

# Deleuze and the “Dialectic” (a.k.a. Marx and Hegel)

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An old question has resurfaced in light of changes that have taken place in the concept of difference over the past 30 years, and I am thinking particularly of the changes effected by those works that Gilles Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* defined as belonging to “a generalized anti-Hegelianism.”<sup>1</sup> These works are well known to us today and do not need much in the way of further clarification. But the question that has returned to demand further clarification is the following: what is the status of the dialectic in the philosophy of difference?

As readers of Hegel and Marx, we understand that the dialectic is a proven means of thinking difference, in that by tracing its movement, “difference finds its own concept in the posited contradiction.”<sup>2</sup> As readers of Deleuze, however, we also know that a “philosophy of difference” refuses a concept of the dialectic that is founded by contradiction, because this method fails to ground a species of difference that is “in itself,” and “the negative and negativity do not even capture the phenomenon of difference, only its phantom or epiphenomenon.”<sup>3</sup> Deleuze writes at many points that contradiction is less and not more profound than difference; less profound means that it has less depth (or volume), that it is superficial (a surface phenomena), an effect of real difference. If difference can be traced or projected onto a flat space, this is because it is already reduced as an element of the space in which it appears (as either contrary, or negative) and, thus, is no longer itself an effective force of differentiation. (According to Althusser’s fine phrase, it is “already found to be pre-digested.”) This is why Deleuze says of the difference that appears via the negative or negativity, that it is only the phantom and epiphenomenon of difference because it continues to manifest itself *for* us (that is, for consciousness) as the “shadow of a more profound genetic element.”<sup>4</sup>

Although the old dialectic “makes difference,” it is true, it is also fashioned from abstract generalities (one and many, whole and part, large and small). It produces contrary concepts, or contradiction, by which being is divided into itself and everything it is not. Yet, this is not effective difference, but rather formal or logical difference. As Deleuze writes, “it is the image of difference, but a flattened and inverted image, like the candle in the eye of an ox.”<sup>5</sup> Infinite representation (the Hegelian dialectic), therefore, suffers from the same defect as Aristotelian finite representation: “that of confusing the concept of difference in itself with the inscription of difference in the identity of the concept in general.”<sup>6</sup> *Hegel takes the dialectic only so far, to the limit of contradiction, while real, effective difference remains either “beyond” or “beneath” this limit in such a manner that sets the mark for philosophy after the “age of Hegel.”*

Given the above claim that Hegel has, so to speak, “set the mark,” it is

remarkable—I am certainly not the first to note this!—that Deleuze did not choose to rectify the Hegelian dialectic. That is to say, like Marx after Hegel, he did not seek to correct or to repair its false and distorted image, or like Althusser after Marx, to complicate its principle of “simple contradiction” so that the dialectic assumes a more complex and “over-determined structure.” On the contrary, according to Deleuze, it was Hegel—not Marx, interestingly enough—who pushed the dialectical determination of difference to its ultimate limit, “that is, to its ground which is no less its return and reproduction than its annihilation.”<sup>7</sup> Consequently, there is a more implicit claim being made here that subsequent attempts to capture the movement of difference by means of a dialectical principle only discover the real *already annihilated in its ground*. This claim would be significant for any discussions concerning the relation between Deleuze and Marx, pro or contra. The statement concerning “the greatness of Marx” aside—a statement that has recently acquired the status of a missing gospel!—the profile of any true relationship must be found in the domain of concepts.

The following discussion will briefly take up and develop these observations in order to explain why Deleuze does not resort to a dialectical “image of thought” to ground his philosophy of difference, even though this does not mean, as I also hope to demonstrate, that he abandons a dialectical procedure of posing problems and solutions. My discussion will focus on several key passages on the dialectical image of thought from *Difference and Repetition*, which I will discuss these in the context of Althusser’s essay “Contradiction and Over-Determination,” an essay that Deleuze himself refers to at a critical point of his argument against contradiction and the negative.<sup>8</sup> After developing these points, I will conclude with some preliminary comments about the nature of Deleuze’s version of the dialectic, which is based on a determination of the *internal* (or as Deleuze often says “genetic”) character of any problematic: “the imperative internal element which decides in the first place its truth or falsity and measures its internal genetic power, that is, *the very object of the dialectic or combinatory, the ‘differential.’*”<sup>9</sup>

