

'But the position 4 will soon be transformed into one of the most surprising philosophical positions of our time: Speculative Materialism, which tries to avoid the two extremes of absolute idealism and correlationism.' (Harman 2011a, 23)

1. Philosophically, as critical label, there are few good uses of an 'ism', whether idealism, anarchism, scepticism, rationalism, pragmatism, modernism, materialism or correlationism. They might have a pedagogical role to allow learners to grasp family resemblances, but this initial understanding must be undone as soon as possible. If an 'ism' takes root it strangles more subtle and adequate kinds of understanding; as we know from the confusions around Descartes, Spinoza and Leibniz when the label 'rationalism' precedes reading them.

2. As a descriptor, an 'ism' resembles nationality, in the moments when our nation is taken to define us. *You English are so hypocritical...* Individuality is smothered by blanket terms, every nuance lost, every divergence denied, new possibilities stifled.

3. Why do 'isms' take a hold on thought and language? Why do philosophers find themselves mimicking the crude moves of political and marketing bluster, where terms such as fascism and liberalism are deployed as insults or banners to rally round, though they often bear little resemblance to the states, economies and parties they are attributed to? Partly, the answer is political and promotional, in their instrumental senses pertaining to factional conflict. 'Isms' are used as signs and shortcuts in struggles for supremacy: 'Imagine, then, the absolute triumph of the philosophy of Quentin Meillassoux by the year 2050. Correlationist philosophy is now a smoking ruin, pitied on those rare occasions when it is not an object of public mockery.' (Harman 2011a, 153)

4. Graham Harman's language exemplifies this instrumental and marketing use, not only in the reduction of swathes of philosophy to three positions, a typical categorising strategy, but also in the rhetorical use of the terms 'extremes', 'surprise' and the queasy hyperbole designed to portray his favoured philosophy as reasonable yet original and revolutionary, while discharging philosophers with different and varied ideas with a dismissive swipe.

5. Rhetorical and instrumental uses of 'isms' support rapid judgements of praise and blame, pleasing those seeking certainties, easy advancement, or revenge. In response to the idea that Harman is deploying his categories for political aims, it could be claimed that he is refining and explaining his position, triangulating it against imaginary coordinates, doing no harm. However, his strategy of dividing the field is always accompanied by moral and disciplinary judgements: 'The real question is

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not whether or not correlationism really exists, but whether it is really so bad. If it's not so bad, then we can stay with the human-world correlate as the centre of philosophy, and Speculative Realism will prove to be an unnecessary distraction. But I happen to think that correlationism is very bad, though not for the same reason Meillassoux thinks so.' (Harman 2013, 232-3) These crude categories do not only support judgements by Harman, they are also the basis for his arguments: 'I will assess both of these philosophical schools and oppose them with my own preferred position: "School Z"' (Harman 2014, 232)

6. 'Ism' strategies aren't necessary. In *Against Continuity: Gilles Deleuze's Speculative Realism*, Arjen Kleinherenbrink diverges from the rhetorical use of 'isms' in speculative realism by investigating the possibility that Deleuze's philosophy can be read as a machine ontology consistent with some of the tenets held by Harman and speculative realists. This in-depth examination, with an eye for detail but also a bold interpretative approach, forsakes the stark oppositions of 'ism' strategy in favour of more nuanced connections and contrasts, for instance, in terms of when and where change can occur in a machine or object: 'Yet Harman's and Deleuze's philosophies are at odds when it comes to their respective account of when change can occur.' (Kleinherenbrink 2019, 202)

7. You might say there is nothing wrong with shortcuts and with moves allowing us to have done with mistaken ideologies when they have shown themselves to be capable of devastation. In response, the critical distinction is between the use of 'isms' as strategic labels and the use of general terms prior to more detailed and precise analysis. In the following passage Marx is using 'capitalist' and 'bourgeois economist' as general terms: 'Any other utilization of machinery than the capitalist one is to the bourgeois economist impossible. Exploitation of the worker by the machine is therefore identical for him with exploitation of the machinery by the worker.' (Karl Marx, *Capital, volume I*, London: Penguin, 1990, p 569) It is helpful to employ general terms when making broad arguments about types, so long as each term is held in suspense as to its validity when applied to individual situations. Marx's thesis should be tested on new kinds of production and on new economists. His statements need to be refined and reviewed if they are taken to apply to contemporary Keynesian economists. They analyse the effects of new types of production on the relation between workers and machines, in terms of wealth inequality brought about by changes in technology, while defending new and better versions of economies coming under the label 'capitalist'. (Krugman 2014) The debate depends on an inspection of general claims in relation to more precise situations. It's this inspection and critical reflection that is obscured by 'ism' strategies.

