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# Beside us, in memory

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In their final book together, *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari[1] take up the question of what philosophy is and do it in a manner so direct and concrete that it poses a question and a challenge to the reader. That challenge is: Is this book a refutation or capitulation of Deleuze's position that the philosopher stutters?[2] Stuttering happens in language when the words themselves become characters. This is never a matter of starting with a homogeneous language system whose terms and relations are constant, then disrupting that system. Such an approach does no more than alter specific utterances. The point here is to make language itself stutter by beginning with a language system in "perpetual disequilibrium" (S, 24), a system which then "overstrains itself [and so] begins to stutter, to murmur, or to mumble" (S, 28) so that language reaches its limits. It bifurcates; it heads in two directions at once, and the elements of its syntax respond dynamically rather than standing in determinate and constant relations with other elements. So, for example, "the indefinite article 'a' [rather than responding to a rule in a rigid and consistent manner] covers the entire zone of variation generated by the movement of particularization" (S, 24), while any movement of the language toward generalization is covered by the definite article "the". The effect of these movements is to make language vibrate, and in using language the writer becomes a foreigner, struggling to put words together even, or especially, in her/his own language. Such a language is evident even in pure science, for discovery, innovation, and creation are never a matter of simply making use of the constant terms supplied by a homogeneous system of reference. It is, rather, the "boom" of disequilibrium that lets language flee so as to vary constantly in every one of its terms (S, 25).

But perhaps Deleuze has changed his mind and the stutterer is only found in literature or poetry, perhaps among composers. How can philosophy stutter? Is stuttering not contrary to all the traditions of philosophy? What is philosophy? The question, "What is philosophy?" was, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, always being asked by them, but too indirectly, too obliquely, and they compare their attempt here (though not necessarily their results) to Kant's *Critique of*

*Judgement*, a book in which "all the mind's faculties overcome their limits" (WP, 1, 2). A superficial glance at the table of contents reveals a structure not unlike that of Kant's three critiques: "Part One Philosophy," "Part Two Philosophy, Science, Logic, Art." Does this not lead the reader to expect to find in this book the ultimate clarification of all Deleuze and Guattari's efforts? Will not the reader find here the ultimate key that unlocks the code so that all questions about Deleuze and Guattari's "philosophy" can be answered once and for all by reference to Kantian divisions, just as the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*[3] are often read as if they provide the ultimate answers to all questions about philosophy, science, logic, art, and life itself by reference to mathematical models or particle physics? And, of course, once the perceptive and sensitive reader has the "key," finding answers to complex questions is only a matter of placing the question into the context of the proper model. Once again, philosophers can master even the most difficult quandries by simply referring to the right model, a model provided by the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

It appears, initially, that *What is Philosophy*? embraces this kind a reading. While philosophy is defined as the creation of concepts, none the less, concepts are nothing without their creator's signature (WP, 5). As such, concepts are marketed and displayed, promoted as the products of their creator and as more effective than their rivals (WP, 10). So we are offered a number of philosophies under the name "Deleuze," or "Deleuze and Guattari." They are Kantians, Mathematicians, Physicists, even Romantics or Anarchists – an unlikely assortment of rubrics that clash outrageously, yet which continue to be appropriated as the forms of what Deleuze or Deleuze and Guattari mean their "philosophy" to be saying. It is my effort here to question such appropriations of Deleuze in particular, and to make what is perhaps an even more outrageous claim, that Deleuze alone, and Deleuze and Guattari together have not produced a "philosophy" at all, that they have made no claims about the nature of the world, and even less have they provided us with a map of it. To believe that they have is to relegate them to the realm of philosophers who once were thought to be right and now (or eventually) are proven to be wrong. Rather, what is revolutionary about Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari, is that they have separately and together produced a body of writing that serves as an immanent critique of philosophy as well as a creative critique of the processes of thought and perception without, however, erecting a new body of thought in the place of what came before. In short, philosophy remains, for Deleuze and Guattari, stuttering.

I would like to begin by looking at Deleuze's revisiting of Kant in "On Four Poetic Formulas which might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy,"[4] a revisiting that Deleuze appears to attribute to Kant's philosophy, except insofar

as each formula is given the name of a conceptual persona, namely: Hamlet, Rimbaud, Kafka, and Rimbaud again. These personae are not signatures, that is, claimants whose ownership of a concept cannot be disputed; they are more like friends, "internal to the conditions of philosophy" (WP, 4) who cultivate concepts rather than attach their signatures to them. For, even though philosophy is the creation of concepts, what is created is never "formed" but is "*autopoetic*" or self-positing; it posits itself in itself, such that, "the most subjective will be the most objective" (WP, 11).[5] So, we might look among these four poetic formulas for the force of *autopoeisis* out of which any concept can posit itself in itself. What exactly this formulation implies will be drawn out as the analysis proceeds.

