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Deleuze and Heidegger on Truth and Science

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Abstract: Deleuze and Guattari’s manner of distinguishing science from philosophy in their last collaboration *What is Philosophy?* (1991) seems to imply a hierarchy, according to which philosophy is more adequate to the reality of virtual events than science is. This suggests, in turn, that philosophy has a better claim than science to truth. This paper clarifies Deleuze’s views about truth throughout his career. Deleuze equivocates over the term, using it in an “originary” and a “derived” sense, probably under the influence of Henri Bergson, who does similarly. Moreover, William James and pragmatism were to Bergson what the early analytic philosophers Frege and Russell are to Deleuze: excessively scientific foils whose confusions about truth arise as a result of failing to distinguish science from philosophy. By situating Deleuze’s conception of truth in relation to the early Heidegger’s, which it to some extent resembles, the paper concludes by suggesting that, surprisingly, neither kind of truth Deleuze licenses applies to science, while both apply to philosophy. Science is indifferent to truth in the way that some of Deleuze’s readers have incorrectly wanted to say that he thinks philosophy is.

Keywords: Deleuze, truth, science, adequation, sense, Heidegger

In the bad old days of the “science wars,” Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont accused Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari of displaying “superficial erudition” in their last collaboration, *What is Philosophy?* (1991), and of deploying scientific jargon “out of context and without any apparent logic.” Such “postmodern abuse of science” is dangerous, they claimed, to the extent that it contributes to the corresponding prestige in the Anglophone academy of relativism about truth.¹ Particularly worthy of Sokal and Bricmont’s scorn were Deleuze and Guattari’s passages distinguishing philosophy from science.² Yet readers more sympathetic to Deleuze have also wondered at the demarcation, chief among them Isabelle Stengers, Deleuze’s sometime student. In texts like “*Les intercesseurs*” (1985), Deleuze seemed to celebrate productive interdisciplinarity—“philosophy, art, and science come into relations of mutual resonance and exchange”³—but Deleuze and Guattari clarify later that science, art, and philosophy ought only to interact as full-fledged, “mature” disciplines, not in the process of their constitution,⁴ a surprisingly traditional division of intellectual labour.⁵ Likewise, other commentators have taken the view that Deleuze has no interest in a robust philosophical investigation of truth.

One of this paper’s goals is to demonstrate that he certainly does. Deleuze, unlike, say, Richard Rorty, does not treat truth as a topic it is not worth a philosopher’s time to have a theory of. In fact, Deleuze writes extensively about truth in his major works of the 1960s, where he, following Nietzsche and Bergson, aims to distinguish between two senses of it, one more fundamental than the other. Moreover, there is no reason to think that his final co-authored work with Guattari abandons this conception of truth.

The paper’s second aim is to make some sense of those passages that Sokal and Bricmont declared “meaningless.” They describe the difference between science and philosophy like this: Both disciplines

1 Sokal and Bricmont, *Fashionable Nonsense*, 154-55; cf. x-xi.

2 *Ibid.*, 155-57.

3 Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 125.

4 Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 161.

5 Stengers, “Enigmatic Message,” 151.

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“confront chaos” but in “completely different, almost opposed” ways. By “chaos” Deleuze and Guattari mean the “infinite speed with which [determinations or forms] take shape and vanish,” which they call a “void that is not a nothingness but a *virtual*.”⁶ Philosophy “confronts” chaos by attempting to “save” the infinite,⁷ or, in crucial language, to “retain infinite speeds while gaining consistency [*garder les vitesses infinies tout en gagnant de la consistance*], by giving the virtual a consistency specific to it” in the form of properly philosophical concepts. Science, in contrast, “relinquishes the infinite [*renonce à l’infini*], infinite speed, in order to gain a reference able to actualize the virtual” by means of scientific “functions.”⁸ Science actualizes or “effectuates” the virtual event by referring it to the state of affairs from which it is inseparable, while philosophy “counter-effectuates” by isolating the event from that state of affairs.⁹

If, however, chaos is both infinite (with respect to speed) and virtual, don’t these distinctions straightforwardly imply a hierarchy? Philosophy “retains” both infinity and virtuality, but science gives them away. Such a hierarchy would be out of keeping with Deleuze and Guattari’s egalitarian assertions, like “Thinking is thought through concepts [philosophy] or functions [science], or sensations [art] and no one of these thoughts is better than another.”¹⁰ I have previously suggested that the language of “retaining” and “relinquishing” makes it sound as if Deleuze and Guattari mean that philosophical concepts are more *adequate* to the infinite and the virtual.¹¹ Since the virtual names the part of reality that “eludes” actualization, “what is real without being actual,”¹² the relation between philosophical concepts and the (virtual) real looks more than a little reminiscent of the adequation associated with the traditional Greek conception of truth as correspondence with reality.

That would also be out of keeping with other things Deleuze and Guattari say in *What is Philosophy?*—for example, that philosophy is not “inspired by truth.”¹³ Nevertheless, in this paper I will argue that the suggestion about truth provides a clue to answering the quandary about the apparent hierarchy of philosophy and science. This becomes clear when one considers Deleuze’s idiosyncratic conception of truth in relation to his readings in the history of philosophy, his lifelong oblique engagement with early analytic philosophy, and in contrast to Heidegger’s more famous distinction between propositional truth, or the “usual meaning” of truth as “correctness,” and the more authentic sense of truth as “unconcealment.” Once we understand Deleuze’s particular conception of truth along these lines, we can see how *What is Philosophy?* actually articulates something singular and novel about science—namely, that science is *not* true, either in the residually positive sense that Deleuze deploys, or in the negative sense he criticizes and associates with the worst aspects of the European philosophical tradition.

1 Truth in the history of the image of thought

By the “Greek conception of truth” I mean the special relationship between thought or language and “*what is*” described by Aristotle: “to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true.”¹⁴ As Barry Allen puts it, “ontological truth” assumes a certain sensitivity of thought or language, a “responsive[ness] to what is,” and he notes that even philosophers as late and non-Greek as Hume and Wittgenstein accept updated versions of this view of truth and the related Parmenidean assumption that it involves a “true-making” sameness of thought and being.¹⁵

⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 42, 118.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 197.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 118, cf. 197.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 159. On Deleuze’s concept of the “virtual,” see Daniel W. Smith, “Deleuze’s Concept of the Virtual and the Critique of the Possible,” which places it in the context of a reading of German idealism, and Manuel De Landa’s influential *Intensive Science and Virtual Philosophy*, 33-38, which offers a realist interpretation.

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 198.

¹¹ Bennett, “Deleuze, Developmental Systems Theory.”

¹² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 156.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1011b.

¹⁵ Allen, *Truth in Philosophy*, 5, 15.

Deleuze is hyper-aware of this conception of truth. It is part of what he criticizes under the name “dogmatic image of thought.” In famous lines, Deleuze says that this image involves “the supposition that thought is the natural exercise of a faculty ... the presupposition that there is a natural capacity for thought endowed with a talent for truth or an affinity with the true.”¹⁶ In *Difference and Repetition* (1968), Deleuze aims for a “radical critique” of this assumption by exposing its postulates. He enumerates eight, and two of them—the model of recognition (third postulate) and the privilege of designation (sixth)—reveal that he too recognizes that the ontological interpretation of truth casts a long shadow over the history of philosophy, persisting even through its most significant conceptual “revolutions.”

