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Spring 2007: The Major Works of Gilles Deleuze

Second day lecture / 29 January 2007: Intro and Ch. 1 of DR

THE CHALLENGE OF *DIFFERENCE AND REPETITION*

Truer words were never spoken than when Deleuze said of DR in his 1973 "Letter to a Harsh Critic": "it's still full of academic elements, it's heavy going" (*Negotiations* 7). I'll say! (Part of that academicism comes from D having submitted DR to his jury as the primary thesis for the *doctorat d'Etat* [the secondary thesis was the big Spinoza book].)

The context of these remarks is useful: Deleuze has just been noting that "the history of philosophy plays a patently repressive role in philosophy, it's philosophy's own version of the Oedipus complex" (*Negotiations* 5). Deleuze continues that he tried to subvert this repressive force by various means (*Negotiations* 6):

(1) by writing on authors such as Lucretius, Hume, Spinoza and Nietzsche who contested the rationalist tradition by the "critique of negativity, the cultivation of joy, the hatred of interiority, the externality of forces and relations, the denunciation of power [*pouvoir*]"

(2) by *enculage* / immaculate conception: making the author say something in their own words that would be monstrous.

These are famous lines, and the last is certainly fun in an *épater les bourgeois* sort of way. But what's really important in my view comes next, when D explains what it means to finally write "in your own name," as he claims he first did in DR:

Individuals find a real name for themselves ... only through the harshest exercises in depersonalization, by opening themselves up to the **multiplicities** everywhere w/in them, to the **intensities** running through them. [This is] a depersonalization through love rather than through subjection. (*Negotiations* 6)

So that's our challenge in reading DR: can we avoid subjecting ourselves to it as a monument in the history of philosophy, as is the case with an Oedipal relation to the history of philosophy in which you give yourself up to be a mere *répétiteur*: an old occupational title in the French academic system? Rather, can we turn our reading of it into a "harsh exercise in depersonalization," that is, by opening ourselves up to the multiplicities and intensities w/in us? Can our encounter with it be a depersonalization through love? Can we **learn** from it, rather than gain knowledge from it?

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

Introduction: Repetition and Difference
1: Difference in Itself
2: Repetition for Itself
3: The Image of Thought
4: Ideal Synthesis of Difference
5: Asymmetrical Synthesis of Sensibility
Conclusion: Difference and Repetition

At first glance we see that the title / subject of the book, difference and repetition, structures the book. The conclusion repeats, with a difference, the Introduction, while chapter 4 repeats chapter 1 and chapter 5 repeats chapter 2. Chapter 3 is the center of the book, the pivot on which it turns. In a useful article, Tim Murphy will claim it is the "caesura," the pure and empty form of time, that breaks naked repetition and opens the way to a novel future, repetition with a difference.

We should note that in an interview from 1988 Deleuze says that "noology" or the study of the image of thought is the "prolegomena to philosophy" (*Negotiations* 149). So, roughly speaking, we can say that the first part of the book (Intro and Chapters 1 and 2) is Deleuze's voyage of depersonalization through the history of philosophy (repeating it with a difference, his *enculage* of the philosophers he writes on). Chapter 3, the study of the image of thought, is the prolegomena to philosophy, while the second part of the book (Chapters 4, 5, and Conclusion) is Deleuze "doing philosophy" in his "own name," after his "harsh exercise" of depersonalization. It doubles the repetition of the history of philosophy we find in the first half of the book by **doing** philosophy in a novel way. DR is itself a living repetition, differing from the bare repetition that would have been a standard reading of Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, et al.

DELEUZE'S ENCOUNTERS WITH OTHERS IN DR

You could replace the title *Difference and Repetition* with *Structure and Genesis*: structures are differential, and genesis produces repetition: different incarnations of the same structure. The key is to identify the conditions for living repetition, that which introduces difference into what tends toward dead repetition, repeated elements that are different only within a horizon of identity: different cases of the same concept, and so on, the four shackles of representation.

So there is something to the clichéd label of Deleuze as "post-structuralist." James Williams has a very nice reading of the "How does one recognize structuralism?" essay as a draft of DR.