The first formulation, that 'time is out of joint' is attached to the name of Hamlet, the Northern prince who like the Northern philosopher, Kant, understands this out of joint time to present itself as an empty and pure form.[6] Kant made possible the conception of an internal difference between thought and being when he claimed that "my undetermined existence can be determined only *within time* as the existence of a phenomenon, of a passive, receptive phenomenal subject *appearing within time*" (DR, 116/86). This has several consequences. The first is that time is unhinged. Time that remains hinged is time subordinated to movement, serving as the measure or number of that movement. It is in service to the movements of objects taking their proper place within it, in its successive moments.

Time unhinged is released from the concepts of movement, interval, and number so that time is no longer defined as succession since "things succeed each other in various times, but they are also simultaneous in the same time, and they remain in an indefinite time" (KCP, VII). Likewise, time unhinged becomes a simple order. Succession, simultaneity, and even, as will be shown, permanence are three modes in which things exist *in* time conceived of as hinged. Time, however, does not change or move, nor can it be characterized as eternal. Time unhinged is,

> the form of everything that changes and moves, an immutable form that does not change, not an *eternal* form, but the form of that which is not eternal, the immutable form of change and movement. (KCP, VIII)

Much the same, I would maintain, can be said about the practice of philosophy as Deleuze and Guattari carry it out. Not that philosophy and time are the same thing, but with respect to the field, plane, or ground that shelters concepts and their personae, philosophy creates concepts that are in no way eternal, but are subject to renewal, replacement, and mutation, so as to constitute a "turbulent geography" (WP, 7–8).

The second consequence of rethinking time as a pure order is that 'I is an Other' (KCP, VIII). The conceptual persona attached to this concept is the poet Rimbaud: "*Car Je est un autre*."[7] Deleuze expresses this even more radically: "The activity of thought applies to a receptive being, to a passive subject which represents that activity to itself rather than enacts it, which experiences its effects rather than initiates it, and *which lives it like an Other within itself*" (WP, 86; emphasis added). The implications of this statement are enormous. The so-called thinker/actor/agent/signator of the philosophical concept and of the model, within which that concept would play its explanatory role, is split, fractured, and emptied by the empty form of time. That any "I" thinks is nothing but the effect of a passive self experiencing its own thought – exercised *upon* it and not *by* it. Undetermined existence is a priori determinable by the 'I think' only under the form of time, that is, only as the existence of a phenomenal, receptive, and changing ego, a passive ego that represents to itself the activity of its own thought as an Other that affects it.[8] As such, the relation between thought and being must also be radically reformulated. We can see even more clearly that time, the empty form in which the 'I' (*je*) affects the 'Ego' (*moi*), is not succession but the form of interiority, and in affecting itself, this interiority splits off from the form of exteriority which is space.

The third poetic formula summarizing Kantian philosophy is found among the writings of Kafka, the persona attached to this concept. Like time, the law is a pure form and has no object, neither sensible nor intelligible (UCP, X). Thus a third consequence of the pure form of time is that, time is no longer conceived of as unfolding into a representation of the Idea whose being and truth demand the greatest possible degree of resemblance, so the representation of the resemblance of Good is empty, and what is left is subjective law, with no content except the pure form of the universal. In one of Kafka's many accounts, a man from the country meets unexpected difficulties because of the formal nature of law: "the Law, he thinks, should surely be accessible at all times and to everyone."[9] Over years of waiting to be admitted into the Law, he forgets that there are many doorkeepers and that each is nothing but a more powerful and horrible version of the one before. He never sees that there is no admittance, not even upon death, there is only the gate, the waiting, and the innumerable gatekeepers of the Law. Nor does he know that the gate before which he waits is his and his alone. "We come across it [law] only through its action. . . . It is not distinguishable from the sentence, and the sentence is not distinguishable from the application" (KCP, XI). For Kant, law contains the subjective rule to which we *must* conform. We must act on those maxims that can be thought as formally universal without contradiction. However, for Deleuze and Guattari, what emerges is the view

of practical reason as no more than its acts. We know nothing. We have nothing to imitate. We only act. The law has thus become a purely practical determination discernible only through its acts.

