

UDK 1Deleuze, G.  
Izvorni znanstveni rad  
Primljeno: 6.4.2018.

Matija Jelača  
Sveučilište Jurja Dobrile u Puli, Filozofski fakultet  
HR-52100 Pula, I. Matetića Ronjgova 1  
mjelaca@unipu.hr

## DELEUZE'S CRITIQUE OF REPRESENTATION BETWEEN POST-STRUCTURALISM AND SPECULATIVE REALISM

### Abstract

Gilles Deleuze's thought is uniquely placed at the interface of post-structuralism and the speculative/ontological turn which marked the humanities in general and continental philosophy in particular at the beginning of the twenty-first century. On the one hand, Deleuze shares with his post-structuralist contemporaries the commitment to Nietzsche's project of overturning Platonism and the critique of representation. On the other hand, while post-structuralism for the most part unfolded under the *aegis* of Heidegger's pronouncements on the end of philosophy and the overcoming of metaphysics, for Deleuze the critique of representation constitutes the necessary condition for the reaffirmation of philosophy's rights to metaphysical speculation. In this respect, Deleuze can be regarded as an important predecessor to the speculative/ontological turn. Therefore an engagement with Deleuze's thought presents an opportunity to better understand the current conjuncture in the humanities. This paper presents an account of Deleuze's critique of representation by tracing his argument against representation and in favour of intuitive knowledge and speculative metaphysics through a close reading of a few select and particularly revealing places in Deleuze's early writings. The conclusion then places this discussion of Deleuze's thought in the context of the recent turn in the humanities and continental philosophy away from post-structuralism and towards speculative realism.

Key words: post-structuralism, Gilles Deleuze, critique of representation, intuitive knowledge, metaphysical speculation, speculative realism, speculative/ontological turn.

### 1. Introduction

The critique of representation constitutes an essential aspect of post-structuralist thought.<sup>1</sup> In fact, it could be argued that the critique of representation is the very thread that binds together otherwise disparate philosophical projects such as those put forward by Gilles Deleuze, Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault which are usually

1 Needles to say, the account of post-structuralism offered here is merely one possible way of framing such a complex subject. For an alternative account that challenges some of the assumptions about post-structuralism presented here see Dillet (2013). I am indebted to an anonymous reviewer for suggesting this important resource.

all gathered under the post-structuralist banner. The anti-representationalism of these thinkers is to be understood in the context of their shared commitment to Nietzsche's project of overturning Platonism.<sup>2</sup> As Deleuze put it most succinctly: "The task of modern philosophy has been defined: to overturn (*renversement*) Platonism" (Deleuze 1994: 59). While Deleuze was the one to explicitly formulate this formidable task in terms of the critique of representation, it is not hard to recognize the close proximity of Deleuze's project to Derrida's deconstruction of "the metaphysics of presence" or to Foucault's account (and critique) of the classical and modern *episteme* in terms of representation. However, there is a crucial difference separating Deleuze from these two thinkers. This difference concerns their respective perspectives on the fate of philosophy in general and metaphysics in particular. For Derrida and Foucault, the project of overturning Platonism is to be pursued under the *aegis* of Heidegger's pronouncements on the end of philosophy and the overcoming of metaphysics.<sup>3</sup> Deleuze, on the other hand, not only claims that he "never worried about going beyond metaphysics or the death of philosophy" (1995: 88) but also emphatically states to be "a pure metaphysician" (1981: 41–42). In this regard, while Derrida's and Foucault's theoretical projects can be construed as constituting the very apex of the *linguistic turn*<sup>4</sup> in the humanities (and philosophy in particular) of the twentieth century, Deleuze's explicitly metaphysical philosophical project is to be understood as an important predecessor to the *speculative* or *ontological turn* which has marked decidedly contemporary continental philosophy and theory at the start of the twenty-first century.<sup>5</sup>

Given Deleuze's unique placement at the interface of post-structuralism and the speculative/ontological turn, an engagement with his thought presents an opportunity to better understand and evaluate the current conjuncture in the humanities. Deleuze's critique of representation is paramount in this regard for it is precisely this aspect of his thought that makes it possible to appreciate the way in which Deleuze departs from his post-structuralist contemporaries, and the influence his thought has had on the contemporary reaffirmation of philosophy's rights to metaphysical speculation. In order to elaborate on this, it is first necessary to explicate Deleuze's account and critique of representation.<sup>6</sup> While Deleuze's confrontation with representation spans the entirety of his *oeuvre*, his most explicit

2 "My philosophy is an *inverted Platonism*: the farther removed from true being, the purer, the finer, the better it is. Living in semblance as goal" (Nietzsche as cited in Smith 2012: 4).

3 For readings that would challenge such an account of Derrida and Foucault see for instance Han (2002), Deleuze (1988), Patton and Protevi (2003), Custer (2016), Rekret (2017). Here again I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for making these suggestions.

4 While the term itself originated in the context of analytic philosophy, namely as the title of an eponymous collection edited by Richard Rorty (1967), it soon came to be recognized as an apt designation for the developments in the humanities in general and continental philosophy in particular of the second half of the twentieth century. For an account of the linguistic turn in continental philosophy see Colebrook (2010).

5 "The Speculative Turn" is the name of the first edited collection dedicated to speculative realism and published in 2010, while "The Ontological Turn in Contemporary Philosophy" was the name of a summer school in philosophy held at the University of Bonn (Germany) in 2012.

6 While Deleuze's "critique of representation" is here interpreted as an attempt to argue against and move beyond representation, for an alternative reading of Deleuze's position as an account of the phenomenological genesis of representation see Hughes (2008).

and direct formulations in this regard are to be found in the early stages of his work, encompassing the period of his first published writings in 1946, and ending with the publication of *Difference and Repetition* in 1968. Furthermore, compared with his later works, which were in a state of constant terminological flux, Deleuze's early writings exhibit a somewhat greater terminological consistency which makes them more appropriate for our purposes. Accordingly, we shall focus our attention on those select few places of his early writings where Deleuze states his case against representation as explicitly and unequivocally as possible.

## 2. Deleuze's Reversal of Platonism

The project of overturning, or more appropriately in this context, reversal (*renversement*) of Platonism constitutes the framework in which Deleuze's philosophical system in general and his critique of representation in particular unfolds, and this is therefore the first aspect of Deleuze's thought that needs to be explicated. We will do so by way of a close reading of Deleuze's "Plato and the Simulacrum", a text explicitly dedicated to answering the question "What does it mean 'to reverse Platonism?'" (Deleuze 1967: 253). Nietzsche himself, whom Deleuze credits as being the first to formulate this demand, seems to have believed that the reversal of Platonism implies the abolition of both the world of essences as well as the world of appearances. In "How the 'Real World' at Last Became a Myth" Nietzsche famously claims: "We have abolished the real world: what world is left? the apparent world perhaps? . . . But no! *with the real world we have also abolished the apparent world!*" (Nietzsche 1990: 51). But Deleuze warns against such an interpretation: "the dual denunciation of essences and appearances dates back to Hegel or, better yet, to Kant" (Deleuze 1967: 253), and thereby cannot be considered peculiar to Nietzsche.