8. As this essay develops we'll see, following Deleuze, that every use of an 'ism' as critical label is mistaken once it is applied to an individual. It is an example of the incautious use of representation and recognition, as studied under the idea of the image of thought from *Difference and Repetition* where 'the world of representation is characterised by its inability to think difference in itself.' (Deleuze 1968a, 180) When you deploy an 'ism' you might win in the short term. In the long term you have misjudged and misunderstood opponents and allies. Even when used as rallying points as emotional signs 'isms' involve great risks to thought, since self-examination and reflection are lost.

9. 'Political Realism' is a label designed to suggest down-to-earth practicality and responsiveness to actual pressures and forces. (Korab-Karpowicz 2018) The approach is a blend of negative and positive moves, attack and defence. Realism evokes wise avoidance of the follies of abstract principles in idealism. Yet realism contradicts itself. When applied as an image of thought, realism is idealism. As a covert repetition of the strategies and elitist consequences it claims to revile, realism becomes an abstract ideal insensitive to difference.

10. In contrast to the hyperbole favoured by 'ism' strategies irony is their constant foe. They are always vulnerable to it because the details and differences they seek to conceal seep up and swamp them, lending them the desperation of bad faith built on quicksand.

11. For speculative realism one of the ironies is the contradiction between all-encompassing categories such as correlationism and books understood as complex and rich objects. Grant Hamilton has shown how speculative realism can give rise to a new approach to literary criticism where 'the text fires the reader's imagination in an untold number of unanticipated ways, and it is this change to the imaginative landscape of the reader that has the potential to radically change the way the reader acts in the world.' (Hamilton 2016, 110) When other speculative realists categorise thousands of different works of philosophy together, labelling them as bad, their potential is prejudged and vitiated. This need not be so unless speculative realism is dependent on 'ism' strategies, like the publicity and marketing required to sell the *nouveaux philosophes* in the 1970s. Lyotard called these mutual boosting strategies the piety of a 'montage in parallel'. It is achieved through the repetition of names and themes across different authors under the same banner in order to create a saleable movement. (Lyotard 1977, 65)

12. An 'ism' label makes it more difficult to sense individual patterns and complex relations. I do not only mean in philosophical works. A tag like 'relativism' is used in attacks on curricula and children's books to punish educational departures from canons and their norms as represented in generalisations such as Western values and culture. (Scruton 2015, 86) These values began in city states dependent on widespread slavery, at the intersection of East and South. They slowly drifted westward only to decline into colonial enterprises, terminal internecine wars and genocide. Against all 'isms', the values education should impart are combinations of delight in learning, sensitivity to difference, alertness in criticism and insouciance in creativity. (Williams 2014, 254-5)

13. If we follow Deleuze, the certainties prosecuted by 'ism' tags should become problems. Our frames for action and the values we apply are changed into practical and involved challenges, responding to invention, experimentation and critical opposition, rather than judgement, obedience, dismissal and punishment.

14. What is materialism as a political banner? Adherence to matter alone. The dismissal of pure ideas. Judgement according to material evidence. The urge to punish those living with abstract ideals. Incautious enthusiasm for the material world with its shaky guarantee of progress and

betterment. Under the flag of materialism, fanatics about hard facts gather to celebrate the fallacy of misplaced concreteness. (Whitehead 1938, 72)

15. Levi Bryant does his work a disservice in subsuming it to an 'ism'. His 'book attempts a defense and renewal of materialism' but when we go deeper we come to understand that matter is not being used in the usual sense. (Bryant 2014, 1) The labels of idealism and materialism are redundant except as strategic descriptors. Bryant's maps of social and cultural machines include the expression and effectiveness of ideas and concepts; they are stuff: 'Rather, by "matter," all I mean is "stuff" and "things." The world, I contend, is composed entirely of "stuff" and "stuff" comes in a variety of different forms.' (Bryant 2014, 6) Later in the book 'isms' are relegated to shorthand: 'In this regard, terms like "capitalism" and "racism" are shorthand for very complex assemblages.' (Bryant 2014, 282) Manuel DeLanda's assemblage theory comes to a similar conclusion though there is a difference in terms of formal commitment to individual difference in singularities. (DeLanda 2006, 40) Why then have other speculative realists committed to shorthand and its inevitable distortions of thought and matter? One reason is that the strategic appeal to categories and stark judgements about their value bypasses explanations of the contingency of some of the arguments of speculative realism. This contingency comes out when, following Deleuze, we focus on problems rather than 'stuff' or the 'real'. What we choose for our ontologies and how we make that selection are always responses to underlying problems in relation to which each choice is contingent rather than necessary, in the sense of involving a series of positive and negative consequences that cannot be dismissed by appealing to distinctions between absolute good and bad.