To begin I might recall a version of Feuerbach’s thesis: it is because the Gods were created out of our confusion that they continue to confuse us. We might also apply this maxim to the confusion that has surrounded the dialectic. If the image of the dialectic was the product of a certain mystification (caused by the projection of ideational form into real material processes of differentiation, or the substitution of effect for cause), then perhaps the fact that the proper representation of the dialectic continues to elude us is not due to any profound or hidden meaning, but rather because its representation already appears in the form of a false problem, one which distorts the nature of movement itself in thought and in matter. It is possible—as I will cite in a moment, Althusser suggests this himself—that an entire tradition of Marxian inquiry has been preoccupied by the false problem concerning “true image” of the dialectic. This line of Marxist inquiry holds implicitly to the belief that once *we get it right*, things will work out in due course; that is, *once we understand how it (the dialectic) works, then history will resume a dialectical path*. (Hence, we have witnessed the repeated calls to “purify” the dialectic, or to rigorously fashion a “specifically Marxist dialectic.”) “If the dialectic, as Lenin said, is realized as the conception of contradiction within in the very heart of things, in their development, but also in their

non-development, their distortions, and mutations, and even in their disappearance, then we will have attained the definition and specificity of the Marxist contradiction, the Marxist dialectic itself."<sup>10</sup>

In Althusser's hands, this problem of representation itself takes the form of a paradox, or more specifically, the well-known *aporia* of "the rational kernel in the mystical shell," which occasions the famous meditation and textual analysis that occurs in the beginning of the essay "Contradiction and Over-Determination," concerning the image of inner (live, rational, perhaps I might even risk saying "spiritual") essence and outer (dead, mystical) form. This *aporia* undergoes several variations until we arrive to the conclusion that it is not simple "inversion," which would only amount to a change of dress, of one (dead) appearance (or metaphor) for another. Because the dialectic is contaminated *in principle*, Althusser argues, what is required is not its simple correction or rectification, but rather a transformation in such a way that the *aporia* of the shell and the kernel are replaced by a new structural determination that will throw some light on, not the old principle, but rather "the specificity of the Marxist dialectic."<sup>11</sup> To his credit, Althusser crystallizes this problem by fully realizing the above *aporia* in his "theoretical practice of reading Marx," but it could also be said that this new method did not make the dialectic any less mystifying. Althusser did not, in concrete terms, solve the problem of the dialectic, but rather defer its solution, by a more tortuous route, to "the last instance." As an aside, we might ask whether or not this solution had the effect of re-introducing the Hegelian absolute moment, or "Circle of circles," back into Marxist theoretical practice, although this time as this circle appears from "below," as a kind of zig-zag line or de-centered cyclone of material history following the law of "uneven development."

Turning now to our commentary on Deleuze, we might notice that everything said concerning the dialectic up to this point has been posed in terms of problems and solutions. As is well known—and this is true for Althusser as well—the dialectic already represents a certain solution that is situated in the practice of Marxist theory, and it is from here that the problems and questions have arisen that have challenged this theory's coherence (for example, the problem of "the weakest link," or the problem that Althusser calls "*les survivances*," which are those points of potential social contradiction that are present only to the degree that they are "*dépassé*" and thus appear, like in dream work, as the ghosts of a future anterior). In order to resolve such problems on a theoretical level, Althusser and Deleuze both argue that problems of this type are only shadows that must be viewed from the perspective of a "deeper," more primordial problem which corresponds to the social solution originally posed in the division of labor, that is, the primary contradiction in Marxist theory, the division between the forces of production and the relations of production. In the encounter with this primordial problem, which is the problem of production as such, society attempts to solve it by means of the division of labor, and not only once, but repeatedly.