According to Deleuze, if we are to understand the meaning of the reversal of Platonism, we first have to track down and make explicit the motivation behind Plato's theory of Ideas. And this motive is to be sought in "a will to select and to choose. It is a question of 'making a difference', of distinguishing the 'thing' itself from its images, the original from the copy, the model from the simulacrum" (Deleuze 1967: 253). Plato's *method of division* is devised precisely in order to address this problem. In light of this, Deleuze highlights a distinction he sees as crucial for defining the motivation of Platonism more precisely. Plato, according to Deleuze's reading, distinguishes between two kinds of images-idols: *copies-icons* on the one hand, and *simulacra-phantasms* on the other. "*Copies* are secondary possessors. They are well-founded pretenders, guaranteed by resemblance; *simulacra* are like false pretenders, built upon a dissimilarity" (Deleuze 1967: 256). Following from this, the true motivation of Platonism, for Deleuze, is not to distinguish the Idea from its image, the original from a copy, or the model from a simulacrum; it has to do instead "with selecting among the pretenders, distinguishing good and bad copies or, rather, copies (always well-founded) and simulacra (always engulfed in dissimilarity). It is a question of assuring the triumph of the copies over simulacra" (Deleuze 1967: 257). So, in Deleuze's interpretation, the true motivation of Plato's theory of Ideas is to uphold the distinction between two kinds of images, namely copies and simulacra, and to

provide a criterion or principle of selection among them (Deleuze 1967: 257). Copies and simulacra are indeed to be distinguished in terms of their respective relations to Ideas. As we have just seen, copies can be said to be well-founded pretenders or good images because they are endowed with *resemblance*. But resemblance in this case is not to be understood as “an external relation” between two different things, but as an “internal relation” between a thing and an Idea. “The copy truly resembles something only to the degree that it resembles the Idea of that thing (...) It is the superior identity of the Idea which founds the good pretension of the copies, as it bases it on an internal or derived resemblance” (Deleuze 1967: 257). Simulacra, on the other hand, are images without resemblance, false images grounded on a dissimilarity. “That to which they pretend (the object, the quality etc.), they pretend to underhandedly (...) without passing through the Idea. Theirs is an unfounded pretension, concealing a dissimilarity which is an internal imbalance” (Deleuze 1967: 257). Yet although simulacra “internalize a dissimilarity” and are “built upon a disparity or upon a difference”, they nonetheless produce an “effect” or an “impression” of resemblance: “but this is an effect of the whole, completely external and produced by totally different means than those at work within the model (...) an effect obtained by ruse or subversion” (Deleuze 1967: 258).

Therefore, copies and simulacra can be said to constitute two opposite ways of arriving at resemblance. Two formulas encapsulate this dualism: “only that which resembles differs” and “only differences can resemble each other” (Deleuze 1967: 261). According to Deleuze,

these are two distinct readings of the world: one invites us to think difference from the standpoint of a previous similitude or identity; whereas the other invites us to think similitude and even identity as the product of a deep disparity. The first reading precisely defines the world of copies or representation; it posits the world as icon. The second, contrary to the first, defines the world of simulacra; it posits the world itself as phantasm (Deleuze 1967: 261-262).

The world of copies or representation is a world founded by Platonism. This world, as we have seen, has the Idea or “the Same” as its foundation (that which possesses something in the primary way) and is populated by the copies-icons or “the Similar” (the pretender which possesses something in the secondary way in virtue of its resemblance to the foundation) (Deleuze 1967: 259). In this world, the simulacra-phantasms, as that which is founded on difference and endowed with dissimilarity, are to be “repressed as deeply as possible”, and “shut up in a cavern at the bottom at the Ocean” (Deleuze 1967: 259).

Finally we arrive at Deleuze’s answer to the question with which we opened our investigation:

So ‘to reverse Platonism’ means to make the simulacra rise and to affirm their rights among icons and copies. The problem no longer has to do with the distinction Essence-Appearance or Model-Copy. This distinction operates completely within the world of representation. Rather, it has to do with undertaking the subversion of this world – the ‘twilight of the idols.’ The simulacrum is not a degraded copy. It harbours a positive power which

denies *the original and the copy, the model and the reproduction*. (Deleuze 1967: 262)

Contrary to Platonism, for which simulacra are to be defined in negative terms as infinitely degraded copies, for Deleuze, “the reversal of Platonism” begins precisely with the affirmation of the positive power of the simulacra to deny the very distinction between the original and the copy upon which the world of representation is founded. By denying this distinction the simulacra are able to undertake the subversion of this world, and inaugurate in its stead a world of their own. In the world of simulacra,

resemblance subsists, but it is produced as the external effect of the simulacrum, inasmuch as it is built upon divergent series and makes them resonate. Identity subsists, but it is produced as the law which complicates all the series and makes them all return to each one in the course of the forced movement. In the reversal of Platonism, resemblance is said of internalized difference, and identity of the Different as primary power. The same and the similar no longer have an essence except as *simulated*, that is as expressing the functioning of the simulacrum. (Deleuze 1967: 262)

Deleuze warns against conflating *simulation* with appearance or illusion: simulation designates the power of the simulacra to produce an *effect*, and therefore it is fully real (Deleuze 1967: 263). Deleuze invokes Nietzsche's eternal return as crucial for the process of simulation and consequently the reversal of Platonism: “Simulation understood in this way is inseparable from the eternal return, for it is in the eternal return that the reversal of the icons or the subversion of the world of representation is decided” (Deleuze 1967: 262). According to Deleuze's admittedly highly controversial interpretation, it is a mistake to read Nietzsche's idea of the eternal return as an expression of a cyclical conception of time or as the eternal return of the *same*.<sup>7</sup> What the thought of the eternal return affirms instead is the exact opposite, i.e. the return of the Different: “Only the divergent series, insofar as they are divergent, return” (Deleuze 1967: 264). It is precisely by affirming that only that which differs returns, that the eternal return constitutes the Same and the Similar:

Thus, the eternal return is, in fact, the Same and the Similar, but only insofar as they are simulated, produced by the simulation, through the functioning of the simulacrum (the will to power). It is in this sense that it reverses representation and destroys the icons. It does not presuppose the Same and the Similar; on the contrary, it constitutes the only Same – the Same of that which differs, and the only resemblance – the resemblance of the unmatched. (Deleuze 1967: 264)

Finally, Deleuze reveals that the eternal return has the same function in the world of simulacra to the one that the theory of Ideas had in the world of representation, i.e. that it is a principle of selection:

And it does not make *everything* come back. It is still selective, it ‘makes a difference’, but not at all in the manner of Plato. What is selected are all the procedures opposed to selection; what is excluded, what is *made not*

<sup>7</sup> For an exegetical account of the series of translation mistakes which resulted in Deleuze's interpretation see D'Iorio (2011).

to return, is that which presupposes the Same and the Similar; that which pretends to correct divergence, to recenter the circles or order the chaos, and to provide a model or make a copy (Deleuze 1967: 265).

So, to put it in simplest possible terms, “to reverse Platonism” is to reverse the relation between identity and difference which defines the world of representation. While in the world of representation, difference is to be conceived as subordinated to identity, in the world of simulacra, constituted as it is by the reversal of Platonism, identity is to be thought of as a product of difference which is affirmed as a primary power. If it is true that Deleuze’s entire philosophical enterprise is best read as a sustained attempt to reverse Platonism thus defined, there is little doubt that Deleuze’s masterpiece *Difference and Repetition* (1968) represents the most compelling chapter of this formidable venture. For it is in this book precisely that Deleuze undertakes his most systematic attempt to explicitly think difference and repetition as released from “the requirements of representation”; that is, to think “difference in itself” (or the simulacrum), i.e., difference not subordinated to identity; and “repetition for itself” (the eternal return of the Different), i.e., repetition not reduced to generality (or the eternal return of the Same). A complete account of Deleuze’s philosophical system as it is presented in *Difference and Repetition* is beyond the purview of this article, and our engagement with it will be restricted to those parts of the book where Deleuze develops further his account and critique of representation.

### 3. Aristotle and the Requirements of Representation

As we have previously learned, “the world of representation”, according to Deleuze, is founded by Platonism. But this should not be taken to imply that the world of representation is already fully established with Plato nor that it is simply to be identified with Platonism. In fact, Deleuze argues that it is only with Aristotle that the world of representation is fully established and difference completely subordinated to identity (Deleuze 1994: 127). For Aristotle, Plato’s method of division is a bad and illicit syllogism for it lacks the middle term, the mediation or the reason according to which it could decide the selection between false and true claimants (Deleuze 1994: 59). In order to establish a genuine philosophical method, Aristotle supplants Plato’s theory of Ideas with his theory of the categories and it is with this gesture that, according to Deleuze, the world of representation is fully constituted (Deleuze 1994: 127).

