Before discussing the content of Beth Lord’s monograph in detail, I want to begin by raising the question of the aim and purpose of the text. As the title suggests, *Kant and Spinozism* revolves around the relationship between Kant’s work and various readings of Spinoza. Lord states in her introduction that the book deals with the resurgence of interest in Spinoza from 1785-1800, and the complex relationship this resurgence had with Kant’s transcendental idealism. As such, three of the principal figures addressed, aside from Kant himself are Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, Johann Gottfried Herder, and Salomon Maimon. Whereas there was a time when post-Kantianism was understood almost exclusively as the transition from Kant to Hegel, there are now several studies of the early years of post-Kantianism, notably those by Beiser and Franks, which deal with the reintroduction of Spinozist themes to greater and lesser extents. Lord claims that what distinguishes her book is the focus on Kant’s own response to those figures who claimed a need either to replace transcendental idealism with Spinozism, or to introduce elements of Spinoza’s thought into transcendental idealism itself.

On Lord’s own reading, the study has a clear, organic coherence to it. What problematises this understanding of the text is the curious introduction of the thought of twen-
tieth century French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze. Writing more than a century after the deaths of the other participants in the pantheism debate, Deleuze would appear to sit uneasily with the claimed structure of the study, particularly with the claim that the focus is on the responses of Kant. We can note that a whole series of questions emerge from the inclusion of Deleuze, such as why the later German Idealist tradition is not also included. Schelling’s sophisticated attempts to develop a genetic transcendent idealism through the reintroduction of an augmented Spinozism is not mentioned at all, and Hegel, traditionally construed as the endpoint of the reintroduction of metaphysics into transcendent idealism, appears only in a subordinate role, in a discussion of Deleuze’s heritage. As with Deleuze, both of these figures respond to Kant with the resources of Spinozism, and as with Deleuze, neither of these figures receive a direct response from Kant. What is perhaps most surprising about the inclusion of Deleuze, however, is how his presence as a representative of Spinozism and post-Kantianism causes little disruption to the structure of Lord’s account. This points to the fact that while *Kant and Spinozism* is a valuable history of the pantheism debate, it is most effectively read as a study of the potential of Spinoza’s thought to disrupt, assimilate or augment Kant’s transcendental idealism. One consequence of this is that the different forms of Spinozism are not treated equally. While Jacobi and Herder are seen to develop their ideas in the light of (and in reaction to) the earlier simplifications of Spinoza’s thought propagated by Bayle, Maimon is presented as having a purer Spinozan heritage, his lack of familiarity with earlier German philosophy allowing him to ‘read Spinoza from an unbiased standpoint.’ (110) Similarly, we can see that Deleuze is privileged over Hegel and Schelling because he sees Kant and Spinoza as both ‘on the side of difference’ (4), rather than seeing them as converging through a principle of identity or contradiction. I will come back to this point at the conclusion of the review, but I now want to go through the
different ways that Lord shows that Spinozism developed in the period of 1785-1800.

Broadly speaking, *Kant and Spinozism* divides into three sections. The first deals with Jacobi’s attempt to make space for faith, claiming that reason leads to Spinozism or nihilism. Lord focuses on Kant’s responses in the essay on orientation in thinking, and the more pronounced efforts in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason* to distinguish transcendental idealism from transcendental realism. The second deals with Herder’s claim that Kant fails to account for the purposiveness of nature, and his introduction of a concept of living matter. Here, Kant’s response is embodied in the analysis of the purposiveness of nature in the third critique. Finally, Lord introduces the Spinozisms of Maimon and Deleuze. In these cases the problem they highlight with Kant’s transcendental philosophy is Kant’s inability to explain the genesis of particular qualities, rather than formal properties of matter, such as extension. Lord turns to the *Opus Postumum* to discover a response to this difficulty through Kant’s concept of ether. The book concludes with a discussion of the somewhat cryptic remarks on Spinoza by Kant himself. In the background of this discussion of Spinozism is the question of ontological difference in Spinoza’s thought. *Kant and Spinozism* sets up the question of the interpretation of Spinoza against the background of the notoriously hostile article in Bayle’s 1697 *Dictonaire historique et critique*. As Lord notes, Bayle’s account equates Spinozan substance with the natural world, which leads to the contradictions one can imagine derive from equating God with the world. In effect, Bayle’s mistake is to see God, or Being, as the aggregate of extended matter constituting the universe. While Bayle privileges beings over Being, Jacobi does the obverse, taking substance to be primary over against modes, which he considers to be illusory. Herder returns to the Baylean equation of God and the world, albeit with a sophisticated, purposive conception of matter. Lord argues, however, that with Maimon, there is the beginnings of a Spinozism that escapes from the ont-
theology of Bayle and his respondents, with an adequate
Spinozism, capable of adequately expressing the relation-
ship between substance and modes, developed by Deleuze.
In each case, the emergence of a form of Spinozism is seen
as presenting a challenge to Kant’s transcendental idealism,
prompting the development of new conceptual innovations.
What this shows, once again, is that at the heart of Lord’s
book are a series philosophical problems rather than his-
torical moments: in this case, how one thinks the relation-
ship between being and beings, or substance and modes.

