

Heideggerian Truth and Deleuzian Genesis as Differential ‘Grounds’ of Philosophy: Miguel de Beistegui’s *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology*

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“Time was when metaphysics was entitled the Queen of all the sciences.... Now, however, the changed fashion of the time brings her only scorn; a matron outcast and forsaken, she mourns like Hecuba....”¹ So writes Kant in the 1781 *Critique of Pure Reason*, in which he seeks to restore the Queen. But as Miguel de Beistegui writes in *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology*², in 2004, “Much of philosophy today seems like a great lady fallen into destitution, who knocks at every door, and especially that of the sciences, begging them to give her some function, some task to keep her busy, however modest it may be; for that is better than disappearing altogether.” (335) For Kant, “the pre-eminent importance of her accepted tasks” makes philosophy, even whilst scorned, at least deserving of her own title, but now, de Beistegui remarks with alarm, philosophy has lost even that, it is philosophy *of* art, science, economics or ethics—it seeks title from other disciplines. To adopt a more acid tone than de Beistegui’s, eavesdroppers on some philosophy department meetings today (at least in North America) might be forgiven for thinking that, in the way that IBM is

1 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan Education, 1987), p. A viii.

2 Miguel de Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis: Philosophy as Differential Ontology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2004).

proud supplier of information technology to the Olympics, philosophy is proud supplier of argument, reason, or ethics to other disciplines—rather than being entitled to anything of its own to think about.

The question of *Truth and Genesis* is whether instead of a philosophy *of* this or that there is still “the possibility that philosophy be *of* everything.” Clearly this is a central and critical question for us. The book’s ambition is to show that philosophy can be *of* everything by becoming an ontology undreamt of in any other thinking. But philosophy can do so “only by twisting free of the classical and dominant interpretation of ontology,” (336, emphasis mine) which dominant ontology, for de Beistegui, is an “*ousiology*” that reduces being to the sort of presence (*ousia/parousia*) found in an object or subject that is complete and has a self-identical essence that can therefore be re-presented.

Why is it that philosophy can be philosophy only by twisting free of ousiology, of the philosophy of essences? Kant restored his Queen by discovering transcendental subjectivity as the special preserve of philosophy. But once transcendental subjectivity is presented as an object of study, it is but a few steps from turning into an empirical psychology and cognitive science, from our situation, in which a natural science of subjectivity claims to ground epistemology and even ethics, and all that is left to philosophy is analysing the dregs of scientific claims.³ In fact, *Truth and Genesis* as a whole would imply that so long as ontology seeks its ground in something present, in essences, so long is philosophy open to having its ground become the object of another discipline, so long is philosophy open to having no title to philosophy. In “Violence and Metaphysics” Derrida asks whether it is possible to feign speaking a language⁴, and in a way de Beistegui is remarking that philosophy cannot

3 To be sure, Husserl’s attack on psychologism and Heidegger’s existential analytic of Dasein wrest a new preserve for philosophy, but these too are incorporated into science, as witnessed by the current question of naturalizing phenomenology, which would seek the neural correlates of Husserlian temporality and so on. See *Naturalizing Phenomenology: Issues in Contemporary Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*, ed. by Jean Petitot, and others, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999) and *The Cambridge Companion to Merleau-Ponty*, ed. by Taylor Carman and Mark B. N. Hansen, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

4 Jacques Derrida, ‘Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas’, trans. by Alan Bass, in *Writing and Difference*, vols (Chicago:

feign speaking of the objects of science as such without in fact speaking in a way that converts philosophy to science. And so *Truth and Genesis* does *not* seek to restore philosophy to its traditional throne, for this would amount to speaking of an essentialism that would let other disciplines claim title over philosophy. For philosophy to have its own title it must become a differential ontology, a philosophy of a ground that cannot be presented or represented. *Truth and Genesis* presents two such philosophies: Heidegger's philosophy of ground as *Abgrund*, as abyss; and Deleuze's transcendental empiricism as grounded in the "dark precursor." I provisionally call these philosophies of the ab-ground.

My main focus here is ab-ground. This is because the central contribution of *Truth and Genesis* on its largest scale is its indication that ab-ground is vital to philosophy and its positioning of Deleuze and Heidegger (of the *Beiträge* and beyond) as 'two' 'sides' of a philosophy of ab-ground. Heideggerian truth, *aletheia*, discloses ab-ground through what de Beistegui calls the *epiphanic* and *poematic* (16), through phenomenology pushed past its limit, whereas Deleuzian genesis virtualises the ab-ground through what de Beistegui calls the mathematical and genetic (16), through science and the empirical pushed past their limit in a transcendental empiricism. Put otherwise, Heidegger reveals the differential sense of being as it is for-us and Deleuze reveals this sense as it is in-itself—the for-us and in-itself distinction is one drawn by de Beistegui (cf. 26, 339). What is remarkable is that de Beistegui's philosophical project is capacious and ambitious enough to encompass both these philosophies, which are often positioned as at odds. Indeed in his treatment these two philosophies somewhat overlap. For de Beistegui, Heidegger's philosophy will always have been rooted in phenomenology, in a humanistic perspective, even if it turns away from the human or Dasein to the grounder of the abyss; nonetheless, in turning to the ab-ground, it addresses a sense of being central to Deleuze's anti-anthropological anti-phenomenology. And, on the other side, Deleuzian philosophy, as turning away from the human to a pre-personal, pre-individual transcendental, as thereby creating the ontology that would characterise contemporary science, is a philosophy in which "the ontological difference is to be understood as genesis, and not as truth" (22), which means that Deleuze's transcendental empiricism opens

up Heideggerian ontological difference in a new light. To this extent de Beistegui tantalisingly hints at something like a rapprochement or overlap between two major routes/roots of 'continental' philosophy, between a philosophy that radicalises subjectivity by way of a radicalised Husserlian phenomenology and a philosophy that would rather go in the other direction, to the impersonal of matter and time, by way of a Bergsonian intuition.

Yet here a deep question arises, because, as de Beistegui writes in his conclusion, "There is no synthesis, no third moment that brings the two sides of being together. Nor is there something like an order of grounding and derivation between them." (338) This should not surprise us: in a philosophy of the ab-ground there would be no ground holding together being in-itself and being for-itself. Nor would there be a synthesis of an epiphanic-poematic philosophy and mathematical-genetic philosophy, or a ground unifying the human and the scientific, the arts and nature. Strictly speaking, in a philosophy of the ab-ground we cannot even feign speaking of 'two' 'sides' of being or philosophy, for 'twoness'⁵ or 'sidedness' would already draw differences to a unifying ground; perhaps we should not even feign speaking of an in-itself and a for-itself, for we would thus feign a ground in a common 'itself'. And yet: de Beistegui's book of the ab-ground does join these differences in its title—and does so in the name of difference. Indeed, in a book whose very end will not synthesise its elements, what is most enigmatic is the "and" that conjoins truth and genesis at its very beginning, in the book's very title and cover.