16. The withdrawal of a coin or banknote demonstrates the interrelated levels and degrees of matter, idea and involved action. We'll learn from Deleuze's analysis of language that the names, scales and directions of these levels are always dependent on an underlying problem. (Bowden 2011, 100) They are produced by it, even as they seek to respond to it, always coming after. At the 'lowest' level there is the most material degree: how to collect the physical tokens, how to remove them from circulation. This task is already tied up with the higher level of reasons for circulation of the tokens (different kinds of exchange and store of value). It will be more difficult to remove them the more users rely on the tokens. This difficulty has 'higher' and more 'abstract' degrees because the circulation works through trust and belief. The stronger the trust in guarantees for the token the greater the belief will be. For financial authorities, as belief in their tokens increases, the more trust in them is at risk from removal. Eluding simple definitions of materialism, there is a strong and persistent relation between the most practical concern of how tokens are exchanged and abstract belief in their value. There is no easily discernible limit to the effects of taking the tokens away: from the unexpected destruction of ancient practices, to the gradual waning of intricate beliefs and their sudden replacement by either despair or vengefulness, to the need to rethink economy, government, fairness and value, to minute shifts in the structure of language around words such as 'money' and 'worth'. The cold and well-worn coin is never only a token. It is never only a belief. Many changing patterns of processes work between them.

17. Nonetheless, a practical thinker might say, the basic difference remains: stuff we can touch against fictions, matter resisting lofty ideas, sensual experience disproving abstract concepts, brain explaining mind, sensation before detached meaning, feelings above mere words, nature countering

the follies of humanity. In the end, it is about materialism defeating idealism, because only one of them returns us to the real stuff, protecting us from the lure of anchorless ideas.

18. In *Logics of Sense*, Deleuze responds to the practical thinker of hard stuff through an ironic reversal. It is wrong to say matter before ideas, or ideas before matter. It is wrong to turn towards matter or towards ideas. Concreteness is the problem itself as condition for any event. Action is then involvement with complex structures made of inseparable levels and degrees of material and ideal processes conditioned by a problem. (Deleuze 1969, 67-73) The practical art will be to draw out the sense of these processes, as sensation, meaning, direction and value.

19. In taking problems as real, Deleuze shifts from binary oppositions and simple categories into multiple involvements, thereby denying stark choices between opposed values. By avoiding clear distinctions around truth and virtue he places thought beyond them and into a realm of degrees and individual ways. This Socratic lineage is perverse in the precise sense of refusing to acknowledge clear virtues, but it is also edifying in its demolition of certainties through thoughtful bewilderment.

20. In their strategic interactions 'isms' deny each other through distinctions between real and unreal. Some things exist yet are unreal and hence lesser – like Molly Bloom in *Ulysses* when compared to a real person. For materialism, idealism exists, but rests on unrealities. For idealism, materialist matter exists, but has none of the reality of the superior ideas that secure and make sense of every existence. For Harman, objects – including fictions – are real, but relations and processes are not. (Harman 2011b, 179) One of the strongest features of Deleuze's ungrounding of these oppositions is to make all things real, but only in degrees, relative to perspectives and problems. There are very few perspectives outside myself where, writing these lines, I am more real than Molly. In Deleuze's creative involvement all processes are really in play and a problem is then never about what is real or not, but about which processes to boost and which to temper. Logics of sense are therefore multiple structures, intervening on the individual effects of many layers of material and ideal processes.

21. Isn't involvement an imprecise and unphilosophical word here? Into French it can translate as *participation*, *implication* and *engagement*. The first two are often used by Deleuze, though in special senses; understood by Jeffrey Bell, for example, as 'tendencies reciprocally involved in the reality of a problematic field.' (Bell 2019, 78) To participate is to be engaged in collective change. This isn't participation as joining within the established rules of a game, but participation in an ever-changing ideal game, played on the 'hinge between two gaming tables', a transformative political movement, an innovative scientific and technological development, or a creative artwork. (Deleuze 1969, 81)

22. Implication means to be folded into multiple internal relations. Deleuze often appeals to folds, to processes of folding and unfolding, thereby avoiding the language of categories and classes. (Deleuze 1988, 5-6) A fold in a piece of cloth is woven to all the others. When a designer pulls at an outfit, pinning it differently, the whole piece changes. Involvement does not imply jumping from

category to category, as in crime fiction when a heretofore blameless character suddenly becomes a suspect. It implies participating in all of them to different degrees. The idea of crime is significant here because it highlights the moral demands Deleuze is putting upon us. Many of the most violent aspects of our societies have been made falsely bearable by wrapping them up in the certainties of categorical distinctions between good and evil, but 'there is no Good or Evil in nature in general.' (Deleuze 1968b, 225)

