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Aufsätze

Deleuze's and Kant's Apprehension of the Imagination in *Difference and Repetition*

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Abstract

From a Deleuzian point of view, the first passive synthesis is undertaken by the imagination. Everything begins with sensibility, and the role of the imagination is to gather together or "contracts," "difference" or "discontinuous matter" which inhabits repetition. In Deleuze's account, the sensibility and the imagination are contemporaneous instances which are "unconscious" for us. This starting point produces a temporal dimension of "the present" or "the living present." The imagination "contracts" the past in "the living present" towards the future. This contraction Deleuze calls habit. Based upon this consideration, in this paper I will clarify two things:

1. Deleuze's understanding of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason, how the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction are the product of the imagination.
2. In Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, how the first synthesis of time as "the living present" is grounded on the synthesis of the imagination.

Schlüsselwörter

passive synthesis, imagination, apprehension, reproduction, representation, repetition, Kant, Deleuze

"Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it."

Deleuze's book *Difference and Repetition* was first published in French in 1968. The most important subject of Deleuze's entire philosophical project in *Difference and Repetition* is the philosophical accounts of the structure of reality. However, the reality is in constant alteration, and our challenge is how to live with these changes. From Deleuze's insight, we must handle the structure of things, i.e., the reality. The way of handling the structure of things and the reality is for our actions to connect with all things and the reality. Deleuze's account of the structure of things and the reality depends on the synthesis. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze distinguishes three passive syntheses which mostly appear in chapter two, "Repetition for itself." The three passive syntheses represent the movement from sensibility through the memory to thought. Or rather, the three passive syntheses drive our self from the imagination to the representation. For Deleuze, the first two passive syntheses do not require a representation of an object. A representation or knowledge of an object transforms the passive synthesis into an active synthesis. The first passive synthesis apprehends what is given in sensibility by the imagination, which is the subject of this paper. The second passive synthesis reproduces the first synthesis, i.e., memorizes what was given in sensibility. The third passive synthesis recognizes the first and the second syntheses, i.e., what was apprehended and reproduced into thought. In fact, the point of the *Difference and Repetition* is the dynamic genesis from the imagination through the memory to thought.

Deleuze rewrites Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* and struggles with the structure of syntheses in Kant. For this reason, we will clarify the Deleuzian interpretation of Kant's apprehension of the imagination in his book *Kant's Critical Philosophy*², and *Seminars*³ about *Kant* (1978) which are crucial for the Deleuzian concept of the imagination. For Kant, the first synthesis apprehends the manifold in a certain space and a certain time. The second synthesis is a reproduction of the first syn-

¹ Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*. New York 1994, p.70.

² Deleuze, Gilles: *Kant's Critical Philosophy*. Minneapolis 1984.

³ Deleuze, Gilles: *Seminars*. Les Cours De Gilles Deleuze. Kant. See <http://www.webdeleuze.com/> Last Accessed May 15th, 2010.

thesis in the imagination. The synthesis determined in this way is twofold:

1. The synthesis holds on a manifold as it appears in space and time, and
2. The synthesis holds on a manifold of space and time in themselves.

According to the Deleuzian interpretation of Kant, space and time can be “represented” to us.⁴ The third Kantian synthesis is recognition in the concept which unifies the synthesis. For Deleuze, the general characteristic of the first two syntheses are passivity and unconsciousness; it takes place in the mind, but it is not carried by the mind.⁵ However, the recognition is grounded on the categories and carried out in the mind, and by the mind. For Kant, the categories are *a priori* concepts that are applicable to any object which I can encounter in my experience, e.g., a “table” or “chair.” I recognize that this is a “table” and this is a “chair.” In Deleuze’s interpretation of Kant, the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction are the result of the imagination.⁶ The imagination mediates between spatial-temporal determinations and conceptual determinations. In fact, the faculty of the imagination determines a space and a time in a way that it consents with a concept. Or, the faculty of the imagination does not derive from a concept, but it consents with a concept.

From a Deleuzian point of view, the first passive synthesis is undertaken by the imagination. Everything begins with sensibility, and the role of the imagination is to gather together or “contracts,” “difference” or “discontinuous matter” which inhabits repetition. In Deleuze’s account, the sensibility and the imagination are contemporaneous instances which are “unconscious” for us. This starting point produces a temporal dimension of “the present” or “the living present.” The imagination “contracts” the past in “the living present” towards the future. This contraction Deleuze calls habit. Conversely, in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, the

4 Deleuze argues that Kant’s synthesis of reproduction reproduces “the preceding parts as we arrive at the ones following. Synthesis defined in this way does not bear only on diversity as it appears in space and time, but on the diversity of space and time themselves. Indeed, without it, space and time would not be ‘represented’” (Deleuze, Gilles: *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, p. 15).