What I would now like to pursue is the concept of ab-ground, by taking up smaller scale results. Here I study de Beistegui's Deleuze, rather than his Heidegger, because it is in the discussion of genesis, in giving us the natural and mathematical science to make sense of Deleuze's ontology, that *Truth and Genesis* is most exciting. This part of the book stands as a more radically ontological complement to Delanda's reconstruction of Deleuze in *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*.⁶

5 Cf. Luce Irigaray, *I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity Within History*, trans. by Alison Martin (New York: Routledge, 1996).

6 Manuel Delanda, *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy* (London: Continuum, 2002).

By situating Deleuze's encounter with science within a general problem about philosophy, traditional metaphysics and science, de Beistegui contributes not just to Deleuze scholarship, but also to continental philosophy of science. (De Beistegui also draws in figures not canvassed by Delanda. Especially intriguing is De Beistegui's illuminating treatment of Simondon.) Most important, what I have called ab-ground comes into sharper focus through Deleuze than through de Beistegui's account of Heidegger. But before going to Deleuze it must be noted that De Beistegui's careful reading of Heidegger importantly contributes to the scholarship by giving a nuanced interpretation of the contrast between the central themes of Heidegger's *Being and Time* and his *Beiträge*, especially around the theme of *Dasein*, and then using this contrast to connect the *Beiträge* and the later work, especially on the fourfold (*Geviert*). But, as John Sallis points out there is a way in which the *Beiträge* remains untranslatable—even in German.⁷ This is one reason why, perhaps, de Beistegui turns to Deleuze. Indeed, if I am not mistaken, in de Beistegui's book there is some despair about Heidegger's tendency to work exclusively in the *epiphanic-poematic* mode, to neglect science and disclose difference only through the for-itself, which is why Deleuze's mathematico-genetic encounter with science is important, for in it ontological difference "is to be understood as genesis, and not as truth" (22). Genesis is thus perhaps an escape from Heideggerian *aletheia*.

My procedure in what follows is to resynthesise de Beistegui's Deleuze in a tour of one of his key results and its implications. De Beistegui's book is about inherently difficult philosophical topics—ontology and difference—and inherently difficult authors—Heidegger, Deleuze, Hegel, Aristotle. Rather than trying to capture all the detail and nuance of *Truth and Genesis*, my concern here is to first of all make a key result accessible so as to lead us back to ab-ground and the large scale problem of relation between truth and genesis.

To soap bubbles and salt crystals, then, examples that de Beistegui develops from Delanda. In its simplest incarnation the soap bubble

appears approximate to a spherical surface, and the salt crystal approximate to a cube. Spheres and cubes are very basic geometrical shapes, well studied since the beginnings of geometry, which coincide with the beginnings of philosophy. Geometrically, we can define the spherical surface as the locus of all points equidistant from a point, and we can define the cube as a solid figure that has six square faces. This definition of the cube is notably and remarkably elegant; it does not need to specify that the squares be of equal size or meet at right angles, for six squares faces can combine in a solid figure only if they meet these criteria. These definitions exemplify essentialist thinking as aiming to penetrate beyond instances of spheres and cubes to a compact set of underlying characteristics that identify what is universally essential, one and the same, in all possible instances of spheres and cubes, such that spheres are different than cubes and so on.

When we look at spherical and cuboidal natural objects, we have been inclined to prolong this essentialist paradigm. Because a bubble looks spherical, we conclude it must have been brought into being by something, an idea, program, generative function, call it what you will, that specifies the bubble's form in terms of what we take to be geometrically essential to spheres; the essence of a sphere is reflected in the bubble's shape and in turn the essence of the bubble is specified as reflecting its spherical shape. The shape of the soap bubble, for example, is thought to be a function of equidistance of parts from a central point. Similarly with the cubic crystal. Five consequences follow. First, the sphericity of the soap bubble resembles something already specified in its essence. It resembles its essence in the sense that it reflects or represents in a different way something already fully present, at least in specification, in the bubble's essence, in the way that, in Aristotle's hylemorphism, the form of the mature plant resembles a form internal to the seed and the plant thereby also resembles the form of its parent and the eternal form of its species. Second, to the extent that the spherical soap bubble resembles an essence that foretells sphericity, the bubble therefore does not resemble the cuboid crystal; the difference between the bubble and the crystal is not held in common by these individual things themselves, but rather goes back to essences that would already specify and organise the differences between the bubble and crystal. Third, and relatedly, in thinking this way we are thinking about a world of no surprises, what Merleau-Ponty would call a ready-made world. If

⁷ John Sallis, 'Grounders of the Abyss', in *Companion to Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy*, ed. by Charles E. Scott, vols (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), pp. 181-197.

the function for bubble generation specifies that molecules of soap-film be moved so as to be equidistant from a point, it is no surprise that the soap bubble turns out to be spherical. Fourth, to draw on a related Bergsonian criticism, we are thinking about a world in which time makes no real difference, since the spherical shape of the bubble is already foretold in its essence. Fifth, and here again this echoes Bergson, we are thinking in a way notably governed by an anthropocentric point of view. Spheres and cubes catch our eye, hand and craft, and thereby become central to our geometry and are defined therein in terms of a human *logos* that compactly captures, in an atemporal formula, what first strikes the eye and what is central to manufacture: regularities of shape. We then reconstruct spherical bubbles and cubic crystals in light of this geometry—as if nature works along the lines of the human hand, eye and mind.

Now, contemporary science tells us that the world is rather more surprising, and here is where I begin resynthesising de Beistegui. The soap bubble and the crystal hold something in common: in both cases, the physical shape of the system arises from the process of minimising free energy; in the soap bubble, it is surface tension that is minimised, in the salt crystal, it is bonding energy. In the technical language of dynamic systems, in both cases the systems may at first occupy a wide variety of positions and trajectories in the state space that describes the possible configurations and energies of the system; but then they converge⁸ on a position or recurrent trajectory in which free energy reaches a minimum. This convergent position or recurrent trajectory is characterised by a topological form in the system's state space, and this is what Deleuze, according to de Beistegui and Delanda, calls a singularity. Thus, as de Beistegui notes, Deleuze can say that "singularities are like "implicit forms that are topological, rather than geometric"." (259-261) That is, the *geometrical* form of the bubble or crystal as the physicist might put it, "falls out" of the system's convergence on a *topological form in state space*; the geometrical form, as the physicists say, "comes for free," in the way that, as Stephen Jay Gould observes, the architectural constraints of building a square building with a domed top happen to give you, "for free," spandrels, triangular niches convenient for displaying statues. Geometrical form is a

8 De Beistegui speaks of systems constrained "to seek" a point of minimal free energy; the point about constraint seems right, but it seems wrong to speak of "seeking" in this context.

spandrel of the system's dynamic topology. Crucially, then, what conditions the geometrical form of bubbles and crystals is not at all anything geometrical (to use a Heideggerian phrasing adopted by de Beistegui).