In developing Jacobi’s reading of Spinoza, Lord first
notes that Jacobi’s interpretation of Spinoza rests on a
misreading of the relationship between substance and the
modes. Whereas Bayle had understood substance as an
aggregate of modes, Jacobi instead argues that modes are
immanent to substance, but immanent in the form of being
mere illusory appearances of substance. Once such a
misreading of Spinoza has been accepted, paradoxical im-
plications can be easily drawn, as Spinozism becomes in
effect a modern form of Parmenideanism. Jacobi draws out
the implications of his misreading, which leads fairly
directly for Jacobi’s alternative call for faith, both in religion
and perception. Lord instead focuses, however, on Jacobi’s
analysis of the relationship between Kant and Spinoza,
which he develops through the categories of the finite and
infinite. Jacobi’s analysis relies on a similarity between
Spinoza’s characterisation of the infinity of substance as
prior to the modes, and the claim by Kant that our intuition
of space as a whole is prior to our intuition of its parts. While
Jacobi’s argument has here traditionally been seen to rely on
an overextension of this analogy, Lord argues, with some
plausibility, that Jacobi’s claim is rather that Kant’s philo-
sophy is condemned to nihilism precisely by preventing
knowledge of the thing-in-itself—a fate Spinoza escapes by
allowing substance to be partially knowable by a finite
subject. As she notes, Jacobi’s exchange with Mendelssohn
has a number of effects on Kant’s development. First, from
the pantheism debate onwards, Spinoza comes to the fore as

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and Immanence from Jacobi to Deleuze,
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the main rationalist interlocutor for Kant, supplanting Leibniz. Second, places a greater emphasis on distinguishing transcendental idealism from transcendental realism, as is particularly noticeable in the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Third, Kant develops the notion of practical reason as a way to allow room for faith, thus escaping the dichotomy Jacobi develops. Fourth, Jacobi’s Spinozism is taken up by Kant as his working interpretation of Spinoza. We might question the degree to which Spinozism is responsible for the move to practical reason (and Lord doesn’t claim that the rise of Spinozism is the only motivation for Kant). Similarly, given Jacobi’s claim that all rationalism ends with Spinozism, we might feel that the reorientation in Kant’s exposition occurs because Spinoza provides a useful shorthand for rationalism, but leaving aside these points, Lord's exposition and analysis of the various arguments is excellent.

The second form of Spinozism that is introduced is that developed by Herder. If Jacobi developed a Spinozism where beings were illusory, Lord argues that Herder, in terms of the relation of being to beings, returns to something like a Baylean account of this distinction, seeing being (to simplify a great deal) as the totality of beings. Whereas Bayle's Spinoza saw the matter of the world (and hence the matter of God) in terms of Descartes' notion of substance as extension, Herder argues that this is a misunderstanding of the intention of Spinoza's thought which derives from a lack of sophistication in the conceptual tools Spinoza had available to develop his position. As such, Herder creates what is self-consciously a Spinozism, departing from the letter of Spinoza's own thought in order to maintain what he believes is the spirit of it. What Herder introduces is a dynamic theory of forces, a theory not thinkable in terms of Descartes’ ontology of substance, into Spinoza's account. As Lord notes, this means that we now do not need to understand the relation of substance to modes as a part-whole relation, even if individuals are constituted by the field of forces which are God. Furthermore, God, or substance, is no
longer understood as developing according to a rational or mechanistic principle. The dynamic of forces implies life, and with it, the kind of purposiveness that we might find in a classical conception of God, are inherent characteristics of matter. As such, Herder thinks that he has managed to reconcile Spinoza with Christianity, and Lord notes Herder's appreciation for St Paul's proclamation that 'in Him we live and move and have our being' – a proclamation that fits better than most in the Bible with Spinoza's metaphysics.