23. Deleuze does not mean implicated in the sense of guilty or responsible. He means drawn into many jointly lived events, demanding a feel for interrelated calls and pressures, like involvement in the construction of a new commune or helping other beings in distress. When we are involved, it is not because we are to be judged, or expected to judge ourselves, but because we are amidst many ongoing events that our actions will alter in problematic ways, with no finally just or good endings, since 'if it is disgusting to judge, it is not because everything is of equal value, but on the contrary because everything of value can only be made and distinguished by defying judgement.' (Deleuze 1993, 169)

24. '*Il faut tenir ses engagements*' is one of France's most overused dictums and dictates, much loved by politicians. (*Le Monde*, 24/8/2007) One should stick to one's commitments. Nothing could be further from involvement, participation and implication in Deleuze's event-driven pragmatism. His criticisms of societies of control, with their combination of data management, monitoring technologies and score-based punishment and reward, forcing us to hold to our engagements through 'continuous control'. (Deleuze 1990, 246-7) Avoiding that negative definition, the best way to translate engagement into his philosophy is as 'problematic immersion'. In societies of control, practice ways of changing the situation in relations to new problems, 'calling for a new earth and anew people.' (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, 95)

25. Reading Lewis Carroll in the first series of paradoxes of *Logics of Sense*, Deleuze denies the main tenets of classical materialism. Instead of physical presence we are given pure events (purely a getting bigger abstracted from things, not from this size to this size for this being). Instead of reliable empirical data (Alice is getting bigger) we are given the nonsense of both this and its opposite (Alice is getting bigger and she is getting smaller). (Williams 2008, 28-9) Instead of evidence in the present (this result here and now) Deleuze says we have all times together as processes, except the present instant (falling away into the past, passing through the present and escaping into the new). There are only paradoxes, instead of the resolution of uncertainty and doubt through the undeniable presence of stuff. (Deleuze 1969, 9)

26. Does this mean Deleuze's philosophy is absolute idealism, celebrating truth and reality as ungraspable nonsense? He is making a quite different claim. Matter is misunderstood when taken as the mark of good sense and traced back to the presence of stuff or to laws about stuff. His target isn't naïve materialism, but rather the bedrock offered by an accessible, reliable, agreed and shareable given: the evidence, the numbers, the results, the data, the statistics, the findings, the forms, the laws. The disagreement is not only with the old idea of physical objects at a human scale but also against the belief in a relation to shared material certainties. Deleuze is not a correlationist,

as defined by Harman. He denies the relations supposed to serve for any correlation as well as their terms in versions of the human subject and any intentional object: subjectivity cannot serve for grounding thought. (Kerslake 2009, 15-16)

27. In his critique of materialism and idealism, Deleuze is concerned about processes he defines as common sense and good sense. (Williams 2013, 16-20) Common sense allows us to define different categories of existence, such as evidence, supposition, fact and fiction. Good sense is then our shared ability to assign things to those categories. We find these operations in the modern mantra 'let's see the data', 'these are the facts', 'our practices should always be evidence-based' and 'you must operate within physical laws' as deployed to ward off falsehoods, mistakes and fictions. For Deleuze, thought will always lapse into categories, representations and recognition because consistency depends upon them. They are one way of warding off 'the persistence of chaos,' though neither the only way nor a sufficient way. (Deleuze and Guattari 1991, 203) The danger in common sense and good sense lies in the claim that it is fundamental to distinguish categories and assign representations to them and in the claim that by doing so we arrive at truthful and good outcomes.

28. Deleuze is not claiming that we can't have matter because we don't encounter any shareable given. He is saying we can, but only if we shift to thinking of matter in relation to problematic individual events for thought and not for humans subjects: 'The emphasis is on the event-hood of thought, responding to the call of the problem.' (Sauvagnargues 2009, 339) More precisely, we only approach real matter if we interact with events as complex processes crossing through many layers, levels and degrees of physical and ideal interaction. Not 'let's see the data' but 'let's interact with the processes at work here'. Not 'here is the evidence' but 'these are the emergent, complex and multiple processes in the event for our problem'. From this point of view, the appeal to data or to laws is only ever one such process and a potentially damaging one when it supports a claim for the truth, goodness and reliability of something commonly agreed upon in the here and now. This does not mean we shouldn't value evidence, data or laws. They are important processes, but only when taken with the wider context determining them.