5 Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, p.71.

6 Deleuze, Gilles: *Kant’s Critical Philosophy*, p.15.

first synthesis begins with an empty form of intuition which apprehends a space and a time as a necessary and universal condition of any “possible experience.” The imagination is an “active” faculty which synthesizes what is given in sensibility. Based upon this consideration, in this paper I will clarify two things:

1. Deleuze’s understanding of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, how the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction are the product of the imagination.
2. In Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition*, how the first synthesis of time as “the living present” is grounded on the synthesis of the imagination.

The Imagination and The Synthesis

Before we elucidate the Deleuzian and Kantian apprehension of the synthesis and the role of the imagination in it, it is necessary briefly to describe the faculties in Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, and Deleuze’s reading of Kant. Kant reformulates the three faculties into the three syntheses of cognition. In the chapters, “The transcendental Doctrine of Elements”⁷ and “Transcendental Dialectic” (“On the concepts of pure reason”), Kant distinguishes three faculties:

1. Intuition (cognition that relates immediately to represented objects of experience. This case is possible only if the objects are given to us by means of sensibility. When we are affected by objects, Kant calls that sensibility (sensibility = reception of representations (*Vorstellung*)),
2. Concept (cognition that relates intermediately to represented objects of experience through the understanding), and
3. Idea (cognition that goes “beyond the concept of the understanding,” and has its source in reason).⁸

According to Kant, we can know only the mind-independent external world through a relation to the representation of it. The term mind-independent external world in Kant’s *CPR* is something that we cannot know (the thing in itself

7 Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of Pure Reason*. New York 1998, p. A19/B33.

8 Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. A313. Kant gives similar accounts dividing the three syntheses into three faculties in A 79, A 97 and A 115.

– *noumenon*). In Kant's epistemological theory we cannot be affected by an object, but only by the representation of an object. In this sense, the term "object" (*Gegenstand*) has the same meaning as the term "mind-independent object," i.e., representation of appearance or representation of relation between the subject and the object of appearance. In other words, we cannot know things as they are in themselves, but only as they appear to us. Rockmore, in his book *Kant and Idealism* gave an interpretation of Kant's epistemology which opened a new field of Kantian analysis of the cognition of a mind-independent object.⁹ He claims that Kant makes three distinctions:

1. Phenomenon (representation of representation – what is immediately given in perceptual experience)
2. Appearance (every appearance is a phenomenon; it refers to thing in themselves, beyond what appears)
3. Noumenon (the thing in itself, independent of us).

In the Deleuzian reading of Kant, Kant's phenomenon appears in space and time which are pure forms of our sensibility. For Deleuze, we have to distinguish in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* sensibility¹⁰ as a reception of the manifold, and the three faculties which participate in the synthesis (imagination, understanding and reason): "Taken in its activity, synthesis refers back to *imagination*; in its unity, to *understanding*; and its totality, to *reason*".¹¹ In other words, a faculty of receptivity can make synthesis possible only if combined with a spontaneous imagination.

Kant explicitly formulates the synthesis and faculties of the soul in the chapter

⁹ Rockmore, Tom: *Kant and Idealism*. New Haven, 2007, pp. 36f.

¹⁰ For Kant, sensibility is a passive faculty of cognition because it cannot create anything without "active" faculty of the imagination: "The capacity (receptivity) to acquire representations through the way in which we are affected by objects is called sensibility. Objects are therefore given to us by means of sensibility, and it alone affords us intuitions" (B 34/A 20). For this reason, sensibility cannot be a faculty of synthesis, but only the imagination. On the contrary, in the Deleuze's interpretation of Kant, he grasps sensibility as a faculty of synthesis. For Deleuze, genesis of sensibility and imagination exist contemporaneously which we are not conscious.

¹¹ Deleuze, Gilles: *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, p. 9.

"Transition to the transcendental deduction of the categories"¹²:

"There are, however, three original sources (capacities or faculties of the soul), which contain the conditions of the possibility of all experience, and cannot themselves be derived from any other faculty of the mind, namely sense, imagination, and apperception. On these are grounded 1) the synopsis of this manifold a priori through sense; 2) the synthesis of this manifold through the imagination; 3) the unity of this synthesis through original apperception."

