

John Protevi
Department of French Studies
www.protevi.com/john/DG
protevi@lsu.edu

Class notes: not for citation in any publication!

I'd like to express my gratitude to Dan Smith of Purdue University, for letting me see his superb lecture notes on Difference and Repetition, to which these lectures are greatly indebted.

Spring 2007: The Major Works of Gilles Deleuze

Fourth day lecture: 12 February 2007: Chapter 3 of DR

3 main parts of Chapter 3:

1. the first four postulates
2. the differential theory of the faculties
3. the last four postulates

INTRODUCTION

The third chapter, "The Image of Thought," is the turning point of DR. Let's look at the architecture of the book, which after the Preface, has a pleasing and significant asymmetry:

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.

So let's look first at the image of thought chapter: It lays out 8 postulates of the "dogmatic image of thought." Murphy shows how the treatment of the first 4 postulates is resentful, ending with the image of difference "crucified" by representation. Then, in the middle of the chapter, we find the disjunctive theory of the faculties. The discussion of each of the first 3 of the last 4 postulates introduces a theme to be developed in Chapter 4: Idea, sense, and problem. The last postulate is that of "learning."

THE EIGHT POSTULATES (DR 167)

1. The Postulate of the Principle, or the *Cogitatio naturalis universalis*:

(The good will of the thinker and the good nature of thought.)

2. The Postulate of the Ideal, or Common Sense:

(Common sense as the *concordia facultatum* and good sense as the distribution that guarantees this accord.)

3. The Postulate of the Model, or of Recognition:

(Recognition presupposes the harmonious exercise of our faculties on an object that is supposedly *identical* for each of these faculties, and the consequent possibility of *error* in the distribution when one faculty confuses one of its objects with a different object of another faculty.)

4. The Postulate of the Element, or Representation:

(Difference is subordinated to the complementary dimensions of the Same and the Similar, the Analogous and the Opposed.)

5. The Postulate of the Negative, or of Error:

(Error expresses everything that can go *wrong* in thought, but only as a product of *external* mechanisms.)

6. The Postulate of the Logical Function, or the Proposition:

(Designation or Denotation [theory of reference] is taken to be the locus of truth, sense being no more than a neutralized double or the infinite doubling of the proposition.)

7. The Postulate of the Modality, or Solutions:

(Problems are materially traced from propositions, or are formally defined by the possibility of their being solved.)

8. The Postulate of the End or the Result, or the Postulate of Knowledge:

(The subordination of learning to knowledge, and of culture [or *paideia*] to method.)

THE FIRST FOUR POSTULATES

The postulates form the “dogmatic image of thought.” An image of thought is pre-supposed in all philosophy, as its “subjective presuppositions.” Philosophy had previously contented itself with beginning by challenging “objective presuppositions,” that is, concepts presupposed by other concepts. Subjective presuppositions are the real challenge however; they have the form “everyone knows,” and consist of common opinions. *Doxa* in Greek is both opinion and “seeming” or “appearance”: Deleuze champions paradox, what is counter to appearance and opinion. The target, as always in DR, is “representation.” What “everyone knows” is the very form of representation.

But preference for paradox is not willful French obscurantism. Philosophy has always fought doxa: think of Socrates as gadfly, of the ascent from the cave, of Aristotle’s dialectical treatment of doxa.

To counter subjective presuppositions we need an individual of ill will who does not think naturally or conceptually: only this individual effectively begins and repeats.

FIRST POSTULATE: *cogitatio natura universalis*: everyone knows what it is to think because everyone has a natural aptitude for thought; this naturally widespread faculty of thought has a “talent” or an “affinity” with the true. Thought “formally possesses the true and materially wants the true.”

Double aspect of the first postulate:

The Good Will of the Thinker: human beings desire truth, strive for truth. (Cf. opening of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*: “All men by nature desire to know. [*pantes anthrōpoi tou eidenai oregontai phusei*.] A sign of this is the pleasure we take in our senses; for even apart from their usefulness they are loved for themselves; and above all others the sense of sight. For not only with a view to action, but even when we are not going to do anything, we prefer sight to almost everything else. The reason is that this, most of all the senses, makes us know and brings to light many differences among things.”)