According to Aristotle, everything there is (Being) can be classified or divided into one of the ten categories: substance, quantity, quality, relation, place, time, situation, condition, action, passion. Aristotle conceives these ten categories as the highest genera (*genos*: kind or family) which can in turn be divided into species (*eidōs*), which can then be further divided into subspecies and so on until we reach the level of the lowest species (*infima species*) and finally individual substances. A genus is divided into species by the *differentia* (*diaphora*), which are also called “specific differences” because they are defined by Aristotle as the difference that “makes a species” (*eidopoios diaphora*).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This account of Aristotle is indebted to Smith (2017).



Understanding why Aristotle's theory of categories in general and his conception of difference in particular are problematic for Deleuze should not be difficult. First and foremost, Aristotle clearly conceives difference not in itself but in relation to the identity of the concept. Generic, specific and individual differences, for Aristotle, are to be conceived in relation to the identity of the concepts of Being, genus, and species respectively. In order for two things to differ they first have to have something in common: they either have to belong to the same genus, or to the same species, or be in an analogical relation to Being (Deleuze 1994: 30).

However, while Aristotle certainly applies the same general conception of difference across all the different levels of analysis, not all of the resulting particular conceptions of difference (generic, specific and individual) enjoy the same status in his system. In fact, as Deleuze highlights, for Aristotle "there is a difference which is at once the greatest and the most perfect, *megiste* and *teleios*" (Deleuze 1994: 30). In Deleuze's reading, only contrariety in the genus (the opposition of predicates) or specific difference is, for Aristotle, deserving of the title of "the perfect and maximal difference" (Deleuze 1994: 30). However, as Deleuze notes, specific difference can be said to be "the greatest" only in relative terms. For, speaking in absolute terms, contradiction is greater than contrariety and generic difference greater than the specific one. And indeed, Deleuze argues, it is only in relation to the supposed identity of a concept that the specific difference can be called the greatest (Deleuze 1994: 31). Crucially, Deleuze concludes, "specific difference, therefore, in no way represents a universal concept (that is to say, an Idea) encompassing all the singularities and turnings of difference, but rather refers to a particular moment in which difference is merely reconciled with the concept in general" (Deleuze 1994: 31-32). It is precisely at this "Greek propitious moment" (Deleuze 1994: 29), at which the determination of the concept of difference is confused with the inscription of difference in the identity of an undetermined concept that the world of representation is fully constituted. All the other aspects of this world follow from this disastrous confusion. In order to understand better what these other aspects are we have to get back to the notion of generic difference.

As we have seen earlier, specific difference can be said to be the greatest and the most perfect difference only on condition of the identity of an undetermined concept. But compared to the generic difference or the difference between the categories as ultimate determinable concepts it is actually rather small, possibly even "insignificant" (Deleuze 1994: 32). For, as Deleuze argues, the categories are, strictly speaking, not "subject to the condition that they share an identical concept or a common genus" (Deleuze 1994: 32). Being is the only term to which the categories are subordinated. And Being, as Aristotle famously proclaims, cannot be a genus.<sup>9</sup> The argument goes as follows: genus cannot be predicated of its differentia. And insofar as differences *are* (or have being), Being cannot be a genus. From this Deleuze concludes that for Aristotle generic difference is of *another* nature than the specific

9 See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, III, 3, 998b22-7, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, 723: "It is not possible that either unity or being should be a single genus of things; for the differentiae of any genus must each of them both have being and be one, but it is not possible for the genus taken apart from its species (any more than for the species of the genus) to be predicated of its proper differentiae; so that if unity or being is a genus, no differentia will either have being or be one."

difference (Deleuze 1994: 32).<sup>10</sup> In short, while species or concepts in general are univocal, that is, they are said in a single and same sense of everything of which they are said, Being is equivocal, that is, it is said in many different senses. Categories are nothing but these different senses in which Being can be said (Deleuze 1994: 32-33). However, while Deleuze does proclaim generic difference to be of another nature than the specific one, this should not be taken to imply that he considers the equivocality of Being to fall completely outside of Aristotle's conception of difference. To say that Being is equivocal is not to say that all these different senses (categories) in which it is said have nothing in common. There is still a respect in which Being can be said to be an identical and common concept in relation to the categories, but not in the same manner in which the categories/genera themselves can be said to be identical and common in relation to their species. In other words, there is a "common sense" to all the different ways in which Being can be said (categories). But this common sense is not collective, that is, it does not have a content in itself which could be applied to all of its subsumed terms in the same manner. It is "distributed" and "hierarchical" instead, that is, it has content only in proportion to the categories of which it is predicated. This is why Deleuze argues that Aristotle's equivocality of Being is to be understood in terms of "analogy" (Deleuze 1994: 33).

Furthermore, according to Deleuze, "judgement" plays a crucial role in Aristotle's equivocal conception of Being (Deleuze 1994: 33). To make a judgement is to predicate a concept of a subject. To do so is first and foremost to select and apply the appropriate concepts to the corresponding subjects. Or in Deleuze's terms, it is to "distribute" Being or everything there is by partitioning the concepts to the appropriate subjects. This in turn implies a "hierarchization", which corresponds to the second function of a judgment: for to distribute Being is to evaluate each subject and apportion it to its rightful place in the "great chain of being". The faculty of judgement known as common sense allows us to apply concepts to the appropriate subjects, which in turns allows the faculty of good sense to evaluate each particular subject (Deleuze 1994: 33).

According to Deleuze, every philosophy of categories from Aristotle all the way through Kant (and Hegel) takes judgement for its model (Deleuze 1994: 33). The problem with this gesture, for Deleuze, is that "the analogy of judgement allows the identity of a concept to subsist" (Deleuze 1994: 33). For, as Deleuze further argues, "analogy is itself the analogue of identity within judgement. Analogy is the essence of judgement, but the analogy within judgement is the analogy of the identity of concepts" (Deleuze 1994: 33). Finally, Deleuze concludes, this is why we cannot expect

that generic or categorial difference, any more than specific difference, will deliver us a proper concept of difference. Whereas specific difference is content to inscribe difference in the identity of the indeterminate concept in general, generic (distributive and hierarchical) difference is content in turn to inscribe difference in the quasi-identity of the most general determinable concepts; that is, in the analogy within *judgement* itself. (Deleuze 1994: 33)

What remains to be seen is the status of the *infima species* (or the smallest species) in Aristotle's system and their relation to the individuals subsumed under them.

<sup>10</sup> For an illuminating discussion of this particular aspect of Deleuze's reading of Aristotle see Daniela Voss (2014: 40).



Unsurprisingly, Deleuze once again notes how the logic of “the Small” reflects the logic of “the Large”: while the categories or “the large units (...) are determined according to relations of analogy, (...) the little genera or species, are determined by a direct perception of *resemblances*” (Deleuze 1994: 34). In other words, while the categories are determined by the relations of analogy between them with regards to Being, the smallest species are determined by the perceptual resemblances between the various individuals subsumed under them. Clearly, once again difference is subordinated to identity: individual differences are to be conceived in terms of the perceived similarity between the individual substances which belong to the same species.

Taken together these different aspects of Aristotle’s theory of the categories form what Deleuze terms “the requirements of representation”: “the identity of the concept, the opposition of predicates, the analogy of judgement and the resemblance of perception” (Deleuze 1994: 34). It is by forging these “four heads or four shackles of mediation” (Deleuze 1994: 29) that Aristotle has definitively enchained difference in itself and fully established the world of representation.