29. To demonstrate why matter, meaning and evidence are insufficient for explaining the nature of reality and acting upon it, Deleuze distinguishes four interdependent processes involved in propositions: designation, signification, manifestation and sense. (Deleuze 1969, 22-5) The role of designation for propositions is ostensive, a showing ('this piece of evidence'). The role of signification is logical and structural, signification is meaning as dependent on a structure of logical relations ('this *meaningful structure* of laws.') Manifestation is the saying of a proposition, its particular utterance (*Anaximander said 'our origins will devour us.'*) Sense is the source of significance in propositions – not what they mean but their effects.

30. Take the proposition 'Democracy in the UK is broken'. If we follow Deleuze's account of language from *Logics of Sense*, its designation is the democracy referred to, say British parliamentary democracy on 29 March 2019. The signification is the meaning of the proposition as deduced from its place in a structure of other propositions; for instance, broken-running-fixed-inoperative-democracy-kleptocracy-autocracy. The manifestation could be the Scottish First Minister uttering

the proposition. The sense of the proposition is its effect forward and back in time making it significant: 'The UK democracy was heading to be broken' and 'British democracy will have been broken' with all the effects on morale, belief and actions those statements encapsulate. Without its sense, the proposition is indifferent. With its sense it connects to an event and to problems, 'the event is sense itself'. (Deleuze 1969, 34)

31. The conjunction of event, process, individuation and problem is at the heart of Deleuze's new understanding of matter. When defined as a process, an event is not the occurrence of a thing at a given instant: this, here, now. It is an ongoing multiplicity of interacting processes: these ongoing processes determining these changing spaces and times. When defined as individuation, an event is about the emergence and future of changing and changeable individuals, complex and extending without limit forward and back in time – like Molly Bloom in her many connections to Penelope from the *Odyssey*, to figures from Joyce's life, and to effects on different readers, ideas and texts. This means every event is determined by a problem itself determined by individuations: 'We can only speak of events within the problems whose conditions they determine.' (Deleuze 1969, 72) *Who will Molly be for me?* This determination is reciprocal and asymmetric. The processes of determination go from event to individuation and from individuation to event, with the event and problem retaining independence from each individuation. Events and problems are 'subsisting conditions.' (Deleuze 1969, 72)

32. Working through Derrida's deconstruction of time, Peter Gratton's study of speculative realism shows how a study of speculative realism can resist the temptation of 'ism' strategies and come much closer to Deleuze's ideas of sense, problem, individuation and time. Firstly, Gratton explains the movement through its figures, avoiding general definitions in favour of traits described in situ in the books of, among others, Meillassoux, Bennett, Malabou and Brassier. This dialectic between singular and general keeps the final judgements of an 'ism' strategy at bay. Secondly, Gratton avoids saying what speculative realism is, reflecting instead on the problem of what this unstable and new movement might become. Derrida's study of writing is a reflection on the labour of time on marks and traces. The important point is that this can be interpreted as a speculative realism about time coming out of a thinker the 'ism' strategy would have labelled 'correlationist' and thereby rejected. Gratton concludes with the deconstruction of the 'ism': 'And thus, mutatis mutandis, so too any rethinking of writing, as in Derrida, makes a speculative move to a "real time" and thinking of the event that traces itself out in/as writing (in the widest sense), and thus beyond any tenses of conceptual schemes that require the writing of time.' (Gratton 2014, 215)

33. The sensitivity of teachers to different learners is good way of understanding the contrast between fact and event implied by Deleuze. A struggling learner differs from others in surprising ways, based on individual history, body, cultures, mind, unconscious influences and pressures, drives, hopes, sadness and ambition, languages, earlier injuries and premonitions of later ones. The learner is a complex event rather than a set of facts. The problem is then how to articulate that difference for a specific educational task, paying attention to the legacy being laid down by each new articulation. This does not mean all problems are separate or that there aren't general approaches and rules. The teacher must pay attention to other students at the same time as adapting a general lesson to an individual. Pushing a star pupil can damage the confidence of others.

Slowing down a lesson can lead to widespread frustration. Lesson plans incautiously out of step with knowledge and techniques can have catastrophic effects, or usher in great progress. Nonetheless, facts such as IQ tests and pressures like general achievement targets are damaging and historically contingent modes of control unless they are adapted to each learner as individual event.

34. Like matter, the importance of designation is not denied by Deleuze. A scan discussed by doctors is significant and meaningful. When a radiologist says 'here is a small fracture' the designation through 'here' and the pointing of a cursor to an area of the scan constitutes a matter of fact. However, the fullest version of the problem of the fracture will set this matter of fact within a series of processes with no final limits and boundaries, from the power structures at play, the role of gestures, the sounds and bodily movements, the effect of conclusions on you and whether you were involved, the various emotional and physical senses of words like 'broken' or 'irreparable' or 'ageing process' or 'difficult choice'. Deleuze generates paradoxes to show how designations and matters of fact are never independent of this extended context of processes: the 'circle of the proposition.' (Deleuze 1969, 27) For instance, the value of the designation varies in relation to the expertise of the doctor. This means that what is counted as fact circulates into much wider problems about utterance, meaning and significance. Matters of fact, gestures, bodies, senses, structures and pure ideas are all involved in wider individual events.