This reverses the five consequences of essentialist thinking. First, and most important, the sphericity of the soap bubble does not resemble anything specified in its condition. As de Beistegui emphasises, singularities as "implicit [dynamic-topological] forms" specify long-term *tendencies* of systems and so singularities "tend to be recurrent." (260) A lot is packed into this inference from tendencies to recurrence; let me try to unpack it by way of contrast with Aristotelian form. Aristotelian form is inseparable from the end (*telos*) of producing one sort of substance vs. another: in virtue of its formal cause, a plant reproduces another plant of the same species; this reproduction of form is the final cause of the plant, because in reproducing its species, a mortal individual plant approximates to the eternal.⁹ Formal cause is thus also inseparable from the material cause in which substantial compounds such as plants are realised: the form of a plant can only be worked out in the germ-material of a plant, not in the matter of an animal. In contrast, because long-term tendencies have no specific end and are correlatively freed from ties to specific material systems, the long-term tendency of minimising free energy can, e.g., recur in very different systems such as the bubble and the crystal. This means that these tendencies "*tend to characterise processes independently of their particular physical mechanisms*. [The tendencies] account for [the physical mechanisms], while being nothing like them: the "condition" of the sphericity of the soap bubble [energy minimisation] is itself nothing spherical." And so "the geometrical properties of the object" are "the *effect* of a process that in no way *resembles* the geometrical shape of the object. There is a radical heterogeneity between the two [between the apparent form and what conditions it]." (260, emphases in original) This radical heterogeneity is key. It overturns the logic in which the essence of something reflects or resembles that thing. In addition to clarifying what Deleuze means by singularities, de Beistegui thus clarifies the Deleuzian logic of expression or sense, in which as Len Lawlor puts it, "'the expressed' does not exist

9 Cf. *On the Soul* II.4, 415a23-415b8, *Generation of Animals* II.1, 731b25-732a10.

outside of the expression and yet bears no resemblance to it."¹⁰ (De Beistegui does not himself emphasise the theme of expression.¹¹) The tendency expressed in the bubble or crystal does not exist outside of bubbles or crystals as expressing that tendency, and yet that tendency does not resemble that wherein we find it expressed. De Beistegui also clarifies virtual multiplicities, for a singularity expressed in soap bubbles, crystals and multiple other things, has a multiplicity not already defined in advance of its expression. This multiplicity is virtual because it has no reality outside of the actuality that expresses it, and because what it expresses is a power (*virtus*) of singularity.

Let us move on to the second consequence. In essentialist thinking the bubble and the crystal each resemble a very different essence, and so they would in themselves hold nothing in common except for differences already specified in their respective essences. Surprisingly, we have now found out that soap bubbles and crystals do have something in common, namely, the singularity they express, but what they have in common, paradoxically, is their being very different expressions of a singularity that neither resembles. De Beistegui's treatment shows that this is what Deleuze means by difference as the univocity of being: the differences of things are freed from having to resemble a ground already containing their differences; rather, each thing locally expresses its own difference, yet, paradoxically, what each such difference expresses is being. Imagine all the jazz musicians of the world each at once playing their own version of *My Favourite Things*; they are univocally voicing one tune, but each is doing so differently, and there is nothing in *My Favourite Things* itself that would prespecify their differences. The univocity of being is more radical: all things 'sing' being in the one voice of being—but only by each 'singing' differences in a way that is not anticipated in being. From a universal that is one and the same, we have moved to a univocity that is one and different. De Beistegui's study of the univocity of being across his book carefully traces this theme back to Scotistic roots, and so stands as a complement to, and critique of, Badiou's *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*.¹²

10 Leonard Lawlor, 'The End of Phenomenology: Expressionism in Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty', *Continental Philosophy Review*, 31 (1998), 15-34, p. 17.

11 Except for a footnote on the problem of expression as Deleuze addresses it in Spinoza, n. 45, p. 361.

The third consequence is that we live in a world of surprises. It is surprising that a singularity of energy minimisation turns out to express things as different as spherical bubbles and cubical crystals. Darwin writes: "How inexplicable is the similar pattern of the hand of a man, the foot of a dog, the wing of a bat, the flipper of a seal, on the doctrine of independent acts of creation! how simply explained on the principle of the natural selection of successive slight variations in the diverging descendants from a single progenitor!"¹³ Darwin finds limb homology surprising unless it is grounded in divergences within a common evolutionary heritage. But contemporary science tells us something even more surprising, and to explain this I add a scientific source not canvassed by de Beistegui, Brian Goodwin's account of morphogenesis, the genesis of living form, in his book *How the Leopard Changed Its Spots*.¹⁴ Central to Goodwin's study are the problem of limb homology and the botanical problem of phyllotaxis, namely, why in higher plants there are three and just three possible basic patterns of arranging leaves on a plant stem.¹⁵ Goodwin persuasively shows that leaf patterning is not a result of genetic program, a program that would, via its formalism, resemble the pattern that it specifies. Indeed Goodwin's book is an extended attack on this sort of genetic essentialism. Instead, patterning is an effect of tensions that arise when a multicellular organism such as a plant grows. A plant grows only by increasing the number of cells in its tips and in the skin of its tip, and this creates tensions in which cells in the tip and skin push against one another, and materials crucial for

12 Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. by Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

13 Charles Darwin, *The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication*, 2 vols (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 1, p. 12.

14 Brian Goodwin, *How the Leopard Changed Its Spots: The Evolution of Complexity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

15 The three patterns are: distichous, as in grass, where a leaf at one side of the stem alternates with a leaf on the other side higher up the stem; decussate, in which a whorl of two or more leaves at one node in the stem is followed by a whorl with the same number of leaves at the next node, but rotated so that the leaves in the one node cover the gaps in the other node; spiral, in which successive leaves on the stem are located at a fixed angle of rotation relative to the previous one. (Goodwin, *How the Leopard Changed Its Spots: The Evolution of Complexity*, pp. 117-118). Interest in this problem goes back to Goethe's speculative-philosophical botany. (Translated as an appendix in Adolf Portmann and Richard B. Carter, *Essays in philosophical zoology by Adolf Portmann: the living form and the seeing eye*, Problems in contemporary philosophy. v. 20 (Lewiston: E. Mellen Press, 1990)).

growth flow through the tip; like the vibrations in a disturbed drum head, these tensions dynamically pattern themselves into nodal points from which leaves thence bud in their characteristic patterns. What is even more remarkable is that a similar dynamic process is at work in generating bone structure in *animal limbs*. Like the bubble and the crystal, the arrangement of leaves in different plants, and of bones in different animal hands, feet, wings, and flippers, have a common ground in a singularity that does not at all resemble what it grounds. We are far from the usual interpretation of the modern evolutionary synthesis here, in the sense that different and homologous morphologies are not grounded in purely genetic patterns that diverge through purely genetic inheritance and variation, but in divergent actualisations of a singularity, in a ground that does not resemble what it grounds.¹⁶ I would like to remark here that if the key move of modern philosophy and science, exemplified by Descartes, Newton and the modern evolutionary synthesis, is eliminating Aristotelian formal and final causes,¹⁷ in light of de Beistegui's book it seems to me that the key move of a Deleuzian philosophy is to reintroduce formal causes¹⁸—with this crucial difference, *that formal and material cause no longer have a common identity and formal cause is decoupled from predetermined final causes*. Formal causes are implicit, virtual and transcendental, no longer resembling the actual and empirical differentia that they ground. For Aristotle, the form of a plant is inseparable from plant material—but now we surprisingly find virtual forms that are actualised in plants, hands and other things. As de Beistegui might put it, modern science would be a science of accidents, of things that happen to go together, not a science of essences.¹⁹

16 Such a singularity would count as an “epigenetic” factor in the organism's evolution. For a philosophical and theoretical perspective on the ways that, in recent biology, aspects of organisms other than the genetic are coming to be understood as having a role in evolution, see Eva Jablonka and Marion J. Lamb, *Evolution in Four Dimensions: Genetic, Epigenetic, Behavioral, and Symbolic Variation in the History of Life*, Life and mind (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005). Chapter 4 in particular details some of the ways in which inheritance of epigenetic dynamic patterns can be a dimension of evolution.