#### 4. *Transcendental Empiricism from Bergson to Deleuze*

As we have stated above, *Difference and Repetition* as a whole represents Deleuze’s most sustained attempt to release difference from these shackles of mediation and escape the world of representation. At various places in the book Deleuze refers to his philosophical project by the terms “transcendental” or “superior empiricism”. One passage in particular stands out in this regard:

Empiricism truly becomes transcendental, and aesthetics an apodictic discipline, only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being *of* the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity. (...) The intense world of differences, in which we find the reason behind qualities and the being of the sensible, is precisely the object of a superior empiricism. (Deleuze 1994: 56-57)

This passage is best read in conjunction with a later one in which Deleuze clearly albeit implicitly refers to the same ideas:

We have contrasted representation with a different kind of formation. The elementary concepts of representation are the categories defined as the conditions of possible experience. These, however, are too general or too large for the real. The net is so loose that the largest fish pass through. (...) Everything changes once we determine the conditions of real experience, which are not larger than the conditioned and which differ in kind from the categories. (Deleuze 1994: 68, tm)

The importance of these two passages for understanding Deleuze’s philosophical project in general and his account of representation in particular can hardly be overestimated. However, if we are to understand the ideas expressed here in full, it will be necessary to go back to Deleuze’s earlier writings where Deleuze can be

seen making virtually the exact same claims but explicating them in more detail. Deleuze's various writings on Bergson are particularly relevant in this regard and we shall start our discussion by exploring a few relevant themes from *Bergsonism* (1966), Deleuze's most systematic and complete account of Bergson's philosophy. In Deleuze's reading of Bergson, "experience itself offers us nothing but composites" (Deleuze 1991: 22); or to put the same point in other, slightly different, yet very revealing terms, "things are mixed in reality", and "this mixture is our experience itself, our *representation*" (Deleuze 1991: 26, my emphasis). A composite, an impure mixture or a representation, for Bergson, is a "fundamental illusion" (Deleuze 1991: 20) which can only be dispelled by dividing it "according to its natural articulations, that is, into elements which differ in kind" (Deleuze 1991: 22). Only tendencies or pure presences can be said to differ in kind, and therefore a composite or a representation "must be divided according to qualitative and qualified tendencies" (Deleuze 1991: 22) or "pure presences that do not allow themselves to be represented" (Deleuze 1991: 26). The task of performing such a division Deleuze attributes to Bergson's notion of "intuition as a method of division, Platonic in inspiration" (Deleuze 1991: 26). Deleuze here notes the similarities between Bergson's intuition as a method of division and Kant's transcendental method: "If the composite represents the fact, it must be divided into tendencies or into pure presences that only exist in principle (*en droit*). We go beyond experience, toward the conditions of experience (but these are not, in the Kantian manner, the conditions of all possible experience: They are the conditions of real experience)" (Deleuze 1991: 23). Not only does Deleuze present Bergson's conception of intuition as a continuation of Kant's transcendental method, but he also reveals in what respect the former supposedly represents an advance over the latter. A few pages later Deleuze reiterates this crucial point: "Intuition leads us to go beyond the state of experience toward the conditions of experience. But these conditions are neither general nor abstract. They are no broader than the conditioned: they are the conditions of real experience" (Deleuze 1991: 27). To further differentiate Bergson's intuition from Kant's transcendental method, Deleuze warns against construing the (Bergsonian) beyond-experience in terms of (Kantian) concepts:

This going beyond does not consist in going beyond experience toward concepts. For concepts only define, in the Kantian manner, the conditions of all possible experience in general. Here, on the other hand, it is a case of real experience in all its peculiarities. And if we must (...) go beyond it, this is only in order to find the articulations on which these peculiarities depend. So that the conditions of experience are less determined in concepts than in pure percepts. And, while these percepts themselves are united in a concept, it is a concept modelled on the thing itself, which only suits that thing, and which, in this sense, is no broader than what it must account for. (Deleuze 1991: 27)

Clearly, the problem with Kantian concepts, for Deleuze, is that they are general and therefore inadequate to capture the real experience which is supposedly singular. Insofar as concepts on Bergson's account are involved in the determination of the conditions of real experience, these concepts are supposed to be *singular*, that is, modelled on and suitable only to the thing itself, the thing which they are supposed to be the condition of.

To this capacity of intuition to go beyond real experience towards its concrete conditions Deleuze gives the name of "superior empiricism" (Deleuze 1991: 30).

What this brief discussion reveals is that Deleuze's project in *Difference and Repetition* is essentially a continuation of Bergson's philosophical project. Even a cursory glance at the two passages from *Difference and Repetition* quoted before confirms that Deleuze characterizes his own project of transcendental empiricism in the very same terms to those in which he construes Bergson's project of superior empiricism. Just like Bergson before him, Deleuze too considers representation to be "a site of transcendental illusion" (Deleuze 1994: 265), a fundamental or inevitable illusion which has to be dispelled. And the only way to accomplish this is by going *beyond* experience, as it is given to us in representation, towards the conditions of experience. By construing his project in transcendental terms as the quest for the conditions of experience, Deleuze affirms his Kantian lineage.<sup>11</sup> However, to the extent that Kant conceives the transcendental in terms of the inquiry into the conditions of experience in general or possible experience, he remains, according to Deleuze, beholden to the domain of representation. In fact, Kantian categories (as the conditions of pure understanding), for Deleuze, are the "elementary concepts of representation", and as such are "too general or too large for the real. The net is so loose that the largest fish pass through" (Deleuze 1994: 68). Therefore, Deleuze argues, if transcendental philosophy is to think the *real* in its singularity, it has to become an inquiry into "the conditions of real experience, which are not larger than the conditioned and which differ in kind from the categories" (Deleuze 1994: 68). Deleuze gives the name of "transcendental empiricism" to such a philosophical inquiry into the conditions of real experience: "Empiricism truly becomes transcendental (...) only when we apprehend directly in the sensible that which can only be sensed, the very being *of* the sensible: difference, potential difference and difference in intensity as the reason behind qualitative diversity" (Deleuze 1994: 56-57). Here it is important to emphasize that Deleuze construes his transcendental empiricism in terms of a *direct apprehension* of the intense world of differences as the conditions of real experience. In positing the possibility of such a direct apprehension of the conditions of experience Deleuze is clearly following Bergson once again, namely Bergson's affirmation of intuitive knowledge. In fact, it could be argued that Deleuze's doctrine of "the transcendent exercise of the faculties" as it is elaborated in the central chapter of *Difference and Repetition* entitled "The Image of Thought" is nothing other than a reformulation of Bergson's notion of "intuition as method of philosophy" (see Jelača 2014).

To fully grasp the implications of this, it is necessary to return to Deleuze's discussion of Bergson's notion of intuition in *Bergsonism*. According to Deleuze, the fundamental dualism for Bergson, the dualism which all his other numerous dualisms presuppose, is the one between *duration* and *space*. This dualism is based in Bergson's appropriation and transformation of Bernhard Riemann's distinction between two types of multiplicities, *discrete* and *continuous* multiplicities. In

11 Deleuze's relation to Kant's critical legacy is notoriously difficult to disentangle and the account of it presented here is merely a sketch. For some of the most systematic and comprehensive scholarship in this regard (some of which would challenge the present reading) see Kerslake (2009), Sommers-Hall (2012), Voss (2014) and Lundy (2015).