This particular formula demands, perhaps, a bit more articulation, for it is not so clear how the Kantian substitution of Law for the Good is related to the pure form of time and the split subject. To clarify, we can look, for a moment, at Bergson. From the point of view of the pure past – what Deleuze calls the second synthesis of time – it is necessary to discover the foundation (*fondement*) of time, that pure form of time that goes from top to base and makes the present pass (DR, 108/79). This pure form of time is called memory, but it is a past that has never been present and without which there could be no freedom. Empirically (according to what Deleuze calls the first synthesis of time), we are formed by relations of succession and simultaneity between presents, as well as their associations according to causality, contiguity, resemblance, and opposition, as characterized by David Hume (DR, 113/83). But "noumenally" we live according to relations of virtual (non-actual but real) co-existence between levels of a pure past, only one of which can be actualized at any time.[10] Such recollection or memory is, to borrow a Kantian expression, its *own* faculty; recollection is preserved in itself, it preserves itself; it is virtual. In his study of Bergson, Deleuze argues that, for Bergson, *in recollection*, we become conscious of an act by which we place ourselves in the past: we leap into ontological memory; we grasp the past where it is, not where we are, such that, after this leap, a particular level of recollection *that we have selected* passes, by means of an active synthesis, from the virtual to the actual and so takes on psychological existence.[11] That is, we move from recollection-memory, the pure (ontological) form of time, to perception, by actualizing a virtual level or region as a recollection-image.

Freedom operates here in two respects. According to the One, the empty form in which the 'I' (*je*) affects the 'Ego" (*moi*) is the form of interiority and the subject is split. This split is distributed, on Bergson's account, along two lines, one moving in the direction of matter, perception, and objects – the other, moving in the direction of memory, recollection, and the subject (B, 51).[12] Along the first line, subjectivity perceives only what interests it in the object, letting everything else go. This interest is aroused at the moment of the "interval" between a received stimulus and an executed movement, and the "brain" chooses based on what interests it. When the second line moves from the past toward the present as an image, it has entered a kind of circuit with the present, a point of contact. We become conscious of a recollection only as an image, a movement that corresponds to a perception and can be adopted by it *according to its interests* (B, 67–8, 70).[13] What is worth noting here is that there is a choice made *and* in the process of

bringing a recollected image into perception "attention to life" is of critical importance. For the recollection is actualized, not as in its own present (which it is always simultaneous with, even if it is ontologically unconscious), but as freedom, that is, as a new present. This repetition of the past in a new present is the "absolutely new itself," the moment of creation, the moment of freedom (DR, 122/90). Without repetition of what is not the same, the ontological past would be subject to an inevitable mythification according to which time unfolds so as to represent something like the mythical Platonic Idea with its demand for the greatest possible degree of resemblance.[14] Thus with regard to time unhinged, recollection no longer serves as the unfolding representation of Ideas.

The second respect in which freedom is operative is with regard to the author/actor. In the more exuberant terms of *Différence et répétition*, the synthesis of time constitutes a "future" (the new, the moment of freedom) that affirms the unconditioned character of the product in relation to its condition, and the *independence of the work in relation to its author/ actor* (DR, 125/94). Such is thinking and the movement of philosophy, independent of any signator, every thought absolutely new.

The final consequence of the pure form of time and the final formulation summarizing Kantian philosophy is again attached to the conceptual persona of Rimbaud. It is the famous "disorder of all the senses" or, in Kantian terms, an "unregulated exercise of all the faculties" (KCP, XI). In many respects, this final formulation is the most profound of all for "misosophy" (DR, 181–2/139), which is, after all, where all thinking starts. Rimbaud calls for the poet to make himself a seer, "*par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens*"[15] by which he reaches only the unknown, that is, the pleasure-pain which emerges out of discord. Deleuze argues that even in Kant there is a basis for derangement. The intuition of the sublime gives us a direct subjective relationship between imagination and reason. This relationship is one of dissension, *discord*, and contradiction between the demands of reason and the power of imagination, though the pain of this discord makes possible a pleasure, that of imagination exceeding its own limits, representing to itself the unattainable rational idea (KCP, 51).