Lord makes a convincing case for the claim that this introduction to purposiveness into the matter of the world presents another problem for Kant that requires a further revision of the critical system. While one of the motivations for Herder's introduction of an active model of matter may be to allow him to develop a Spinozism consistent with Christian belief, it also allows him to develop a more sophisticated theory of organic individuation. The active nature of matter allows us to develop a model of organic unity which takes into account the relationality of the organic realm. The whole of the organism is determined by the parts, and vice versa. If one were to simply read the Critique of Pure Reason, one would have the impression that the world could be understood purely in terms of the mechanistic categories of Newton's physics. Such categories do not allow us to understand the kinds of structures of unity that we find in the world, where life is not simply an aggregate of matter, but is a system which separates itself off from other structures within the world. In denying something like Herder's notion of an immanent action of organisation inherent to nature, Kant instead opens the way to claim that the existence of purposiveness necessitates the existence of a transcendent creator. Drawing an analogy with our own ability to instil purpose into the world through our creation of artefacts, Kant argues that we can also understand the structures we find in the natural world as purposive if we posit their creation by a transcendent deity. As Lord notes, there is a seeming affinity between Spinoza and Kant on this point, and she develops an incisive analysis
of the differences in their accounts of purposive thinking. For both Spinoza and Kant, we experience the world as purposive, and for both Spinoza and Kant, this purposiveness is related to the structure of thinking of a finite discursive subject. Lord provides an excellent analysis in this respect of Kant’s brief, neglected remarks on the intuitive intellect, a form of intellect which is not limited by the kind of discursive structures we find in finite subjects. While both Spinoza and Kant put the necessity of thinking in terms of purpose down to the finite structure of the subject, however, Kant claims that the only coherent conception we can have of God is of the transcendent cause of this purposiveness, thus ruling out the conceptualisation of the kind of immanent God developed by Spinoza.

The final figures introduced by Lord are Salomon Maimon and Gilles Deleuze, who together develop a final problem with Kant’s philosophy. Lord provides a clear summary of Maimon’s relationship with Kant, taking up Kant’s claim that ‘none of my critics understood me and the main questions as well as Herr Maimon does.’ (108) Maimon is given a somewhat privileged position in relation to Spinoza, to the extent that Lord argues that his lack of formal education places him outside of the interpretive framework first established by Bayle. While the Leibnizian aspects of Maimon’s philosophy are often emphasised in readings of him, Lord instead argues that his references to Leibniz are largely governed by a need to cover over a Spinozism that was still controversial in the Berlin intellectual scene of the 1780s. While Lord’s emphasis of Spinoza is perhaps overplayed here, this is nonetheless a useful corrective to more Leibnizian readings. As Lord notes, Maimon’s reading of the Critique of Pure Reason leads to his own development of what he calls a coalition-system, bringing in Kant, but also Hume, Leibniz and Spinoza. Maimon readily accepts Kant’s claim to have provided an account of the conditions that have to be met for experience to be possible, but questions whether experience, in the technical sense put forward by Kant, is in fact possible. As Lord explains,
Maimon takes issue both with Kant’s claim that experience must take place in relation to a spatio-temporal manifold, and that we can assume our experience is of a world governed by the categories of the understanding. Lord’s claim is that according to Maimon and Deleuze, Kant fails to explain how the categories are able to relate to intuitions. As Lord notes, Maimon’s strategy in the face of these negative results is to claim that transcendental idealism itself has certain transcendental conditions, and these conditions are that it presupposes a kind of rationalism. It is only within such a framework that we can understand the relationship between intuition and sensibility. In effect, Maimon’s claim is that the duality between intuition and the understanding exists because our finite understanding cannot fully grasp the rule that allows the specification of an object. For this reason, we instead encounter objects as schematised in spatio-temporal form by the imagination. Maimon claims that our finite experience of sensible objects, therefore, presupposes the idea of an infinite understanding which would understand the rule for the determination of an object without the need for recourse to the imagination. In fact, Maimon claims that our own finite minds are modes of this infinite understanding.