By the model of “recognition” Deleuze means that the image of thought presupposes “the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object.”¹⁷ The wax Descartes sees, touches, imagines, remembers, and thinks about is the same wax, and the “I” that doubts, understands, desires, imagines, and so on, the same “I.” The classical responsiveness of thought to being depends here on the agreement of different subjective powers and the sameness of their respective objects. This is a “modernized” version of the classical conception of truth. Certainly, it grants a new and supreme importance to the role of subjectivity, but the difference between classical and modern conceptions of truth is a matter of having *replaced* its expected “ontological a priori,” not of *abandoning* the expectation that truth requires such ontological support.¹⁸ Even Kant, whose critical turn would seem to prohibit dogmatically innocent statements about the human “talent for truth,” grants that truth is “agreement of knowledge with its object.”¹⁹ Although the existent object is constituted by, rather than simply disclosed to, the mind, the special relationship between thought or language and nature or “what is” is still what makes a judgment true.²⁰

Deleuze would agree. As he puts it, even though you’d think that Kant had the resources to overturn the dogmatic image of thought, he “did not want to renounce its implicit presuppositions.”²¹ And Deleuze adds that modelling all thought on recognition limits its potential “misadventures” to mere error. Of course, recognition can go awry, when, for example, the faculties one presumes are in harmony actually aren’t.²² Error arises from a *disharmony* of the faculties on *different* objects. That implies, however, that error is simply “false recognition”: “Error, therefore, pays homage to the ‘truth’ to the extent that, lacking a form of its own, it gives the form of the true to the false.”²³ Nothing can escape this form of truth, even its opposite. Suffice it to note the formal similarity of Aristotle’s definition of the false to his definition of the true: “To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not, that it is, is false.”²⁴

According to Deleuze, the linguistic turn in philosophy, like the critical or Kantian turn before it, did little to change the key presuppositions of the image of thought. Philosophers may now recognize that there is a difference between falsehood and nonsense, and therefore the “element of sense is well known to philosophy.” “Nevertheless,” he says, “this is perhaps not enough,” because sense (or meaning), as opposed to reference (or denotation), is conceived of exclusively as a condition of truth—as a way of specifying under what conditions indicative statements like “x is tall” are true or false—for example, when “x” means such-and-such, or has a certain sense. Deleuze likes that Frege’s sense-reference distinction requires distinguishing “Two dimensions ... in a proposition: *expression*, in which a proposition says or expresses some idea; and *designation*, in which it indicates or designates the objects to which what is said or expressed applies,”²⁵ but he laments that these two dimensions have been understood as that of the condition of truth and that of straightforward denotative truth and falsity. Deleuze attributes the interpretation to Russell but seems to think is widespread. The privilege of designation (denotation or reference) reveals the continuity of

¹⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 131.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁸ Allen, *Truth in Philosophy*, 32.

¹⁹ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A58/B82.

²⁰ Allen, *Truth in Philosophy*, 28.

²¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 136.

²² *Ibid.*, 148-49.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1011b26-27.

²⁵ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 153.

early analytic philosophy and the image of thought: “designation is only the logical form of recognition.”²⁶ In particular, the isolation of truth from sense shows the limitations of this philosophy of language. Having been interpreted as condition of truth, sense remains strangely “indifferent” to the truth that it founds.²⁷ Deleuze therefore wants to *reattach* the themes of sense and truth as a way of “radically critiquing” this new avatar of the dogmatic image. In sum, according to Deleuze, Frege and Russell have started down a line of thinking that has the potential to overturn the image of thought, but, like Kant before them, they lose heart and use their freshly minted conceptual resources to reformulate its postulates anew.

2 The precedents for Deleuze’s theory of truth

There are many reasons one might want to criticize the classical conception of truth. One might, like William James, accept that truth means “agreement with reality” but completely change the meaning of this phrase by asking what it amounts to in practice and answering that the true is what is “good in the way of belief.”²⁸ Alternatively, one might go beyond spelling out the “cash-value” of truth and challenge the notion that it has any value at all. Nietzsche asks not only “*What* really is it in us that wants ‘the truth?’” but also “*why not rather* untruth? and uncertainty? even ignorance?” Maybe untruth would serve us better—a possibility Nietzsche thinks he is the first to articulate.²⁹ The *Genealogy of Morals* describes the experimental calling of truth into question a “critique,”³⁰ and Deleuze’s interpretation of Nietzsche seizes on that language. Unlike Kant, whose critique never went far enough, Nietzsche provides the precedent for Deleuze’s exposé of the image of thought³¹: Nietzsche “completely changes the image of thought (criticism of the will to truth).”³²

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze’s motive seems to be to create space for alternative “possibilities for thought” that have been quashed, such as those glimpsed in the letters of Antonin Artaud: “It is not a question of opposing to the dogmatic image of thought another image borrowed, for example, from schizophrenia, but rather of remembering that schizophrenia is not only a human fact but also a possibility for thought the dogmatic image, for its part, recognizes only *error* as a possible misadventure.”³³ But error doesn’t afford any genuine alternative to the image, and, as a matter of fact, thinking *does* contain other possibilities than the ones postulated by the image. Those postulates “crush thought under an image which is that of the Same and the Similar in representation, but profoundly betrays what it means to think.”³⁴ In a nutshell, the postulates of the image of thought are normative statements about how thought *ought* to be masquerading as descriptive ones about what it is.

The normative (“dogmatic,” “moral”) perspective of “representation” is not the schizophrenic’s but that of the Cartesian or Kantian “I think”—the “I” whose representations thoughts are, which substitute for a thought of pure difference the proxies of identity, analogy, opposition and resemblance.³⁵ Now, even though “representation” is Deleuze’s word here for thinking that fails to give difference a fair shake, it would be hasty to elide Deleuze’s critique with the “antirepresentationalism” of a latter-day pragmatist like Rorty, precisely because of their different views about what philosophy should do about truth. Rorty and Deleuze might agree, as Allen argues, that the association between philosophy and “ontological truth” has been a sad one whose loss no one should mourn.³⁶ But if Rorty takes the view that, as a consequence, truth is not something worth having a theory of, then this is far from Deleuze’s position. Throughout the 1960s he writes extensively about truth, and not always dismissively, in major works like *Nietzsche and Philosophy*,

²⁶ Ibid., 154.

²⁷ Ibid., 153; cf. Voss, “Rethinking,” 2.

²⁸ James, *Pragmatism*, 37.

²⁹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, §1.

³⁰ Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, III.24.

³¹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 94-95.

³² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 65.

³³ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 148.

³⁴ Ibid., 167.

³⁵ Ibid., 138.

³⁶ Allen, “Deleuze-Rorty,” 172-74.

Proust and Signs, *Bergsonism*, *Difference and Repetition*, and *The Logic of Sense*. In these cases, far from aiming to eliminate truth from philosophical consideration, Deleuze wants to show that adequation is not the “originary” sense of truth but a “derived” one.³⁷

Not all readers of Deleuze have appreciated this commitment. Gregg Lambert, for example, doubts that Deleuze is interested in developing a theory of truth and argues that Deleuze simply replaces that theme with a quasi-Nietzschean affirmation of chance. On Lambert’s reading, Deleuze is describing what others have called the “end of metaphysics”:

the moment when philosophy lost the rule of reason and could no longer go on playing the ‘game of truth’ according to the same old rules. At this point our aging philosopher was presented with a stark alternative: either invent new ones, or abandon the game altogether. Briefly put, this is the fundamental problem that Deleuze’s work addresses throughout his entire *oeuvre*.³⁸

If Lambert means by the last sentence that truth remained a fundamental concern for Deleuze throughout his work, then he’s right. But the alternative with which Lambert says Deleuze is faced is a false one. Deleuze would not accept that these are mutually exclusive options. When he talks about truth in the 1960s, it is not a matter of “inventing new rules,” but neither does he “abandon the ‘game of truth’ altogether.”