35. In the first series of *Logics of Sense*, Deleuze follows his opening remarks with a discussion of Plato tracing the history of an argument about matter, representations and ideas through a 'reversal of Platonism.' (Smith 2012, 20) Deleuze distinguishes models, copies and simulacra. (Deleuze 1969, 10) When taken as having general validity, a designated matter of fact such as a definition or diagram of a fracture is a model for the idea. The model is a general representation of the idea of a fracture. Like the definition given in a text-book, it comes as close to the pure idea as possible while remaining actual in some way and hence bridging between the abstraction of ideas and particular cases. When taken as a particular instance a designated fracture is a copy of the idea. It fits under the idea but it is also imperfect in relation to both the model and the idea by having many actual aspects not related to the idea. The copy is mixed in with many other things and uncertain because of this. 'This fracture here,' doctors might say, only for their colleagues to then argue bitterly that it is really a twist or a shadow on the scan.

36. Unlike a copy, a simulacrum is an actual *and* ideal challenge to the idea. The simulacrum relates to the idea as a disruption, 'constructed on a fundamental disparity', undermining the purity of the idea and raising paradoxes for it. (Smith 2012, 14) For instance, when a stressed bone is described as a fracture to come, in a new theory about fragile bones, it isn't a fracture and yet it is. As such it forces the idea to change by introducing contradictions and movement into it. Where the copy is subjected to the idea and imperfect in relation to it, the idea is subjected to the movement of the simulacrum, thereby rendering ideas, copies and models secondary to an event: 'The matter of the simulacrum is pure unlimited becoming. As such, the simulacrum parries the action of the Idea *and* contests the model *and* the copy.' (Deleuze 1969, 10) I've used 'parries' as a translation for 'esquiver', whereas Mark Lester uses the standard 'eludes'. I prefer 'parry' because it reinforces the to-and-fro and competitive aspect of the transformations set off by the simulacrum in copies, models and ideas.

37. When Deleuze describes the matter of the simulacrum as becoming without limit he is doing something very important to materialism. He is not only situating the simulacrum in the physical world but also making the actual world simulacrum, 'composed of simulacra rather than simple copies.' (Bryant 2008, 150) How can the actual be pure and unlimited? Isn't anything actual necessarily limited and static in some way? It is, but only when it is taken in a representation that identifies it. This thought leads to two of the most difficult challenges set by Deleuze. One is experiential: really, events are experienced as difference and becoming. The other is metaphysical: reality is material and ideal, constituted by an asymmetrical reciprocal determination of actual and ideal realms. *That brake block isn't real on its own. It depends on changing relations between the wheel, the material of the wheel, the rubber compound, the idea of a transfer from natural rubber to synthetic compounds, the abstract geometry of the brake mechanism, the velocity of the bike, the skill of the rider and how it was learned, the significance of hard rain and aging materials, the desire for speed and the idea of safety.*

38. We should be sensitive to change in things, to transformations counter to representations of fixed boundaries and properties: a 'world of singularities beneath states of affairs, these virtual events folded in individuals, that sense expresses.' (Beistegui 2010, 96) The circle of denotation, manifestation, signification and sense is another of Deleuze's response to the paradoxes of Nietzsche's eternal return that require a critique of identity and representation. (Deleuze 1968a, 152) How can we withstand the eternal return of one and the same life, with its boredom and suffering? Deleuze's answer is that it only returns in an unbearable manner when we take it to be the same life. Real lives can't return as the same because they never are the same. Something in them is always different. That's why real lives are simulacra, between matter and idea, resisting representation and identification. (Williams 2011, 113-33)

39. Models, copies and simulacra are interdependent but there is an order of priority to them. A copy is inferior to the model as a representation of the idea, but the copy is an actual case of the idea, whereas the model isn't. You can't relate the copy to the idea without going through the intermediary of the model, because it is by knowing the meaning of the model that you also know that the copy belongs with the idea. However, without copies, models are pointless, like a text-book for a medicine that does not exist. When taken as representations of the idea, simulacra are far inferior to models and copies, because they contradict the idea. Yet, when taken as challenges and contributions to the wider truth and potential of the idea, simulacra contribute to its genesis and evolution, since they show its limitations, how it came about and where it might go to: 'The problematic nature of the simulacra points to the fact that there is something that contests *both* the notion of copy *and* that of the model, and undermines the very distinction between the two.' (Smith 2010, 16) However, Daniel Smith and Anne Sauvagnargues remind us that Deleuze abandoned the concept of the simulacrum after *Difference and Repetition* and *Logics of Sense* (Smith 2010, 26; Sauvagnargues 2009, 315) Though the concept of simulacrum introduces difference into the reciprocal determination of idea and matter, it risks a return to truth as decisive for reality, because copy, model and idea are false representations when compared to becoming and difference in the simulacrum.

