

Edward Willatt

Kant, Deleuze and Architectonics.

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(Almost) every philosopher tackles the *Critique of Pure Reason* in his or her training; it's something of a boot camp to work your way through its twists and turns, its forbidding terminology, its elaborate architectonic. Willatt's short and clear book brings us back to the *CPR* with an eye to defending its unity and to identifying some connections his reading of the book has to Deleuze. If it has some limitations in the latter respect, its strengths in the former make it ultimately quite useful.

The book proposes a unifying reading of the *CPR* based on the architectonic method seen as centered on demonstrating the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments. It claims this way of reading the *CPR* is superior to approaches that break up the *CPR* to deal with individual arguments. It then attempts to show that the unifying reading of the *CPR* will help us read Deleuze's work in a new way, one that describes Deleuze's 'categories' in such a way as to help us understand the relation of virtual and actual.

Willatt clarifies two senses of 'architectonic'. The narrow sense focuses on the *CPR*, while the broad targets the organon of principles for all disciplines of cognition (thus including the metaphysics of natural sciences). The narrow sense is the focus here (10-11). Willatt argues that the architectonic is no mere hobby or psychological quirk of Kant. Rather, the unifying reading is oriented to the regulative Idea of cognition as a complete, systematic whole; the key to unlocking this Idea is the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments. From this, all the familiar steps of the *CPR* are justified as necessary parts of the whole: the Transcendental Aesthetic and intuition (sensation); the Metaphysical Deduction and understanding (pure concepts); the Schematism and imagination (schemata); the Analytic of Principles and judgment (principles); and the Transcendental Dialectic and reason (Ideas). Willatt specifies the requirements for the transcendental argument enabled by the architectonic method: 'the argument must be inclusive and internalizing, providing the conditions of the possibility of experience exhaustively and so without remainder. In this way it relies only upon its own elements and upon its way of relating them in order to carry forward its argument' (27).

On Willatt's unifying reading the *CPR* necessarily develops or unfolds along its order. It cannot be re-organized, despite the desires of some commentators, among them the giants Norman Kemp Smith and Martin Heidegger, who want to re-organize the text, thinking themselves able to divine what Kant's fundamental intention would have been (69-75). Nor can the unifying reading on the basis of the relation of synthetic and a priori (or concrete and abstract) be replaced by a focus on the relation of faculties, as desired by

Heidegger in *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, for whom the transcendental imagination as the power of time is primary, or as desired by Deleuze in *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, for whom the understanding's rule dictates the function of the other faculties in the *CPR*.

The notion of 'Idea' is a key commonality between Kant and Deleuze. Willatt acknowledges that the sense of problematic Ideas in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* is different than that in the *CPR*. For Kant, Ideas are unifying, totalizing, and conditioning, while for Deleuze, Ideas are multiple, differential and genetic (Willatt quotes Daniel W. Smith on this point at 42-3). For Kant, Ideas are focal points unifying a research endeavor, allowing the 'as if' mode (e.g., 'proceed in psychology as if all thoughts are referred to a subject'), and guaranteeing the unity of cognition in exploration of a field (e.g., self, world, God). For Deleuze, on the other hand, Ideas are common themes across variations (all animals are variations on the theme of 'animal' which thus serves as an idea), and there are as many Ideas as there are different fields of experience: biological ideas, social ideas, etc..

Deleuze's lecture, 'The Method of Dramatization', which is something of a rough draft for Chapter 5 of *Difference and Repetition*, is the focus of Willatt's Chapter 6, 'Deleuze's Categories'. Despite their differences when it comes to ideas, Deleuze and Kant are claimed to share a common concern with the relation of the concrete and abstract (115). As Willatt points out, Deleuze did not use the unifying reading of Kant; he picks and chooses, judging Kant to have pulled back from the true radicality of critique (in particular, 'tracing' the transcendental from the empirical). However, despite this difference, Willatt holds that 'the way in which [Kant] argues for such conditions of experience is highly relevant to Deleuze studies' (6). There is thus a common methodological concern in the way each thinker uses the notion of "Idea" to relate abstract and concrete in a way as to 'attain both openness and reach' to account for experience (116; Willatt cites here James Williams).

However, for Deleuze, in relating the concrete and abstract to give an account of cognition, we must escape recognition and representation; we have to avoid subsuming the sensible under pre-established formal categories but must instead learn from or experiment with the encounters we undergo in sensation. (Deleuze here benefits from the dual meaning of the French *expérience*, both 'experiment' and 'experience'.) Thus for Deleuze, Ideas do not provide a focus for understanding's categories; Ideas are dramatized by schematisms rethought as 'spatio-temporal dynamisms'. Deleuze wants to grasp these dynamisms in their own terms, that is, as singular 'individuations', using 'categories' which are questions: 'who?', 'how much?', 'how?', 'where?', 'when?' (125-7). Rather than the formal categories of Kant, which mark out universal time-determinations (substance as perdurance, cause and effect as succession, and so on), Deleuzean categories allow an encounter with unique individuations, singular ways of occupying time and space; they are like the 'hunting grounds of an animal' (126).

Willatt's treatment of Kant is remarkable for its clarity, and his treatment of Deleuze, while brief, is perspicacious. However, while I benefited from reading Willatt's book, and can recommend it as worthwhile, I should note a shortcoming in his treatment of Deleuze: that is, the neglect of the figure of Solomon Maimon, whom Deleuze always credits for pinpointing Kant's failure to move from mere conditioning to genesis. So the concern for Deleuze is not just to provide an account of 'real experience', versus the concern with 'possible experience' in Kant (115). Rather, the proper contrast we might draw to explain Deleuze's relation to Kant is that between the former's concern with a 'genesis of real experience' and the latter's concern with the 'conditions of possible experience' (see, e.g., *Difference and Repetition* 170; 173-4, both passages explicitly linking this distinction to Maimon).

Now to be fair, it is only a very recent trend in Deleuze scholarship to follow up on the Deleuze/ Maimon relation, most of the pieces appearing after the publication of Willatt's work (see the essay by Daniel W. Smith in Sjoerd van Tuinen & Niamh McDonnell [eds.], *Deleuze and the Fold: A Critical Reader* [London: Palgrave Macmillan 2010], and that by Graham Jones, in Graham Jones and Jon Rolfe [eds.], *Deleuze's Philosophical Lineage* [Edinburgh University Press 2009]). However, a focus on the difference between genesis and conditioning is prominent in *Difference and Repetition*, and should have warranted a discussion in Willatt's work.

Nonetheless, *Kant, Deleuze, and Architectonics* has a number of virtues, as noted above, and forms a worthwhile contribution to the growing Deleuze secondary literature, even if its work on Kant might end up gaining most of the critical attention.

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