Riemann's usage, *discrete* multiplicities are those that "contain the principle of their own metrics (the measure of one of their parts being given by the number of elements they contain)", while *continuous* are the ones that find "a metrical principle in something else, even if only in phenomena unfolding in them or in the forces acting in them" (Deleuze 1991: 39). For Riemann, a mathematician and a physicist, these two types of multiplicities designate two distinct aspects of *space*. Bergson's crucial advance over Riemann consists in the insight that the distinction between discrete and continuous multiplicities is to be applied to space *and* duration, with space being conceived in terms of discrete multiplicities and duration in terms of continuous ones. To be more precise, for Bergson, space is "a multiplicity of exteriority, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of order, of quantitative differentiation, of difference in degree; it is a numerical multiplicity, *discontinuous* and *actual*"; and duration is, in turn, "an internal multiplicity of succession, of fusion, of organization, of heterogeneity, of qualitative discrimination, or of difference in kind; it is a *virtual* and *continuous* multiplicity that cannot be reduced to numbers" (Deleuze 1991: 38). As we have learned above, experience, according to Bergson, always presents us with a composite which is to be divided according to its natural articulations into tendencies which differ in kind. Let us now supplement this by noting that this composite is always composed of space and duration. It might seem to follow that space and duration represent the two tendencies which differ in kind into which the composite is to be divided. But to see that such a conclusion would be overly hasty it will be enough to recall that for Bergson space is a homogenous and numerical multiplicity or a multiplicity of differences in *degree* while duration is a heterogeneous and continuous multiplicity or a multiplicity of differences in *kind*. In other words, only duration presents us with differences in kind. If the task of intuition as method is to divide the composite which is given to us in experience into articulations which differ in kind, and if only duration presents us with differences in kind, then it follows that if intuition is to achieve its task it has to think in terms of duration. And this is precisely the "fundamental meaning" of intuition: "intuition presupposes duration, it consists in thinking in terms of duration" (Deleuze 1991: 31).

The evolution of Bergson's conception of space parallels the evolution of his conception of duration and Deleuze shows how these two trajectories of Bergson's thought merge together:

Duration seemed to him to be less and less reducible to a psychological experience and became instead the variable essence of things, providing the theme of a complex ontology. But, simultaneously, space seemed to him to be less and less reducible to a fiction separating us from this psychological reality, rather, it was itself grounded in being. (...) The absolute, said Bergson, has two sides (aspects): spirit imbued with metaphysics and matter known by science. But the point is that science is not a relative knowledge, a symbolic discipline that commends itself only by its successes or its effectiveness; science is part of ontology, it is one of ontology's two halves. The Absolute is difference, but difference has two facets, differences in degree and differences in kind. It can, therefore, be seen that when we grasp simple differences in degree between things, when science itself invites us to see the world in this way, we are again in an absolute (...). It

is, however, an illusion. (...) If the illusion can be repressed it is because of (...) duration, which gives us differences in kind *corresponding in the final instance* to differences of proportion as they appear in space, and already in matter and extension. (Deleuze 1991: 35)

From being conceived as two aspects of psychological experience, space and duration became for Bergson two aspects of being itself or of the Absolute. Furthermore, insofar as Bergson conceives space in terms of differences in degree, and duration in terms of differences in kind, Deleuze identifies being or the Absolute with difference itself. By the same token, insofar as science invites us to think the world in terms of differences in degree, while metaphysics inquires about differences in kind, these two disciplines constitute two halves of ontology as the science of being or the Absolute. And while space or differences in degree do indeed constitute one aspect of being, and science one of the two halves of ontology, it would be an illusion to think that science on its own can provide access to being itself or the Absolute. This illusion can be repressed and access to being secured only by metaphysics, which by way of intuition as its method reveals to us the articulations of the real or true differences in kind. Similarly, in the afterword to the English translation of *Bergsonism* Deleuze claims: "For Bergson, duration becomes the metaphysical correlate of modern science. (...) For Bergson, science is never 'reductionist' but, on the contrary, demands a metaphysics - without which it would remain abstract, deprived of meaning or intuition" (Deleuze 1991: 116).

Deleuze, as we have seen, construes Bergson's notion of intuition as method as a re-articulation of Kant's transcendental method. It will therefore be instructive to briefly contrast Bergson's project as we have sketched it here to basic tenets of Kant's philosophy. Kant famously proclaims the impossibility of us having intellectual intuition and consequently attaining knowledge of things in themselves. Insofar as we do not possess intellectual but only sensible intuition, we cannot know things as they are in themselves (noumena) but only as they appear to us (phenomena) in experience. Therefore, we must not inquire about the essences of things but ask instead about the conditions under which they are given to us in experience. These conditions, for Kant, are constituted by space and time as pure forms of intuition, and categories as pure concepts of the understanding. Bergson, as we have seen, goes against all of these fundamental Kantian postulates. First and foremost, his intuition as method is nothing but a reaffirmation of intellectual intuition. Just as intellectual intuition would grant us immediate knowledge of the "in-itself", so too Bergson's intuition as method allows us to grasp the Absolute. Or to be more precise, insofar as the Absolute, according to Bergson, has two aspects, duration or differences in kind and space or differences in degree, intuition, which consists in thinking in terms of duration, allows us to immediately apprehend that aspect of the Absolute which pertains to duration. And seeing that, for Bergson, duration constitutes "the variable essence of things", it follows that intuition allows us to grasp nothing less than the essences (or singular conditions) of things themselves. Furthermore, while for Kant, space and time constitute the conditions of *our experience* of things, Bergson in turn conceives space and duration (time) as two aspects of the Absolute or Being itself. In other words, while Kant construes his transcendental method in epistemological

terms, Bergson's intuition as method is to be conceived in ontological terms instead. Clearly, Bergson's intuition as method could hardly be any more distant from Kant's transcendental method. While, for Kant, the transcendental method constituted part and parcel of his critique of dogmatic metaphysics, Bergson conceived intuition instead precisely as the method of his speculative metaphysics. Furthermore, while for Kant the goal of transcendental philosophy was to show how knowledge of the world which the science provides us is possible, Bergson, on the other hand, considered modern science to be abstract and incomplete if it is not complemented with metaphysics based on intuition. And this brings us to what may very well be the only real point of convergence between Kant and Bergson: both of them would certainly agree that science needs philosophy. But with regards to their respective conceptions of the nature of this relation, once again, these two could not be further apart.

Now it is important to emphasize that Deleuze closely follows Bergson not only with regard to his critique of representation and the affirmation of intuitive knowledge, as we have shown before, but also with regards to Bergson's account of the relation between science and metaphysics. Deleuze explicitly confirms this when he states: "I feel I am a pure metaphysician. (...) I feel that I am Bergsonian – when Bergson says that modern science has not found its metaphysics, the metaphysics it needs. It is that metaphysics that interests me" (Deleuze 1981: 41-42). One more place in Deleuze's early writings on Bergson is of singular import in this context for it ties together all these various strands of thought that Deleuze inherits from Bergson. The passage in question is to be found in the text "Bergson, 1859 – 1941" (1956) and due to its significance is worth citing in full:

The first characteristic of intuition is that in it and through it something is presented, is given in person, instead of being inferred from something else and concluded. Here, already, the general orientation of philosophy comes into question, for it is not enough to say that philosophy is at the origin of the sciences and that it was their mother; rather, now that they are grown up and well established, we must ask why there is still philosophy, in what respect science is not sufficient. Philosophy has only ever responded to such a question in two ways, doubtless because there are only two possible responses. One says that science gives us a knowledge of things, that it is therefore in a certain relation with them, and philosophy can renounce its rivalry with science, can leave things to science and present itself solely in a critical manner, as a reflection on this knowledge of things. On the contrary view, philosophy seeks to establish, or rather restore, *an other* relationship to things, and therefore *an other* knowledge, a knowledge and a relationship that precisely science hides from us, of which it deprives us, because it allows us only to conclude and to infer without ever presenting, giving to us the thing in itself. It is this second path that Bergson takes by repudiating critical philosophies when he shows us in science, in technical activity, intelligence, everyday language, social life, practical need and, most importantly, in space—the many forms and relations that separate us from things and from their interiority. (Deleuze 1956: 23)