In fact, Deleuze consciously equivocates about truth. For example, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* diagnoses the dogmatic image of thought in terms that anticipate those of *Difference and Repetition* (“We are told that the thinker *as* thinker wants and loves *truth* ... [etc.]”³⁹), but it also contains an interpretation of Nietzsche’s famous remarks about art in the third essay of the *Genealogy of Morals*, according to which “art, in which precisely the *lie* is sanctified ... is much more fundamentally opposed to the ascetic ideal than is science” because art has experimentally called into question the will to truth.⁴⁰ For Deleuze, when art “invents the lies that raise falsehood to the highest affirmative power *Then truth perhaps takes on a new sense*. Truth is appearance. Truth means bringing of power into effect.”⁴¹ Nietzsche’s “new image of thought,” Deleuze explains, “means primarily that truth is not the element of thought. The element of thought is sense and value,”⁴² the implication being that the truth we talk about is a function of values, like baseness and nobility, so that there are the “base truths” of the slave (or ascetic scientist), and noble truths of the artist (the affirmation of the reality of appearance). In other words, “the truth of a thought must be interpreted and evaluated according to the forces or power that determine it to think and to think this rather than that.” That goes even, and especially, for the truths of philosophy and science, but “This is what the dogmatic image of thought conceals: the work of established forces that determine thought as pure science, the work of established powers that are ideally expressed in truth in itself.”⁴³ Deleuze is referring to the “reactive” powers of morality, religion, and the state—everything that Kant, for example, couldn’t bring himself to critique radically enough. This diagnosis of Nietzsche is clearly a major precedent for Deleuze’s own way of thinking about “originary” and “derived” truth. Far from disappearing, truth finds its place as a correlate of forces and powers. The claim is not that there’s no such thing as truth. On the contrary, Deleuze implies that after Nietzsche there’s really a *proliferation* of truths. For example, now we must take account of the truths of artists, which may previously have been classified as lies or falsehoods.

Proust and Signs, Deleuze’s next major consideration of the image of thought, doubles down on the idea of the artist’s truth. According to Deleuze, the “*recherche*” involved in the “Search for Lost Time” is a “search for truth”—a kind of search that Proust contrasts with “other kinds of search—scientific and philosophic,” and hence, other kinds of truth.⁴⁴ But Deleuze most likely inherits the equivocation over

³⁷ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 159.

³⁸ Lambert, *Non-Philosophy*, 74.

³⁹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 103.

⁴⁰ Nietzsche, *Genealogy of Morals*, III.25.

⁴¹ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 102-103, emphasis added.

⁴² *Ibid.* 104.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 103-104.

⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, 11.

truth involved in the fully realized critique of the dogmatic image in *Difference and Repetition* from Proust's friend Henri Bergson.

Bergson's biologically informed philosophy of *Creative Evolution* (1907) treats intelligence as an evolved faculty tending toward utility.⁴⁵ Human, so to speak, cognitive biases are not built in as necessary conditions of our experience of reality but have arisen historically over evolutionary time because it serves us—the survival of our species—to cognize in certain ways. The “truths” that intellect produces—scientific truths, say, about biology—are therefore “altogether relative to our faculty of action.”⁴⁶ For example, from the point of view of intellect there is a strong tendency to treat living systems mechanistically, on the model of inert matter. Habitually treating everything as a dead mechanism enables human beings to convert nature into an enormous tool to serve human ends.⁴⁷ Scientific truths have a utilitarian meaning: “We invent the truth to utilize reality, as we create mechanical devices to utilize the forces of nature.”⁴⁸

Bergson thinks this is what William James had also understood about truth, but, despite their mutual admiration, Bergson and James diverge decisively on this topic.⁴⁹ For Bergson philosophy, unlike science, demands of us the effort to “thrust intelligence outside itself by an act of will”⁵⁰—that is, to *suspend* the prejudices of action-oriented intellect. Methodically doing so is what Bergson means by the much-misunderstood term “intuition”: “Intelligence, by means of science, which is its work ... brings us, and moreover only claims to bring us, a translation [of life] in terms of inertia But it is to the very inwardness of life that *intuition* leads us.”⁵¹ Doing philosophy for Bergson is therefore consciously deactivating the evolved pragmatism of intellect. Such a substantial disagreement with the pragmatists also requires that Bergson not restrict the term “truth” the way that they do. The philosophical effort to achieve “intuition” produces a species of truth unknown to James: “Philosophy ought to follow science onto this new ground [the study of life], in order to superimpose on scientific truth a knowledge of another kind, which may be called metaphysical.”⁵² The insight that there is a truth distinct from the scientific truths of intellect, which would command our assent if we only made the effort to grasp it,⁵³ is what Bergson thinks James should've realized pragmatism entails. In his preface to the French translation of *Pragmatism*, Bergson notes that for James the simplifying prejudices of our intelligence falsify the indefinite character of reality as it is experienced,⁵⁴ and he emphasizes that it remains possible to have a relation with reality that isn't as pragmatic as scientific “truth” is: “Every truth is a path traced through reality: but among these paths there are some to which we could have given an entirely different turn ... there are some, on the contrary, whose direction is marked out by reality itself: there are some, one might say, which *correspond to currents of reality*.”⁵⁵ These would be the “truths of feeling,” experienced vitality and duration, known to the open or “mystical souls” James described in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. Bergson also means that philosophers, in his sense of the term, duty-bound to make the effort to bracket cognitive biases and the requirements of survival and to think “intuitively,” have access to this kind of truth.

The points worth making relevant to my argument are, first, that Bergson's correction of James could also be expressed as the complaint that the latter lacks a strong enough distinction between philosophy and science—such as Bergson offers in *Creative Evolution*—the absence of which would be the reason that James doesn't affirm the higher truth of feeling and experience to which, according to Bergson, he's entitled. (And, indeed, James's theory of truth is modelled on how practicing scientists use the term.⁵⁶) Second,

45 Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 152.

46 Ibid. 196.

47 Ibid. 161.

48 Bergson, “Pragmatism,” 271.

49 Ibid. cf. Allen, “Useless Knowledge.”

50 Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 193.

51 Ibid. 176.

52 Ibid. 199, translation modified.

53 Ibid. 238.

54 Bergson, “Pragmatism,” 270.

55 Ibid. 272, emphasis added.

56 James, *Pragmatism*, 26-27.

and more significantly, while Bergson does distinguish between a (so to speak) higher and a lower form of “truth,” Bergson’s higher truth *retains* the form of correspondence with the (experienced) real. Some representations are more adequate to reality by virtue of their responsiveness to what is, or the true-making sameness that subsists between what is and what is represented. Bergson’s theory of intuition sounds even more like it involves “ontological truth” in a letter to James:

I believe in the mutability of *reality* rather than that of *truth*. If we can make our intuition accord with the mobility of the real, would not this accord be something stable, and would not truth—which can only be this accord itself—participate in this stability?⁵⁷

Deleuze’s higher form of truth, which he calls “originary,” will, in contrast, *not* have this form: “truth is a matter of production, not of adequation.”⁵⁸ Despite his admiration, Deleuze might say that Bergson’s thought reveals the persistent influence of the dogmatic image precisely to the extent that he models his philosophical truths on correspondence.