The Good Nature of Thought: thought is innocent and is in tune with, can reach, the truth.

This first postulate forms a dogmatic, orthodox, or moral image of thought.

A critical philosophy, a philosophy w/o presuppositions requires a radical critique of the image of thought and its postulates. Such a philosophy finds its *difference* or true beginning in rigorous struggle against the image, and its authentic *repetition* in thought w/o image.

This is not easy, but comes at the cost of greatest destructions and greatest demoralizations, having no ally but paradox.

SECOND POSTULATE: ideal / common sense.

There are two aspects here:

Common sense: subjective *concordia facultatum*; the *subjective* identity of the self and its faculties (*concordia facultatum*).

Good sense: distribution that determines contributions of faculties in empirical cases; the *objective* identity of the thing to which these faculties refer (recognition).

“Good sense determines the contribution of the faculties in each case, while common sense contributes the form of the Same” (134).

The second postulate is given philosophical expression in the cogito: “For Kant as for Descartes, it is the identity of the Self in the ‘I think’ which grounds the harmony of all the faculties and their agreement on the form of a supposed Same object” (133).

THIRD POSTULATE: model / recognition [verification via dead repetition of same object]. This is the presupposition of the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object: the same object is seen, touched, remembered, imagined.

Recognition depends on the second postulate.

Deleuze’s critique: the three postulates follow upon each other and leave philosophy helpless before *doxa*: “the image of thought is only the figure in which *doxa* is universalized by being elevated to rational level” (134).

The “costly double danger to philosophy”:

First, the debasement of philosophy in being concerned with daily acts of recognition is only a sign of the real danger: the “tracing method” of basing a principle on extrapolation from facts. The example is Kant’s tracing of the transcendental from the empirical. This is clear in the A Deduction; though suppressed in the B Deduction it is still legible.

Second, the practical realm. It is most harmful in practical realm: struggle for honors, wealth, power [*pouvoir*]. Power as an object that

one lacks: the ability to have the signs that make others obey [due to fear of falling prey either to violence or to exposure to manufactured lack].

But this transcendent, reified notion of power misses power as immanent, as the creation of new values (Nietzsche: will to power = *volonté de puissance*). We need a thought of difference, of the new, which "calls forth forces in thought ... the powers of a completely other model" (cf. "cruelty").

Compare "Notes on Desire and Power" on D's reading of Foucault. Roughly speaking, *puissance* becomes "desire" in DG.

Kantian critique is initially promising: illusion is not error; the self is fracture by the line of time; God suffers a "speculative death." But it ultimately validates the 3 postulates; it recuperates God and the self better than ever in the practical realm. Kantian critique is respectful; it lacks "the power [*puissance*] of a new politics which would overturn the image of thought" (137).

FOURTH POSTULATE: element / representation

The four elements of representation conform to the three postulates and the cogito is most general principle of representation: source & unity of postulates.

Difference is "crucified" on the four branches of the cogito: "difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition, or a perceived similitude" (138).

Thus "world of representation" cannot think difference in itself / repetition for itself.

THE DIFFERENTIAL OR DISJUNCTIVE THEORY OF THE FACULTIES.

INTRO / OVERVIEW

The differential theory of the faculties is crucial, in all the senses of that word: it's important, and it's the crossroads of the book (and it comes just after the crucifixion of difference by representation.)

Difference is crucified by the fourfold structure of representation:

1. identity in the concept
2. opposition in the predicate
3. analogy in judgment
4. resemblance in perception

Deleuze's exposition of the differential theory of the faculties begins with Plato's distinction between objects of recognition and the "contingency of an encounter" with that which forces thought upon us.

In developing his theory of the faculties, Deleuze picks up elements of Kant's notion of the sublime: a violence done to the soul in a sensation that provokes a discord of imagination and understanding.

In colloquial language: you have to have your mind blown. You have to be forced to think.

[There's been some very interesting neuroscience done on this necessity of "unlearning" by Walter J. Freeman, *How Brains Make Up Their Minds*. (There are quite a few places where D or DG talk about the brain; there's a very good dissertation / book topic there.)]