Arguably, this passage constitutes the single most straightforward and explicit metaphilosophical statement of Deleuze's entire *oeuvre* for it reveals in unequivocal



terms the motivation behind his philosophical venture as a whole. It is thereby revealed that what is truly at stake in Deleuze's critique of representation and the affirmation of intuition and speculative metaphysics is nothing other than the justification of philosophy itself. According to Deleuze, there are only two possible ways to justify philosophy's relevance in the wake of the advent of the modern sciences. The first one relinquishes to the sciences the task of arriving at the knowledge of things, and restricts philosophy to a critical or reflective discourse on this knowledge. Kant was the one to set philosophy on this critical path. The other way is to affirm of philosophy itself the capacity to arrive at knowledge of things independently of the sciences. However, in order to justify this second path it is necessary to first show that scientific knowledge is in some way lacking, and that there is a need for philosophy to supplement it. This is why Deleuze, following Bergson, argues against *representation*, which, in Deleuze's usage, as the above quote reveals, is a complex notion encapsulating not only the discourse of the sciences and critical philosophy but also "technical activity, intelligence, everyday language, social life, practical need and (...) space". Representation thus conceived is, as we have previously seen, a fundamental illusion for the world that it reveals to us in experience is not all there is. There is *an other* aspect to this world and only a philosophy capable of going beyond representation can secure the knowledge of this other domain. Deleuze is adamant about not construing this other aspect of the world in *transcendent* terms and, in affirming the thesis of the univocity of Being, he upholds an *immanent* ontology instead – there is no other world, this world is all there is. However, to the extent that Deleuze construes his philosophical project in terms of a going *beyond* experience as it is given to us in representation, which, among other things, is constituted by the sciences, his philosophy quite literally is a *metaphysics*. And just like all the other great metaphysical philosophers before him, from Plato to Bergson, Deleuze too construes the knowledge of this other domain in terms of an intuitive or immediate knowledge. Finally, by construing this other domain that intuitive knowledge reveals in terms of *temporal difference*, Deleuze's ontology truly is a reversed Platonism. As is well known, Plato presents a dualistic two world ontology: beyond the world of sensible appearances (images, simulacra, difference) existing *in* time, there is an other world of intelligible essences (Forms, Ideas, the Same) *outside* of time. Deleuze retains most of the distinctions which constitute Plato's transcendent ontology but reformulates them in immanent terms. First, Deleuze follows Kant in substituting Plato's disjunctive distinction between appearances and essences with the conjunctive distinction between apparitions and conditions of appearing (see Deleuze 1978). In this regard, Deleuze is a successor to Kant's transcendental turn. However, while Kant conceives the transcendental in epistemological terms, i.e. as a quest for the conditions of the possibility of knowledge or experience in general, Deleuze, following Bergson, construes it in ontological terms instead, i.e. as the search for the conditions of real experience. What the engagement with Deleuze's writings on Bergson reveals is that Deleuze's often used formulation "the conditions of real experience" is to be understood as an ontological quest into the conditions of the *actualization of things themselves* or *the world itself*. Crucially, Deleuze also follows Bergson in postulating time or temporal difference as constituting such conditions of actualization. In a nutshell, whereas Plato believed in another world outside of time, for Deleuze, there is nothing beyond this world *but* time.

## 5. Conclusion

Let us conclude this discussion of Deleuze's critique of representation and affirmation of speculative metaphysics by placing it in the context of recent developments in contemporary continental philosophy and humanities in general. The appearance of *speculative realism* has arguably been one of the most significant events in contemporary continental philosophy at the beginning of the twenty first century. Initially, "speculative realism" was meant merely as the name for a one day workshop held at Goldsmiths College, University of London in 2007, which gathered together four previously relatively unknown philosophers: Ray Brassier, Iain H. Grant, Graham Harman and Quentin Meillassoux. Many things have been written about speculative realism to this day; however, the programme which announced the workshop still remains the best testament to what speculative realism was meant to be in the first place and due to its importance it is worth citing in full:

Contemporary "continental" philosophy often prides itself on having overcome the age-old metaphysical battles between realism and idealism. Subject-object dualism, whose repudiation has turned into a conditioned reflex of contemporary theory, has supposedly been destroyed by the critique of representation and supplanted by various ways of thinking the fundamental correlation between thought and world.

But perhaps this anti-representational (or "correlationist") consensus—which exceeds philosophy proper and thrives in many domains of the humanities and the social sciences—hides a deeper and more insidious idealism. Is realism really so "naïve"? And is the widespread dismissal of representation and objectivity the radical, critical stance it so often claims to be?

This workshop will bring together four philosophers whose work, although shaped by different concerns, questions some of the basic tenets of a "continental" orthodoxy while eschewing the reactionary prejudices of common-sense. Speculative realism is not a doctrine but the umbrella term for a variety of research programmes committed to upholding the autonomy of reality, whether in the name of transcendental physicalism, object-oriented philosophy, or abstract materialism, against the deprivations of anthropocentrism. (Brassier and Toscano 2007: 306)

From a compromise umbrella term under which four divergent philosophical trajectories could be subsumed during a one day workshop, "speculative realism" soon came to be used as the name of a new *movement* in contemporary continental philosophy. But as it was obvious from the programme that announced the Goldsmiths event, speculative realism was never meant to be a unified philosophical movement, and given major divergences between its four main participants which became even more apparent (and insurmountable in some cases) with time, it is now clear that it never could have turned into one in the first place. However, while it might not be accurate to use "speculative realism" as the name of a unified philosophical movement, this is not to say that the tendency itself which it named was not real. In fact, it is my contention that "speculative realism" is to be understood precisely as the *first* name given to the tendency away from idealism and towards realism in contemporary continental philosophy which became quite apparent at

the beginning of the twenty first century. Many other names followed soon after, "the ontological turn" and "the speculative turn" being the most prominent ones. Each of these different names singles out certain aspects of this tendency as a whole. What initially brought together not only the four participants of the Goldsmiths event but also everybody else that enthusiastically accepted the advent of speculative realism was their shared repudiation of what Quentin Meillassoux famously termed "correlationism". Meillassoux defines this notion in his seminal book *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency* (2008):

The central notion of modern philosophy since Kant seems to be that of *correlation*. By 'correlation' we mean the idea according to which we only ever have access to the correlation between thinking and being, and never to either term considered apart from the other. We will henceforth call *correlationism* any current of thought which maintains the unsurpassable character of the correlation so defined. (Meillassoux 2008: 5)

Given that Kant was taken to be the founder of correlationism thus defined, many believed that the rejection of correlationism implies a wholesale rejection of Kant's critical project and its entire legacy. This was in turn then taken as a license for unbridled metaphysical speculation freed from the critical constraints Kant bestowed upon us. The argument could be reconstructed as follows: Kant was the one who proclaimed the impossibility of knowledge of things-in-themselves and critically delimited our knowledge to phenomena or things as they appear to us. In light of this, he posited as the task of philosophy the transcendental inquiry into the conditions under which things appear to us or the conditions of knowledge/experience. Speculative realism breaks with Kant's injunction against the possibility of knowledge of things-in-themselves. Therefore, to the extent that it affirms the possibility of such a knowledge it abolishes us of the obligation to critically inquire into the conditions of knowledge and licenses free speculation on the structure of reality. In light of such reasoning the term "speculative turn" seems most appropriate to refer to the tendency that we are describing here. The same point could be put in terms of "the ontological turn" that we have also mentioned before: given that Kant privileged epistemology at the expense of ontology, a repudiation of Kant implies an abandonment of epistemological concerns and a turn towards ontology.

As it was suggested in the introduction, Deleuze's critique of representation can be construed as a particularly sophisticated instance of the "anti-representational consensus" characteristic of the humanities in general and post-structuralism in particular of the second half of the twentieth century. However, while it is certainly true that in this regard Deleuze is indeed a prime representative of the philosophy of his time, there is another respect in which Deleuze is to be considered an important predecessor of the speculative/ontological turn described above. In fact, it is safe to say that Deleuze (along with Alain Badiou), through the Anglophone reception of his philosophy beginning already in the 1990s, constituted the major impetus towards the said speculative/ontological turn. Utterly disillusioned with the state of continental philosophy at the end of the twentieth century and in particular with its post-structuralist textualist-idealist secession of thought from the real, the younger generation of philosophers found precisely in Deleuze their "line of flight"

from such a situation. Instead of interminable post-structuralist reflections on the conditions of *(im)possibility* of knowledge of the real, Deleuze offered this younger generation of philosophers an incredibly rich and audacious ontological account of the structure of reality, precisely of the kind that every other philosopher of his time claimed to be impossible. Soon enough Deleuze became by far the most significant French philosopher in Anglophone continental philosophy and his influence has not diminished significantly to this day. This brings me to the main point of my discussion.