Grounded upon these three faculties (sense, imagination, and apperception), Kant builds a threefold synthesis:¹³

1. Synthesis of apprehension in the intuition (our representations belong to a formal condition of inner sense – time. It takes the manifold together in "one representation.")
2. Synthesis of reproduction in the imagination (contracts a manifold of representations under the inner sense – time)
3. Synthesis of recognition in the concept (contracts a manifold of representations subjected to a concept: "The I think must be able to accompany all my representations").¹⁴

Now we can elucidate the core of Deleuze's thesis: "This synthesis, as both apprehension and reproduction, is always defined by Kant as an act of the imagination".¹⁵ We will see how Deleuze reconfigures the Kantian syntheses. In fact, Deleuze discovers a passive element in the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction, which Kant neglected. In the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction, argues Deleuze, Kant neglected the role of sensibility in the synthesis. For Kant, sensibility is a passive faculty, and the imagination is an "active" faculty. On the contrary, for Deleuze, the imagination which synthesizes the diversity of sensibility is a

¹² Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. B127.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. A97.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. B132.

¹⁵ Deleuze, Gilles: *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, p. 15.

passive faculty.

The Synthesis of Apprehension

Kant distinguishes two aspects of the synthesis of apprehension: empirical and transcendental. The empirical synthesis gathers together a manifold that appears in space and time in "one moment": "It is necessary first to run through and then to take together this manifoldness, which action I call the synthesis of apprehension".¹⁶ On the other hand, the transcendental synthesis gathers together not the appearances, but a manifold of space and time as such. This synthesis "can be generated only through the synthesis of the manifold that sensibility in its original receptivity provides".¹⁷ In fact, the transcendental synthesis of apprehension "generates" a representation of space and time.

Whether our representations have originated *a priori* or empirically, through the influence of the external world or as the effect of inner sense, they are in space and time.¹⁸ There is an indefinite diversity in space and time. Between two moments is another moment which divides indefinitely. The determination of space and time are both: on the one hand, they are representations in which indefinite diversity is given in space and time. On the other hand, they give us indefinite diversity of space and time itself:

"Moreover, space and time are themselves diverse: they are not only the forms in which diversity is given, but they also give us a properly spatial and temporal diversity: the diversity of heres and the diversity of nows; any moment in time is a possible now, any point in space is a possible here".¹⁹

In other words, when I perceive a chair or a table, it means that I constitute "a certain space and a certain time in space and time".²⁰ I cannot perceive a chair or a table without a certain space and a certain time. However, if our reception received only these elements of space and time, we could not form a perception. For

¹⁶ Kant, Immanuel: Critique of Pure Reason, p. A99.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. A100.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. A99.

¹⁹ Deleuze, Gilles: Seminars. Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze. Kant.

²⁰ Ibid.

this reason, our perceptions are grounded on the synthesis of apprehension. From the Deleuzian reading of Kant, the synthesis of apprehension is the synthesis of successive apprehension of parts. Or, in Kantian terminology:

"Now in order for unity of intuition to come from this manifold (as, say, in the representation of space), it is necessary first to run through and then to take together this manifoldness, which action I call the synthesis of apprehension, since it is aimed directly at the intuition, which to be sure provides a manifold but can never effect this as such, and indeed as contained in one representation, without the occurrence of such a synthesis".²¹

For instance, when I look at a text, I perceive it at once. Wherever I perceive a text either from the beginning or from the bottom or from the top, the synthesis of successive parts must be apprehended in time. As with Kant, Deleuze distinguishes two cases of apprehensions. First, an objective apprehension occurs from a fixed position in which only one side of an object appears. For example, I can perceive a building from the foreground or the background. In this case, I can say that I perceive an "event." Second, a subjective apprehension occurs if we look at an object from all sides. I can look at a building from the left and from the right, and I will have the succession of parts of a building. In this case, I can say that I perceive a "thing." From Deleuze's account, the succession does not occur in things or phenomena, but only in an apprehension. In both objective and subjective cases, the apprehension of parts is successive, and it is contained only in "one moment" in our apprehension.²²

The Synthesis of Reproduction

"The Synthesis of apprehension is therefore inseparably combined with the synthesis of reproduction"²³

Besides the synthesis of apprehension, the imagination has a transcendental power of reproduction. Unlike the synthesis of apprehension, which focuses on the

²¹ Kant, Immanuel: Critique of Pure Reason, p. A99.

²² Deleuze, Gilles: Seminars. Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze. Kant.