DETAILS:

PLATO posed the difference between objects of recognition and chance encounters w/ objects that force thought: the encounter moves each faculty to its transcendent exercise, communicating its violence from one to the other. As with Kant, Plato shows promise, but ultimately betrays that promise.

The promise of Plato's text:

First character: The sign is that which can only be sensed (the *sentiendum*): an object of recognition can also be recalled, imagined,

conceived, etc. It is "not a sensible being but the being *of* the sensible"; it is "not the given, but that by which the given is given" (140). It is thus "imperceptible" [*insensible*] from the point of view of recognition. Sensibility finds itself before its limit, the sign, and is raised to its transcendent exercise.

Second character: the sign moves the soul, forces it to pose a problem. Sensibility, forced by the encounter with a sign as *sentiendum*, forces memory to that which can only be remembered in Platonic reminiscence. There's no ready-made empirical memory by which the encountered thing can be re-cognized (same object for all the faculties).

Third character: we are now forced to think that which can only be thought, the *cogitandum*. (The Idea cannot be sensed, it can only be thought).

But Plato falls short of this promise in each case:

First character (sensibility): By posing the encounter as object of a contradictory perception he confuses being of the sensible w/ a simple sensible being.

Second character (memory): By posing reminiscence as that of an already-recognized object he confuses the being of the past w/ a past being (time as physical cycle rather than pure form).

Third character (thought): By defining essence as the form of real identity, Plato reinforces the good nature of thought and ultimately representation. [D's Ideas are differential: they have no form or self-identity.]

TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICISM

For Deleuze, the transcendent exercise of a faculty breaks with common sense and grasps that which concerns only itself.

The transcendental must not be traced from its empirical use (the "tracing" method). Rather, we must have a "superior" or

"transcendental empiricism" to discover the limits of faculties: we must "explore" or experiment (cf. duality of French word *expérience*).

We must submit each faculty to a triple violence:

- 1) The violence of that which forces it to be exercised
- 2) The violence of that which it (and it alone) is forced to grasp
- 3) The violence of that which is ungraspable from the point of view of its empirical exercise

This allows us to discover the difference and repetition of each faculty. Not just for sensibility, memory, and thought, but also imagination (sublime), language (silence), vitality (monstrosity), sociability (anarchy) AND also for faculties yet to be discovered (in explorations of transcendental empiricism).

Deleuze does not want to develop a theory of the faculties, but only to describe what is required for such. The question is free or untamed difference. How are we to think this?

INTENSITY is difference in itself, that which carries the faculties to their limits, so that the faculties are linked in order as communicating violence (privilege of sensibility as origin).

Sensibility: pure difference in intensity is grasped immediately in the encounter.

Imagination: the disparity in the phantasm is that which can only be imagined.

Memory: the dissimilar in the pure form of time = the immemorial of transcendent memory.

Thought: the fractured I is constrained to think the "aleatory point" or difference in itself: the "differential of thought."

The "free form of difference" (145) moves each faculty and communicates its violence to the next. The four elements of representation are only effects produced by difference. We see a "discordant harmony" (cf Kantian sublime) in this communicated violence.

IDEAS: Traverse all faculties but are object of none: moving between faculties; Ideas are problems; Ideas are obscure – distinct rather than clear – distinct.

Exchange of letters between Rivière (dogmatic image) and Artaud (destruction of that image)

FIFTH POSTULATE: the "negative" of error (148-153 / 192-198).

Every misadventure of thought is reduced to error. It's as if thought could achieve the truth, but sometimes goes wrong. Error confirms the preceding postulates as much as it derives from them. It gives the "form of the true" to its negative, the false (what is false could have been true).

But thought has other misadventures than error: madness [*folie*], stupidity, malevolence. The dogmatic image treats these as mere facts, as occasioned by external causes, as assimilated to errors they cause. This is the same old "tracing" method: error is empirical fact elevated to level of transcendental principle.

Philosophers have had a presentiment of this and have investigated superstition, etc.

Stupidity [*bêtise*] is not animality: the animal is protected by its instincts from being *bête*. Rather, stupidity, cruelty, cowardice, baseness are structures of thought as such.