17 Which would let science, as de Beistegui claims, end metaphysics by overturning the essences that are metaphysics's traditional end.

18 At numerous points in the book, especially the beginning, de Beistegui suggests that modern science can be read as a return to Aristotle (cf. e.g., p. 19) but this theme is not brought to completion.

The fourth consequence is that we obviously live in a world in which time makes a difference. If genetic programs determined morphology then an omniscient scientist could infer from genetics to the shape of the organism, or simulate morphogenesis in a program that would not have to take into account the real time of growth. But this cannot be the case; if chemical and physical processes proceeded at a different rate, then plants and limbs, indeed crystals and bubbles, would be different. Time is ingredient in form, which is why de Beistegui can call Deleuze's philosophy an *onto-hetero-genesis*, an ontology in which difference is inherently genetic, and why he speaks of current science as a science of events—leaf pattern is an event, not an imitation or representation of an essential form. Formal cause is not to be identified with material cause or even final cause as a temporal dimension; formal cause is rather temporal differentiation, it is creative cause. (Indeed, the points I have covered so far about singularity mostly pertain to differentiation, the differential determination of the virtual itself, but perhaps the most important chapter of *Truth and Genesis* is “Smooth Space and Volcanic Time” which pertains to differentiation and the process wherein the virtual actualises itself in differences; what is important about this chapter is the way it talks about everyday space and time as events that result from differentiation.)

The fifth consequence is that this account obviously takes us away from anthropocentric thinking. We are no longer telling nature how to think, no longer thinking that nature thinks as we do, that nature constructs bubbles so as to distribute matter according to our essential definition of a sphere. We are no longer thinking that nature constructs itself according to our idea of it, according to the way it looks to us, to play on a sense of looking in the Greek word *eidōs*. Indeed, de Beistegui very helpfully clarifies Deleuze's concept of an Idea by first of all saying (to put it roughly) that the sort of virtual multiplicity actualised in the arrangement of the plant or hand is its Idea—an idea that is different than

19 De Beistegui speaks of a “science of accidents” on p. 45 of his book, in the context of his discussion of Aristotle; the point there is that there can be no science of accidents in Aristotle, only of essences. With modern science, the situation reverses. For a physicist's argument that suggests that something accidental and historical is needed even in cosmology, see Lee Smolin, *The Life of the Cosmos* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

the traditional idea because it does not specify a clear endpoint toward which it actually unfolds (259). Second, he shows us how Deleuze's usage of Idea stems from Kant by reminding us that "Ideas for Kant designate first and foremost problems," that is, for Kant the Ideas of god, soul and the world do not have a clear endpoint because they precisely designate problems that reason resolves in multiple incompatible directions. But, as de Beistegui says, "for Deleuze, it is not reason as a human faculty that is the site of Idea, but the real itself: the problematic, or the Ideal, is a dimension of being itself." (248) Rather than a nature or being that constructs itself according to the way it looks to us, as in Plato, or according to the forms which we see in it, as in Aristotle, we have a nature or being with its own Idea, its own way of thinking, its own problems.

Put together, these five points elucidate what I have called the ab-ground. Instead of a ground that reflects or resembles what it grounds, ground is radically heterogeneous with what it grounds yet is nonetheless expressed in what it grounds. Instead of a ground that, qua being ground of everything, already classifies all possible differences, ground is univocally expressed in the differences of beings in such a way that these differences cannot be reduced to or anticipated in being as ground. Instead of a ground that would already encompass all difference for all time, ground is nothing without its time of differentiation. Instead of a ground that reflects human thinking about the world, ground transcends human thinking. Instead of a ground that would therefore ensure no surprises, that would already give a sufficient reason for everything that makes human sense, this is a ground of surprises in which the reasons for things make their own sense. What human would have thought the sufficient reasons for roses and hands have something in common? (Well, maybe Goethe or Hegel.) This is a ground that pulls the rug out from under us in surprising ways. The ground here is not at all solid, it is ab-ground, an abyss, what grounds things is already in itself a source of wonder, a kind of thinking or problem in being that exceeds itself in the way that the Kantian Idea exceeds itself. How does this ab-ground twist free of turning into an object of science, how does a Deleuzian philosophy of ab-ground twist free of being a mere philosophy of science? De Beistegui's answer is that science discovers this sort of ab-ground in relation to actual, empirical results, but Deleuze's philosophy traces these results to their transcendental condition, and this requires

concept creation. In de Beistegui's words, science is interested in how the virtual is actualised in phenomena, but Deleuze moves in the opposite direction, from actualised phenomena to their virtual, and in this way he finds a new transcendental, a noumenon echoed and repeated in every phenomenon, a noumenon real only in the phenomenon, but a noumenon that is nothing like and exceeds the phenomenon (277). De Beistegui's nuanced reading of the transcendental in transcendental empiricism thus adds something new to the usual emphasis on immanence in Deleuze.

I would now like to turn back to the large scale problem of *Truth and Genesis*, the problem of conjoining its two sides, namely differential being in-itself conceived as genesis and differential being for-us conceived as *aletheia*. The problem, you will recall, is that de Beistegui insists that there can be no synthesis of these two sides of being, and this implies there can be no synthesis of a Heideggerian styled phenomenological differential ontology with a Deleuzian styled anti-phenomenological differential ontology. And yet, should they not have some ab-ground too? Are they not univocal?

A neat solution may be to call this a Deleuzian conjunctive synthesis. But the connections de Beistegui draws between Kant and Deleuze prompt a different, surprising way into this question—through German idealism. After all, Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* is clearly meant to pull the ground out from under Hegel's *Science of Logic*, and de Beistegui's book is remarkable amongst books on Deleuze for its extensive treatment of Hegel's *Logic*. Now Deleuze's reading of Hegel is shaped by Hyppolite's *Logic and Existence*, and in his review of that book, Deleuze writes that "Kant indeed raises himself up to the synthetic identity of subject and object, but the object is merely an object relative to the subject: this very identity is the synthesis of imagination; it is not posited in being."²⁰ What Deleuze finds extraordinary is that Hegel's logic does just that—posits the synthetic identity in being. Kant's system could not immediately reconcile subject and object, because there is no intellectual intuition; they can be reconciled only by way of imagination as a subjective faculty. Deleuze's book *Kant's Critical Philosophy* is fascinated with imagination across Kant's three critiques. I would put it this way: what is

²⁰ Jean Hyppolite, *Logic and Existence*, trans. by Leonard Lawlor and Amit Sen (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), p. 192.