²³ Kant, Immanuel: Critique of Pure Reason, p. A102.

manifold of sensibility, the synthesis of reproduction goes beyond the given sensibility to reproduce the past. The synthesis of reproduction reproduces the preceding parts with the following ones.²⁴ For instance, if I forgot the previous part when I arrived at the following part, I would not be able to perceive it. For this reason, if we want to carry it out by a space and a time, we must contract the previous part with the following ones. This contraction creates the synthesis of reproduction by the imagination. In other words, the synthesis of reproduction contracts the past into the present. Without this contraction, i.e., the transcendental power of reproduction, we cannot grasp time in a succession (past, present, future):

“Now if we can demonstrate that even our purest a priori intuitions provide no cognition except insofar as they contain the sort of combination of the manifold that makes possible a thoroughgoing synthesis of reproduction, then this synthesis of the imagination would be grounded even prior to all experience on a priori principles, and one must assume a pure transcendental synthesis of this power, which grounds even the possibility of all experience”.²⁵

The transcendental power of reproduction is different from the empirical power which reproduces images. The empirical power of reproduction presupposes that representations have to be subjected to rules analogous to the rules which are associated with us. For example, I can produce an image of Peter in my imagination, even if he is not here. The empirical imagination would never get to do anything that is related to an object:

“If cinnabar were now red, now black, now light, now heavy, if a human being were now changed into this animal shape, now into that one, if on the longest day the land were covered now with fruits, now with ice and snow, then my empirical imagination would never even get an opportunity to think of heavy cinnabar on the occasion of the representation of the color red”.²⁶

If this occurs, the imagination will be “hidden in the interior of the mind, like a

²⁴ Deleuze, Gilles: *Seminars. Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*. Kant.

²⁵ Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. A101.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. A100f.

dead and to us unknown faculty”.²⁷

Ultimately, the syntheses of apprehension and reproduction refer to the act of the imagination. According to Deleuze, we determine a space and a time in space and time through the apprehension of parts and the reproduction of parts.²⁸ Kant distinguishes two kinds of imagination. The reproductive or empirical imagination produces images (We can imagine Peter who is not here). For Kant, the reproductive imagination “contributes nothing to the explanation of the possibility of cognition a priori, and on that account belongs not in transcendental philosophy but to psychology”.²⁹ In this context, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze criticizes Kant of “hiding” “psychologism” in the B edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In the A edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the transcendental faculty is grounded on an empirical synthesis of apprehension.³⁰ For this reason, Deleuze claims in *Difference and Repetition*:

“It is clear that, in this manner, Kant traces the so-called transcendental structures from the empirical acts of a psychological consciousness: the transcendental synthesis of apprehension is directly induced from an empirical apprehension, and so on. In order to hide this all too obvious procedure, Kant suppressed this text in the second edition. Although it is better hidden, the tracing method, with all its ‘psychologism,’ nevertheless subsists”.³¹

However, Kant prefers the productive or transcendental imagination which determines a space and a time through the synthesis of apprehension and the synthesis of reproduction in accordance with a concept. In paragraph 24 “On the application of the categories to objects of the senses in general,” Kant determines the transcendental synthesis of the imagination as “the faculty for representing an object even without its presence in intuition”.³² For instance, we can draw a line in our thought only if we think about a line, or we can describe a circle only if we think a

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. A100.

²⁸ Deleuze, Gilles: *Seminars. Les Cours de Gilles Deleuze*. Kant.

²⁹ Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. B152.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, A99f.

³¹ Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, p. 135.

³² Kant, Immanuel: *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. B151.

circle in our thought.³³ This line or circle exists in accordance with the concept of a line or a circle, but they do not depend on the concept of a line or a circle. This kind of synthesis which is abstract from sense Kant calls intellectual synthesis (*synthesis intellectualis*). Or rather, a schema is a result of the transcendental synthesis of the imagination. For Deleuze the crucial question is: "What does the imagination do with its synthesis?"³⁴ Kant's answer: the imagination schematizes. The synthesis and the schema are the act of the productive imagination, and they determine a space and a time in accordance with the concept. However, Deleuze poses another question: What is the difference between the synthesis and the schema? The synthesis as an act of the productive imagination determines a certain space and a certain time ("here and now") "by means of which diversity is related to the object in general" in accordance with the concept.³⁵ The schema as a spatial-temporal determination is a "formal and pure condition of the sensibility".³⁶ From Kant's perspective, the function of the transcendental schema is applying the categories to appearances. The only way in which objects are given to us is "the modification of our sensibility".³⁷ According to Kant, the subject makes a "modification of our sensibility" only through the schema. Kant says, "The schema is in itself always only a product of the imagination".³⁸ Kant's point is that the schema as a product of the imagination is a pure and necessary condition of an image. We can represent Kant's point in this way:

The imagination - The schema (categories + appearance) - Image (look)

For Kant, the synthesis is "the mere effect of the imagination, of a blind though indispensable function of the soul without which we would have no cognition at all, but of which we are seldom even conscious".³⁹ The synthesis occurs in the imagination outside of the concept of the understanding. For Kant, the imagination is an "active" faculty because sense cannot supply representations and combine

33 Ibid., p. B154.

34 Deleuze, Gilles: Kant's Critical Philosophy, p. 18.

35 Ibid.

36 Kant, Immanuel: Critique of Pure Reason, p. B179.

37 Ibid., p. B178.

38 Ibid., p. B179.

39 Ibid., p. A178.

them. Only the imagination, "the function of the soul," can synthesize representations of objects. In this sense, the imagination has a double role: it takes sensibility and processes it into a certain form, and mediates between the passive faculty of sensibility by composing moments of time and the concept of understanding.