In one of those odd, but characteristic moments in his exposition of the problem-differentiation scheme (namely, the dialectic), Deleuze does not refer to the concept of Marx, but rather a passage from the historian Arnold Toynbee "who, it is true, is little suspected of Marxism":

We could say that society confronts in the course of its existence a succession of problems that each member must solve for himself as best he can. The statement of each of these problems takes the form of a challenge which must be undertaken as a test. By means of this series of tests, the members of society are progressively differentiated from one another.<sup>12</sup>

As a result, the problem itself gradually appears “over-determined,” as the problem of multiplicity, whether the concept of multiplicity here is understood in the very presence of multiple classes that are the products of this earlier division, or of the many historical formations of society that correspond to the different stages of production, some of which continue to co-exist and become co-implicated in a present formation (though in the manner of “*les survivances*”). Marx himself addresses both expressions of multiplicity in the Introduction to *The Grundrisse*, in the subsection “Externalization of Historic Relations of Production.” However, in a footnote that refers to Althusser’s reading in *Pour Marx*, Deleuze argues that “it is still the case that for Althusser it is contradiction which is over-determined and differential, and the totality of these contradictions remains legitimately grounded in a principle contradiction.”<sup>13</sup> This last remark highlights, in my view, a fundamental difference between Deleuze’s problem-differentiation schema of the dialectic, which I will outline below, from that of Althusser for whom there is only one form of contradiction from which all other contradictions are derived, like a “genus” that undergoes infinite subdivision into the multiplication of “species” of contradiction in a differential structure. Moreover, this schema recalls Althusser’s debt to psychoanalytic theory at this point of his project, particularly the psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan, and one can easily substitute the two terms in the title “Contradiction and Over-Determination” with the two primary attributes that define the Freudian concept of the Unconscious: contradiction = condensation (“fusion”), and over-determination = displacement (“mutation”)—i.e. the totality of multiple contradictions subsumed under one concept in general, and at the same time, the effective distribution (or “dispersal”) of this over-determined and differential multiplicity following the law of “uneven development.”

In Chapter 4 of *Difference and Repetition*, “Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference,” Deleuze extracts the following dialectical progression of the problem-differentiation schema:

- (a) First, the affirmations of being are genetic elements in the form of imperative questions;
- (b) these develop into the positivity of problems;
- (c) the propositions of consciousness are engendered affirmations which designate cases of solution;
- (d) each proposition, however, has a double negative [1] which expresses the shadow of the problem in the domain of solutions—in other words, it expresses the manner in which the problem subsists in the distorted image [2] of it given in representation.<sup>14</sup>

If we were to apply this problem-differentiation scheme on a Marxian terrain, what would it look like?

The problems of a society, as they are determined in the infra-structure in the form of so-called “abstract” labor [b], receive their solution from the process of

actualization or *differentiation* (the concrete division of labor [c]). [Here I note that we have skipped the first postulate [a], “the affirmations of being in the form of imperative questions,” for reasons I will return to explain below.] However, as long as the problem [abstract labor, forces of production] projects its shadow [d-1] over the ensemble of *differenciated* cases forming the solution [the concrete division of the *socius*, or the relations of production], these will present a falsified image [d-2] of the problem itself.<sup>15</sup>

In commenting on this dialectical progression, I will make two observations or clarifications of the schema that Deleuze offers, after which I will address two potential objections from a Marxian perspective.

### First observation

In the last postulate, Deleuze implicitly rejects a dominant concept of ideology as a certain “after-pressure” (*Verdrängung*, derived from the psychoanalytic concept of “repression”) that is projected to distort the true nature of the problem, deferring the true representation of the problem to *another consciousness* (even that of a dark or latent intentionality). By doing so, he implicitly corrects an error that has taken place in the historical appropriation of the psychoanalytic concept of “the Unconscious” (*das Unbewusste*) by the tradition of Marxist theory, especially pertaining to function of “Ideology.” In his foundational article on “The Unconscious,” Freud himself stated that its effects cannot be simply referred to the presence of “another consciousness” (albeit even one that is latent), which would reduce a dynamic understanding of the Unconscious to a mere “sub-conscious” level of psychic functioning; in short, the effects of “repression” or “distortion” would simply be inferred from the position of another subject, as we have seen repeatedly in various conspiracy narratives.

