

**Gilles Deleuze – The Deleuze Seminars (deleuze.cla.purdue.edu), summaries: Charles J. Stivale**

**Seminar on Kant: Synthesis and Time, March-April 1978**

In 1963, Deleuze published a tightly articulated book on Kant, *La philosophie critique de Kant* (translated as *Kant's Critical Philosophy*) that lays out (in the introduction) the “transcendental method”, then in three successive chapters, outlines the relations of the faculties as presented, respectively, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Practical Reason*, and the *Critique of Judgement*, with a brief conclusion on “les fins de la raison”, the “ends of reason”.

Years later, in *L'Abécédaire* (“K as in Kant”), Deleuze describes his motivation for working on a philosopher with whom he had little in common: first, for Deleuze, Kant’s writing constituted such a turning point in numerous ways and, second, he initiated something in philosophy that had never been advanced previously, a tribunal of reason and things being judged as a function of this tribunal. While pretending to be struck with horror by Kant’s critical method, Deleuze admits that this is mixed with fascination, especially Kant’s astonishing reversal of time’s subordination to movement, with movement henceforth depending on time, and thus, time ceasing to be circular and becoming a straight line. Moreover, late in his life, Kant introduces his conception of the sublime, by which the faculties enter into conflicts, having discordant accords, then reconciling, but no longer being subject to a tribunal. Deleuze argues that Kant’s greatness is due to creating a whole undergirding in his works that makes Deleuze quite enthusiastic, while on top of the undergirding is a system of judgment that Deleuze says he would like to do away with, but without standing in judgment.

We should also note that during the 1977-78 academic year, one topic for the German language examination (*épreuve*) in the national *agrégation* degree was a text by Kant (from the *Critique of Judgment*, Introduction, “Analytik des Schöne”), so Deleuze’s choice for this brief seminar may have linked his students’ needs with his own interests.

**Session 1, March 14, 1978**

Highlighting Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, Deleuze suggests that rather than attempting to understand this “stifling philosophy”, one should just get into Kant’s rhythm and seek his philosophy’s hidden architecture underneath, with a new conception of time. Based on a first distinction between Kant’s use of a priori as opposed to a posteriori, Deleuze develops successive points, especially emphasizing predicates, or categories, that include Kant’s threes, unity, plurality, totality; reality, negation, limitation; substance, cause, reciprocity. Arguing that the a priori is determined by universal predicates as opposed to empirical or a posteriori predicates, Deleuze concludes the first point by suggesting that, for Kant, something other than categories can be a priori (universal and necessary), space and time, establishing two sorts of a priori elements and indicating Kant’s work to distinguish a priori representations or concepts from presentations (space and time). The second distinction concerns Kant’s notion of phenomenon, defined as apparition, i.e. what appears insofar as it appears, its conditions, with no opposition with essence (the basis of phenomenology), a reversal which impacts the subject. Deleuze indicates that the conditions of the phenomenon’s apparition are the categories, on one

hand, and space and time, on the other, i.e. space and time as the forms of representation of what appears, hence, Kant's extension of the term "transcendental" toward the subject as the instance which the conditions of all apparitions are related to, with the apparition itself appearing to empirical subjects.

Deleuze's third point concerns the synthetic a priori, entailing the query, what is synthesis for Kant? Here Deleuze distinguishes analytic from synthetic judgments (both defined in detail), and synthetic judgments arise in our experience, the manner in which we know things. Since Kant needs something to be irreducible to the order of the concept, hence his monstrous invention of a third type of judgment, synthetic a priori judgment, for which Deleuze provides several examples. Finally, exploring Kant's reasons for affirming that space and time are not reducible to categories, Deleuze considers how, for Kant, space and time are the forms of apparition of what appears, indeed forms of perception, and distinguishes types of diversity of what appears in space and time: first, empirical diversity; second, the diversity of space itself and of time itself, or a priori diversity. Deleuze concludes that Kant's construction of this system occurred to establish the correspondence of spatio-temporal determinations and conceptual determinations. Returning to the expression from Hamlet, "time is out of joint", to express how time is no longer subordinated as the number of nature or the measure of movement (hence is "out of joint"), Deleuze proposes for the next session another, mysterious expression, from Kant's *Opus Postumum*, regarding time as the form under which the subject affects itself.