According to Deleuze, Kant's concept of receptivity defines the passive self or ego in terms of the passive synthesis of contraction assuming that "sensations are already formed, then merely relating these to the a priori forms of their representation which are determined as space and time".⁴⁰ In *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant says, "The apprehension of the manifold of appearance is always successive".⁴¹ Therefore, he gives an example of coexistence between sensations and a space and a time: "Alteration is a way of existing that succeeds another way of existing of the very same object. Hence everything that is altered is lasting, and only its state changes. Substances (in appearance) are the substrata of all time-determinations. All change (succession) of appearance is only alteration".⁴² In fact, Kant's synthesis of apprehension presupposes that the relation between sensations and a space and a time exists before their representations in the synthesis of recognition. Kant supposes that sensations have already spread themselves out in a time because time and space are the "a priori formal condition of all appearances in general".⁴³ We cognize sensations *a priori*, i.e., prior to all actual perception.⁴⁴

On the contrary, in Deleuze's conception of the passive synthesis, he does not presuppose that the faculty of sensations gives a space and a time to objects or that those sensations exist in space and time as in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. In Kant's sense, a space and a time exist prior to every experience as a universal necessity. However, in Deleuze's sense, a space and a time exist prior to every experience, but involved "as a function of the nervous system. Its biological necessity transcends logical necessity".⁴⁵ In other words, sensibility and a space and a time exist in a contemporaneous way in "one moment." For Deleuze, sensations are not

40 Deleuze, Gilles: Difference and Repetition, p. 98.

41 Kant, Immanuel: Critique of Pure Reason, p. A189

42 Ibid., pp. A187f., B233.

43 Ibid., p. A34.

44 Ibid., p. B60.

45 Faulkner, W. Keith: Deleuze and the Three Syntheses of Time. New York, 2006, p. 23.

already formed as in Kant, but they form a representation together with a space and a time prior to every experience. In fact, a space and a time are not separated from sensibility, i.e., a space and a time are not a universal and necessary condition for every "possible experience," but they exist a priori together as a "larval subject," a passive self: "The passive egos were already integrations".⁴⁶

Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* defines the passive synthesis as one which "is not carried out by the mind, but occurs in the mind which contemplates, prior to all memory and all reflection".⁴⁷ Unlike Kant, Deleuze determines that the synthesis is not carried by an active faculty as Kant thought, but is carried out by a passive faculty, i.e., the imagination: "In other words, the active synthesis of memory and understanding are superimposed upon and supported by the passive synthesis of the imagination".⁴⁸ In Deleuze's rewriting of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, he stresses that only the first two syntheses create the process of synthesis: "Synthesis has two aspects: *apprehension*, by means of which we pose the manifold as occupying a certain space and a certain time, by means of which we 'produce' different parts in space and time; and *reproduction*, by means of which we reproduce the preceding parts as we arrive at the ones following".⁴⁹ The characteristic of these two syntheses of the imagination, taken in itself, is that they are "not at all self-conscious".⁵⁰ For Deleuze, we form the concept of "table" *a priori*, i.e., prior to our conscious attention to the concept of "table" "in the depths of the earth and of the hearth, where laws do not yet exist".⁵¹ In this context, the concept of "table" is passive and unconscious because it does not require a representation of itself in our conscious. The passive synthesis begins with singularities or "evanescent matter" or "discontinuous matter," which Deleuze understands as the immediate objects of intuition. Deleuze's first passive synthesis gathers together "evanescent matter" of sensibility into a "living present" (*present vivant*) by the faculty of the imagination. In order to grasp the importance of Deleuze's first synthesis of time

46 Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, p. 98.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

48 *Ibid.*

49 Deleuze, Gilles: *Kant's Critical Philosophy*, p. 15.

50 *Ibid.*

51 Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, p. 25.

for the entire genesis of thought⁵², it is necessary to explain a correlation between Deleuze's first passive synthesis and "the present" or the imagination and time.

The Imagination and The First Synthesis of Time

The first passive synthesis as an act of the imagination gathers together sensibility's "discontinuous instants." In this process, the first synthesis "generates" the "living present," which is the starting point of the Deleuzian genesis of time. The "living present" does not constitute a present instant or "now" because the imagination contracts one instant with the following ones: "The synthesis of time constitutes the present in time. It is not that the present is a dimension of time: the present alone exists. Rather, synthesis constitutes time as a living present, and the past and the future as dimensions of this present".⁵³ The passive synthesis of time is the condition for the "living present" where the past is contracted in the present towards the future. Deleuze calls this synthesis habit (the present gives a direction from past to future): "Passive synthesis or contraction is essentially asymmetrical: it goes from the past to the future in the present, thus from the particular to the general, thereby imparting direction to the arrow or time".⁵⁴ The repetitions of an act in the past are contracted in "the present" with expectancy to the future.