At the same time, Deleuze does retain the notion of “false consciousness” as what he defines as the field of “objectified illusion,” since, as he writes, “falsification accompanies and doubles the problem.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, Deleuze retains the critique of the “speculative illusion” associated with the critique of Feuerbach, the illusion that consists of the identification of thought and being, of difference in the concept from difference “in itself.” As Deleuze defines it, the negative is both the *shadow of the problem as such*, and at the same time, *the objective field of the false problem* in which all forms of non-being appear: false oppositions, distortions, illusions. Yet, in keeping with Althusser’s criticism of the Feurbachian tradition, Deleuze does not commit a simple inversion either, that is, he does not locate the movement of difference on the surface of the real. Deleuze is not a vulgar empiricist. Rather, “the origin of the illusion which subjects difference to the false power of the negative must therefore be sought, not in the sensible world itself, but that which acts in depth and is incarnated in the sensible world.”<sup>17</sup> What is it exactly that “acts in the depth” and then is “incarnated in the sensible world”? Deleuze replies, “affirmations of difference” (see [a] above), that is, when the positivity of problems are “posited” (in the real, in its depth) giving rise to propositions and, in turn, to “the objects of which are those differences which correspond to the relations and singularities of a differential field.”<sup>18</sup> As Deleuze immediately goes on to qualify, everything is reversed if we begin with consciousness, and try to trace the propositions back to their problems—Ideas (which are by nature unconscious). If we do then

“illusion takes shape” (via resemblance, limitation, opposition), and “a shadow awakens and appears to acquire a life of its own,” as occurs in Hegel, for example, when “Spirit” is born as a Subject that acts in the world.

Still, we find that there is some gesture of inversion in Deleuze’s reading; for example, when Deleuze writes the following: “Negation is difference, but difference see from its underside, seen from below. Seen the right way up, from top to bottom, difference is affirmation.”<sup>19</sup> This inversion has two aspects. First, the inversion is from difference determined as negative (as *not* or *no*) to difference understood as a positive affirmation, but which is not simply “the negation of negation.” Thus, all negation is derivative or reactive in relation to a prior affirmation, a relation which it seeks to limit or contain. “As Nietzsche says, affirmation is primary; it affirms difference, while the negative is only a consequence or a reflection in which affirmation is doubled.”<sup>20</sup> Second, Deleuze attaches this affirmation to a positive thesis of “multiplicity,” the co-existence of multiple worlds, which he draws from Leibniz. Difference is the object of an affirmation, and only affirmations can effectively make difference. There are multiple perspectives which are not gathered into one center which orders them in advance, but rather which enter into “play”; this would be different than the Hegelian representation of Spirit as subject thinking itself (Self = Self), as itself and what it is not (the world, the object). On the contrary, there is no Subject underlying the appearance of difference, no preliminary inside that relates itself to an outside, or projects its own limitation onto an alien or external reality.

Is the dialectical form retained? Yes, but “contradiction,” especially the primary contradiction, is abandoned as less profound than a plurality of forces that begin to differentiate themselves. For example, in the context of our discussion of the Marxist dialectic, this would imply that the division of classes is not given for all cases, or that this division does not assume the same form each time for all possible worlds. In other words, if I could put this in terms of a problem that I believe concerns us all today, how do we get from difference that is determined, already over, and in this sense negative or non-being (the division of the classes), to a difference that is full, effective, not yet determined? That is, how do we get from a world in which the dice is always already cast to a world that is just on the verge of a throw of the dice? Deleuze replies that it is by means of an Idea which cannot be located in the real, but rather in an act that works in the depths and incarnates itself in the sensible world. This is a revolutionary Idea for which there is no sufficient reason, no grounds in this world, because the Idea already appears as a “shadow” of a more primary affirmation, in the form of unrealized possibility, or “a survival”—which is to say that it embodies a form of non-sense when it is determined by the concept of contradiction. This leads me to my second observation and potential objection.

## Second observation

If we noted above that Deleuze skips the first postulate, “the affirmations of being in the form of imperative questions,” we can now find it as the object of what he calls “*a transcendental social faculty*.” Revolution, for example, is the object of affirmation as well as the genesis of imperatives upon which this affirmation depends. It is a *virtual object*, meaning that the Idea of revolution *exists*, and it is from its *positive reality* that its existence is “actualized” according

to divergent lines that represent the multiple states of this Idea. Thus, the “idea” of revolution is the transcendental object of a social faculty, which means that its concept cannot be “traced back” from the propositions and cases of a solution which are posed in consciousness. Here, Deleuze is arguing (against Althusser) that the being of the primary problem (i.e. the being of production) cannot be traced back beginning from its states of “non-actualization,” or non-Being; therefore, it cannot appear in the position of “the last instance” of a negative dialectical progression, no matter how “rigorously” conceived.