Structures (what Deleuze will call Ideas) are conditions of genesis, conditions for the creative transformation of things. So in a twist typical of Deleuze, a twist in which the form of his thought maps its content, we're not trying to "recognize" structuralism, that is, produce a finite set of necessary and sufficient conditions so that we can judge something as falling within the category of "structuralism," but we are trying to establish the conditions for the creative transformation of structuralism: we're trying to find the sensitive

points of structuralism so that if we nudge it a little, it and we will be transformed. We're trying to "conjugate our singularities" with that of structuralism to produce something new: what DG will call a "becoming," or "mutual de/re-territorialization." We're trying to form a "war machine," in which we re-territorialize on our powers of de-territorialization: we're trying to form a habit of creative transformation of habits, we're trying to feel at home while we're on the move – even when that being on the move entails no change of spatial location.

But DR is just as much a rewriting of Kant as it is a work of "post-structuralism."

DR includes engagements with Plato, Aristotle, Scotus, Spinoza, Leibniz, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, and Bergson.

With Aristotle and Hegel, the engagements are uniformly critical, and with Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Bergson they are largely positive.

Plato, Kant, Leibniz and Freud are the interesting cases. Deleuze treats them as what the early Derrida would call "marginal," inscribing openings or gestures toward differential thought in their writing, but not following up on them.

With Plato we get the simulacrum, with Leibniz the notion of "vice-diction" and the glimpse into the world of divergent series (followed up on by Borges in the notion of the garden of bifurcating paths), and with Freud the rethinking of death. There's also the very important though largely unmarked influence of Simondon, from whom the notion of individuation is taken.

But perhaps the encounter with Kant's transcendental philosophy is most important.

TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Transcendental philosophy in its technical modern form was inaugurated by Kant with the distinction between transcendent and transcendental.

“Transcendent” objects refer to those which are thought but cannot be experienced (they are beyond experience, that is, they “transcend” experience), that is, there is either no sensory data corresponding to them (the soul, God) or there is no way of synthesizing the totality of the object (the world).

“Transcendental,” on the other hand, refers to the method of looking for the universal and necessary conditions of possibility of any rational experience. That is, it works backward from experience to what must be if that sort of experience is to be possible.

Deleuze will criticize Kant for copying the transcendental field in the image of the empirical field. That is, empirical experience is personal, identitarian and centrifugal: there is a central focus, the subject. (Kant has a Cartesian heritage then: the vital importance given to subjective consciousness, that is, the “I think” or *cogito*.) All our experiences are tagged as belonging to us. Kant says this is only possible if we can posit the TUA, the Transcendental Unity of Apperception, that is, the possibility to add “I think” to all our judgments: “[I think] the cat is on the mat.”

Deleuze will instead want to have the transcendental field be differential: the virtual is the condition for real experience, but it has no identity. Identities of the subject and the object are products of differential processes. Deleuze still wants to work back from experience, but his rule is that the condition should not resemble the conditioned. As the empirical is personal and individuated, the transcendental is impersonal and pre-individual. The Deleuzian virtual is not the condition of possibility of any rational experience, but the conditions of genesis of real experience.

A nice online reference:

Levi Bryant, “Immanence and the Fractured *Cogito*: Deleuze’s Grounding of the Transcendental Field.”

<http://www.levibryant.com/copernicus3.pdf>

Dan Smith: Deleuze’s “categories” (which are precisely not categories as identitarian forms of thought)

- a. [Substantive] Multiplicity: against the ONE, the identity of the Platonic Form. Every thing is a multiplicity, an manifold.
- b. [Modality] Virtuality: against possibility as a modality.
- c. Problematic: Being always presents itself under a *problematic* form.
- d. Intensity: the type of difference by which Ideas are actualized.

PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

French version in *Deux Régimes de Fous*, p. 280-283

- 1) Difference between history of philosophy and writing philosophy.
- 2) DR is first book in which D tries to "do philosophy." Everything that follows is connected to DR.
- 3) Four-fold representation prevents us from thinking difference in itself.
- 4) Thinking repetition as difference w/o concept also prevents us from a concept of repetition. We need to think variation. Is there a single power [*une seule et même puissance*] of difference / repetition?
- 5) D has tried to constitute a philosophical concept from the mathematical function of differentiation and the biological function of differentiation: a stable relation between the two that does not appear at the level of their respective objects.
- 6) Putting into question the traditional image of thought. Ch 3 now appears to D to be "the most necessary and the most concrete." Cf the contrast of the rhizome and the tree.

