *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984)

LS	*The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, with Charles Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990)
M	*Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1989)
MI	*Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986)
NP	*Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone, 1983)
PI	*Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001)
PS	*Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Athlone, 2000)
SPP	*Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988)
TI	*Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989)
TRM	*Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2007)

Works by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari

AO	*Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* I, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977)
ATP	*A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* II, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987)
K	*Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986)
WP	*What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Works by Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet

D	*Dialogues* II, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2002)
N	*Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995)

CONTENTS

Introduction

Gilles Deleuze belongs to that group of philosophers, often taken to typify the continental approach to philosophy, for whom the difficulty we encounter in reading them is not simply one of the content of their claims and arguments, but also one of penetrating their style of writing itself. This difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that Deleuze not only seemingly employs language in order to destabilize and obfuscate his philosophical arguments, but also revises his basic philosophical terminology between his numerous writings, from the early work of intensive depth, virtuality, and preindividual singularities, to the body without organs, machinic phylum, and plane of immanence of his collaborations with Guattari.[1] This leads us to the problem of how we read Deleuze. Do we see the obfuscation of language, the various appropriations of the sciences, and the experiments in philosophical writing as attempts to cover over a paucity of argumentation? Do we take up this rejection of traditional metaphysical language, seeing it as a rejection of the tradition of metaphysics itself, or do we strip the language away in the hope of finding underneath it a philosophical position that can be distinctly expressed in another, more palatable language? Similarly, we might ask what the reason is for the proliferation of philosophical systems developed by Deleuze, both in his historical monographs and his own philosophical writings. The continual reinvention of basic philosophical concepts might be taken to signal a failure of Deleuze's philosophical enterprise, an inability to formulate a definitive yet consistent philosophical outlook. Finally, Deleuze presents us with the problem of understanding the relation of these various projects. Deleuze's engagements with the history of philosophy, science, aesthetics, and ethics seem reminiscent of the

kind of grand systematic project of the nineteenth century exempli-
fied by the works of Hegel. In spite of this similarity, there is a repe-
tition of themes, and a recommencement of philosophical projects
that is more akin to what we find in Schelling or Nietzsche. While
Difference and Repetition and the *Logic of Sense*, for instance,
were written at much the same time, they provide very differ-
ent approaches to the questions of ontology and metaphysics. Key
structures from Deleuze's early work, such as the simulacrum, dis-
appear once he begins collaborating with Guattari, yet in his last,
sole-authored project (*Immanence: A Life*), the early logic of multi-
plicities, together with the concepts of the virtual and the transcen-
dental field, once again emerges.[2]

It is perhaps because of these difficulties that there are as yet so
few attempts to provide a consistent general reading of Deleuze's
whole *opus*.[3] Rather than deal with questions of Deleuze's specific
engagements, which are masterfully explicated by the contributors
to this volume, I want to focus in this Introduction simply on the
question of how we approach reading, interpreting, and engaging
with Deleuze's philosophy, and how we are to reconcile his approach
with the seemingly antithetical aims we might attribute to our
standard conception of the philosophical endeavor.

Deleuze's relationship to prior metaphysics is complex. While he
wrote numerous monographs on figures from the history of phil-
osophy, frequently analyses presented in these historical mono-
graphs reappear within Deleuze's own metaphysical systems. Thus,
Deleuze's reading of Hume on habit in *Difference and Repetition*
opens out onto a vitalist conception of nature that moves far beyond
the psychological considerations of Hume himself. His reading of
Spinoza's relations of speeds and slowness reappears in *What is
Philosophy?* as the chaos that science, art, and philosophy are all
preoccupied with. Deleuze is not so much interested in these cases
in providing a historical analysis as in resurrecting the conceptual
developments of his predecessors to bring them to bear on his own
philosophical concerns. Deleuze makes this clear in perhaps his
most famous, and most misunderstood, pronouncement on his rela-
tion to the tradition:

I imagined myself getting onto the back of an author, and giving him a
child, which would be his and which would at the same time be a monster.

It is very important that it should be his child, because the author actually had to say everything that I made him say. But it also had to be a monster because it was necessary to go through all kinds of decenterings, slips, break-ins, secret emissions. (*N* 6)

In fact, Deleuze's borrowings from his predecessors make clear that what interests him in the philosophical systems of the past is not so much the systems themselves, but the concepts that each philosopher brings together to formulate their system. From his early years, Deleuze saw philosophical concepts as literary characters, having their own autonomy and style, and this preoccupation is reaffirmed in his last work with Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, where they make the claim that "the philosopher is an expert in concepts and the lack of them. He knows which of them are not viable, which are arbitrary or inconsistent, which ones do not hold up for an instant" (*WP* 3). While the philosopher's expertise may extend to concepts more generally, the activity of philosophy itself is, however, something more specific. The activity of philosophy is, at root, the "creation of concepts" (*WP* 5). This characterization of the philosophical endeavor immediately raises three questions that I want to address in this Introduction. First, what does it mean to *create* rather than discover concepts? Second, how do we relate these concepts together? And finally, what does philosophy achieve through the creation of concepts? It is by answering these questions that we can provide at least a rough answer to some of the questions with which we began.