Deleuze argues that the negative is merely the turning shadow of the problematic upon the set of proposition that subsumes it as cases. For example, when the problematic of production is already subsumed under the negative of the division of labor, the mode of production is already determined (negatively) by the concrete relations of production. A critique that begins with the present division of labor as the primary instance of the social dialectic fails to grasp the true nature of the problem, “but assumes as given the affirmation ready made in the proposition.”<sup>21</sup> On the one hand, to affirm the same division of labor as given for all times effectively distorts the true social problematic from which society itself begins: for which the question of “division” becomes an imperative affirmation, but the form of division is not yet ready-made. On the other hand, to assume the problematic of division itself, prior to the determinate cases of distinct classes that are already the products of division, is the problem of a revolutionary perspective that continues to exist alongside all its negative states. This is why, despite all its “negative realizations,” the Idea of revolution continues to exist as a reality today, even if it remains purely virtual, and often appears as a shadow.

We might illustrate this last statement by returning to the two central problems that appear highlighted in Althusser’s analysis: “the weakest link,” and the “survivals” (*les survivances*). We already noted that they appear as problems in Marxist theory for which solutions must be created, but that they also appear in a negative form as defects of the Idea, that is, as either the displacement of the virtual object (i.e. revolution), or as its “non-actualization” despite the determinate conditions that were present in certain historical cases (e.g. England, Germany). In both senses (or incarnations), it is this “contradiction” that must be accounted for in order to meet the crisis of the Marxist idea of revolution. But here, there is the potential critique of Marxist dialectic in that the Idea in both cases assumes a form of the possible, and this explains why its object is already viewed negatively: as the non-realization of the possible (viewed from its non-being, so to speak, that is projected backwards as the obstacle to its actualization); or as a defective object, a defect which serves to condemn it to the position of a future anterior. We might briefly return to the problem of the Russian revolution, for example, and say that it is not a question of its defect, but rather of its image (or shadow) which has determined the transcendental object for the other social faculties that followed it, and which acted as their fateful “double” (the shadow of totalitarianism, that is, the case of one solution of concrete social division of production).

As Deleuze advises, “we must guard every time against this manner in which a perfectly positive (non)-being leans toward the negative non-being and tends to collapse into its own shadow, finding there its most profound distortion, to the further advantage of the illusion of consciousness.”<sup>22</sup> It is for this reason that

in the conclusion of *Difference and Repetition*, “the negative” is defined as the third transcendental illusion that belongs to Representation. As a result of its “mystification”—and I note that Deleuze employs this word in this context which has clear origins in Marx—“intensity is inverted and appears upside down” and the power of “affirming difference” is “betrayed” by limitation and opposition which are the first- and second-dimension surface effects (i.e. shadows).<sup>23</sup>

In order to ward off the inevitable objections that might at this point, it would be a mistake to understand the nature of the problem in the sense of going back to the beginning, to the primary affirmation of being (i.e. production), as if to a moment that is prior to its distinct incarnation in society as a problem corresponding, historically, to a determinate solution or case. Rather, as Deleuze argues, this primary affirmation *can and does* occur, but “as differential relations around certain *distinctive points* ... relations that can become centers of envelopment within a continuum, centers of possible implication or involution” (my emphasis).<sup>24</sup> This is Deleuze’s Leibnizian solution, which holds that individuation precedes the actual determination of species, even though it is already preceded by the whole differential continuum” (for example, the concrete division of labor). Later on, in the works undertaken with Guattari, these “differential relations around certain distinctive points” will be described in terms of different “becomings” that are actualized within a continuum of differential relations (e.g. “becoming-woman,” becoming-animal,” or “becoming-imperceptible”), and which are precisely characterized as “centers of possible implication or involution.” Moreover, the primary being of production will be recast in terms of primarily productive nature of the Unconscious that one finds from *Anti-Oedipus* (1973) onward, and it is here that we can locate the first term of the above dialectical progression, in which “(a) the affirmations of being are genetic elements in the form of imperative questions.”