There is little doubt that Deleuze's influence was at first extremely beneficial for continental philosophy for it allowed it to finally reaffirm again its long forsaken ontological pretensions. However, it could be argued that Deleuze's influence has also had some quite pernicious side effects for these newly awakened realist ambitions of contemporary thought. As we have seen, Deleuze was quite unequivocal about his intentions to reaffirm the rights of philosophy to metaphysical speculation freed from any critical constraints. Therefore, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that the wholesale repudiation of Kant's legacy outlined above was at least in part due to Deleuze's influence. Now it is my contention that by following Deleuze in this regard contemporary continental philosophy is in danger of falling into a trap possibly even more insidious than the post-structuralist one it hoped to extricate itself from. If post-structuralism could be construed as the apex of Kant's injunction against the possibility of knowledge of things-in-themselves, then various contemporary uncritical reaffirmations of metaphysical speculation mark the other, possibly even much more dangerous extreme. As was suggested above, the initial appeal of speculative realism was in large part due to its promise of doing away with the scepticism and relativism of post-modernism. However, the recent flourishing of various speculative metaphysical programs in contemporary continental philosophy reads more like a perverse realization of the proverbial postmodernist "anything goes" attitude than a delivery to this initial promise.<sup>12</sup>

The turn towards the work of the analytic philosopher Wilfrid Sellars (1912-1989), initiated by Ray Brassier and followed by many others, most notably Peter Wolfendale, Reza Negarestani, Daniel Sacilloto and Fabio Gironi, can in part be read precisely as a reaction to this unfortunate conjuncture. What Sellars provides in this context is the much needed critical sobriety necessary to curb the speculative exuberances of contemporary continental metaphysics. Sellars' most important contribution in this regard lies in his call for a return to Kant. Although originally voiced almost fifty years ago in the context of analytic philosophy of his time, Sellars' famous pronouncement on the necessity of philosophy's "slow climb back to Kant" (1967: 29), rings even more true today in the context of contemporary continental philosophy. In fact, Sellars conceived of his own philosophical project to a large extent as a rewriting in contemporary terms of some of the most important lessons learned from Kant. Among these, surely the most relevant for the present context is Sellars' critique of the myth of the given which is nothing other than a contemporary reaffirmation of Kant's injunction against the possibility of us humans having

---

<sup>12</sup> The worst excesses of this kind have been documented in painstaking detail by Peter Wolfendale in his book *Object-Oriented Philosophy: The Noumenon's New Clothes* (2014).

intellectual intuition (see Sellars 1956). Human intuition can only be sensible and our understanding discursive or conceptual. It is only by combining the two that we arrive at the knowledge of the world. As soon as this critical insight is forgotten, the threat of idealism looms large. However, in contrast to Kant, for Sellars, the injunction against intellectual intuition does not preclude the possibility of us having knowledge of things-in-themselves. While Sellars certainly acknowledges “the gulf between appearances and things-in-themselves” as “a genuine one”, he nonetheless believes that this gulf can in principle be bridged by replacing “the static concept of Divine Truth with a Peircean conception of truth as the ‘ideal outcome of scientific inquiry’” (Sellars 1967: 50). In short, Sellars reinscribes Kant’s distinction between noumena and phenomena in terms of his distinction between “scientific” and “manifest images-of-man-in-the-world” (see Sellars 1962). Science and not philosophy can give us knowledge of the in-itself, albeit the in-itself is here to be understood in Peircean terms as the “ideal outcome of scientific inquiry”. Therefore, continental Sellarsians have found in Sellars not only the critical means necessary to counterbalance the speculative excesses of various contemporary metaphysical programs, but also the resources needed for the construction of a truly transcendental realism and/or naturalism.<sup>13</sup>

One last question remains. If science, according to Sellars, gives us knowledge of the in-itself, what role is there left for philosophy? In his programmatic essay “Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man” (1962) Sellars proclaims that the aim of philosophy is to understand “how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term” (Sellars 1962: 1), or to fuse into one stereoscopic vision two competing perspectives on the world, namely the scientific and the manifest images-of-man in the world (Sellars 1962: 4). Compound this with another of Sellars’ important metaphilosophical statements: “The ideal aim of philosophizing is to become *reflectively* at home in the full complexity of the multi-dimensional conceptual system in terms of which we suffer, think, and act” (Sellars 1971: I, 3). If we compare these pronouncements with Deleuze’s views regarding the relation between science and philosophy encountered above, it is clear that Sellars upholds the very position that Deleuze argues against. Sellars relegates to the sciences the task of arriving at the knowledge of reality and reserves for philosophy the apparently much more modest task of reflectively understanding how the emerging scientific image hangs together with the manifest image. Deleuze, on the other hand, considers scientific knowledge incapable of apprehending reality in full and therefore in need of being supplemented by a philosophy that reaffirms its metaphysical ambitions to attain (intuitive) knowledge of that which lies beyond the reach of science.

The alternative that Deleuze and Sellars exhibit here is as pertinent today in the context of the speculative/ontological turn in contemporary continental philosophy as it ever was. Any invocation of philosophical realism today faces a crucial question – what role is science to have in relation to philosophy’s reawakened realist ambitions? Deleuze’s and Sellars’ respective positions constitute two contrasting

13 Brassier’s text “Concepts and Objects” (2010) can be taken as programmatic in this regard. See also Wolfendale (2013).

ways of addressing this question. The first option is to take the same path as Deleuze and affirm the ability of philosophy to know the real independently of science. This in turn implies postulating, again with Deleuze, an other knowledge of things to the one that science provides. If scientific knowledge is representational then this other knowledge can only be immediate or intuitive and philosophy that asserts such intuitive knowledge a speculative metaphysics. For those, on the other hand, who remain committed to Kant's injunction against the possibility of intellectual intuition and by extension Sellars' critique of the myth of the given this is clearly not the path to take. The only other option is to go down the same road as Sellars and try to develop a philosophical realism in *alliance* with the sciences instead of in a supposed *rivalry* with them. Barring the postulation of some kind of intuitive knowledge, it is hard to see in what way philosophy alone could meaningfully lay claim to a knowledge of the real. If, following Kant, knowledge is construed in terms of representation as a result of the synthesis of sensible intuition and conceptual understanding, then knowledge of the real is out of bounds of *a priori* philosophical speculation and attainable only by empirical scientific inquiry. Where does that leave philosophy at? *Pace* Deleuze and all those who share his concerns in this regard, it must be emphasized that by delegating to the sciences the task of arriving at the knowledge of the real philosophy has by no means made itself either a servant to the sciences (as it is too often put), nor redundant. In fact, quite the opposite is true – it is only by acknowledging its constitutive limitations and dividing the cognitive labour with the empirical sciences that philosophy can truly move forward and retain its relevance today. In this division of labour, what philosophy can lay claim to is the conceptual realm. Now depending on the manner in which this conceptual realm is construed, the specific metaphilosophical position one upholds will vary. Sellars conceives “concepts” in normative terms as rules of inference. By construing the conceptual realm in normative terms Sellars has secured for philosophy an important place in relation to the sciences: while the sciences explore and describe the structure of reality, only philosophy has the resources to address and investigate the normative-conceptual realm or the “logical space of reasons” (Sellars 1956: 169) in which every knowledge (and by extension, every empirical-scientific) claim is placed. The redeployment of Sellars' metaphilosophical framework in the context of contemporary continental invocations of realism by Ray Brassier and others has been met with two contrasting reactions. On the one hand, Graham Harman has made the proverbial accusation of *scientism* against this line of thought (see Harman in Iliadis (2013)). However, even the mere sketch of Sellars' metaphilosophical perspective presented above should be enough to make it obvious that such an accusation is misguided at best and intentionally deceiving at worst. On the other hand, Scott Bakker has made the exact opposite claim to the effect that the contemporary continental invocation of Sellarsian normativism is nothing but a desperate attempt to rescue philosophy from the unstoppable advances of the sciences by circumscribing a conceptual domain over which only philosophy presides (see Bakker 2015). According to Bakker, all similar historical attempts to determine *a priori* what sciences can and cannot know have had a poor track record, and there is no reason to believe it will be different this time around. Nothing can be proclaimed as in principle beyond the reach of