PREFACE

A "generalized anti-Hegelianism" is "in the air." Identity is primary in the world of representation, but "the modern world is born of the

failure of representation." (Cf. Foucault's Order of Things, and, after DR, his Inaugural Address at the Collège de France (French: L'Ordre du discours; strange English title as "The Discourse on Language" for the wiles of Hegel, for whom being "anti" is perhaps already subsumed in his system?)

We see difference and repetition rather than identity and contradiction. Hegel confines difference to a horizon of identity; in this way difference is negation leading to contradiction. See the "Determinations of Reflection" section of Book II of the Science of Logic, "Essence." Also very important for Derrida.

Difference and repetition: the simulacrum. Identities are produced by difference and repetition.

Two converging lines of research: "concept of difference w/o negation" and "concept of repetition" in which mechanical repetition finds its *raison d'être* in a "hidden repetition in which a 'differential' is disguised and displaced."

The aggression of thought in grappling with problems vs the beautiful soul who shirks from battle.

Philosophy books as detective novel and science fiction.

Detective novel: empiricism. Undoing classic oppositions of temporal / non-temporal, historical / eternal, particular / universal.

Science fiction: Impersonal individuations and pre-individual singularities. Writing at frontier of ignorance.

Use of the history of philosophy: reproduction with a monstrous difference.

INTRODUCTION

4 main areas

1. Three contrasts of repetition and generality

a. conduct: instead of generality as establishing a genus of particulars, we have repetition as universality of the singular: everything is unique, and can only be stolen or given rather than exchanged (Mauss / Derrida on gift; polemic contra Lévi-Strauss and exchange anthropology in AO)

b. laws: repetition has to be a "transgression," has to be "against the law" (singularity versus equality of legal subjects) both in terms of natural laws and moral law

c. concepts: repetition as difference w/o concept

2. Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Péguy: concludes with distinction btw K and N on "theatre of faith" and "theatre of cruelty":

3. The negative and 4. Bare and clothed repetitions

In the discussion of the negative, we see a movement typical of DR: a historical figure (Freud in this case, but this will also be how Deleuze reads Plato, Leibniz, and Kant) does not grasp, or backs away from, the radical implications of what he has written in a "furtive and explosive moment" (said of Kant in Chapter 1, p. 58).

In this case, in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, we see the death instinct both as bare or naked or brute repetition, a mechanical or material model, as the tendency of life to return to inanimate matter. But there is another reading of the death instinct in BPP (as D argues at length in Chapter 2), as "positive and disguised." That is, disguises that do not simply disguise a brute fact that is first there, fully present, and then is repeated again and again. Rather, disguises are themselves what is first there: they are the "internal genetic elements of repetition itself, its integral and constituent parts" (17). In Derridean terms, difference is primary: "there is no first term which is repeated" (17).

Here Deleuze introduces a term, "simulacra," which we will find again and again in DR (especially the end of Chapter 1 and of Chapter 2), and in one of the appendices to *Logic of Sense*, "The Simulacrum and Ancient Philosophy."

Next, a long discussion of bare vs clothed repetitions. See chart in DR outline. Repetition of ordinary points is the "envelope" of

repetition of singularities, its series of disguises, but these do not pre-exist dynamic repetition.

The Introduction has taught us that we have not yet grasped the essence of repetition because we think "difference w/o concept" only in terms of brute spatio-temporal difference and not as difference internal to the Ideas (which gets actualized in divergent lines [what is repeated, that is, another instance of this Idea, is always different]).

So we now turn to question of difference in itself. The past philosophies of difference (Aristotle, Leibniz, Hegel) missed the concept of difference bcs they contented themselves with "a merely conceptual difference ... difference in the concept in general." (NB that D's "Idea" is not a concept [as self-identical form of thought] but an internally-differentiating structure that throws out divergent lines in actualizing itself.)

CHAPTER 1: DIFFERENCE IN ITSELF

How has difference been chained in representation, subordinated to identity? How have we been led to mistake the chaining of difference in concepts for what we should have wanted, a concept of difference in itself?

Difference is not intermediate btw two states of indifference, the black abyss of total dissolution (no forms, just ground) and the white surface of disparate unconnected determinations (all forms, no ground). Rather, difference is when we can "speak of determination as such."