This occurs because the sublime is not conditioned by the logic of concepts: the sublime includes no objects of nature as mechanism, only "nature in its chaos or in its wildest and most irregular disorder and desolation."[16] Thus the sublime appears through the condition of nature regarded not as mechanism but as "art," that is, art free from all constraints or agreement of rules. In an intuition of the sublime, the imagination fails to apprehend the absolutely great, so the sublime produces pain with regard to imagination's inadequacy. It is also violent with regard to inner sense, the flow of elements successively

apprehended. For, the effort to intuit all at once a magnitude requiring an "unimaginable" time *annihilates* the time sequence and violates inner sense as a unity. What should be given in a temporal series is given all at once, eliminating time (CJ, sect. 23). An intuition of the sublime would mean the end of time and space understood as mathematical or dynamic succession, the end of representation as the play of the time series, and the impossibility of bringing anything to presentation by means of representation. We are left confused because of the sudden powerlessness of representation, but we celebrate what emerges out of it: the power to conceive.[17]

For Kant, Ideas of Reason generate "respect" for the Idea which is a "law" to us, a law that prescribes the comprehension of every intuition as an absolute whole, as a totality, and not even the infinite is exempt from this (CJ, sect. 27, sect. 26). For Deleuze, the Idea is taken to be neither an absolute whole nor a totality, it is always differential and genetic.[18] Thus, another way to think of Ideas, for Deleuze, is as virtual multiplicities.[19] A fuller account of this, one that will bring us back to Bergson, appears in the final chapter of *Bergsonism*. The virtual, I have noted, is real, so it does not have to be realized, but actualized. Actualization of the virtual can never be a matter of resemblance, since there is no longer any conception of time as unfolding recollection that represents the mythical Platonic Idea with the greatest possible degree of resemblance. Thus, actualization of the virtual is a matter of difference, divergence, or creation. As Deleuze reads Bergson, the virtual creates its own lines of actualization in positive acts and its actualizations do not resemble the virtuality they embody (B, 97). Since, for Bergson, concrete perception is the perception of heterogeneous qualities which are discontinuous and cannot be deduced from one another but are contracted in memory, perception is the perception of difference according to which matter is the same concrete perceptions emanating from memory (MM, 237–8). And, as I have noted, there are a multitude of "virtualities," memories capable of squaring with the same actual situation, but the intelligence chooses the "useful memory," that which "completes and illuminates the present situation with a view to ultimate action" (MM, 233–4). To actualize the virtual is to differentiate it; it develops according to divergent lines. There is no existing whole or totality as in the Kantian Idea of Reason, there are only successive and simultaneous lines of actualization, each one actualizing the whole in one direction, not combining therefore with other lines or directions, that is, each actualizing its level (B, 99). No longer do the different levels of virtuality co-exist, instead, they divide into matter and life, then each of those divide further, always differentiating and always creative, always continuing to differentiate, thus belonging to an open whole.

So, unlike Kant's totality or absolute whole, the whole, for Deleuze, following Bergson, is virtual: real but not actualized, differentiated and open. And actualizations never resemble the lines of virtuality they embody, so actualization is genuine creation and differentiation according to directions created in the act of interest and usefulness that completes and illuminates the situation.

There is one more element to be considered here: the role of philosophy. For did I not begin by insisting that Deleuze's work exists only as the open form of philosophy, the crack in time and not as a model in terms of which philosophical inquiries can be answered with mastery? "What is philosophy?" is too often a false problem, either a non-existent problem such as the "problem" of the non-being of a being or, a badly analyzed composite, arbitrarily grouping together things that differ in kind. So when we ask, "What is Philosophy?," we expect certain models to provide us with a rule from which we may deduce all "answers" to the problems we have determined, or we determine what possibilities that rule entails. On the other hand, when we look for models, we assume those models to provide us with an account of a single thing; we muddle together what should remain a multiplicity of divergent and discontinuous lines. Either way we have created an obstacle.[20] Everything depends on how we ask the question, what we take the problem to be.

Deleuze recommends Bergson's method of intuition, a method which, briefly stated, recognizes that stating the problem is the first creative act, so it demands that we, first of all, look for differences in kind and articulations of the real.[21] Thus, the question "What is Philosophy?" demands a separation in *kind* from other fields. Philosophy, unlike other fields of thought and action creates "concepts." But, as we have seen, such creation is never a matter of realizing a possible but of actualizing through differentiation of the virtual multiplicity. According to Deleuze, such a moment arises in Bergson's "interval" between a received stimulus and an executed movement, that is, concepts are created in an intuition specific to them, and this is what constitutes their singularity (NP, 7). In the interval between excitation and reaction, the whole of freedom, a whole level of virtual, ontological memory is actualized insofar as it is a useful memory. As such, perception, memory, and intelligence itself, which comprehends needs and organizes activities rationally, still function together in a "deranged," that is, creative manner.