40. Deleuze's arguments about matters of fact, evidence and data can be traced to his work on models, copies and simulacra. The complexities and different positive and negative aspects of the latter, in their relation to the idea and to each other, are repeated in the relations of the former to designation, signification, sense and manifestation. Here, complexity is shorthand for interdependence as process. Models, copies, simulacra and ideas depend on each other in the strong sense of altering each other as they come about. Simulacra and sense take priority in this interdependence, they have a power of genesis over ideas and, therefore, of copies and models. (Deleuze 1969, 29) The way to understand this is that for Deleuze ideas are generated by problems, but since problems are tense relations of contradictory 'pulls' there has to be a third term between the purity of an idea and the chaotic state of the problem: the simulacrum.

41. A simulacrum is an unstable innovation responding to a problem and to changing sense, understood as different intensities assigned to directions, themselves defined by infinitives, such as 'to drown', 'to flood', 'to cultivate' and 'to starve.' (Deleuze 1969, 33) Ideas, models and copies come about when a problem such as 'Can we cultivate the sea?' is answered by a simulacrum. The simulacrum expressed by the first plans of a polder brings together a combination of canals, sea walls, pumps, texts about salinity, new farming techniques, population movements and markets. These change sense through changes in the intensities of 'to flood', 'to cultivate', 'to pump' and 'to drain'. The idea of a polder then takes shape, giving rise to models and copies. However, the contradictions inherent to the problem remain – to become land and to become sea remain in tension with one another. This means another simulacrum can contribute to an alteration in the idea; the idea of a polder fades and the prevalence of actual polders diminishes as fear around 'to flood' increases leading to greater investment in massive sea walls. The polder then becomes something different guided by a new simulacrum.

42. The priority assigned to genesis and to the simulacrum as engine of change also applies to designation. Changes in sense give rise to alterations in designation, significance and utterance. For example, what a piece of evidence means, why it matters and who is deploying it change in response to different investments or intensities around different senses of 'to harm', 'to defend' and 'to punish'. Rather than operating as independent entities with well-defined, reliable and closed functions, signification, manifestation and designation interact according to a circular movement, where real change comes from shifts in sense itself expressed through simulacra. This explains why the new is always at the heart of Deleuze's metaphysics. It is only through the new that you approach the real as difference and becoming rather than identity, 'everything has become simulacrum.' (Deleuze 1968a, 95)

43. When you change a model such as a text-book definition, you also change the copies, since practice now has something different to refer to. Similarly, copies influence models because practice calls the model into question; that's one of the reasons why textbooks are always behind the times. But simulacra are more direct challenges to the idea and hence to models and copies; for instance, when new laser technology challenges the idea of a cut, altering many of its aspects yet also satisfying others.

44. Deleuze's understanding of the fragility of evidence, as defined by a fixed relation of designation, signification and manifestation, can be seen in the different roles, function and meaning of evidence as we shift between contexts and practices. For the same event – a botched operation, say – limits, meanings, rules of utterance and ideas change with context, with the nature of the problem. This is because what constitutes evidence is different between, for example, the discussion in a review meeting by a medical team, the same operation taken in a law court, its use in scientific analysis among many other similar cases, its presentation in a newspaper, and a heartfelt account of what went wrong by the patients and how it affected their lives. Extending this remark about evidence to cases, an 'ism' strategy and its judgements fit well with code law and the submission of different cases to the same codes and categories. However, if we are dealing with simulacra, case law is preferable since it adapts better to the challenge of new differences: 'Case is not subordinated to principle, nor positive law returned to natural law.' (Saunders 2012, 199)

45. One of the reasons *Logics of Sense* matters for modern life is its dependence on layers of contexts. We live in a world of problems, simulacra and difficult cases – that's our matter at hand. The medical world is impacted by legal cases and pressure; through insurance and medical witnessing, for instance. The legal world is in a difficult relation to newspapers and their relation to politics and law-making. Individual lives exist within prevalent and apparently indispensable worlds of medicine, law and politics. Those worlds are nothing without the individual lives they shape, support, discipline and exploit. This interdependence comes to the fore when any discipline or profession attempts to impose its understanding of evidence; for instance, when the unstable mix of juridical, statistical and economic data used by the insurance industry clashes with the medical sphere around the question of the right thing to do for a cases or cases.