science, and neither should the conceptual-normative realm be construed as such. Continental Sellarsianism traces its path between these two extremes of uncritical metaphysical speculation independent from scientific knowledge on the one hand, and an unabashed scientism on the other; in order to develop a *transcendental realism* which would inquire into the structure of the real *together* with the sciences but *irreducible* to them. In its attempt to rehabilitate representation in the face of the “anti-representational consensus” of the humanities and its ambition to renegotiate the notoriously contentious relationship continental philosophy has had with the sciences, this project constitutes arguably the most compelling and sustained effort to definitively break with continental orthodoxy and deliver on the promise of the initial speculative realism workshop.

### References

- Aristotle (2001). *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. New York: The Modern Library.
- Bakker, S. R. (2015). “Reason, Bondage, Discipline”. <available from <https://rsbakker.wordpress.com/2015/04/12/reason-bondage-discipline>> (21/3/2018).
- Brassier, R.; Toscano, A. (2007). “Speculative Realism”. In Robin Mackay, *Collapse*, Vol 3, (p. 306). Falmouth: Urbanomic.
- Brassier, R. (2011). “Concepts and Objects”. In Levi Bryant, Nick Srnicek and Graham Harman (ed.), *The Speculative Turn: Continental Materialism and Realism*, (pp. 47-65). Melbourne: Re.press.
- Colebrook, C. (2010). “The Linguistic Turn in Continental Philosophy”. In Alan D. Schrift (ed.), *The History of Continental Philosophy*, Vol. 6, (pp. 279-309). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Custer, O.; Deutscher, P.; Haddad, S. (eds.) (2016). *Foucault/Derrida Fifty Years Later*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1956). “Bergson, 1859–1941”. In David Lapoujade (ed.), *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*, (pp. 22-31). New York: Semiotext(e).
- Deleuze, G. (1967). “Plato and the Simulacrum”. In Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, (pp. 253-266). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1978). “Synthesis and Time”. <available from <https://www.webdeleuze.com/textes/66>> (15/1/2018).
- Deleuze, G. (1981). “Responses to a Series of Questions”. In Robin Mackay (ed.), *Collapse*, Vol 3, 2007, (pp. 39-43). Falmouth: Urbanomic.
- Deleuze, G. (1988). *Foucault*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1990). *The Logic of Sense*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1991). *Bergsonism*. New York: Zone Books.
- Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and Repetition*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G. (1995). *Negotiations*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G. (2004). *Desert Islands and Other Texts, 1953-1974*. New York: Semiotext(e).
- Dillet, B.; MacKenzie, I.; Porter, R. (eds.) (2013). *The Edinburgh Companion to Poststructuralism*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- D'Iorio, P. (2011). “The Eternal Return: Genesis and Interpretation”. *The Agonist: A Nietzsche Circle Journal*, IV, I, Spring (pp. 1-43), <available from [http://www.nietzschecircle.com/AGONIST/2011\\_03/Diorio\\_Chouraqui-FINAL\\_](http://www.nietzschecircle.com/AGONIST/2011_03/Diorio_Chouraqui-FINAL_)

- APRIL\_2011.pdf> (21/3/2018).
- Han, B. (2002). *Foucault's Critical Project*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Hughes, J. (2008). *Deleuze and the Genesis of Representation*. London: Continuum.
- Iliadis, A. (2013). "Interview with Graham Harman". <available from <http://figureground.org/interview-with-graham-harman-2>> (21/3/2018).
- Jelača, M. (2014). "Sellars Contra Deleuze on Intuitive Knowledge". *Speculations*, 5, (pp. 92-126).
- Kerslake, C. (2009). *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Lundy, C.; Voss, D. (eds.) (2015). *At the Edges of Thought: Deleuze and Post-Kantian Philosophy*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Meillassoux, Q. (2008). *After Finitude: An Essay on the Necessity of Contingency*. London: Continuum.
- Patton, P.; Protevi, J. (ed.) (2003). *Between Deleuze and Derrida*. London: Continuum.
- Rekret, P. (2017). *Derrida and Foucault: Philosophy, Politics and Polemics*. London and New York: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Rorty, R. (ed.) (1967). *The Linguistic Turn*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sellars, W. (1956). "Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind". In Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*. Atascadero: Ridgeview, (pp. 127-196).
- Sellars, W. (1962). "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man". In Wilfrid Sellars, *Science, Perception and Reality*. Atascadero: Ridgeview, (pp. 1-40).
- Sellars, W. (1967). *Science and Metaphysics*. Atascadero: Ridgeview.
- Sellars, W. (1971). "The Structure of Knowledge". <available from <http://www.ditext.com/sellars/sk.html>> (21/3/2018).
- Sellars, W. (1991). *Science, Perception and Reality*. Atascadero: Ridgeview.
- Sellars, W. (1992). *Science and Metaphysics: Variations on Kantian Themes*. Atascadero: Ridgeview.
- Smith, D. (2012). *Essays on Deleuze*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Smith, R. (2017). "Aristotle's Logic". In *Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. <available from <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-logic/#Cat>> (21/3/2018).
- Somers-Hall, H. (2012). *Hegel, Deleuze, and the Critique of Representation: Dialectics of Negation and Difference*. Albany NY: SUNY Press.
- Voss, D. (2014). *Conditions of Thought: Deleuze and Transcendental Ideas*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Wolfendale, P. (2013). "Essay on Transcendental Realism". <available from <http://deontologistics.files.wordpress.com/2010/05/essay-on-transcendental-realism.pdf>> (15/1/2018).
- Wolfendale, P. (2014). *Object-Oriented Philosophy: The Noumenon's New Clothes*. Falmouth: Urbanomic.

## DELEUZEOVA KRITIKA REPREZENTACIJE IZMEĐU POSTSTRUKTURALIZMA I SPEKULATIVNOG REALIZMA

### Sažetak

Misao Gillesa Deleuzea smještena je na razmeđu poststrukturalizma i spekulativnog/ontološkog obrata koji je početkom dvadeset prvog stoljeća obilježio humanistiku i kontinentalnu filozofiju. S jedne strane, Deleuze sa svojim poststrukturalističkim suvremenicima dijeli predanost Nietzscheovu projektu prevrata platonizma i kritike reprezentacije. S druge strane, dok se poststrukturalizam najvećim dijelom odvijao pod znakom Heideggerovih proglašavanja kraja filozofije i nadilaženju metafizike, za Deleuzea kritika reprezentacije predstavlja nužan uvjet reafirmacije prava filozofije na metafizičku spekulaciju. U ovom pogledu Deleuzea se može smatrati važnim prethodnikom spekulativnog/ontološkog obrata, stoga je bavljenje njegovom mišlju prilika za bolje razumijevanje trenutačnog stanja humanistike. Ovaj rad predstavlja Deleuzeovu kritiku reprezentacije u korist intuitivne spoznaje i spekulativne metafizike pomnim čitanjem nekoliko važnih mjesta Deleuzeovih ranih radova. U zaključku se ovo bavljenje Deleuzeovom mišlju smješta u kontekst recentnog obrata od poststrukturalizma k spekulativnom realizmu u humanistici i kontinentalnoj filozofiji.

Ključne riječi: poststrukturalizam, Gilles Deleuze, kritika reprezentacije, intuitivna spoznaja, metafizička spekulacija, spekulativni realizam, spekulativni/ontološki obrat