## **Session 2, March 21, 1978**

Deleuze starts this session by indicating three abstract expressions that designate three Kantian reversals regarding the notion of time: "time is out of joint", from *Hamlet*; while until now our task was to represent space, "the moment has come to think time" (anonymous); and from Rimbaud, "I is an other", all taken outside their contexts, as abstract declarations. The session has three parts: Deleuze's initial development of "time is out of joint"; then, an intervention by mathematician Gilles Châtelet, also on the first formula, followed by Deleuze's response; then, Deleuze's consideration of critical philosophy. Deleuze's review of "time is out of joint" (the joint being a pivot around which time turned, or time's subordination to change or to movement or the course of the world, hence time as circular or cyclical), concludes that with Kant, time loses its cyclical form, becoming a straight line, acquiring a tonal character, marked by a caesura distributing a non-symmetrical before and after, time marked as a pure present. Hence, once enclosed within harmony with God, man now is the caesura distributing the non-symmetrical before and after. While Kant calls space and time extensive magnitudes or quantities, they also have intensive quantity, that which fills space and time to a particular degree, with characteristics that Deleuze outlines. Deleuze states that intensive quantity effects a synthesis between the degree zero it implies and time as pure line or empty form, but in Kant, neither God nor the soul is suppressed, so receive a moral, practical function, yet with God passing into empty time while the soul passes into the caesura. And in "Anticipation of Perception", Kant suggests that there are two things a priori, whatever there is that is given in space and time is an extensive quantity, having a degree which is an intensive quantity, hence a priori judgment.

Deleuze asks Gilles Châtelet to comment (alas, in inaudible remarks) on how, from a mathematical perspective, the conception of time as a straight line is fundamental. Through a summary from WebDeleuze, Châtelet finds time as projective straight line in Plotinus, and in

Kant, time is a multiplicity, a real straight line, and a function, with abstract space as pure parameter. Deleuze finds confirmation in these remarks of his earlier analysis although he takes issue with Châtelet's emphasis on Plotinus. Then, Deleuze turns to Kant's critical philosophy, first, contrasting it to classical philosophy, then suggesting how Kant's transformation of time into a straight line eliminates the importance of space as obstacle to thought, with the subject traversed by this line of time, the synthesis of the form of thought and the form of the internal limit of thought. Kant sees a priori acts of thought as particular concepts called categories, and also uses the term "forms of spontaneity", and he also considers the form of receptivity or of intuition, and Deleuze emphasizes that the form of exteriority (space) and the form of interiority (time) have in common the fact of being two forms of intuition or of receptivity. Then, turning to Kant's problem of how the same subject (self) can have two forms which are irreducible to each other, Deleuze considers the constitution of this alienation by citing Rimbaud's expression "I is an other". Deleuze explains how Kant's conception of the active determination "I think" can only determine an existence under the form of a passive being in space and time, hence, the "I" as act that "I" can only represent to myself as passive being, "I" is an other, transcendental. Deleuze concludes that this means it's the same subject which has taken on two forms, the form of time and the form of thought, and the form of thought can only determine the existence of the subject as the existence of a passive being.

### **Session 3, March 28, 1978**

Answering a student's question about thought in the imaginary relationship by referring to Kant's treatment of "to think", "to imagine", "to feel", each as a specific faculty, then follows carefully Descartes' development starting from the operation of doubt yielding a certainty containing in itself its own ground, e.g. "I think", thinking given in the act of thinking. Launching a new type of logic, a logic of implications, Descartes threads this logic -- I doubt, I think, I am, I am a thing that thinks -- thereby discovering the zone where substance was subject, affirming a real distinction between soul and body. After reflecting on Descartes' innovation in introducing time into philosophical discourse in several meditations, Deleuze then refers to Kant's text, "What does it mean, to orient oneself in thinking?" in which Kant moves beyond Descartes' conclusion. For Kant, thought is limited from the inside by the line of time, and his philosophy henceforth thinks that which is not thinkable rather than thinking what is exterior to thought. Deleuze proposes to justify the shift he is making between a conceptual determination to a spatio-temporal determination, i.e., Kant as posing the problem of the relation between the form of determination "I think" and the form of the determinable as time, thereby upending philosophy.