Let us pose "the properly transcendental question: how is stupidity (not error) possible"? It is made possible by the link between thought and individuation [cf Simondon]. Individuation involves fields of fluid intensive factors that do not take the form of an I or a Self (*moi*). The field or pure ground is a-formal and rises to the surface along with the individual. Stupidity is the relation in which individuation brings ground to surface w/o giving it form. We see here also malevolence, melancholy, madness.

What is going on here? I think it's something like this. Individuation is the production of formed beings. It occurs by pushing a system to a threshold of self-organization where it undergoes a "becoming" or "line of flight." You sense these thresholds as "traits," as potentials. This sensation takes the form of affect (you feel that there's something you can do with this encounter, you feel that it will increase or decrease your *puissance*). There's no form in the risen ground (the contact with potentials of self-organization), but there are traits that you can sense as signs of a problem (that communicates its violence through the faculties). You're being stupid when you blunder about, not being sensitive to the potentials for becoming in your encounters. This blundering stupidity is not error (there's no one "true" way of having an encounter) but is also melancholy (sadness as decrease of *puissance*) or even madness (there's no guidelines anymore, no habits to fall back on, no rational self).

But the "pitiful faculty" of being able to see stupidity and not abide it can also spur philosophy. It leads all the other faculties to their transcendent exercise by rendering possible a "violent reconciliation btw individual, ground, and thought."

SIXTH POSTULATE: the privilege of designation

Two elements of proposition: expression (sense) & designation (reference / "indication"). For Deleuze sense is condition of truth, but in dogmatic image, truth / falsity are confined to designation. In this way, sense is referred only to a psychological trait or logical formalism. [Frege's distinction between sense {conceptual meaning} and reference {things in the world} is one of the founding distinctions of analytic philosophy.]

For D, [sense as] condition must be condition of real experience, not possible experience. It is an intrinsic genesis, not an extrinsic conditioning. Truth is a matter of production, not of adequation. Thus the relation of proposition and referent must be established w/in sense and sense points beyond itself toward the object as limit of its genetic series.

Only in cases of isolated propositions does the referent stand detached from sense. Once again, we see the "tracing" method if we erect a principle on basis of such empirical cases. In "living thought" the proposition has the truth it deserves based on its sense.

** Sense vs signification:

Signification refers to concepts and their relation to objects in a field of representation.

Sense is "like the Idea which is developed in the sub-representative determinations." This means that the Idea is both structure and genesis:

Structure: "constituted of structural elements which have no sense themselves"

Genesis: "constitutes the sense of all that it produces"

** Sense as nonsense: limit of empirical exercise of faculties: "highest finality of sense":

- 1) First paradox of sense: proliferation: expressed of a name is designated by another name
- 2) Paradoxical repetition of doubling: immobilization of the proposition
 - a) Complex theme of the proposition as ideal event: it insists or subsists
 - b) But here sense is only a vapor that plays at the limit of words and things
 - c) It is a "sterile incorporeal deprived of its generative power"

** Transition: expressing sense as a question shows how proposition is only one solution to a problem. We thus see that sense as a problem is not dissolved by its solutions. Once again, we find the dogmatic image and its "tracing" method: problems are traced from propositions, thus subordinating thought to doxa.

SEVENTH POSTULATE: truth confined to solutions

Deleuze draws the political implications of the tracing method: the subordination of thought to chasing after pre-established answers to out-of-context, ready-made “problems” is an “infantile prejudice ... a social prejudice with the visible interest of maintaining us in an infantile state” (158). It results in a “grotesque image of culture that we find in examinations and government referenda.” Polling is an obvious issue here too.

Instead, problems must be constituted and invested in their proper symbolic fields. Transcendentally conceived, problems are “objectivities” [*objectités*] with their own sufficiency that are constituted in their own symbolic fields. Truth and falsity primarily affect problems and are relative to their sense. Problem / sense is both site of an originary truth and genesis of a derived truth. Stupidity is thus the faculty for false problems: inability to constitute problems as such.

