

Bergson Class Notes

1/30/08

Time and Free Will (Chapter 2)

Reiterations

“The basic principle is that one should not think of the properties of the process by means of the properties of the product”

In general:

The psychological processes that Bergson is interested in are a continuous heterogeneity; the phases continually interpenetrate. By a process called exchange, it can result in a product we call homogenous time.

Danger: To think of our inner lives in terms of this product (h-time)

2 Forms of Multiplicity

New Business:

Relation to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804)

Kant

1. The Critique of Pure Reason- roughly about knowledge
2. The Critique of Practical Reason- roughly about morality
3. The Critique of Judgment- roughly about beauty, sublimity, organisms, and nature as a system.

-Bergson's works tend to refer to Kant, a sort of coming to grips with his ideas.

The notion of spatialiaized homogenous time has ties to Kant:

In CoPR: discusses time and space in *The Transcendental Aesthetic*

Transcendental: “What are the necessary and sufficient conditions for rational experience?”

- a. He assumes that our experience of the world makes sense, and he wants to figure out how this is possible.
- b. This is a systematized experience.
- c. Kant wants to show how scientific knowledge is possible.

Aesthetic: “Deals with our sensibility” “difference between sensibility and episteme”

Generally, in the work:

Knowledge: Sensation + Categories=Experience

These things happen at the same time, but remain separable components.
“How is it possible that we can know that this pen is on the table”

Intuition, for Kant, equals the immediate relation to an object.

Space: The condition of external experience/experience of external objects.

- a. The form of external intuition
- b. It is the condition of the arrangement of the things around us.

Time: The condition of internal experience/ experience of internal objects.

- a. The form of internal intuition.
- b. The arrangement of series of experiences.

Both Space and Time are PURE Intuitions.

--if you abstract from content of sensation, time and space are immediately given as wholes.

--any one determinate time/space is given as a part of a whole of time/part of a whole of space.

The form of internal intuition is therefore given as an immediate whole, but without a shape. (Time is given without shape)

- a. “Just because this inner intuition yields no shape, we endeavor to make up for this want with an analogy: the time sequence represented as a line to infinity”- Kant
- b. The empirical reality of time vs. transcendental ideality of time
 - a. Time is empirically real, tied to actual objects, but transcendently ideal. (but it’s only the condition of them) (time is the ordering of things, and if you take away the things, no time, essentially)
 - b. It is only the condition for the presentation of objects, so if you abstract from our conditions of experience, time is nothing. (time is the ordering of things, and if you take away the things, no time, essentially)
 - c. (If you eliminate human beings, time is NO THING; it is not a thing)
 - d. This is one of the key differences between Kant and Bergson.

Bergson: “Time as Duration, is reality itself”

-by Matter and Memory, things are just practical creations of ours; what is real the durational rhythm of the process.

“We are in time, as opposed to time being within us” (Kant)

“We are the creation of time, just like everything else” (Bergson)

- a. Time is Being.

Heidegger (1889-1976)

For Bergson: Time is Being

For Heidegger: Being is time.

An analogy: In “Being in Time” Heidegger attacks the straight line theory of time; he calls it inauthentic, fallen, everyday. It is a falling away from concrete, primordial, real time. For Heidegger, time is the structure of experience.

Difference: For Bergson, time is an ontological reality; the means by which things form.

According to Bergson, you’re not a thing that has properties; you’re a process.

-relationships shouldn’t be mechanical, but rather musical.

Ex. When you break up, you’re tempted to make them into a thing (reify) with properties (My properties weren’t good enough for that person or their properties weren’t good enough for me). Instead, our rhythms simply didn’t align at the given time.

Both people and things are events. The event of a “thing” is simply slower than the “event” of a person.

Straight Line Time is a falling away from original, durational, time, because of our involvement with sociality, with things of the world. (Bergson says it’s because we’re biological organisms)

Heidegger seems to give Kant more credit (Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics/1929)
-the schematism of the transcendental imagination

Straight Line time is an idea; our life is an unfolding duration.

An aside on the nature of the philosophical endeavor

Philosophy is a matter of letting associations come to you, and then being able to rigorously, carefully relate those associations in an ordered fashion to other people.

You have to be secure enough to have ideas come to you; but eventually you have to shift gears and get them into associations that you can relate to people.

What are the conditions that allow you to drop defenses, let ideas come to you → What are the conditions that let you articulate it?

The (mistaken) means by which we generate Homogeneous Time (according to Bergson in TFW)

Space

- a. Pure Exteriority (things are separated and outside of each other)
- b. An array of juxtaposed, simultaneous points: The world is arranged in a certain way, and in an instant, the world is arranged in an entirely different way. Death and Rebirth through changed spatial locations. ***
- c. Therefore, any and all retention is a mental synthesis.
- d. There is no motion in space; motion is the result of our retention of one spatial arrangement, and then the comparison of this retained arrangement with the new arrangement.
- e. Our inner life=duration=continuous heterogeneity
- f. The external world=discontinuous homogeneity (in homogenous space all points are the same)
- g. These two come together in homogeneous time, which has the properties of continuity (borrowed from duration) and homogeneity.
- h. This happens by a process of exchange, in which these two things come together.

Generally, we can associate different phases of our inner life with objective events (the tolling of a clock, watch ticking, person walking down a hallway). Our inner life can correspond to the spatial position.

- a. We thereby get in the habit of distinguishing the moments of our inner life in same fashion as we distinguish the ticking of a clock.
- b. The external phenomena profit as well. Instead of being discontinuous snapshots, they are retained and arranged in a series.
- c. This occurs in an “ideal space”
- d. Ideal space is homogeneous time.
- e. Homogeneous time is the symbolic representation of duration: it represents our unrolling life.

Example: Indivisible act of moving as compared to the space traversed

Other Example: Counting

Homogeneous time, although an illusion/corrupt form of time, means that it can never arise from space. It must arise from duration.

Counting: First you must strip the quality from experiences, and then arrange them in an ideal space. This results in the unity/multiplicity.

Counting requires retention of the previous, to add to the subsequent: the retention/addition of unit then changes the quality/rhythm of the whole unit. The process

of adding three things therefore feels different qualitatively than adding two things. Therefore, there is a quality to quantity. "What we think is quantity is really just quality."

--The growth of an emotion is the same. Growth of an emotion is not an increase of quantity, but different kinds of quality.

Thus, if you look at the product (a sum of homogenous units) it is quantitatively different; process is qualitatively changing.

Homogenous time: Thinking of our inner life in terms of an inner space. (Mental state #1, Mental State #2, Mental State #3, etc.)