Is not Deleuze articulating the condition and criteria of a radical theoretical practice by saying that it must carry out a genesis of affirmation at the same time that it carries out critique of the negative? Deleuze defines very clearly at several points of *Difference and Repetition* that a critique of negativity can only be conducted on the basis of an ideal, differential, and problematic element, “on the basis of an Idea.”<sup>25</sup> The Idea is a multiplicity, for which Deleuze reserves the name of “positivity” and in which there is no negativity or limitation; “the critique of the negative is radical (here meaning ‘rooted’) only when it carries out a genesis of affirmation and, *simultaneously*, the genesis of the appearance of negation.”<sup>26</sup> This forms an axiomatic rule of Deleuze’s analysis in later works with Guattari, and we might also note here a certain parallelism between with Althusser’s famous statement from the opening of “On the Materialist Dialectic,” concerning the two requirements of a “theoretical practice”: the *production* of knowledge (theory) and the *critique* of illusion, in one movement.<sup>27</sup> However, we might also note the crucial difference implied the substitution of the “genesis of affirmation” in Deleuze’s two criteria for “the *production* of knowledge” in Althusser’s.<sup>28</sup> This implies that no effective critique of the negative can be produced outside an affirmation of a difference which is fully positive, or *creative*, and it is on the basis of this difference that the negative appears as the shadow produced by this primary affirmation. As Deleuze writes, “practical struggle never proceeds by way of the negative but by way of difference and

affirmation; that of deciding problems and restoring them to their truth; and finally, by evaluating their truths always in terms of the imperatives upon which they depend."<sup>29</sup>

But this positive evaluation leads to a second potential objection in that it would seem to leave the field open and indeterminate, so to speak, concerning where effective and affirmative difference can be engendered within an existing society. It allows for a certain subject to lay claim to the idea of a virtual object (society itself) in order to deploy its positive affirmation of difference, and in turn, to critique the negative forms that appear to threaten this affirmation. It even allows, or at least, does not prohibit, the co-existence of multiple affirmations all of which grasp this virtual object as so many societies that are "*perplexed*," as Deleuze says, within the same social body. As a result, we seem to be evoking a situation similar to the one recounted in "*Plato and the Simulacrum*," in which there is of a series of claimants, pretenders, and lovers all of whom lay claim to the Ideal!<sup>30</sup> But if we were to imagine for this situation that all affirmations are equal, or that all differences can co-exist peacefully without undergoing negation, then we would fall into the error of the beautiful soul—a charge, it is true, that has all too often been leveled at Deleuze's conception of difference as affirmation. Yet, in order to posit such a charge one has to assume the position that already reduces every difference to equality, that is, to already trace or project it onto a flat space, to place it on the slope of the identical and "abstract" difference. Therefore, at each point that Deleuze rejects "negativity" as ultimately creative of difference, he immediately defends this assertion from the position of the "beautiful soul" in Hegel's philosophy. Does this mean that he already assigns himself the problem of the beautiful soul, one who does not, so to speak, get his hands dirty with real negativity, but chooses rather to live above the violence idealizing pure difference? (This has certainly been an underlying theme of the reception of Deleuze and Guattari's works by different critics, especially by feminists and Marxist critics.) In response to this potential accusation, Deleuze draws up two avatars of those who "justify destruction": the poet and the politician. This returns us again to Plato, this time via the detour of Marx. The politician justifies the destruction of difference in order to maintain the identity of the established order, while the poet justifies destruction in order to release a maximum of difference. What Deleuze rejects, however, is the frequent alternative employed to wed affirmation to passive contemplation of the world, and effective difference to bloody contradiction, to "the real world" made by so-called "History."