3 The “truth” of problems

It’s probably true that Deleuze borrows the distinction between an “originary” truth and a derivative one from Bergson because of how the theme of the “truth of problems” is developed in his book on *Bergsonism* (1966). According to this influential text, the first rule of Bergson’s method of intuition is: “Apply the test of true and false to problems themselves. Condemn false problems and reconcile truth and creation at the level of problems.”⁵⁹ *Difference and Repetition* makes a related point: “truth and falsehood primarily affect problems.”⁶⁰ Bergson had used this theme regularly to deflate august philosophical quandaries about the nature of human freedom and “Why there is something rather than nothing”⁶¹ as well as broadly “scientific” ones, like the cause of cosmic order.⁶² Such problems are “false” because they produce no useful truths. They are “badly formed” since it makes no practical difference what answer one gives. A “true” problem produces useful, vital truths, but a false one insignificant scholastic quibbles, where nothing of life or of experience is at stake. For Bergson, failing the pragmatic test in these cases goes hand in hand with failing the, so to speak, test of intuition.⁶³

Deleuze builds on the notion of the “truth of problems.” As many commentators have noted, by the expression Deleuze means something quite different from classical adequation. He means the productivity, the genetic quality, of truths: truth is “production, not ... adequation.”⁶⁴ But what exactly is *truth-like* about a well-posed and productive problem? Why would Deleuze repurpose the old word “truth,” the classical concept of which he relentlessly critiqued? Dan Smith observes that, having cleared away the ground of the concept, Deleuze has “no reason not to” repurpose it.⁶⁵ But does Deleuze not have a positive reason to do so as well? Failing to appreciate that he actually does has, I think, encouraged readers of Deleuze to underestimate his interest in the notion of truth.

What’s truth-like about true problems derives from their relation to *sense*. “Sense is located in the problem itself,” Deleuze says,⁶⁶ and, as I have already described, he criticizes the way in which early analytic philosophers mishandled this concept. Having staked out the domain of sense, they made

⁵⁷ Bergson, “Correspondence,” 362.

⁵⁸ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 155.

⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 15.

⁶⁰ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 159.

⁶¹ Bergson, *Creative Mind*, 57 and 46-47. Cf. also, *Creative Evolution*, 267ff.

⁶² Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 220ff.

⁶³ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 17-21.

⁶⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 155. Cf. Beistegui, *Truth and Genesis*, 286-87.

⁶⁵ Smith, “Analytics,” 140.

⁶⁶ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 157.

it a condition of possible truth but one that is “indifferent to what it founds.”⁶⁷ In other words, the shortcoming of these representatives of the linguistic turn was similar to those of the critical turn. It was to *disconnect* truth from the domains they discovered (of sense and of transcendental ideas, respectively) and apply it only to the domain in which it can be most easily reconciled with the classical way of talking about representations (designation/denotation, and the concepts and categories of the understanding). To compensate, Deleuze asserts, it is necessary to trace designating propositions back to the senses that *generate* them:

The relation between a proposition and what it designates must be established within sense itself Designation, in so far as it is achieved in the case of a true proposition, would never be grounded unless it were understood as the limit of the genetic series or the ideal connections that constitute sense.⁶⁸

This is a strong claim: even “the proposition’s relation to what it designates”—that is, the relation between language and the true-making existent object or reality putatively exterior to sense—is “constituted within the unity of sense.” The whole game of ontological truth is derivative of the unity of sense, which is located within problems. Deleuze complains about the way that those (like Russell) who hold the opposite view, that sense and reference are really distinct, deploy cherry-picked examples to make their case, whereas “Every time a proposition is replaced in the context of living thought, it is apparent that it has exactly the truth it deserves according to its sense.”⁶⁹

What does Deleuze mean by the production of ontological truth from the “unity of sense”? Can we make this idea more precise? Remember that “sense” for Deleuze picks out the property of a proposition in respect of which it “expresses some idea.” So, to use Frege’s example, while the name “Aristotle” refers to a physical body, it admits of many distinct cognitive valences—such as “the pupil of Plato” and “the teacher of Alexander the Great.”⁷⁰ Deleuze’s point in *Difference and Repetition* seems to be that designating propositions (like “Here is Aristotle”) are just limit cases of the whole series of propositions expressing different senses of the names involved. Placed in the context of “living thought,” a proposition that is true in virtue of designation will therefore be relatively rare, but there will nevertheless be many more propositions—like, for example, the conjunction “Aristotle was the student of Plato and the teacher of Alexander”—whose truth is a function of the ideas they express rather than the things they designate. For Deleuze, this is what it means that “truth is a matter of production, not of adequation.” Meaningful propositions form a series and already possess truth in their interrelations (their “unity”); the adequation of designating propositions with their objects is really something produced, once in a while, by these interrelations—not something qualitatively different. So when Deleuze says that “Sense is located in the problem itself,” he means that a problem can be true (i.e. productive) just insofar as it has a sense—in other words, insofar as it contains a series of related true propositions. This explains Deleuze’s straightforward equivocation about truth: there are lots of true statements that aren’t a matter of reference:

A solution always has the truth it deserves according to the problem to which it is a response, and the problem always has the solution it deserves in proportion to *its own* truth or falsity—in other words, in proportion to its sense.⁷¹

Deleuze links the Bergsonian deflation of false problems with the notion of sense borrowed from those philosophers of language who, in Deleuze’s estimation, bungled it. He talks about “true problems” not just because he can now do so with a clear, Nietzschean conscience—having destroyed the presuppositions of the classical image of truth—but for specific reasons bearing on the interpretation of early analytic philosophy.

⁶⁷ Ibid., 153.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 154.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Frege, “Sense and Reference,” 58.

⁷¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 159.

The question remains: what is it about senses that makes their series *productive*? Basically, Deleuze's answer is that the series of meaningful propositions is continually proliferating.⁷² There's a potentially infinite regress of names (like Aristotle) and their senses, which Deleuze calls "Frege's paradox."⁷³ Moreover, the relations among senses are purely contingent, at least in comparison to the relation between propositions in a logical deduction. The relationship between the ideas expressed in "Aristotle was a student of Plato" and "Aristotle was a teacher of Alexander" (a true conjunction) is not conceptual implication but a matter of history, the events irreducible to relations among bodies or universal concepts.⁷⁴

For both Deleuze and Bergson, then, the derivative sense of truth is the one employed by a group of excessively scientific philosophers. Bergson's foils are the pragmatists, and Deleuze's, the early analytics. And for both it is possible to get to the "originary" sense of truth by returning to the "context of living thought"—what Bergson means by sticking with the truth of experience and resisting the prejudices of intellect. But, unlike Bergson's, Deleuze's "originary truth" does not revert to the form of adequation but takes the form of an impersonal production, in which the adequate or derived truths (solutions) are produced as the limit-cases of the contingently proliferating series of senses vested in problems.

Lambert is right, then, that Deleuze's response in the 1960s to the question concerning truth was to affirm chance—the aleatory, paradoxical character of sense he discusses in *The Logic of Sense*. But we can now see how the opposition with which Lambert claims Deleuze was faced is false. Supposedly, with the collapse of the "rule of reason" and the Nietzschean critique of the value of truth, Deleuze had either to invent new rules for the "game of truth" or abandon it altogether. Yet not only does Deleuze articulate a positive theory of truth, but the classical conception of it still finds a place in his post-structuralist system of the late 1960s. Adequation *qua* reference is explained in relation to the broader context of sense. On the other hand, neither does Deleuze simply "invent new rules" for the game of truth—at least, not strictly speaking, since the productivity of true problems and ideas has to do with the historical contingency of sense, the fact of its being identical to events irreducible to relations among bodies or universal concepts.