D's formula is "unilateral distinction" in which "something distinguishes itself, yet that from which it distinguishes itself remains aloof." He gives the example of lightning, but we could also give the example of crystallization: the crystal forms from the super-saturated solution without the solution distinguishing itself from the crystal. The solution remains there as "ground risen to the surface," that is, as retaining its unformed potential to produce more crystals. Deleuze's difference is "making a difference," it is not mutual recognition of subjects on the Hegelian master-slave model in which both sides take and preserve form in distinguishing themselves from themselves.

Rather, forms are "dissolved," becoming only an "abstract line" reflected in the ground.

In ATP the "abstract line" of dissolved form will be called a "trait," or a potential to generate forms by an artisan's nudging of a system to one of its thresholds of self-organization. Here we see that the problem of individuation (how to produce an individual – you move a system to a threshold in which its potential for self-organization click in) is prior to that of specification in which we arrange things by similarity of form.

Project of a philosophy of difference: rescue difference from its monstrous / cursed state.

In representation difference is confined in the four shackles of mediation.

1. Identity in form of undetermined concept: thought
2. Analogy in relation of determinable concepts: judgment
3. Opposition in relation of determinations w/in concepts: predication
4. Resemblance in determined object of concept: perception (of form)

Reconciling difference and concept: Greek propitious moment (Plato / Aristotle); realized in Large (Hegel) and Small (Leibniz)

ARISTOTLE: ORGANIC REPRESENTATION. See lectures of 14 Jan 1974 (14/01/1974) on webdeleuze.

For Aristotle, difference can only be seen or dealt with on a horizon of identity ("you can't compare apples and oranges"). But that's not all: some differences are "better" than others. For instance, contraries or opposites (black and white) are a "better" kind of difference than otherness (red and green). But there are several kinds of difference for Aristotle that we need to take into account to understand D's critique: generic difference, specific difference, and material difference.

Dan Smith refers us to Porphyry's tree, a way of representing the kinds of difference we find in Aristotle.

1: GENERIC OR ANALOGICAL DIFFERENCE = difference between genera: alterity or diversity is hetero-geneity: animal is a genus and so is vegetable, but they are only other or diverse vis-à-vis the other. This difference between genera becomes crucial when we have to discuss the relation among the many senses of "being." Being is not a genus in which the categories are species. Rather, the categories are genera. What then unites the senses of Being? Are they just diverse?

Sense in this context relates to *logos*, which is neither subjective nor objective, but is "speech cut to the measure of the world." (We see here D's "dogmatic image of thought": thought has a natural affinity for the truth of the world.)

In technical terms, this is called "*pros hen* equivocation" of being. *Pros hen* = "with reference to one." This is also known as the "analogical" senses of being: being is said in many ways, but always with a prime meaning, a "focal meaning" of substance. The other categories (concepts said of all beings = the senses of the term "being") all refer to substance: quality of a substance, quantity, where, when, etc.

This is a distributive and hierarchical judgment: it distributes the sense of being among all the categories (all the categories are senses of being) and yet there is a prime sense of being (substance is "more" being than the others, which modify substance). The medievals called this an "analogy of proportion" (more or less) rather than an "analogy of proportionality" ($a:b::c:d$).

2. SPECIFIC DIFFERENCE is difference w/in a genus: it is the "greatest difference": this is opposition or contraries, presupposing the horizon of identity of the genus. Man is rational (as opposed to non-rational) animal (the genus to which man as species belongs). Here we see the "middle range" of Porphyry's tree, identity of the concept (the genus) and opposition of the predicates that determine the species. Deleuze comments that "univocity of species within genera refers to equivocity of being in the genera."

3. material difference is difference w/in the “lowest” species: it's the matter that separates those beings with the same form. Here we see resemblance in perception: in Aristotelian perception, the form is abstracted from matter: in seeing two men, we see the form of rational animal (through the form of their actions as matching means to end), even as we see the material differences (their desires as what proposes to them their ends) that separate them. Again we see the horizon of identity within which difference appears.

UNIVOCAL ONTOLOGY is the key to developing a philosophy of difference, in which difference would no longer be subordinated to identity.