Finally, we might ask what this alternative might mean in practical terms and how it pertains to Deleuze and the dialectic (a.k.a. Hegel and Marx). Here I recall that difference is negative only from the bottom; from the top down it is positive, affirmative. Yet, immediately there is a possible objection which can be formulated as follows: one can only *know* difference from below, that is, in its concrete incarnation, which implies in its negative form. One can never *know* difference "in itself," as purely affirmative. As we have already seen earlier, this criticism opens the trap door already prepared for by Hegel: the critique of the "beautiful soul" who claims to *know* difference in its pure or unadulterated state ("uncontaminated," as Althusser would say). To clarify Deleuze's response to this problem, allow me to quote two passages from *Difference and Repetition*

where he skirts this danger as well as the accusation of the beautiful soul. First passage:

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 one in effect 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 onto the field of battle, one who sees in inextinguishable struggles only simple “*differends*” and 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.<sup>31</sup>

Second passage:

Clearly at this point the philosophy of difference must be wary of turning into the discourse of beautiful souls: differences, nothing but differences, in a peaceful coexistence in the Idea of social places and functions ... but the name of Marx is sufficient to save it from this danger.<sup>32</sup>

Addressing only the second defense, we must ask how is it that the “*name of Marx*” alone sufficient to avert this danger? Is this not tantamount to turning the name of “*Marx*” into a shibboleth, a chant that one resorts like a sacred talisman to in order to ward off the shadow cast by Hegel? No. Rather what this declaration implies I believe is that, after Marx, the problem of the dialectic itself has changed *in principle* (specifically the principle of its repetition in thought and being *in one another*). The difference between Deleuze and Althusser concerning this proposition is profound, since for the former it is an object of affirmation while, for the latter, this affirmation must itself be produced by the labor of the negative (i.e. “*theory*”). In short, these are two very different perspectives concerning the “*problematic*” of difference.

In conclusion, therefore, let us say of Marx that he is the Pierre Menard of philosophy, who repeated the Hegelian dialectic in such a way that everything has changed—and *today one can only read Hegel through the repetition effected by Marx!* In other words, Hegel is the double of Marx, and to reverse this proposition is to distort the name of Marx for a shadow cast by Hegel. In terms of our above discussion, Hegel may very well continue to be a shadow today—but I would say he is the thin shadow cast by Don Quixote on his horse which continues to ride across the plain of problems and solutions. Likewise, discussions of Deleuze’s so-called “*anti-Hegelianism*” may also be characterized as a false problem, even comic in its repetition, since these discussions inevitably end up turning Marx into the figure of Sancho Pansa saddling the horse of his Master. The crucial point is that the system of Hegel is no longer possible *for us*, and therefore can be characterized as “*a survival,*” the negative double of an Idea introduced in this world by Marx. Perhaps, it is only in the sense of this repetition “*rigorously affirmed*” that today the name of Marx is already enough to dispel the ghost of Hegel, but only under the condition that we affirm this difference as *real* and not as *merely possible*.

## Notes

1. Deleuze, Gilles (1968/1994) *Difference and Repetition*, Paul Patton (trans.) (New York: Columbia), p. xix.
2. Deleuze, p. 45.
3. Deleuze, p. 52.
4. Deleuze, p. 55.
5. Deleuze, p. 51.
6. Deleuze, p. 50.
7. Deleuze, p. 45.
8. Althusser, Louis (1965) *Pour Marx* (Paris: Maspero), pp. 87–128. Translations of passages from this work are mine.
9. Deleuze, pp. 161–162.
10. Althusser, p. 223.
11. Althusser, p. 91.
12. Deleuze, p. 327n.
13. Deleuze, p. 311n.
14. Deleuze, p. 206.
15. Deleuze, p. 207.
16. Deleuze, p. 207.
17. Deleuze, p. 267.
18. Deleuze, p. 267.
19. Deleuze, p. 55.
20. Deleuze, p. 268.
21. Deleuze, p. 206.
22. Deleuze, p. 203.
23. Deleuze, p. 47.
24. Deleuze, p. 47.
25. Deleuze, p. 203.
26. Deleuze, p. 206.
27. Althusser, p. 166.
28. On the Deleuzian conception of “practice,” as distinct from Althusser’s, see Hardt, Michael (1993) *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), pp. 115–122.
29. Deleuze, p. 208.
30. The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy. In: Gilles Deleuze (ed.) *The Logic of Sense*, Mark Lester with Charles Stivalle (trans.) (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 253–266.
31. Deleuze, p. 52.
32. Deleuze, p. 207.