4 Does Deleuze change his mind about truth?

Lambert also argues that we need to make a distinction between Deleuze's response to the question about the "game of truth" in the 1960s and his response later in his career. Deleuze supposedly abandoned the affirmation of chance and advocated instead affirming the "principle of creation."⁷⁵ The latter, according to Lambert, "does not necessarily entail the creation of a new model of truth."⁷⁶ So even if I'm right about how Deleuze develops a reductionist theory of ontological truth in the 1960s, that doesn't prove anything about his views in a text from the 1990s like *What is Philosophy?* Other commentators have also concluded that late Deleuze's emphasis on creation implies a break with the old ontological conception of truth entirely.⁷⁷

Another reason to think that Deleuze has no interest in thinking theoretically about truth in his later texts is the one Allen highlights. For Deleuze, "*the interesting* emerges as a value higher than truth,"⁷⁸ or at least a more properly philosophical value. Deleuze and Guattari do insist that "Philosophy does not consist in knowing and is not inspired by truth. Rather, it is categories like Interesting, Remarkable, and Important that determine success or failure."⁷⁹ Likewise, "Thought as such produces something *interesting* when it accedes to the infinite movement that frees it from truth as supposed paradigm and reconquers an immanent power of creation."⁸⁰ The latter passage seems to imply, first, that thought's claim to "infinite

⁷² Ibid., 155.

⁷³ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 29.

⁷⁴ Bennett, *Deleuze and Ancient Greek Physics*, 78.

⁷⁵ Lambert, *Non-Philosophy*, 75, 80.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 95.

⁷⁷ Smith, "Analytics," 139; Allen, "Deleuze-Rorty," 174.

⁷⁸ Allen, "Deleuze-Rorty," 174.

⁷⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 82.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 140.

movement” by right helps it break with the theme of truth, and, second, that what thought *produces* when it confronts infinite movement or speed—a philosophical concept—is itself interesting, rather than true. Adequacy can’t be what the word “retains” implies when Deleuze and Guattari write that philosophy “retains” infinite speeds through consistent concepts.

That said, I think that the contrast between early and late Deleuze is overstated. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze was already sounding the theme of creation that Lambert thinks replaces that of chance—“To think is to create”—and associating such creation with nonstandard thinkers undetermined by the image of thought: “Artaud opposes *genitality* to innateness in thought.”⁸¹ Likewise, as I have explained, the opposition between production or creation and adequation is already at work in that text, but, correctly understood, it doesn’t imply that there’s no such thing as truth, or even no such thing as adequation, just that the latter is produced and explained by productive ideas in terms of their sense. Moreover, there is no reason to think that the opposition between creation and truth in *What is Philosophy?* is saying anything else. Although it doesn’t rehearse the arguments in detail, Deleuze and Guattari’s last book does allude to “sense” in its 1960s valence: “The concept is neither denotation of states of affairs nor signification of the lived; it is the event as pure sense.”⁸²

The main reason, however, for thinking that there’s no sharp contrast between the early and late Deleuze on the question of truth is the continuity of his disdain for *doxa*. As I’ve shown, Deleuze is more classically inclined than Rorty because he does indeed think a theory of truth is something worth having for a philosopher. Deleuze is even interested in explaining where truth in the classical sense of onto-adequation comes from, rather than simply presupposing it. There’s also another way in which Deleuze is more traditional than Rorty: he is much more committed, throughout his entire career, to the distinction between what philosophers are after (the placeholder classically supplied by “truth” or “knowledge”) and opinion or *doxa*. Deleuze never abandons this classical, even residually Platonic, point of view. His criticisms of the philosopher’s rivals in *What is Philosophy?*—for example, the “ideas men” of advertising—are reminiscent of the Platonic aim of sorting out true claimants to the truth from phonies like the sophists.⁸³ In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze had said that the main problem with the dogmatic image of thought is that it leaves philosophy without the means to realize its “project of breaking with *doxa*.” Similarly, the first presuppositions of the image, “good sense” and “common sense,” are called the “two halves of the *doxa*” and thus unworthy of a philosopher.⁸⁴

In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari are even harder on opinion when they elaborate on Deleuze’s critique of early analytic philosophy. “Logic,” they claim, is the attempt to collapse the distinction between philosophy and science, but they seem to intend the rather broad term to capture something specific about early analytic philosophy, since they mention Frege and Russell by name. Philosophy creates concepts, science creates functions, but scientific analysis produces a pseudophilosophic hybrid, the “propositional function.”⁸⁵ Philosophers like Frege and Russell use the notion to develop a theory of truth perfectly in keeping with the dogmatic image of thought—in fact, the very same one that Deleuze referred to in *Difference and Repetition* in terms of “designation”: “The relation of the propositional function to the independent variable or argument defines the proposition’s *reference*, or the function’s truth-value (‘true’ or ‘false’) for the argument.”⁸⁶ The notion of the propositional function also produces a rival claimant to the name “philosophical concept,” namely the “extensional” concept defined as the set of variables or arguments for which the propositional function comes out true.⁸⁷ However, Deleuze and Guattari say, this pseudo-concept lacks all the characteristics of the properly philosophical one, particularly the concept’s “consistency,” by which Deleuze and Guattari mean both the “specific infinity” of the concept’s heterogeneous components and its capacity to “speak” the “pure” or “virtual” Event.⁸⁸ So, as they put it, logic “kills the concept” in this sense.

⁸¹ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 147.

⁸² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 144.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 10. Compare the description of Platonism in the essay “Plato and the Simulacrum,” *Logic of Sense*, 254-57.

⁸⁴ Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 134.

⁸⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 135.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 136.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 21, 156.

Whatever it is possible to make of the above argument, what follows it is even more significant. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari claim, “logic” kills the concept “twice over”⁸⁹ because whenever a logician’s pseudo-concepts acquire their rigorous definitions (for example, as well-defined sets) they inevitably exclude *unrigorous* entities, “vague or fuzzy sets, simple aggregates of perceptions and affections, which form within the lived as immanent to a subject, to a consciousness. They are qualitative or intensive multiplicities, like ‘redness’ or ‘baldness’.”⁹⁰ These are Russell’s own examples of predicates “whose application is essentially doubtful.”⁹¹ For Deleuze and Guattari the problem with such vague predicates is not what it is for Russell: a challenge to the accuracy of representations. The issue is that “logic,” lacking the ability to treat them as extensional concepts, nevertheless allows them to hang around its periphery as a penumbra of tricky cases to be tackled by some other means. What propositional functions can’t resolve is delegated to non-logic and resolved finally by “the subject’s pure and simple opinions.” Hence, Deleuze and Guattari think, there is a subterranean alliance between logic and *phenomenology*, the pseudo-philosophical discipline for which “simple opinions ... subjective evaluations or judgments of taste” are the theoretical bread and butter.⁹² Diagnosing the state of the academic discipline, they note: “This has long been the situation of philosophy in America, with a large department of logic and a very small one of phenomenology.” Although the two so-called analytic and continental camps may sometimes be at verbal war, their relationship is actually symbiotic, “like the rhinoceros and the bird that lives on its parasites.”⁹³ The willingness of logicians to allocate the treatment of these fuzzy, unrigorous topics to another discipline also explains the devolution of rigorous language philosophy in the twentieth century, via Quine, Davidson, and eventually Rorty, into the “philosophy of communication ... [which is] exhausted in the search for a universal liberal opinion as consensus.” Here opinion reigns, “every noble soul flees,” and philosophy has become “orthodoxy” again.⁹⁴

To be clear, for Deleuze and Guattari it’s bad enough that “logic” redefines “concept” so that it loses what qualities it had that “retain” infinite speed and the virtuality of chaos while gaining consistency. But the *real* problem with “logic” is that it is *too tolerant* of opinion. Its search for the (referential) truth of adequation is, in a way, *not classical enough*. It fails to disambiguate true philosophers from their imitators. *What is Philosophy?* even suggests that the “struggle against chaos” shared by philosophy, science, and art may actually be *less* important than the “struggle against opinion, which claims to protect us from chaos.”⁹⁵ It would be better for a philosopher to lose the former battle than the latter.