Natural illusion of tracing problems from propositions is extended into philosophical illusion in which problems are true only insofar as they admit of solutions: problem is modeled on form of possibility of propositions. Examples: Aristotle and dialectic; mathematical method: geometric and synthetic / algebraic and analytic; empiricists.

Kant is bivalent here: He discovered the problematic Idea, but his critique remained subordinated to dogmatic image.

Deleuze continues with his distributed preview of Chapter 4 and Ideas. Problems are Ideas themselves. We must distinguish here between particular vs. singular and between general vs. universal. A proposition is particular: a determinate response, while a series of propositions can constitute a general solution. But only the problematic Idea is universal and involves a distribution of singular points. [It’s universal in that it gives rise to solutions of differing genera, not just differing species. That is, there is always “discontinuities” in the differing solutions to an Idea.]

Preliminary sketch of problematic Ideas as “multiplicities ... of relations and corresponding singularities.” As a multiplicity, it is just as much a “concrete singularity” as it is a “true universal.”

A problem does not exist apart from its solutions, but insists and persists in them. The “determination” of the problem is not the same as its solution; the determination of the problem is what generates the solution. The problem is at once both transcendent and immanent in relation to its solutions. These characteristics of the dialectical nature of problems were seen well by Albert Lautman but botched by Hegelianism.

EIGHTH POSTULATE: the result of knowledge [= possession of rule enabling solutions] (164-167 / 213-217)

Learning = exploration of Ideas or elevation of faculties to their transcendent exercise. French is important here: *apprendre* and *apprentissage essentiel*. Learning and “essential apprenticeship.”

We connect back to the differential theory of the faculties. Blowing your mind or communication of "violence" among the faculties by bringing them to their transcendent use happens, for Deleuze, in "exploring Ideas": "the exploration of Ideas and the elevation of each faculty to its transcendent exercise amounts to the same thing" (164). Exploration of Ideas is learning as the entering into relations of Ideas and their corresponding singularities. For example, learning to swim. Learning happens when we "conjugate the distinctive points of our bodies with the singular points of the objective Idea in order to form a problematic field" (165). [This conjugation is demanding: "To what are we dedicated if not to problems which demand of us the very transformation of our body and our language?" (192).]

We learn when our bodies and our language are transformed in becoming sensitive to turning points in the systems we come into contact with (when we can "interpret signs" as Deleuze would say – signs indicating precisely transformations of systems, when two differential series are placed in communication, resulting in "resonances" [coupling of systems: e.g., "entrainment" or "falling in love"] and "forced movements" [amplifications of small differences in positive feedback loops]).

Leibniz shows Idea of sea = systems of differential relations and singularities. Learning to swim = "conjugating" distinctive points of our bodies w/ singularities of Idea of sea in order to form a problematic field. This conjugation determines a threshold of consciousness. Ideas are ultimate elements of nature and subliminal objects of little perceptions. Learning is thus unconscious: "bond of profound complicity of nature and mind."

Elevation of faculties is always experimental (recall "transcendental empiricism"), because we can never predict how learning will take place. Our systems are too complex; we can only experiment with encounters, what Deleuze calls "culture," and which he opposes to "method" (165).

There's a lot to be said about bodies and language here. It's not that bodies are crude and language is exact. It's the other way around. Apprenticeship is about practice embedding corporeal skills. It could never be put into a formula. If your verbal about an action, it's the mark of your incompetence. Teaching is all about setting up a situation in which students can pose problems and find their own solutions; it's about letting them develop their skill at posing problems. I have a lot about this in Chapter 5 of *Political Physics* about Plato and *technē*.

There is no method, but only a "violent training" a culture which affects entire individual. Method is confined to knowledge; common sense; natural thought. Learning is misconstrued as the passage from ignorance to knowledge.

(One of the big differences in Deleuze and Guattari's thought is that between the seeming recklessness of *Anti-Oedipus* – "destroy, destroy," as the formula of the negative task of schizoanalysis – and the caution of *A Thousand Plateaus* – "staying stratified is not the worst thing that can happen.")

Plato is double, once again. On the one hand, he makes a break in which learning is transcendental movement of soul and time is introduced into thought in reminiscence. But he ends up subordinating thought to resemblance and identity; to image of thought.