fascinating is that the imagination precisely exceeds what is already present, what could be determined *a priori*, and this facultative excess is necessary to Kant's system. Imagination thus undermines the philosophy of presence—which is why Heidegger detects a metaphysics of the retrieval of ground in the Kantian imagination.²¹ So, on the one hand, Hegel's logic posits an excessive faculty of this sort, not in the subject, but in *being* as becoming. And this is why Hyppolite's Hegel inspires Deleuze to call his book a Logic of Sense, for Hegel provides a model for detecting the categories of being, the thought of being, in the surface of being itself, in sense, not merely in the subject. For better or for worse, this locates Deleuze as repeating (in the Deleuzian sense) the tradition of German Idealism, namely repeating the problem of finding the intellectual intuition that would put subject and object in one plane. But Deleuze seeks this through a Bergsonian intuition²² of intensive differences and so, on the other hand, for Deleuze, as for de Beistegui, Hegel's logic fails, for it merely pushes difference to contradiction, rather than freeing difference to be intuited in a creative, Deleuzian univocity of being. Hegelian sense is, for Deleuze, and those who take up Deleuze's Hegel, all too determinate.

Two observations. First, it seems to me that what is common to Heidegger's and Deleuze's philosophy of the ab-ground is that they are both trying to locate the Kantian excess of imagination in being. When de Beistegui writes that "Heidegger reveals how anything like an object, and like thought itself, is itself a function of a peculiar, forever reinscribed event" (156), I cannot help but think that this peculiar reinscription is akin to the function of imagination—now disclosed as a function of being. And when de Beistegui writes that for Deleuze the virtual multiplicity that we find in the genesis of an embryo is to be understood as an Idea, but an Idea sited not in human understanding, but in the real, an Idea that as noumenon would exceed the phenomenon,

21 Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. by Richard Taft, Studies in Continental thought, 5th edn (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

22 On a relation between Kantian intellectual intuition and Bergsonian intuition, see Nathan Rotenstreich, 'Bergson and the Transformation of the Notion of Intuition', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 10 (1972), 335-346; also see David Morris, 'Bergsonian Intuition, Husserlian Variation, Peirecean Abduction: Toward a Relation Between Method, Sense and Nature', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 43 (2005), 267-298.

again I cannot help but think that the Kantian excess of imagination is here conceived as the power of the virtual. This excess might also be what Deleuze finds in Bergsonian memory above matter. Could it be that in a differential ontology of *aletheia* and genesis, being is not merely becoming but imagination? Second, it seems to me that both Deleuze and de Beistegui underestimate Hegel by not venturing far enough into his logic. For Hegel, the logic of actuality as the real ground of what appears is such that contingency is necessary and necessity contingent, which means that differences are not merely pushed to contradiction but are freed in a ground that does not resemble what it grounds²³, where we even find Hegel abandoning the logic of ground altogether,²⁴ no longer seeking foundations of actuality in something else, even if that something else would be for Heidegger an ab-ground or for Deleuze a virtual. This is really where a sense or concept immanent in being becomes an issue in Hegel's logic, and where we find the plastic Hegel of an open future proposed by Catharine Malabou.²⁵ So perhaps truth and genesis are two inflections of being as imagination or sense.

But perhaps we need not approach the issue through idealism, for at many points in his book there is an echo between de Beistegui's Deleuze and Merleau-Ponty—and de Beistegui remarks on affinities with Merleau-Ponty at crucial points (cf. 14-20, 69-75). Let me put it in terms of the ab-ground: the points about the ab-ground, especially the point that the ab-ground does not resemble what it grounds, but is rather related to it by means of an expressive, creative, temporal relation, apply

23 See Catherine Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*, trans. by Lisbeth Doring (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire ; New York: Routledge, 2005), pp.160-164, Stephen Houlgate, 'Necessity and Contingency in Hegel's "Science of Logic"', *The Owl of Minerva*, 27 (1995), 37-50, John Burbidge, 'The Necessity of Contingency: An Analysis of the Hegel's Chapter on "Actuality" in the *Science of Logic*', in *Selected Essays on G.W.F. Hegel*, ed. by Lawrence S. Stepelevich, vols (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 60-73, George di Giovanni, 'The Category of Contingency in the Hegelian Logic', in *Selected Essays on G.W.F. Hegel*, ed. by Lawrence S. Stepelevich, vols (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1993), pp. 41-59; also see the discussion of Hegel in David Morris, 'What is Living and What is Non-Living in Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy of Movement and Expression', *Chiasmi International*, (Forthcoming).

24 Stephen Houlgate, 'Hegel's Critique of Foundationalism in the "Doctrine of Essence"', *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 39-40 (1999), 18-34.

25 Malabou, *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality and Dialectic*.

to the invisible in relation to the visible. Merleau-Ponty's philosophy has always been a philosophy of the genesis of form. This genetic element only deepens in his philosophy of the visible and the invisible. What is remarkable about Merleau-Ponty's philosophy in relation to *Truth and Genesis*, then, is how his philosophy of a genesis of being-in-itself develops through a philosophy of the truth of being-for-us, how his phenomenological study of the perceptual intertwining of our being and other beings eventuates in a philosophy that seeks the precursor of perception in a pre-personal movement of being itself. Here we should remember that in Merleau-Ponty's prospectus of his work,²⁶ he says that he will engage in studies of the origin of truth and in studies of expression. But what eventuates is the *Invisible and the Visible*—as if studying visible expression and truth necessitates a study of its invisible, as if the very logic of the phenomena leads to a study of original being. One might hope that the next topic of de Beistegui's investigations might be Merleau-Ponty as a chiasmatic “and” between truth and genesis.

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²⁶ Collected in Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964).

Response to David Morris

MIGUEL DE BEISTEGUI

In his review, David Morris seems to be doing three things : a. identifying a thread that runs through the book, and in which he finds some value (that of “abground”); b. illustrating, extending and complementing this thread by focusing on the issue of form and matter from the perspective of non-essentialist dynamics, and on the example of energy minimising; c. addressing the difficulty of thinking together truth and genesis with the tools provided in the book, and suggesting a couple of alternatives. In what follows, I shall return to the first and third points.

1.

David Morris locates the primary value of the book in the move that it enacts from ground to unground, a move according to which philosophy can no longer serve as an activity of grounding and proceed foundationally. Let me provide some background to this question – a background that will also emphasise the relevance and astuteness of David Morris’ focus on the meaning of recent developments in physics. In developing a brief interpretation of the question of ground in relation to German idealism, I also hope to provide a context in which to address the main question raised in David Morris’ review, namely, that of the nature of the relation between “truth” and “genesis”.