Deleuze then explores the senses of "spatio-temporal determination" and its correspondence to conceptual determination and argues that the innovation in Kant's analysis is his awareness of the double catastrophe, of the sublime's crushing effect and of the symbol's eruption dislodging the ground of knowledge on which syntheses and schemas are built. Pursuing Kant's sense of the synthesis of perception, Deleuze considers the three operations constituting the synthesis operating on diversity in and of space and time: the synthesis of the apprehension of parts; the synthesis of reproduction (referring to the act of the imagination); and the necessity of the form of an object (recognition). Hence, we learn from the *Critique of Judgement* that beneath the logical synthesis through successive apprehension of parts, aesthetic comprehension of a unit of measure is needed, through an evaluation of rhythm, heterogeneous

rhythms. Ultimately, however, the whole process of perception explodes since the aesthetic comprehension founded on evaluation of rhythm is drowned in chaos, or the sublime which, for Kant, consists of the mathematical sublime (extensive) and the dynamical sublime (intensive). For the individual, joy arises from awareness of a superior faculty, the super-sensible faculty of the idea, and for Kant, evil is something spiritual, not matter as exterior, but in thought qua thought. As for causality in Kant, Deleuze outlines several definitions, one in the order of phenomena (notably “phenomenal” and so-called “free causality”), a second definition as the relation between phenomena when the succession in their apprehension corresponds to an objective rule. The session ends abruptly here, suggesting that the transcript is not entirely complete.

#### **Session 4, April 4, 1978**

Deleuze states that his focus in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is two operations forming a correspondence between conceptual determinations and spatio-temporal determinations as synthetic operations of heterogeneous elements. Yet he sees a need to distinguish between these and to consider (referring to the *Critique of Judgement*) how synthesis may be overwhelmed by experience of the sublime. Calling Kant’s book the hinge of Classicism and Romanticism, Deleuze points out that the same risk of being overwhelmed experienced by synthesis occurs for the schema, being overwhelmed by symbolism. Addressing the difference between the schema and the synthesis, Deleuze describes the schema’s path as no longer from the here and now, but from the concept, i.e., an operation that is complete, a valid-at-all-times determination, carried out by a rule of production (rather than recognition). Deleuze links this to the study of judgment and then links these perspectives to Husserl, who he takes to task (specifically, regarding the category of “roundness”), preferring Kant’s emphasis on the act of productive imagination. Deleuze concludes his first point by insisting that schematism is not a case of reflective judgment, but of determinative judgment. Deleuze then links space and time to rhythms and mannerisms, e.g., an animal’s territory, and he links Kant’s influence to experiments by the Würzburg school psychologists, notably their concept of empty intentions, or spatio-temporal directions of consciousness as a sort of rhythm or way of occupying space and time, the schema. Whereas the concept provides the homogeneous measure or tempo of things subordinate to it, rhythmicity differs entirely, operating through blocks of space-time.

Deleuze then considers the adventure of the sublime in relation to the synthesis, particularly the synthesis of imagination that presupposes an aesthetic comprehension (of the thing measured and of the unit of measure) serving as the fragile ground on which the synthesis rests. Deleuze insists that what Kant sought for the schema was its own limit, that which might overwhelm it, and for this, Deleuze traces on the board the schema’s diagram (generally unclear in the written transcript), using the concept of the circle as a specific example. Here arises the Kantian series: the synthesis referring to a rule of recognition, the schema to rules of production; the symbol to rules of reflection. The session ends (or is interrupted, with text possibly missing) with Deleuze suggesting that no intuition corresponds to the concept, either because it is simply lacking, without necessary knowledge, or because of the concept’s special nature.