46. A word of caution. The examples I have given treat ideas like images, like shared representations we have communal access to. At best, these are only expressions of Deleuze's 'Ideas' or 'sense' as treated in *Logics of Sense* and 'the essential point is the independence of the expression from any content'. (Montebello 2008, 165) This is because he alters the ordinary meanings of 'sense' and 'idea' by changing the values and processes at work in the interdependence of designation, signification, manifestation and sense. Sense and Idea are introduced in response to a problem about the relations between linguistic terms relating to showing, meaning, saying and having significant effects. The effects are the prior term. This means that when we use an example to show something, with a particular meaning, in a particular enunciation, we must always pay attention to the effects of the example: how it changes significance forward and back in time. This is difficult for two reasons. First, due to their role in explanation, examples have a tendency to satisfy us with simple images and representations. Second, to find the effects of examples we need to experiment with them, that is, we need to follow on from them with further creative uses. This has a strange but in some ways uplifting consequence. It means that when we use examples we need to pay attention to the failure implied by their success as examples. The better they work as examples, the worse they are at conveying changes in sense: 'Good intentions are perforce punished.' (Deleuze 1969, 236)

47. In the first series of paradoxes from *Logics of Sense*, Deleuze poses the problem of sense in a suite of rhetorical questions. They are rhetorical because he has already given us the answer in the

title to the series 'of pure becoming' and because the suite tends towards his answer. The prior term in language is pure becoming. It is prior because it cannot be eliminated and is at work within all the other terms, thereby undermining their claims to independence and self-sufficiency: 'Or again, might it not be two distinct dimensions internal to language in general, one always covered by the other, but continuing to "come within" and subsist under the other?' (Deleuze 1969, 10) When taken in general, we might think of language as a dimension of designation and a dimension of signification, separate and under the rule of designation for matters of fact and signification for changes on meaning. However, these two dimensions cannot be taken apart and, more importantly, sense as distinct from meaning works within designation, signification and manifestation: 'The very concept of sense as opposed to meaning is based on systematic ambiguity: it is that which (chrono)logically precedes meaning, and therefore has neither the shared consensual fixity of common sense, nor the right directionality of good sense.' (Lecerclé 2010, 128)

48. Doesn't Deleuze have things the wrong way here? Don't facts hold sway even for meaning, through facts about meaning and through the priority that should be given to matters of fact in cases of dispute? Deleuze's answer is strange and explains why his philosophy is a challenge to philosophers of fact, evidence and stuff. Sense is resistant to resolution through appeals to fact because it is pure, as in pure becoming and pure infinitives that only change in the intensity assigned to them. Yet pure sense is always at work within all other dimensions of fact, altering them each time they try to define themselves as independent and secure. Without pure sense there would be no matters of fact or evidence. We know there is pure sense because our attempts to represent the world always founder, attesting to an inner power of transformation and resistance to identity. Even if it is correct that Deleuze abandons the simulacrum in his later work, its inner power of difference never leaves his philosophy and continues into his work with Guattari where, 'rather than accepting brute facts and forms of life as Wittgenstein does, they argue that it is difference all the way down, or more precisely collective, heterogeneous assemblages all the way down.' (Bell 2018, 75) As I have defined them here, simulacra are exactly such assemblages.

49. In the first series of paradoxes Deleuze explains this resistance and power of subversion through the paradox of infinite identity: '... an infinite identity of both ways together, of past and future, of yesterday and tomorrow, of more and less, of too much and not enough, of active and passive, of cause and effect.' (Deleuze 1969, 10-11) In sense or the Idea, as potential pure becoming, all directions are continuously connected. This means there is no direction things can become in that is not also a change in another, as you grow older you grow older than you were, but you also grow as younger than you will be, shorter than you were, but taller still than others growing shorter. The challenge Deleuze is setting with this paradox is twofold. Try to think of a verb that you cannot in some way connect to a given event. Try to think of a verb in an event that cannot be taken on another scale, until you must connect all instances to an infinite version, to a pure becoming.

50. Between materialism and idealism, Deleuze's lesson is that language always has two processes at work within it once we take in the paradox of infinite identity, or the togetherness of all pure becoming as pure potential. On the one hand, language serves to counter the many directions and purity of sense and the idea. On the other hand, each of those attempts is determined by the sense it seeks to tame and transformed by it. Settling a matter of fact – identifying its meaning and who

says it right – is a struggle against and a dependence upon underlying pure sense defined as multiple becoming. There is no bedrock of evidence or stuff and every ‘ism’ is a distortion of individual differences and change.

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