The question of ground follows from the *metaphysical* search for first principles and primary causes – itself an effect of the manner in which the question of being is raised initially, that is, in terms of a questioning regarding what is common (the beingness) to everything that is – and leads to the twofold principle of identity and permanence. Ground really translates the ‘meta’ of metaphysics : it designates the manner in which

movement (and not just locomotion) or becoming is apprehended on the basis of something that is itself not of the same kind, something unmoved, in which *phusis* finds its sufficient reason : a permanent substance, an essence (this is the sense of *ousia as to ti en einai*). Let me also say, in passing, and at the other end of the spectrum, that “truth’ and “genesis” are both translations of *phusis* (this means that inasmuch as they attempt to overcome the issue of ground they are also an attempt to overcome meta-physics): they both designate the operation through which something comes into being and vanishes out of being, they both testify to the event of presence. I now return to the question of ground, and the manner in which its search is implicit in the ‘meta’ of metaphysics. Chronologically, this happened through the positing of a prime mover, and a realm of essences, over and beyond that of the physical, material world. With Aristotle, philosophy posits itself as a double science of being and becoming, of immobility and movement, of meta-physics and physics. Movement, however, is not yet *local* movement (a mechanics), and physics is not yet *mathematised* nature. Crucially, this ontology leads to a position torn between the identity of essence-substance and the difference of “accidental” singularities, between the form to which the *logos* is as it were naturally attuned, and matter, the chaotic expression of a world in motion in which thought loses its way. Then came the discovery of the *subjectum* guaranteeing the stability and veracity of the physical world in human nature and thought. Modern metaphysics distinguishes itself from classical, Aristotelian onto-theology in that, whilst remaining at bottom a thinking of beingness as substance, or as substratum, it invents a new concept of the *ousia-hypokeimemon*, and, as a result, a new sense of metaphysics. Beginning with Descartes, and in the light of the decisive turn within the science of nature, for which “nature” is written in essentially geometrical terms, substance comes to be divided between material, extended nature, and thinking nature. To the twofold sense of the *subjectum* as designating, first, a thing in its individuality and concreteness (a *tode ti*), as well as in its quiddity (its *ti esti*), and, second, the subject of a proposition, or the logical subject, modern metaphysics thus adds a new one, which turns out to be the most decisive, in that it serves as the ground and foundation for the other two: the “I”, essentially interpreted as an “I think.” In doing so, metaphysics also introduces a dualism to which an entire tradition will remain committed, before attempting to overcome it. Decisive, in this new sense, is the way in which the “*sub*” of the *sub-jectum* is

interpreted in terms of ground, of a power of grounding or foundation. "Thought" comes to be identified with the substrate that lies beneath material nature, thus immediately framing the latter in terms of its ability to be thought, and this means *known*, in the sense presupposed by the natural sciences. If, as a result, nature becomes object, it is only in the sense that it stands there op-posed, as something that needs to be represented and brought out in its ideality and truth by a thinking thing. Typically, Schelling speaks of the "I" as the *Urseyn* underlying all Dasein, as the primal and primordial being underlying all beings. The "I" is thus elevated to the status of an absolute principle, which is precisely what Fichte wanted it to be: the unconditioned principle that conditions the edifice of knowledge, the undisputed and unshakable foundation on which that edifice is erected, the transcendental identity that grounds even the principle of identity *qua* logical principle. This, then, is the sense in which modern philosophy is still meta-physical: not so much in the sense in which it remains a theology, a science of divine being and the eternal motion of celestial bodies, but in the sense in which its object (the "I" or the subject) is the sort of thing that is presupposed by the very science of nature itself. When the "I" comes to be posited as transcendental, as the transcendental unity of apperception, as in Kant or Fichte, the transcendental comes to occupy the place that was once accorded to transcendence. Meta-physics becomes the science of the fundamental structures of the I think as providing the key to the conditions of possibility of experience and knowledge in general. Insofar as the primary object of philosophy becomes human nature as thinking substance, philosophy takes on a reflexive form: thought is thought directed back upon itself as constituting the very foundation of the real itself.

From the point of view of the ontological problematic with which I am concerned here, the period in the history of philosophy ordinarily referred to as German Idealism amounts to a decisive turn, one, I might add, which is realised to the full in Hegel's speculative philosophy, and in the *Logic* in particular. Yet this turn was already underway in Fichte and Schelling, and can perhaps best be summarised in the following way: if the essential connection between being and self-identity is indeed reinstated, if beingness as such is evaluated on the basis of a reinterpretation of the Aristotelian *kath'auto*, and thus still caught within the logic of substance, it is no longer simply opposed to non-being or to

non-identity (or difference), as to an *other*, in what amounted to an irreducible tension or an unbridgeable ontological gap. Rather – and this is where the decisive shift takes place – it is indeed op-posed to non-identity, but precisely as to *its* other, and this in such a way that this otherness, or this difference, becomes the condition of its own positing. Identity (and by that we need to understand the identity of being and identity, or, as Leibniz put it, of *esse* and *idem esse*) is now a *posited* identity, and substance, essentially still defined in terms of its ability to exist *kath'auto*, or *propter se*, is a *self*-positing. In other words, the model of beingness as substance, or as existing *per se*, is that of subjectivity itself. But beyond the sole positing of subjectivity, it is being as such and as a whole that comes to be seen as self-positing, or as reflexive. In other words, this positing of identity is not simply *formal*; it is not simply a logical principle, or even a transcendental reality, but is the positing of a *content*. As such, identity (or being) is identified with a *movement* and a *process*, and thus reconciled with the world of becoming (to which, remember, it was opposed in classical ontology). This, at least, is what emerges from the first few principles of Fichte's *Wissenschaftslehre*, and from their interpretation in Schelling's early essays. And this op-position, or this difference, which is at work within being and constitutes it in its positing, which transforms identity from a formal and empty principle into a concrete identity of content, is precisely what elevates being to the level of the absolute, or the infinite. The metaphysics of the absolute is onto-tauto-*thetic*. From a merely posited and presupposed identity, beingness is now envisaged as an identity that has *become* what it is, or as a self-positing identity *in the process of its own becoming*. The science of being thus understood can now, in Hegel's own terms, assert itself as the science of "the identity of identity and non-identity."¹ Yet this is only going to be the case to the extent that it enacts a transgression in relation to the classical concept of difference, only to the extent that, refusing to subordinate difference to the prior identity of a substance or of a genus, it takes it into the hitherto forbidden territory of contradiction. Contrariety, not contradiction,

¹ G.W.F. Hegel, "Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie (1801)," *Jenaer Schriften* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 96. See also *Logik*, I, 74/74: "The analysis of the beginning would thus yield the concept of the unity of being non-being – or, in a more reflected form, the unity of differentiatedness and non-differentiatedness, or the identity of identity and non-identity. This concept could be regarded as the first, purest, that is, most abstract definition of the absolute."

characterised the highest degree of difference for Aristotle and the Aristotelian tradition. Contradiction was simply *too* different, simply otherwise than being. The principle of non-contradiction was even the cornerstone of sense and logic. Now, though, contradiction is integrated into the very movement of the real and the very constitution of thought (negativity is the “soul of the content” and “absolute difference”). Now the relevant point here is that with this absolutisation of substance through its becoming subject comes a new conception of the problematic of grounding: by going ‘under’ (*zu Grunde*), the abstract determinations of thought reveal their ground, which is not posited in advance, but is the outcome of their inner contradictions. The process of “accounting for” now becomes a dynamic, and coincides with the very dynamic of the real itself. Ultimately, the real *Grund* (ground or reason) turns out to be the concept. The standpoint of ground is itself overcome, and not elevated as an unsurpassable principle.

