## Dylan Wade: Bergson Course / Fall 2008 / Lecture # 1 from 1/16/2008

- Common sense tells us that you can measure the intensity of an inner state (such as sensations, feelings, passions, effort) in terms of magnitude twice, thrice as much X
- Not only does this fail to do justice to the experience but it creates redundant problems
- It is practically useful to think in terms of space or discrete objects, but the philosophical way is to think in terms of time or in terms of an unfolding that could be an image of experience, ex. Color changes in chemical processes or certain features of cinema or dance
- Philosophy has to address the habits of spatializing in language, the creation of sharp distinctions, by catching ourselves thinking in terms of space and develop other capacities
- Ex. Embodied models of cognition vs. discrete computational models, particularly when Hubert Dreyfus pointed out that chess masters don't play chess the same way a computer does, a chess master knows just by seeing the board and relying on learned feel, he doesn't have to think out every move the way a computer does
- Bergson's thesis is that by thinking in terms of space we create false problems; by presupposing a discreteness or definition to subjectivity we get the free will/determinism debate
- Deleuze cites Bergson as shifting the locus of truth from the answer to the question so there becomes the possibility of a false problem

Deleuze describes this process in the 3 steps of the intuitive method:

- Focus on level of problems not answers acting in terms of space might be fine, but thinking in terms of space is not
- Discover differences in kind discovering qualitative differences as opposed to differences in degree or magnitude – differences in degree only concern the movement of a single process while differences in kind concern the movement from one process to a different process
- 3) Thinking in terms of time specifically involving the notion of duration or concrete real-time as opposed to homogenized or spatialized time, measurement abstracts experience, freezing and disconnected an object, thereby treating experience as atemporal
- You get chicken and the egg impasses by always depicting objects moving over an abstract grid, for instance, whether the affective or judgment centers of the brain are the causers of emotion at that frozen "moment of emotion"
- Another way of dealing with the issue would be to treat emotions as an unfolding reciprocating process between both the affective and judgment centers through time
- We usually think we can compare magnitudes of psychological states, I am more or less angry, but it is not at all clear that one proceeds from lesser to greater intensities of emotion in that experience, like one would stack bricks.
- There are some reasons to think psychological states can be defined in terms of magnitudes, if punch myself harder then I will feel more pain, but many internal states are caused internally
- Another reason would be to think that a change of speed of neurons firing cause more or less intense experiences, but we don't experience neurons firing so this doesn't explain the difference in kind, between being happy and being sad

2 major questions are raised by trying to maintain a first-person perspective that is not objectifying

- a) Can you avoid objectifying other people?
- b) Can you avoid objectifying yourself when detailing your own experiences? Bergson thinks so through pre-reflexive intuition or sympathy. We still may run into problems, however, expressing this intuition in language