In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari make the following provocative claim: "Plato said that Ideas must be contemplated, but first of all he had to create the concept of Idea" (*WP* 6). The assertion that Plato's philosophy is fundamentally creative appears radically at odds with Socrates' frequent claims, most notably in the *Meno* and *Phaedo*, that knowledge is attained through the reminiscence of our perception of real things prior to the soul inhabiting the body. Similarly, Descartes, in his *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*, does not understand the philosophical project as one involving innovation, but rather "entirely in the ordering and arranging of the objects on which we must concentrate our mind's eye if we are to discover some truth."[4] In both these cases, we do not appear to have a project of creation, but rather

one of the reminiscence, recognition, or discovery of something that pre-exists our enquiry. Even a philosophical project such as Kant's, that gives a constitutive role to thought, still centers on the discovery of pre-existing rules of constitution. Understanding this claim is essential, both with respect to understanding Deleuze's engagement with the philosophical tradition, and with respect to his relationship to his own project.

Relating this claim to the philosophical tradition lets us know that for Deleuze, philosophical systems cannot simply be this relation to a pre-existing field of potential objects of knowledge: philosophy is not a science of discovery. We can understand this claim in the light of Deleuze's reading of Feuerbach, whose *Towards a Critique of the Philosophy of Hegel* was translated into French by Deleuze's friend Louis Althusser.[5] In this essay, Feuerbach makes the claim that the history of philosophy, including the grand systems of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, has been subject to a form of paralogism similar to the one Kant discovered in the philosophy of Descartes, but far more wide ranging.[6] As Feuerbach noted, the communication of philosophical concepts is not seen by philosophers to occur through some kind of affective relation (the philosopher "does not instil his thoughts into me like drops of medicine"),[7] but rather it relies on the listener actively taking up these ideas with his own intellect. Philosophical communication therefore relies on an abstraction from my own experience to that which is shared by every intellect (what Deleuze calls the "everybody knows" [*DR* 130]). Philosophy on this reading does not therefore concern itself with the active process of thinking itself, but rather with an image or representation of thought which can be recognized by and communicated to others. Furthermore, the concepts that it operates with are not concepts meant to capture the world, but rather those ready-made concepts that the intellect expects to find mirrored in others. Rather than exploring the metaphysical structure of the world, therefore, philosophy has instead produced a paralogistic image of a shared common sense. It is for this reason that it appears to be the case that we are remembering, discovering, or recognizing some objective state of affairs, while in fact we are merely mapping the structure of reason itself. Deleuze's response to this situation is twofold.[8] If we are to escape from this kind of paralogism, then first

it is necessary to break with the image of thought. In order to do so, Deleuze introduces a certain obscurity into his language – a stuttering, or in his own words, a deterritorialization of language that prevents the kind of reliance on ready-made categories of thought that inhibits true philosophical engagement. It is this aspect of Deleuze's project that leads to the obscurity we find in much of his prose. This explains, further, his interest in writers of paradox such as Lewis Carroll. In this respect, Deleuze makes explicit affinities with the actor, dramatist, and poet, Antonin Artaud,[9] who also produces "defective" writing in order to forestall the kind of reflective enquiry Feuerbach is critical of:

This diffusion in my poems, these defective forms, this constant falling off of my ideas, must not be set down to lack of practice or control of the instrument I was manipulating, of *intellectual development*. Rather to a focal collapse of my soul, a kind of essential and fugitive erosion in thought, to a transitory non-possession of physical gain to my development, to the abnormal separation of elements of thought (the impulse to think at every stratifying endpoint of thought, by way of every condition, through all the branching in thought and form).[10]

If philosophy is not simply to fall into either sophistry or skepticism, it cannot simply remain at the level of stuttering, but instead needs to make this stuttering the foundation of a new method. It needs to think that which is outside of the intellect and reflect on that which has not been given to it ready-made. The notion that concepts are created is therefore intimately connected with the notion that philosophy begins with an encounter with that which is outside of it, whether this is "Socrates, a temple or a demon" (*DR* 139). In this sense, we can say that while there is a definite discipline of philosophy (the discipline of creating concepts), this discipline can only operate by reaching beyond itself, in encounter with that which is not philosophy. Deleuze's own work is exemplary in this respect, with its engagements with cinema, the arts, the sciences, and those aspects of philosophy itself that remain to be encountered (or re-encountered) beneath the sedimented structure of the image of thought: "each distinct discipline is, in its own way, in relation with a negative: even science has a relation with a nonscience that echoes its effects … The plane of philosophy is prephilosophical insofar as we consider it in itself independently of the concepts that come to