In fact, Deleuze begins the first synthesis of time with the possibility of repetition using a Humean model.⁵⁵ Deleuze says, "Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it".⁵⁶ The repetition starts with the rule of discontinuity: one case does not appear unless the

52 In Deleuze's interpretation of Kant, the first synthesis is both: apprehension and reproduction.

53 Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, p. 76.

54 *Ibid.*, p. 71.

55 Keith W. Faulkner in his book *Deleuze and the three synthesis of time* has excellent insight, when he notices that Deleuze with a Humean model tries to overcome Kant's first synthesis. Deleuze starts with a Humean model because this model uses a conjunction of "cases" in space and time, which constitutes a connective synthesis. This conjunction allows us to produce our habits of apprehension (9). Also, Dr. Jay Lampert in his book *Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy of History* stresses that it is not accidental that Deleuze starts with Hume: "For Hume, 'experience' need not be founded on subjectivity; it is first of all a conjunction that allows data to 'to count as one' (to use Badiou's phrase)" (13).

56 Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, p. 70.

other has disappeared.⁵⁷ How does repetition can change something in the mind which contemplates? Supposing that we consider two cases independently from each other, there is no case that we can say “the first” and “the second” cases are the same. According to Deleuze, such a repetition cannot change anything; even “the mind which contemplates it” recollects what has seen “the first” after “the second” case. Hume gives an example of the repetition of couples of cases AB, AB, AB, A... Once an AB conjunction occurs, then an A occurs with an expectation of B recurring.⁵⁸ The “case” AB makes a difference itself because it appears twice: “Whenever A appears, I expect the appearance of B”.⁵⁹ On the contrary, if the “case” AB is independent of the others, the repetition cannot take place as such. In other words, the repetition cannot change anything in the object repeated. The question that is posed: What is the relation between expectancy and repetition? Deleuze explains the repetition in terms of “contraction” of “the first” case in later ones by creating expectancy. This “contraction” is passive in the sense that we do not have to be conscious about what takes place. Therefore, the “contraction” produces in the mind, which contemplates, “a difference, something new in the mind”.⁶⁰ It “contracts” an AB case into one temporal unit, and retains them quite differently. If we want to grasp the AB case, it has to include differentiated moments which “contract” each other into one synthesis. The faculty of “contracting” these differentiated moments Deleuze calls the imagination: “The imagination is defined here as a contractile power: like a sensitive plate, it retains one case when the others appears”.⁶¹ In sum, the repetition is not a “memory,” “operation of understanding” or “reflection,” but “it forms a synthesis of time”.⁶²

From Deleuze’s perspective, the passive synthesis of time is the cause of expectation of every possible case which goes from the past to the future in the present. Expectation which depends on a “contraction” is based on the repetition of instants. In other words, time is grounded on the synthesis of the imagination which contracts successive independent instants with each other in “the living present:”

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Lampert, Jay: *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History*. London, 2006, p.14.

⁵⁹ Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, p. 70.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid.

“A succession of instants does not constitute time any more than it causes it to disappear; it indicates only its constantly aborted moment of birth. Time is constituted only in the originary synthesis which operates on the repetition of instants. This synthesis contracts the successive independent instants into one another, thereby constituting the lived, or living present. It is in this present that time is deployed”.⁶³

The “living present” cannot exist out of instants. For this reason, the present includes temporally two different instants: the past which “retains” in the contraction, and the future which “anticipates” in the same contraction. The past and the future do not refer to instants out of the present, “outside of itself,” but rather to “the dimensions of the present itself insofar as it is a contraction of instants”.⁶⁴ The “living present” constitutes time by moving it from the past to the future, from the particular to the general. In the present synthesis, a moment converts the particular instant into a general instant. In Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, he says that particularities are given to us as manifoldness in the external world. We can only apprehend representations of manifoldness in the external world. The starting point of Kant’s first synthesis is a pure and empty form of intuition which apprehends representations of manifoldness in “one moment.” Unlike Kant, Deleuze does not say that particularities are given to us, but that they are the product of the synthesis, i.e., they are contracted in the present moment. In other words, there is no empty intuition as the starting point as in Kant, but the first synthesis begins with “the imagination’s experience of a discontinuous matter” at once.⁶⁵ Based upon this deliberation, Deleuze’s first synthesis “generates” the first dimension of time, the “living present.”