The medievals were concerned with what Heidegger calls “onto-theology”: the question of Being for them always revolved around the difference between God and creatures. The answers here were always politically weighted for there is always an implicit politics in ontology, an “analogy of proportionality” if you will: God is to the world and the King is to the kingdom and as the Pope is to the Church.

There were three options: equivocity, analogy and univocity.

Equivocity: God and creatures are said to be in different senses. The risk here is ontological anarchy: if God cannot be said to be in the way creatures are, then it's hard to see what God's relation to the world can be, or alternatively, how we can express that relation in our language which is formed by our experience of worldly creatures. The risk is negative theology, which can come close to atheism: God “is not,” he cannot be said “to be.” (We can't even talk about the King, let alone define his rights and privileges; there can be no thought of duties of the King.)

Analogy: this is how the medievals read the “pros hen equivocation” of Aristotle. God is the primary sense of Being, he exists in an excellent or superior way, but there is a relation to the way creatures exist: they exist in a lesser way, but there is not the sheer ontological gulf you get with pure equivocity. (The King is a man, but he is a special kind of man.)

Univocity: there is only one sense of Being. God and creatures are in

exactly the same way. Univocity collapses the onto-theological difference. The risk here is pantheism / atheism: either all things are God (or God is all things or God is "in" all things) or there is no God, there is just the totality and systematicity of things. Spinoza captures this ambiguity in his formula *Deus sive Natura* ("God or Nature": Nature, that is to say, God OR God is nothing but Nature). (The King is just another man like you or me.)

Rather than the analogy of being in Aristotle, in univocal ontology being is said in a single sense of all of which it is said, but it is said of difference itself. What is that difference? The difference in degrees of *puissance*. *Puissance* is not *pouvoir*. It is immanent power, power to act rather than power to dominate another. *Puissance* is *praxis* rather than *poiēsis* (others are matter to be formed by my command). D will read *puissance* in terms of intensity: self-dividing or self-differentiating difference: qualitative change at thresholds.

Two important points here:

First, Nomadic distribution and crowned anarchy. Remember that judgment regarding categories, that is, ontological judgment, is distributive and hierarchical.

Types of distribution: Territorial: divides that which is distributed in a closed [striated] space; Nomad: a division of that which distributes itself in an open [smooth] space.

Types of hierarchy: Measurement by limit, i.e., by distance from a principle; "Measurement" by power [*puissance*]: going to limit of what a thing can do.

Quote from 1/14/74 lecture: "At this level, there are no longer any categories, no longer any forms, no longer any species.... [B]etween two members of the same species there can be more differences, more differences in the degree of power than between two beings of different species. Between a racehorse and a draft horse, which belong to the same species, the difference can perhaps be thought as greater than the difference between a draft horse and an ox.... [The] thought of degrees of power is linked ... to a conception of assemblages into which each being is capable of entering. "

Cf. ATP and the notion of "affects." D will distinguish morality and ethics. Morality is the "judgment of God," that is, comparison of the action of a being with what is expected of a being with that essence, that is, the "natural law" of what that being is supposed to do ("rational" animal). Ethics is instead action according to puissance, that is, immanent action taking a body to the limits of its capacity to act. As we are social, capacity to act means praxis, acting with others. The criterion then becomes production of "joyful, active affect." More later, but briefly this means horizontal networks of mutual empowerment. I know this sounds Californian, but there it is.

Second, Individuation precedes matter and form / species and parts. (individuation: Simondon: field of difference prior to identity).

Ideas = virtual = difference = structure;
spatio-temporal dynamisms = intensive individuation = repetition = genesis.

Three moments in history of univocal ontology: Scotus, Spinoza, Nietzsche. Repetition in ER is realization of univocal being. Practical selection and nobility: that which returns is that which is capable of self-transformation, of becoming. The being of becoming.

Nietzsche and ER let us see that being is said in the same way of all onto-hetero-genesis: differential conditions for becoming or individuating factors. All things have Ideas / spatio-temporal dynamisms as their genetic conditions.

Then back to Hegel and Leibniz and "ORGIASTIC" REPRESENTATION. Despite some provocative formulations, Leibniz remains bound to identity by his theory of God's choosing among compossible worlds.

We have to turn to Nietzsche to see that difference is the condition for identity, not the other way around.

Then a famous saying: "the task of modern philosophy is reversing Platonism." Plato and selection.