Now the move from ontology to onto-heterology as I understand it, the move, that is, from a metaphysics of beingness grounded in identity (and in identity as ground) to an ontology rooted in the concept of difference has to do with the experience of a collapsing (and not this *Aufhebung*) of ground, with the fundamental experience that far from securing a ground, philosophy is confronted with the abyss – the withdrawal or the *effondement* of nature. Whether in itself or for us, whether mathematically-genetically or poetically-epiphanically, being no longer emerges as ground, as that in which beings find their ground, but as *Abgrund*, as that in which they are ungrounded : at once brought into actuality and wrested from actuality. *Sein* is *Ab-grund*, as is the virtual. This ungrounding is not synonymous with a collapsing, with a chaos in which all things are engulfed in a single, anonymous, undifferentiated mass. On the contrary: it is a “principle” (I use this word in quotation marks, for obvious reasons) of sense, life and differentiation; it organises, distributes, opens up and generates; it is the transcendental horizon of all processes, yet one that is not located in any being, not even the human being. In that sense, it is a ground. Yet to the extent that it is pure differentiation, or transcendental difference, it is a forever shifting ground, an *Ab-grund*. David has very clearly shown how this can be seen to be the case in certain non-linear dynamic systems. In doing so, he also signalled the internal emancipation of physics itself from the fiction of ground (one that operated for a very long time), and

the manner in which contemporary science can serve as a “propedeutics” to a differential ontology, to use Merleau-Ponty’s term.

But to finish with this point, if I may myself formulate a concern, it is that we quickly learn to see what’s at stake in this problematic of the *Abgrund*, and of greater significance still, namely, the event. This is what I was after, more than the abyss. The experience of the abyss, which I believe is absolutely coextensive with our time (our literally post-modern time), opens onto a rethinking of being as event, as opposed to essence (and of course copulation): both truth and genesis illustrate the eventful nature of being. Event means coming into being, presencing, and this presencing is both genetic and epiphanic. To free thought from the quest for grounds is to free it for the sense of being as event. And the event brings us back to originary difference: *Ereignis* is *Unter-schied*, interstitial being, and the Deleuzian event is differenc/tiation.

2.

Truth and Genesis was published in the summer of 2004, but completed some eighteen months earlier. Naturally, my own views about the project – and the results it offers – have evolved over that period, especially regarding the nature of the relation between the last two parts of the book, devoted to the concepts of “truth” (in connection with Heidegger’s *Beiträge*) and “genesis” (in connection with Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*). I am therefore especially grateful to be given the opportunity to express my views on this matter. Things appear to be more complex than I initially thought. Let me begin by emphasising the fact that both truth and genesis signal a question or a problem, that of being as coming-into-being, of being as presencing (as opposed to being as presence), as reality *se faisant*, as Bergson would say (as opposed to reality as already made). And both concepts are attempts to move away from any conception of coming into being or presencing as production and creation – *if* by that we understand a process that takes us from forms or essences to matter and actual things, from a first and highest principle to individuals, which all presuppose a kind of resemblance, and a form of incarnation, between the cause and the effect. This, I believe, is how philosophy renews itself as ontology: by occupying the space of the difference between being and beings. That being said, as soon as one begins to talk of being in terms of coming into presence, a certain notion

of genesis is already in place. The task that I set for myself includes necessarily a spatiality and a temporality that is active, I wouldn't exactly say productive, but genetic, precisely: it's a process or an event that is at issue here. So, the first misunderstanding to dispel would be the one according to which truth were static and genesis alone were genetic. Everything that Heidegger, and a certain strand of phenomenology, has to say regarding truth as unconcealment, especially in relation to the work of the work of art, is said with a view to dispelling such a misunderstanding. All of this is to say that, on one level, truth is as genetic as genesis. So, when David Morris suggests that genesis is perhaps an escape from *aletheia*, he is both right and wrong. He is wrong, insofar as truth as Heidegger understands it, and in a way that I want to retain, already contains an element of genesis, and is directed towards the reality in excess of presence that is implicit in every presencing. He is right, however, insofar as I am trying to move away from two aspects of Heidegger's thinking of difference as truth: that according to which History is the manner or mode in which truth unfolds (we could call this the historicisation of difference), and that according to which language (a language that, at times, becomes so esoteric that it runs the risk of leaving every reader to the side) becomes the primary site in which the truth of History itself can be revealed (as the withdrawal or concealment of concealment itself, or as the *essence* of truth). With Merleau-Ponty, we could call this latter risk "gnosis". David Morris is also correct to emphasise the fact that, for me, the concept of genesis is a fruitful way of extending the reach of ontology beyond the confines of the epiphanic-poematic, and especially of rethinking physical, material coming-into-being away from essentialism (a metaphysical tendency that governed science for a long time, and is still in place in some areas). The pages he devotes to the analysis of soap bubbles and crystals is a remarkable and welcome addition to what I wrote – and one that is in many ways clearer. Now, one might wonder, why does "truth" not find itself on the side of science? Simply because the manner in which science – and the philosophical discourse that accompanies it – concerns itself with truth does not concern me: it is an epistemological concept, not an ontological one. But this does not mean that ontology can have nothing to do with science: it has everything to do with it, but from the point of view of genesis. That being said, there would be some naïveté in believing that there is no such thing as a history of truth, and that modern science itself is not caught up in that history: that truth has become an

epistemic concept should not eliminate the fact that it once was – and still has the potential to become – an ontological and onto-poetic determination. But to recognise this does not amount to recognising – as Heidegger does – that the history of truth is itself destinal, and that the birth of modern science constitutes a further stage in the concealing of the essence of truth as un-concealment. Similarly, and symmetrically, it could be argued that "genesis" is itself a mode of disclosedness, a certain way in which nature itself manifests itself: genesis is a mode of truth, as truth is a mode of genesis.

Having said that, I am able to address further David Morris' concerns in the following way: why double the truth/genesis dichotomy with that of the for-us and the in-itself? As a preliminary caution, let me stress that this conceptuality is in no way to be understood in a Sartrean way : it is absolutely not the case that being is on the side of matter, inert objectivity, and nothingness on the side of a free subjectivity. Differential ontology bypasses the subject-object and the being-nothingness dualism completely. Being is on both sides of the divide, as is this being that we are (and which we cannot call a subject). So why use this conceptuality? Because in truth, or on the onto-epiphanic plane, this being that we are is called upon in a manner that is different from the manner in which it is implicated in genesis. It is called upon as a site of truth, in which perception, language, emotions and affectivity play a key role.

I am now – finally – in a position to address what is perhaps the most important question and concern coming out of David Morris' review, namely, how do truth and genesis sit together, and on what "grounds" can they be brought together (granted that this cannot be a ground in any classical, straightforward sense)? David Morris suggests two ingenious and thought provoking answers, both motivated, it seems to me, by the fact that there *needs to be* a concept under which to think both truth and genesis.