Jay Lampert, in his book *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History*, poses a crucial question: “Why does time begin as a present instead of as past or future?”⁶⁶ Time is the present because the first case of experience is repetition and contraction of differentiated moments into a unity. The past cannot be past if it was not taken in the present as such. The past represents the way of constitution of the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

⁶⁵ Hughes, Joe: *Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition*. New York, 2009, p. 106.

⁶⁶ Lampert, Jay: *Deleuze and Guattari’s Philosophy of History*, p.15.

“living present” itself. Also, the future cannot be future if it will not be taken in the present as such. The future represents the way of constitution of the “living present” itself. In sum, the synthesis of the imagination synthesizes the time dimensions of the past and the future into the “living present” in “one moment.”

The synthesis of the imagination, i.e., movement from the past to the future within the present is passive because it does not depend on our subjectivity. This passivity designates the internal relation, “contraction” or habit among parts into the “living present.” Hume’s example is an example of the perceptual synthesis in which the faculty of the imagination “contracts” sensations. However, the passive perceptual synthesis refers back to the organic synthesis which is not quite subjective or corporeal.⁶⁷ Rather, it refers back to “a primary sensibility that we are. We are made of contracted water, earth, light and air – not merely prior to the recognition or representation of these, but prior to their being sensed”.⁶⁸ Deleuze distinguishes the perceptual and organic synthesis to show that the organic synthesis has its own form of “contraction”: “Every organism, in its receptivity and perceptual elements, but also in its viscera, is a sum of contractions, of retentions and expectations. At the level of this primary vital sensibility the lived present constitutes a past and a future in time”.⁶⁹ We can see that the organic synthesis of the “living present” consists of retention and expectation. Organic retention of the past appears as a “cellular heredity,” and organic expectation of the future appears as a “need.” A “cellular heredity” and “need” as dimensions of time constitute the “primary vital sensibility,” i.e., the “living present.” The organic synthesis (the living present = retention + expectation) is the transcendental structure of metabolism. Thus, Deleuze shows that the “living present” as retention and expectation occurs at the organic level as well as the level of the passive perceptual synthesis of the imagination.

In this context, the question is: How is it possible to make the connection between organic synthesis and perceptual synthesis? Deleuze’s answer is habit: “In essence, habit is contraction”.⁷⁰ The organic synthesis has a pre-conscious aspect

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 19.

⁶⁸ Deleuze, Gilles: *Difference and Repetition*, p. 73.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

of habit. Deleuze uses the term “habit” or “extraction” (“drawing something off”) to make the point of the synthesis: when the mind becomes conscious, a difference is “extracted” from repetition. The passive synthesis is not “contraction” as “an instantaneous action which combines with another to form an element of repetition,” but “contraction” as a fusion of successive moments in a contemplative soul.⁷¹ Habit manifests many passive syntheses from which we are organically composed: the heart, the muscle, nerves and cells. Through the “contraction” we are habits, and through the contemplation we are “contraction.” We adduced that organically habit is “drawing something off,” but the contemplation is the same: “To contemplate is to draw something from”.⁷² According to Deleuze, we can exist only as both; the perceptive and organic synthesis, as the contemplation and habit at the same time.

Every passive synthesis or “contraction” constitutes a sign which is deployed in active synthesis.⁷³ Signs are not only representations of objects, but a “contraction” of elements into one single case without erasing their differences. In this sense, signs are passive because they are not more than “contraction.” According to Deleuze, signs “belongs to the present”.⁷⁴ It means that signs are in relation to the past and the future as dimensions of the present. In sum, the sign is the sign of the present: “A scar is the sign not of a past wound but of “the present fact of having been wounded”.⁷⁵ Each instant which passes separates itself in the presence, but what the instant signifies comes back. In other words, Deleuze distinguishes two kinds of signs: natural signs refer to the passive synthesis, to the present, and the artificial signs refer to the active synthesis, to the past or the future out of the present. For Deleuze, natural signs only represent the “living present” because they “contract” cases in a “contemplative soul.”