The "interval" between perception and memory, intelligence and social life is decisive for humans. And what appears in this interval is creative emotion. At the end of *Bergsonism* Deleuze writes:

> It is the genesis of intuition in intelligence. If man accedes to the open creative totality, it is therefore by acting, by creating rather than contem-

> plating. In philosophy itself, there is still too much alleged contemplation: Everything happens as if intelligence were already imbued with emotion, thus with intuition, but not sufficiently so for creating in conformity to this emotion. (B, 112–3)

Thus our memory of Deleuze's work is not of an agent-signator who left us with a set of formulas, laws, or dogmas. Rather, like Bergson's ontological memory, Deleuzean philosophy as creation is here with us, beside us or with us each time we are open to the creative whole and the open totality. It is the differentiation and diffusion of virtual multiplicities, playing the whole of the universe; not a model, not a program or ideology, but unceasing creation: philosophy as stuttering creation, beside us, in memory.

## Notes

1. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1991). *What is Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); hereafter cited as WP.
2. Gilles Deleuze, "He Stuttered," in Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski, eds., *Gilles Deleuze and the Theatre of Philosophy* (New York: Routledge Press, 1994), pp. 23–9; hereafter cited as S.
3. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipe* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1972); *Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), and *Milles Plateaux* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1980). Trans. Brian Massumi, *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).
4. First published as the preface to the English translation *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. vii–xiii. Published in French as "Sur quatre formules poétique qui pourraient résumer la philosophie kantienne," in *Philosophie 9* (1986), pp. 29–34. Revised and expanded for *Critique et clinique* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1993), pp. 40–9; hereafter cited as KCP.
5. Readers of Deleuze who are trained in philosophy often leave out of their accounts all together Deleuze's constant and insistent articulation of the work of visual artists, composers, poets, prose-writers as if they serve only to provide examples of concepts developed by philosophers and scientists. This is an enormous oversight. To do this, I would maintain is to miss the point of much of what Deleuze is about.
6. *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, p. vii. See also Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968); trans. Paul Patton, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); hereafter cited as DR. For a complete account of the relation between Hamlet and Oedipus see, Ernst Jones, *Hamlet and Oedipus* (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1949; New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1949).
7. "Letter to Paul Demeny, 15, May 1871," *Rimbaud, Complete Works, Selected Letters*, trans. Wallace Fowlie (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966): p. 304.
8. See Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: MacMillan, 1933), "Analytic of Concepts," note to section 25, p. 169. Quoted in *Difference and Repetition*, p. 86.
9. Franz Kafka, "Before the Law," in *The Penal Colony*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken Books, 1974), p. 148.

10. See Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1988), p. 128; hereafter cited as MM.
11. Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone Books, 1988), pp. 56, 57; hereafter cited as B.
12. See also *Matter and Memory*, Chapter 1.
13. See also *Matter and Memory*, pp. 168, 120, 97.
14. This point was clarified for me by Constantin V. Boundas, in "Repetition, Remember to Forget," read at the American Philosophical Association, Pacific Division, April 1996, pp. 4–5.
15. *Rimbaud, Complete Works, Selected Letters*, p. 306.
16. Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, trans. J.N. Bernard (New York: Hafner Press, 1951), sect. 23; hereafter cited as CJ.
17. For a more detailed account of the relation between art and the sublime, see my *Space, Time, and the Sublime*, in *The Question of the Other, Essays in Contemporary Continental Philosophy*, Arleen B. Dallery and Charles E. Scott, eds. (Albany: State University of New York Press), pp. 175–185.
18. My thanks to Daniel Smith, University of Chicago, for an account of this in "Deleuze's Concept of the Virtual and the Critique of the Possible," read at the International Association for Philosophy and Literature conference, Villanova University, May 1995.
19. For a fuller treatment of "Ideas as virtual multiplicities" see Paul Patton, "Society as Virtual Idea and Event," read at the International Association for Philosophy and Literature conference, Villanova University, May 1995.
20. See *Bergsonism*, pp. 17–21 for an account of the false problem.
21. A full account of intuition as a method appears in *Bergsonism*, ch.1.