5 Heidegger *redivivus*?

Deleuze’s distinction between two senses of “truth,” and especially his use of the word “originary” to describe one of them, may remind the reader of Heidegger, who in “On the Essence of Truth” (1930) not only identifies the usual concept of truth as the accord, correspondence, or “correctness” (*Richtigkeit*) of intellect with respect to beings, but also argues that this kind of truth is derivative. Its very possibility is grounded in the unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*) or disclosure (*Entschlossenheit*) that requires us to “rethink the ordinary concept of truth” on the basis of what it presupposes.⁹⁶ The remainder of this paper aims to situate Deleuze’s views about truth in relation to recent scholarly debates about the early Heidegger’s.

Mark Wrathall has suggested that Heidegger’s gesture of moving from propositional truth to unconcealment encapsulates an important difference between the so-called analytic and continental “ways of doing philosophy.” While analytic philosophers see themselves as engaged in the rigorous clarification of their subject matter (for example, the structures of language and mind), continental philosophers, often

⁸⁹ Ibid., 140.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 141.

⁹¹ Russell, “Vagueness,” 85.

⁹² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 141.

⁹³ Ibid., 143.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 146.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 203.

⁹⁶ Heidegger, “Essence of Truth,” 144.

starting from the same place, reflect on the historical and existential preconditions of those structures.⁹⁷ So with respect to truth, one procedure consists largely of the analysis of the way speakers use the truth predicate (“is true”)—of which Tarski’s definition of the truth predicate (Convention T) is exemplary—while the other seeks the conditions of true (and false) statements in a transcendental analytic of what makes them possible.⁹⁸ In the case of Heidegger this is, as he puts it in *Being and Time*, an “existential analytic” of what “unconcealment” is like for *Dasein*, the kind of beings we are. Deleuze might consider this contrast an oversimplification, since he thinks that Frege and early analytic philosophers are also interested in finding the “conditions of truth” in the linguistic dimension of sense. Nevertheless, despite his and Guattari’s evident disdain for both “departments of logic” and “of phenomenology,” Deleuze would also fit Wrathall’s description of the characteristically “continental” search for conditions of truth in the “context of living thought.” As we shall see, however, there are at least two marked differences between his views on this topic and Heidegger’s, which a foray into the Heidegger scholarship helps to clarify.

In his study of *Heidegger’s Concept of Truth*, Daniel Dahlstrom explains that the early Heidegger diagnoses a “logical prejudice” in philosophy, according to which the “site” of truth lies in assertions and related declarative utterances.⁹⁹ In response, Heidegger develops a conception of the “existential truth” that underlies propositional. This is explicit in section 44 of *Being and Time* but also implicit in the analyses of work and equipmentality, Being-with-others, care, and timeliness or temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*), including the anticipatory resoluteness of Being-toward-death, all of which Dahlstrom discusses in the longest chapter of his study.¹⁰⁰ To be sure, Deleuze’s conception of truth finds resonances in Heidegger’s. First and foremost, as both Wrathall and Dahlstrom point out, Heidegger’s views about unconcealment and “existential truth” involve a transcendental turn to conditions of possibility: they “bear[] the stamp ... not only of Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology but also of a conception of transcendental philosophy that can be traced back to Kant and Duns Scotus.”¹⁰¹ Likewise, Deleuze’s account of truth in terms of the sense of problems hinges on the move from “formal” to “transcendental logic,” and Deleuze also cites Husserl as a precedent.¹⁰² The extent to which Deleuze’s theory of “transcendental Ideas” in *Difference and Repetition* is a reworking of Kant is well understood,¹⁰³ as is his use of transcendental argumentation,¹⁰⁴ and Deleuze shares with Heidegger a profound admiration for Duns Scotus.¹⁰⁵ Secondly, and no less significant, Deleuze, like Heidegger, associates originary truth with temporality and historicity—although Deleuze’s lodestar here tends to be Bergson again. *Bergsonism* associates distinguishing true from false problems with finding the suitable articulation of those problems in temporal rather than spatial terms, as two elements of Bergson’s signature “method of intuition.”¹⁰⁶

Deleuze certainly read Heidegger. References to the latter are scattered throughout his work, though he never engaged directly at much length with Heidegger’s views.¹⁰⁷ Ernst Tugendhat writes that “Heidegger is perhaps the only philosopher of our time who has tried to productively continue the classical tradition

⁹⁷ Wrathall, “Conditions of Truth,” 306.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 308.

⁹⁹ Dahlstrom, *Heidegger’s Concept*, xvi.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 223-384.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 407.

¹⁰² Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 96.

¹⁰³ Voss, *Conditions of Thought*.

¹⁰⁴ Chase and Reynolds, “Transcendental Reasoning.”

¹⁰⁵ Widder, “Duns Scotus.”

¹⁰⁶ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 14.

¹⁰⁷ The longest discussion of Heidegger appears in *Difference and Repetition*, 64-66, in a “Note on Heidegger’s Philosophy of Difference.” There Deleuze begins by inquiring whether the negative particle “not” in Heidegger’s work stands for negation (the “negative in being”) or difference (“Being as difference”), and there is a strong presumption in favor of the second option. It concludes that Heidegger’s identification of the ontological difference with “questioning” (described in “On the Essence of Ground”) is “fundamental.” This may be interpreted as an endorsement of the view that there is some overlap between Heidegger’s conception of existential truth with Deleuze’s theory of the truth of problems if it is associated with Deleuze’s briefly technical use of the term “question” in *The Logic of Sense*, 56, according to which is the element that makes the series of senses “communicate” with each other. But such a conclusion would be underdetermined by the texts. For more on the relationship between Deleuze and Heidegger, see Boundas, “Martin Heidegger.”

of ontological-transcendental philosophy.”¹⁰⁸ Very likely he came to this conclusion without having read Deleuze’s views on truth, which also fit the bill. Moreover, Tugendhat’s influential interpretation of Heidegger, according to which the latter “simply equates truth and disclosedness” and thus loses the “specific meaning of truth”¹⁰⁹—whether or not it actually strikes its mark in Heidegger (both Wrathall and Dahlstrom give reasons to doubt it does¹¹⁰)—probably would not pose a problem for Deleuze’s analogous transcendental theory. According to Tugendhat, what is “specific” to truth is its opposition to untruth, but the identity of truth and unconcealment denies that: “untruth now becomes an aspect of truth.”¹¹¹ Existentially, “Dasein is equiprimordially both in the truth and in untruth,” Heidegger says, insofar as some entities are unconcealed while others are concealed—for example, as Dasein realizes some inauthentic existential possibilities that distract it.¹¹² For Deleuze, in contrast, there is no such blurring of the opposition at the level of the “originary” truth of problems. He imagines that transferring the test of true and false from solutions to problems (as Bergson advised) ought to produce the “disappearance of false problems,”¹¹³ not the lingering of “untruth” in the possibility of existential inauthenticity. To be fair, Deleuze does acknowledge that the truth—which is to say, productivity—of problems may only be discovered retrospectively, in accordance with what Bergson called the “retrograde movement of the true,”¹¹⁴ and it may be that this brings Deleuze’s view closer to Heidegger’s.