The synthesis of time constitutes the present while passing in time.⁷⁶ However, the present has a certain duration which depends on the species, the individuals and

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 74.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 73.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 77.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 79.

the organisms. Each species, each individual, each organism has its own measurement of time: "It necessarily forms a present which may be exhausted and which passes, a present of a certain duration which varies according to the species, the individuals, the organism and the parts of organisms under consideration".⁷⁷ The measurement of time of an organism's present depends on a natural "contraction" in a contemplative soul. For instance, two "successive" presents may be contemporaneous with a third present. However, the real component of contemplation is fatigue. The fatigue occurs when the organism cannot "contract" anymore what it contemplates. In this case, contemplation and contraction are separated from each other. Fatigue is not a lack of energy in fulfilling its needs, but rather fails to "produce" needs. Needs are "satiated", and fatigue is the limit of those needs. Fatigue occurs when "satiety" is completed or when "contraction" has not begun yet. Needs marks the limits of the present. Fatigue is the past dimension of the "living present," and need is the future of the "living present." In other words, need and fatigue come into focus in the "living present." "The present extends between two eruptions of need, and coincides with the duration of a contemplation".⁷⁸ One eruption of need occurs at the beginning of contraction, and another when satisfaction is fulfilled. The extended present is the time in which the past and the future are "inscribed" in the present's needs: "Repetition is essentially inscribed in need, since need rests upon an instance which essentially involves repetition: which forms the for-itself of repetition and for-itself of a certain duration".⁷⁹ Our present's rhythmic extension, our reaction times, the present and fatigues are based on our contemplations. We can exist only in contemplation which "contracts" cases itself. Contemplation is question: What is the difference? The contemplative soul puts difference in repetition, and it draws a response from repetition: "Difference inhabits repetition".⁸⁰ It allows us to pass from one repetition to another. In this sense, Deleuze says that difference lies between two repetitions. Ultimately, the role of the imagination is to draw difference for repetition, something new from repetition, of which we are not conscious. The first synthesis of time is led by the faculty of the imagination. "Contraction" which occurs in contemplation produces the

77 Ibid., p. 77.
 78 Ibid.
 79 Ibid.
 80 Ibid., p. 76.

"living present," i.e., the first synthesis of time by the imagination. In fact, many habits from which are composed such "contraction," as contemplations, needs, fatigue, satisfaction form the foundation of the first passive synthesis.⁸¹

The passive self or "larval subject" is defined by a contractile contemplation which synthesizes the organism itself. This contractile power is an act of the imagination or the act of a contemplative soul of apprehension. Unlike Deleuze, Kant's passive self is determined as sensibility, i.e., every process of cognition begins with sensibility. For Kant, time is the inner sense of intuition as a necessary and universal condition of a possible experience. Deleuzian time defines a "living present," a "fusion" of the repetition in a contemplative mind, a "fusion" in which the imagination "contracts" dimensions of the "living present" in "one moment." Differences between Kant's and Deleuze's apprehension of sensibility and the first synthesis are shown in this graph below:

	Kant	Deleuze
Sensibility	Spatial – Temporal diversity	Spatial – Temporal diversity
Doctrine of Faculty	Sensibility	Sensibility
Philosophical Account	Manifold of representations of objects	Discontinuous matter
Temporal Dimensions	Finite	Finite

	Kant	Deleuze
First Synthesis	Apprehension	Apprehension and Reproduction
Doctrine of Faculties	Intuition	Imagination
Philosophical Account	Imagination	Imagination
Temporal Dimensions	Present	Present

81 Ibid., p. 78.

The Role of the Imagination

To sum up, Deleuze's first passive synthesis of time determines the "living present" as a multiplicity of contemplations. The essence of the "living present" is the "contraction" of differences through repetition, i.e., "contraction" which retains the past and expects the future in the present. The first passive synthesis constitutes the "living present" which includes the past and the future as dimensions of it. Habit and "contraction" are the foundation of time. The role of the imagination is to draw or "contract" difference from repetition. The imagination forms the moment of repetition which "contracts" cases of it (imagination=contraction=habit). In fact, the first synthesis of time is grounded on an act of the imagination as a contractile power. The first synthesis is the passive synthesis because we are not conscious of it.

From Kant's standpoint, the synthesis of the imagination is "a blind though indispensable function of the soul of which we are seldom even conscious." Bringing that synthesis to the concept is a goal by which we provide cognition. In Kant's account, the imagination has a twofold function. First, the imagination takes a sensibility and processes it in the same form by which the faculty of understanding can recognize. Second, the imagination is the mediator between a concept and a passive faculty of sensibility. The first synthesis of apprehension takes together a manifoldness of appearance, i.e., space and time itself in "one moment." Second, synthesis of reproduction reproduces the preceding parts when you come to the following part, i.e., space and time by an act of the imagination. In Deleuze's interpretation of Kant, the imagination is the faculty by which we determine a space and a time in a way that conforms to a concept. In this context, the synthesis of the imagination is the "active" faculty by which we apprehend the manifold of appearance of the mind-independent external world. On the contrary, Deleuze considers the synthesis of the imagination as a passive faculty which "is not carried by the mind, but occurs in the mind which contemplates." The synthesis of the imagination "produces" something new in our mind, i.e., a "difference," of which we are "not at all self-conscious."

"Repetition changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it." (Deleuze, Difference and Repetition, p. 70)