

Deleuze, Thompson and Jonas: Toward a New Transcendental Aesthetic and a New Question of Panpsychism

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Plan of the Talk

- Introduction
- An “evolutionary” genetic phenomenology?
- A biological Transcendental Aesthetic
 - Mind in Life (Evan Thompson / Hans Jonas)
 - Deleuze and biological time (*Difference & Repetition*)
 - Simondon: membranes & organic space-time
- Panpsychism
 - Deleuze and “spatio-temporal dynamisms”
 - “Mind in Process”?

Introduction

- Mind in Life: biological panpsychism
- Biological time and space: a new T Aesthetic
- Biological “sense-making”: a new T Analytic
 - Sensibility as openness to environment
 - Signification as establishing good or bad
 - Sense as direction of action
- Displacement of rational reflective subject
 - Corporeal engagement now foundational
 - Post-Kantian demand for “genesis”
 - Deleuze and Maimon
 - Dynamic and static genesis

An “evolutionary” genetic phenomenology?

- Genetic phenomenology:
 - Discovery of passive synthesis (perceptual sense prior to active judgment)
 - Investigation of development of practical / corporeal capacities from infancy
- “Evolutionary” genetic phenomenology:
 - Development of biological space-time and “sense-making” from earliest life forms
 - Embodied empathy condition: 2nd person

A New Transcendental Aesthetic (1)

Mind in Life

- Living present
 - Retention / metabolism
 - Protention / need
- Emergent organism: “active self-integration”
- Organic time founds organic space
 - Faces outward because it faces forward in time
 - Spatial presence lit up by temporal imminence
 - Both merge in past fulfillment / disappointment
- Organic reversal of causal time
 - No longer simple domination of causal history
 - Life is also what is going to be and just becoming

A New Transcendental Aesthetic (2)

Difference & Repetition, Ch. 2

- First passive synthesis of time: living present
- Dynamic genesis: from actual to Idea
 - Instantaneous / exteriorized sensation
 - Organic syntheses (metabolism / matter)
 - Perceptual syntheses (imagination / sensation)
 - Active syntheses (memory / thought)
- “Contemplative soul” in heart, muscles, nerves
 - A “mystical or barbarous hypothesis”?
 - The “habit of life,” the habits “that we are”

A New Transcendental Aesthetic (3)

Simondon: topologie et ontogénèse

- Transduction: individuation in a metastable field
- New TA is topological, not Euclidean
 - Life: dynamic topology maintaining metastability
 - Single-celled (absolute) membrane is only a limit case
- Contra Jonas: chronology associated with topology, rather than founding it
 - Interior as past actively present to exterior at limit
 - Exteriority as futural (*à venir; ce qui peut advenir*)
- “topology and chronology are not a priori forms of sensibility, but the very dimensionality of the living being as it individuates itself [*vivant s’individuant*]”

A new panpsychism (1): Deleuze

- Simondon: generalized metastability
 - Not just organic, but general form of transduction
 - Vital individuation: suspension of inorganic ind.
 - Living individual: a crystal *à l'état naissant*
- Deleuze: spatio-temporal dynamisms
 - “Pure syntheses of space, direction, and rhythm”
 - Virtual, intensive, and actual space and time
 - “Whole world is an egg”: D as “eco-devo-evo” thinker
 - Distributed and interactive plastic processes
- Larval subjects for each s-t dynamism
 - Dark precursors and information transfer
 - Rocks and islands: a question of time scales

A new panpsychism (2): Mind in Process?

- Bateson: *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (1970)
 - “mind as synonymous with cybernetic system”
- Biological panpsychism
 - Escape from Cartesian mind-body problem
 - Problem shifts to emergence of life / mind
- Panpsychist challenge to radical emergence
- Thompson’s radical processualism
- So is there a “mind in process” position?
 - Politics of science: “better part of valor”
 - Too much parsimony?