There are other, less ambiguous divergences between Deleuze and Heidegger. We can pinpoint them by articulating Dahlstrom’s major worries about Heidegger’s early view of truth. Dahlstrom wonders whether Tugendhat’s objections, although flawed in some respects, nevertheless reveal an unresolved problem—namely, that Heidegger’s conception of existential truth and his transcendental method are incompatible. In part, that’s because of the way Dahlstrom defends Heidegger from Tugendhat’s charge. Heidegger does not abandon the “specific meaning of truth,” since he maintains that “transcendental truth is articulated in propositions, albeit propositions ... [that] cannot be meaningfully rejected.”¹¹⁵ If so, however, then Heidegger “concedes ... in practice if not in principle” the “equiprimordially of existential truth and propositional truth,” thus undermining the pivotal claim that one is a transcendental condition of the other.¹¹⁶

Dahlstrom also indicates that the potential incompatibility of existential truth and transcendental method has to do with what he calls the “paradox of thematization,” Heidegger’s attempt to “thematize what is unthematic or prethematic, [or] to provide a theoretical account of what is pretheoretical.”¹¹⁷ Drawing on Heidegger’s 1925-26 lectures on *Logic: The Question of Truth*, Dahlstrom explains that “the difference between unthematic and thematic assertions lies in the fact that the thematic assertions allow something to be seen, not as something corresponding to a context of concern, but rather as itself.” It is the difference, for example, between the statement “The door is open,” in relation to which one is pragmatically concerned, and “The door is oak,” which may only elicit theoretical interest.¹¹⁸ While Heidegger always wanted to show how thematization is derivative of an original existential or “hermeneutical” understanding, throughout the 1920s, according to Dahlstrom, he began to recognize a tension intrinsic to his own project, to the extent that his work could be seen as a set of thematic or even theoretical statements. Heidegger’s first solution was to treat philosophical concepts as “formal indications” that guard against a pre-emptively theoretical attitude.¹¹⁹ While the exact role of formal indications in Heidegger’s writings remains “ambivalent,” the least we can say is that they are meant to contrast with theoretical or thematic assertions by *restoring*

¹⁰⁸ Tugendhat, “Heidegger’s Idea,” 247-48.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 257-58.

¹¹⁰ Wrathall, *Unconcealment*, 34-39; Dahlstrom, *Heidegger’s Concept*, 403-07.

¹¹¹ Tugendhat, “Heidegger’s Idea,” 257.

¹¹² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 265.

¹¹³ Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, 15.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18.

¹¹⁵ Dahlstrom, *Heidegger’s Concept*, 420.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 451, cf. 433-34.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 265.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 205.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 245.

the reader to a “context of concern” in which the original phenomenological understanding of a being is revealed, rather than taking a step back from this context.¹²⁰ Formal indications thus require a kind of short-circuit between the existential state of the reader and of the subject matter under discussion. As Dahlstrom puts it, they are intended to have a transformative effect. Rather than simply changing a reader’s mind, a philosophical concept (qua “formal indication”) induces a kind of existential realization and thus functions more in the manner of art and poetry than of scientific pronouncement.¹²¹

It is not clear to what extent the “paradox of thematization” would be a problem for Deleuze’s (and Deleuze and Guattari’s) isomorphic distinction between originary and derived truths. Although he does refer to replacing propositions in the “context of living thought,” there’s no hint that Deleuze envisions philosophical concepts inducing a comparable state of existential concern, so it is doubtful that the distinction between “thematic” assertions and “formal indications” applies. When he talks about truth, Deleuze does not seem to be imagining a “non-propositional form of intentionality ... which makes linguistic interaction possible,”¹²² but rather (like Donald Davidson, according to Wrathall) a pre-intentional propositional (or at least linguistic) structure, historically inflected as the senses of names (like “Aristotle”) evolve over time.

There is also a strong presumption against thinking that Deleuze’s “originary” truth is an *existential* one. It is possible that Deleuze would include Heidegger among those philosophers, such as Kant and Husserl, who inappropriately assign to the transcendental field “the form of a synthetic, personal consciousness,” and who are thus, in Deleuze’s estimation, “powerless to break with the form of common sense.”¹²³ I wonder, for example, what Deleuze would make of Heidegger’s argument that the essence of truth as disclosedness is *freedom*. In other words, it depends on the “ek-sistent” engagement of human beings qua Dasein with a region (“*Da*”) in which the disclosure occurs.¹²⁴ It may be that Deleuze would recognize that Heideggerian Dasein does not have the “form of synthetic, personal consciousness” to the extent that Heidegger insists that “disclosive Dasein” “possesses the human being,” and not the other way around,¹²⁵ but if Deleuze would number Heidegger alongside Kant and Husserl as a kind of personalist transcendental philosopher, then Deleuze and Tugendhat might agree when the latter concludes that “Heidegger was compelled to develop his position as an ‘overcoming’ of the modern philosophy of reflection—whereas it might have just as easily been a radicalization of the latter,”¹²⁶ even though for Deleuze this would be a criticism rather than, as it is for Tugendhat, a preferable alternative.

In a word, Deleuze is a structuralist about truth, not an existentialist, whatever the similarities between him and Heidegger. As I mentioned, for Deleuze the transcendental field assumes the “impersonal” form of continuously and contingently ramified “series” of linguistic items, which Deleuze also often describes in a more metaphysical and mathematical vein as a plane of consistency populated by “singularities.” It is, however, certainly surprisingly from this point of view that Deleuze attributes the insight that the transcendental ought to be “impersonal” to a work by another great existentialist, Sartre’s 1937 essay *The Transcendence of the Ego*.¹²⁷

While the “paradox of thematization” does not seem to apply to Deleuze, he and Guattari would be well advised to attend to the tension inherent in what Dahlstrom calls the “equiprimordiality” of propositional truth and originary truth, especially to the extent that their discussion of the difference between philosophy and science in *What is Philosophy?* deploys language like “retains,” which preserves a whiff of adequation. Collapsing the distinction (“in practice if not in principle”) between the sense of originary truth (productivity) and derived (correspondence) would create problems for Deleuze and Guattari analogous to the ones diagnosed by Dahlstrom in the context of the early Heidegger.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 249, cf. 204.

¹²¹ Ibid., 440.

¹²² Wrathall, “Conditions of Truth,” 320.

¹²³ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 97-99.

¹²⁴ Heidegger, “Essence of Truth,” 145.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Tugendhat, “Heidegger’s Idea,” 263.

¹²⁷ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 98; cf. Somers-Hall, “Sartre and the Virtual.”