Let me begin by making clear that the "and" in the title of the book does not refer to a hidden, common ground, to a third term under which the first two could be subsumed, one that would remain implicit and that I could and should, one day, make explicit (this is something that David

Morris recognises completely, as his suggestion that we think this relation in chiasmic terms indicates). The conjunction refers to the only legitimate conjunction acknowledged in the book, namely, difference. “Truth” and “genesis” communicate through difference alone. Difference is what they have in common. How could it be otherwise? Any talk of a ground would bring us back into the sort of problems I’m trying to avoid. The only ground is *Ab-grund*, and that’s dif-ference. That being said, it’s possible that there’s something more to be thought in this conjunction, that is, in the relation between truth and genesis (something like a relation, precisely). Yet if it turned out to be something other than differential relationality, well, the entire enterprise would need to be revised. What I began by saying regarding the evolution of my views on the matter might be compatible with a solution of the “chiasmic” type that David Morris suggests: there is perhaps indeed something like an interlacing or a reciprocal folding of truth and genesis, but one that I am not willing – at this stage – to identify with the structure of the visible and the invisible Merleau-Ponty articulates, for reasons that would be too long to develop here. I am also aware of the programmatic nature of what I am proposing here, that is, of the fact that I have not sufficiently argued for the need to adopt such a double ontology. Suffice it to say that the “and” of the title signals a relation of complementarity, not interruption, between the matheme and the poem – a relation, I believe, that philosophy alone is able to recognise and carry out. The matheme and the poem are both originary modes of disclosedness. They sit side by side. “Difference” is what allows them to sit side by side, what they have in common.

The one concept I would feel comfortable advancing at this point would be that of Nature. But I realise this would amount to side stepping the issue. Still, as difference, I would argue that Nature has always and already begun to differentiate itself, beyond any recuperable identity, between the mathematical-physical and the poetic-aletheic (not to say spiritual). The task of the artist, Proust argues, is to extract the poetic laws of nature, which evolve on a plane quite different from that of nature in a physical sense. The difference between the two extractions is that one amounts to a creation, or perhaps a recreation. If philosophy is, as Deleuze argues, the creation of concepts, than it is perhaps more akin to art than to science. There is perhaps, then, underlying *Truth and Genesis*, an ambition not unlike the one that nourished the great systems

of German idealism, and of Hegel in particular. It is an ambition that I am happy to embrace, without adopting the Hegelian manner in which it is taken up (for reasons that are made explicit in the first part of the book, and which I summarised a short while ago).

On the question of Deleuze’s (and to a certain extent Heidegger’s) relation to German idealism, and to the thematic of imagination in particular, let me say the following. Whilst understanding David’s reasons for putting forward the concept of imagination as one that could contain the operations of truth and genesis, and hailing it as ingenious and potentially very fruitful, let me stress that, with respect to Deleuze, it is perhaps the thematic of expression that needs to be emphasised, over and above that of imagination (and this despite his interest in that concept). This is the thematic that we find developed in Spinoza and the Problem of Expression. The logic of the Spinozistic substance is, for Deleuze, a logic of expression, not reflection (and his logic of sense is also a logic of expression, not reflection). This means: it’s precisely not a substance that is turning itself into a subject; there’s no movement back into the substance, which is pure, immediate expression through differentiation. The problematic of expression is such as to overcome or sidestep the problem of German idealism, namely, how to reconcile subject and object (and the thematic of imagination makes sense in that context). I really don’t see how, to repeat David’s words, “for better or for worse,” Deleuze “repeats the tradition of German idealism” by “repeating the problem of finding the intellectual intuition that would put subject and object in one plane.” Deleuze’s problem, it seems to me, is different, and amounts to asking how a single plane can be extracted from all beings, a plane that precisely cannot be found in a privileged being, whether it be a transcendent God, a consciousness, a life-world, a lived body, or the existent being. As for the question of imagination, I am perfectly willing to accept that it can be taken beyond the confines of the subject-object dualism, and articulated anew so as to encompass a different sense of being, as spacing, and temporalising. And I am also perfectly willing to accept – how could I not? – that it has roots in German idealism. But my reservation is that it would signal only one of the two sides of nature I am eager to pursue. So, if we begin to speak of imagination in terms of structure, and not faculty, yes. Does this mean that Deleuze thinks completely outside the frame of German idealism? Not at all. He does, after all, think of Ideas in the Kantian sense, that is,

as the site where problems are generated. Yet they are not generated by the power of human reason. They are empirical, real problems, or problems that can be identified on the basis of their real or empirical solutions. So, Deleuze's question does not concern the a priori powers of legislation of human reason, nor the conditions of human experience. Yet we could think of his concern as one of schematism, of the nature of the relation between concepts and things, and even between noumena and phenomena. In fact, his question in *Difference and Repetition* is very much that of the nature of the relation between thought and sensibility, between concepts or ideas and the objects of experience. It's in the answer to that question that Deleuze is no longer Kantian, and that imagination is not retained as a mediating, intermediary power (this means that, for him, the nature of the relation is not one of mediation, whether in the Kantian or Hegelian sense; in place of the imagination, he thinks the unity of space and time, as powers of virtual differentiations and actualisations, as essentially productive). Why? Because concepts are, for him, virtual multiplicities, and virtual multiplicities designate things not in their form, whether actual or possible, but in their being. Concepts designate not just possibilities, and thus not the form of a thing, but virtualities, and by that we need to understand the real tendencies or individuating factors of the actual thing, expressed and enveloped in the thing, but in no way resembling the thing. In that respect, the sense of the transcendental has shifted dramatically, from designating the conditions of possibility of actual experience, to designating the real, albeit non-actual conditions of existence of actual processes. This non-Kantian sense of the transcendental is itself actually born from within 'German Idealism', and can be attributed to Salomon Maimon's *Versuch über Transzendentalphilosophie*. Maimon is the first post-Kantian to have advocated the need for a genetic point of view in place of conditioning as a solution to the Kantian aporia regarding the question of mediation between intuition and concept, or between the particular and the universal. Having recognised the two realities as absolutely heterogeneous, an abyss between the particular and the universal is created, one that the transcendental deduction cannot bridge. The Kantian schema refers to a purely external concept of difference, and thus to a purely external harmony between the faculties. Difference does not quite unite (in separating) the two; it is merely a term "between" the determinable intuition and the determining concept. It does not generate them so much as relate them to one another. Maimon's contribution,

according to Deleuze, is to have forced the two terms of the differential relation into a reciprocal determination, and thus to have understood difference productively. Whilst Maimon's specific solution can be seen as announcing some of the moves within German idealism (specifically, the ontological interpretation of the question of schematism, which David Morris emphasises), it also accounts for the way in which Deleuze embraces the concept of genesis without retaining the logic of mediation (and of dialectical mediation in particular). In that respect, I am not sure what we would gain by translating the concept and problematic of genesis back into the vocabulary of imagination, when the former was precisely born of a need to move beyond the latter. But it doesn't mean imagination itself could not be thought differently: a. not as a faculty, but as an ontological structure; b. not merely schematically, but productively or genetically (and so 'productive' in a sense different from that of Kant). And yes, on those conditions, I would see how imagination could become a name for the coming into being of poetic as well as mathematical nature. But it amounts to such a bending and distorting of the roots of imagination that I am not sure it would not bring about more confusion than if we were to retain the concept of nature with which I began.