I will return to the question of Deleuze’s place in the book shortly, but to continue with the architectonic of the book, I want to first discuss Lord’s discussion of Kant’s *Opus Postumum*. This little studied later work of Kant’s is important because it seeks to address a question thrown up by Maimon’s transcendental Spinozism, namely how do we move from an account of the formal aspects of our experience (conditions of possible experience) to an account of the actual properties and events that we encounter in the world (conditions of real experience)? Kant’s solution to this problem arrives late in his intellectual development, after the three critiques that are normally taken as definitive of his work. His solution is to claim that a form of universal matter, governed by universal attraction and repulsion, is a condition for the experience of a world made up of bodies of

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different densities. Lord’s discussion of this almost invariably marginalized aspect of Kant’s philosophy is excellent, and brings into play an entirely new side of Kant’s transcendental idealism.

As a study of the philosophical turmoil caused by the introduction of the critical system, as well as the resurgence of Spinozism, Lord’s book stands well alongside the works of Beiser and Franks. As I mentioned earlier, Lord also introduces a chapter on Deleuze after the chapter on Maimon. This chapter prevents us from seeing the book purely as a study of a historical period, and opens out onto a whole series of broader questions, notably how we conceive of the relationship between being and thinking. This question, as well as the related question of how we think the relationship between monism and individuation, runs through the whole of *Kant and Spinozism*, but with the introduction of Deleuze, Lord shows her intention to bring to bear the conceptual work of the late 18th century on our contemporary understanding of metaphysics. Lord suggests that Deleuze is a natural successor to Maimon, developing his notion of reciprocal determination in a way that moves away from the somewhat fixed notion of essence found in Maimon’s work. She uses this account of Maimon’s logic to develop an account of one of the most difficult elements of Deleuze’s metaphysics: his development of a logic that he sees at work both in Kant’s paralogism and in Spinoza’s account of substance, attributes and modes. In both cases, an undetermined moment (the cogito, or Spinozan substance) determines itself, but in determining itself, differs from itself. This structure is taken up by Deleuze in positing a field of differences that express themselves in terms of representation, or a field of intensity that expresses itself in individuated beings. This moment in Deleuze’s thought is probably one of the hardest to think through, and Lord does an excellent job in clarifying it, though the project of clarifying Deleuze’s metaphysics is one that will continue to occupy the Deleuze community for some time to come. While Deleuze’s position in the text is justified by his own

attempt to unite the work of Kant and Spinoza, there are still some difficulties with this section. It is difficult not to read Deleuze here as completing (or, at least, advancing) the Spinozism of Maimon. While Lord does a very good job of arguing for Maimon’s Spinozism, it is nonetheless the case that Deleuze explicitly calls Maimon the ‘Leibniz of the calculus.’ Thus the reading that Lord provides goes, at least, against the word of Deleuze’s thought, if not necessarily against the spirit. Secondly, at the conclusion of the section, Lord turns to another figure who attempts to reconcile Spinozist and Kantian themes: Hegel. Drawing on Christian Kerslake’s analysis of Deleuze’s early review of Hyppolite’s _Logic and Existence_, Lord posits a direct lineage from Hegel to Deleuze. This belies Deleuze’s own absolute rejection of Hegel in _Nietzsche and Philosophy_, but also runs against the grain of what I take to be one of the main interpretive lines of the book: that Maimon institutes a different reading of Spinoza through developing his thought outside of the usual debates and positions. I cannot think of a place in Hegel’s corpus where he references Maimon, and so a fairer conclusion to draw would have been that Maimon continues to play a role as a figure outside of the usual positions, lines and arguments, and for precisely this reason, he is able to offer Deleuze a new way of thinking Spinoza and Kant that bypasses the traditional line of Fichte-Schelling-Hegel.

To conclude, _Kant and Spinozism_ is an impressive analysis of the variety of forms of Spinozism at play in the late 18th century, and of Kant’s reactions to these forms. More importantly, I think, Lord shows that the resources of those debates can still be deployed to illuminate and advance contemporary debates on the nature of life, the relation of reason and faith, and the question of immanence. _Kant and Spinozism_ is exemplary in relating the history of philosophy to contemporary questions, and deserves to be read by all those interested in the genesis of the post-Kantian tradition, and the philosophical foundations of the thought of Gilles Deleuze.