Tugendhat's reading of Heidegger also anticipates, to a degree, the difference between Deleuze's equivocation over truth and Heidegger's. Tugendhat sees the latter as being "tempted" to solve the question of truth in a stroke ("like a Gordian knot") but in a way that suspends "the demands of criticism" to scrutinize carefully and discriminatingly the understanding of the world that existentially unfolds.¹²⁸ Deleuze, as we have seen, is also wary of philosophers (especially transcendental ones, like Kant) who are in his estimation insufficiently "critical." While there's no reason to assume that what Tugendhat and Deleuze mean by "criticism" and "critique" exactly converge, their views do share one salient feature. As Tugendhat put it in 2007: "Intellectual virtue," the careful, critical attitude, "consists ... in being open for the possibility that one's own opinions are untrue."¹²⁹ A recent commentator puts it this way: "Truth-directed pursuits" draw "attention to one's provisional or tentative grip on things, especially those of most direct concern to oneself ... Rather than offering reassurances."¹³⁰ Deleuze's sought-after critical, transcendental philosophy is likewise supposed to challenge the presupposition that thinkers have a spontaneous, natural "talent for truth" by calling into question the "common sense" according to which diversity is recognized only under the "form of the same" and all the "faculties of the soul" harmonize seamlessly.¹³¹ Powerlessness to break with such "common sense" is what Deleuze accused Kant and Husserl of, and he might also think the charge applies to Heidegger. Similarly, if critical consciousness involves "being open" to the possibility that one's opinions are untrue, then Tugendhat's complaint resonates with Deleuze and Guattari's view that institutionalized phenomenology reduces philosophy to the uncritical sharing of "the subject's pure and simple opinions"—which lack the "specific meaning of truth" in that they cannot be false. If Heidegger has contributed to the "surrender of the idea of critical consciousness,"¹³² then no wonder he is enthusiastically read in what Deleuze and Guattari call "departments of phenomenology."

Furthermore, Tugendhat wonders "whether Heidegger, as a result of his renunciation of critical consciousness, did not give his approach a direction that does not necessarily inhere in it, and to this extent, leaves other possibilities open."¹³³ In other words, Heidegger's "approach," which involves showing to what extent philosophy suffers from a "logical prejudice" and how propositional truth is derivative, may be consistent with other philosophies that do *not* renounce "critical consciousness." I submit that Deleuze's views about truth would qualify as one of the "other possibilities" Tugendhat envisions. For Deleuze, truth is primarily a property of "problems" or transcendental "structures," rather than propositions, and "applying the test of true and false" to problems demands carefully discriminating between them, not acceding to the spontaneous lived experience of the thinker.

6 Conclusion

One final divergence between the early Heidegger and Deleuze and Guattari deserves notice and answers the question about the relation between philosophy and science with which we began. According to Dahlstrom, while the "paradox of thematization" and the threat of the "equiprimordially of existential truth and propositional truth" initially provoked Heidegger to construe philosophical concepts as "formal indications," they later contributed to Heidegger's "turn" away from the project of *Being and Time*. Between 1925 and 1930, Heidegger shifts from calling his fundamental ontology "scientific" to signalling a sharp distinction between science and philosophy proper.¹³⁴ Science, according to the early Heidegger, makes thematic assertions—that is, ones that separate their subject matter from the lived contexts of concern in which they find their original meaning.¹³⁵ Moreover, the "ontical inquiry of the positive sciences" is

¹²⁸ Tugendhat, "Heidegger's Idea," 260.

¹²⁹ Quoted in Skirke, "Tugendhat's Idea," 846.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 845.

¹³¹ Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 78; cf. *Difference and Repetition*, 131.

¹³² Tugendhat, "Heidegger's Idea," 261.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 261.

¹³⁴ Dahlstrom, *Heidegger's Concept*, 209.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 208.

satisfied with the “totality ... of true propositions.”¹³⁶ According to Dahlstrom, Heidegger gradually realized how inconsistent these claims are with the view (also advanced in the introduction to *Being and Time*) that “phenomenology is the science of the Being of entities”¹³⁷—because the assertions of the latter are neither thematic nor “true” in same sense as the propositions of positive science. The culmination of these reevaluations of science appears in the famous passage of “The Origin of the Work of Art,” according to which “science is not an original happening of truth, but always the cultivation of a domain of truth already opened When and insofar as a science passes beyond correctness and goes on to a truth, which means that it arrives at the essential disclosure of beings as such, it is philosophy.”¹³⁸ Basically, Heidegger has ironed out a tacit equivocation on “science,” which at the time of *Being and Time* had both “positive” and “phenomenological” varieties, in order to retain the explicit equivocation on “truth,” as correctness and disclosure. This produces a demarcation of science and philosophy according to which science is true in the first sense and philosophy in the second.

Does Deleuze think science is true in the same way? He sounds Heideggerian when he speaks about truth in two senses, “originary” and “derived,” and I have shown how these two senses are at work not just in *Difference and Repetition* but still in *What is Philosophy?*, the book that most directly and extensively addresses the demarcation problem. But in the later book, science is true in *neither* sense that Deleuze licenses. It doesn’t possess the “originary” truth of a philosophical concept, to the extent that a concept possesses a sense and is linked to a problem it helps to resolve.¹³⁹ Nor does it possess the “derived” truth of adequate reference, which is the domain of “logic.” If we retain Heideggerian expectations, it will come as a surprise that for Deleuze and Guattari the distinction between science and philosophy does not correspond to the distinction between two kinds of truth.

Certainly Deleuze and Guattari say that the scientific way of confronting chaos is with a “plane of reference,” and they implicate reference in the theory of truth as adequation endemic to a certain kind of philosopher. This may seem to imply that scientific functions, on which pseudophilosophical “propositional functions” are modeled, are concerned with the truth of reference as well. But this inference is neither necessary nor supported by the evidence from the text. In *What is Philosophy?* the theme of reference is actually detached from any talk about truth, except in the context of “logic” as a hybrid of science and philosophy. In fact, I suspect that the false problem of onto-adequation arises only in the context of this hybridization, because here science and philosophy are not intersecting in their “full maturity” but in the process of their constitution.

It’s also possible that Deleuze and Guattari think science installs its “plane of reference” that actualizes the virtual and finitizes the infinite for the sake of adaptive utility, for the human ease of handling and manipulating systems. They aren’t explicit. If that were so, then science would be true in the sense of the pragmatist’s truths or what Bergson called the truths of intellect that serve life. But the fact is that, unlike Bergson, Deleuze and Guattari don’t describe science instrumentally, nor do they associate the search for truth with the scientific endeavor. Rather, they say that science has an “affinity” for, even “attraction” toward, chaos and is like philosophy in that respect.¹⁴⁰ It is possible that science is just as contemptuous of opinion as philosophy is (or ought to be).

Science is *not* true, for Deleuze, in either sense of the word he equivocates. Philosophy on the other hand, strives to be true in *both* of these senses—in the sense of originary truth, in contrast to opinion, and the (bad) sense of derived truth, the ontological adequation with which “logic” is satisfied, as the contemporary representative of the long-lived dogmatic image of thought. This situation gives science a unique third status. Science is indifferent to truth in the way that some of Deleuze’s readers have wanted to say philosophy is. In fact, this characteristic of science—its not being interested in the truth—is what’s original and novel about *What is Philosophy?* relative to Deleuze’s other works. As I have argued elsewhere,

¹³⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 31-32.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

¹³⁸ Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” 187.

¹³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 144, 27, 79.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 203, 205.

Deleuze and Guattari's conception of science is antirealist and thus in accord with the way that practicing scientists sometimes deploy self-consciously false models, which Deleuze and Guattari call "planes of reference," to produce the results of normal science.¹⁴¹ Deleuze and Guattari don't disparage science in relation to philosophy, however, as if it were mired in the dogmatic image of thought and naïve ideal of truth. Rather, they equivocate on "philosophy" in a way reminiscent of the early Heidegger's equivocation on "science" and disparage institutional philosophy for not being committed enough to the old Platonic ideal.¹⁴²

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¹⁴¹ Bennett, "Deleuze, Developmental Systems Theory."

¹⁴² My sincere thanks to Tano S. Posteraro for the stimulus to think about this topic in more depth and to two anonymous reviewers at *Open Philosophy* for their very useful feedback, especially on Dahlstrom and Heidegger.

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