

## 11 Deleuze and the Pragmatist Priority of Subject Naturalism

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Rather than making grand claims about the relation between Deleuze's approach to philosophy and pragmatism, what I attempt to do in this chapter is position Deleuze's work in relation to some of the more interesting recent developments in pragmatism, specifically a certain pragmatist approach to philosophy put forward by David Macarthur and Huw Price (2007), which they refer to as subject naturalism. In many respects there is much in common between various flavors of pragmatism and Deleuze's philosophy. In some respects, however, drawing connections between the two is not so straightforward. What I undertake to do in this chapter is canvass the more obvious connections between the two, such as anti-, or nonrepresentationalism—what some pragmatists refer to as quietism on representation—and then try to test the waters with some of those aspects of Deleuze's philosophy that are more difficult to forge connections with pragmatism, such as the question of Deleuze's relation to metaphysics. For instance, Macarthur and Price's pragmatism is quietist on metaphysics, whereas Deleuze does seem to have metaphysical commitments of one kind or another, at least in terms of the metaphysics of the calculus that I argue underpins his ontological commitments. The aim of this chapter is therefore to test the degree to which Deleuze's philosophy can be reconciled with the subject naturalist approach to pragmatism put forward by Macarthur and Price.

Pragmatists have traditionally been critical of representationalism but supportive of a kind of naturalism, understood as naturalism about human subjects. In "Naturalism Without Mirrors," Huw Price distinguishes between two kinds of naturalism. On the one hand there is the familiar "object naturalism," or what he refers to as "capital N Naturalism," which is the view that the only facts there are are the kinds of facts recognized by natural science. The world is the world-as-studied-by-science; whatever exists does so "in the natural realm." On the other hand, there is the less familiar "subject naturalism," which is the philosophical viewpoint that begins with the realization that humans are natural creatures and that human thought and discursive practice are part of the world, or part of the natural order. While capital N Naturalists consider subject naturalism to be merely a subspecies of object naturalism, Price claims, on the contrary, that

subject naturalism is importantly prior to object naturalism. This claim to priority is in response to the fact that object naturalism presupposes a particular “representational” or “referential” view of human linguistic activity, namely the representational or referential relation between language and the natural world. And that this view about human language is a presupposition that is properly assessed from a subject naturalist standpoint.

While Price is primarily concerned with better addressing the concerns about time and causation that object naturalism engages with, this distinction is informative for assessing and understanding some of the moves that are made by Deleuze in the development of his philosophy of difference. Similarly to the pragmatism outlined above, Deleuze is also critical of representationalism, and his work is concerned with recent developments in mathematics and science; indeed his work is replete with mathematical examples, which begs the question of the relation Deleuze’s philosophy has to pragmatism and to the kinds of naturalism supported by its various adherents. It is clear from a number of statements that Deleuze makes throughout his work that he is critical of the scientific reductionism that goes hand in hand with what I’ll refer to, following Price, as “capital N Naturalism.” However, it is less clear whether a kind of subject naturalism can be understood to be operative in his work. Deleuze’s obvious favor of the Spinozist doctrine that we humans are not “a kingdom within a kingdom” (Spinoza 2002, EIIIPref; PT, chapter 2.6) but rather are a part of nature does provide some support for such a reading. However, the metaphysics that is more or less explicit in the philosophy of difference that Deleuze develops throughout his work, and the range of Romantic characterizations of it that have been developed by his commentators, is less obviously reconcilable with the pragmatist subject naturalism proposed by Price.

What I claim in this chapter is that Deleuze’s metaphysics, and the ontological commitments it seems to imply, can be understood in a deflationary way to be a metaphysics of the calculus, namely, the logic of the calculus of problems, that draws upon a conception of mathematics that is more than just the sum of its theories, and that this deflationary metaphysics is consonant in useful ways with the subject naturalism proposed by Price. One preliminary consonance being that the conception of mathematics that Deleuze develops does not serve the same reductive ends that “capital N Naturalism” requires, but rather it serves as a useful tool for modeling the nature of our relation to the world without the representational presuppositions of the latter. This conception of mathematics draws upon the work of Henri Poincaré, Bernhard Riemann, Hermann Weyl, and the mathematical philosophy of Albert Lautman (Lautman 2011). The metaphysics of the calculus that Deleuze develops therefore moves beyond the scientific reductionism of a thoroughgoing “capital N Naturalism” and provides a deflationary model for the metaphysical claims that Deleuze makes about the virtual.<sup>1</sup>

## LEITER AND SPECULATIVE M-NATURALISM

In order to better position Deleuze's philosophy in relation to what I'll refer to as Price's subject naturalist pragmatism, I'd first like to make some preliminary comments about Deleuze's relation to naturalism. In order to do so, I want to draw upon the work of the Nietzsche scholar, Brian Leiter, who characterizes a particular kind of Humean naturalism, which he refers to as speculative, in order to frame a naturalist reading of Nietzsche. What I propose to do is to put Deleuze's philosophy to the test to see whether it can be understood to be operating within the parameters of this approach, i.e., whether or not it provides the requisite minimalist naturalist framework that Leiter claims is operative in Nietzsche. There are going to be some obvious limitations to this exercise. However, this detour helps me to set out what I think is an important and often overlooked aspect of Deleuze's philosophy. Far from settling on a speculative approach to characterize Deleuze's relation to naturalism, I'd like to use this as a platform for further interrogating whether Deleuze's philosophy is reconcilable with Price's pragmatism and the subject naturalism that it endorses. Because this is more of a position paper, I am neither going to critique Leiter's Nietzsche, nor propose or defend a reading of Deleuze's Nietzsche in this chapter. The relative success of the argument I'm trying to put together in this chapter will rest on the degree to which I am able to argue for the reconciliation of Deleuze's philosophy with Price's particular brand of pragmatism, rather than with Leiter's minimalist naturalist framework.

The benefits of this kind of approach, and the reason that I am attempting to reconcile Deleuze's philosophy with such a pragmatist framework is that I am interested in putting together a leaner Deleuze, that is, a Deleuze that is a bit more "sober and . . . mundane" (Lefebvre 2008, xiv), but hopefully a bit more useful; a Deleuze that resists the romance of being historicized as, for example, either Kantian or Hegelian, but rather a Deleuze that is able to provide the tools to do philosophy today and that is robust enough to have those tools deployed widely and usefully. Price offers one of the most interesting contemporary takes on the potential of pragmatism for philosophy today, and it is therefore useful to try to determine whether or not Deleuze's philosophy stands up in relation to it, and therefore to determine whether, to what degree or in what way, this variety of pragmatism can be used to extend Deleuze's philosophical project.

In *Nietzsche on Morality* (2002), Leiter sets out a systematic reading of Nietzsche as a philosophical naturalist in what he elsewhere calls the "broad sense" (Leiter 2013, 576). This is in distinction to what he refers to as "Laundry List Naturalism" (Leiter 2013, 577), which bundles together all of the following characteristics about Nietzsche:

He opposes transcendent metaphysics, whether that of Plato or Christianity or Schopenhauer. He rejects notions of the immaterial soul, the

absolutely free controlling will, or the self-transparent pure intellect, instead emphasizing the body, talking of the animal nature of human beings, and attempting to explain numerous phenomena by invoking drives, instincts, and affects which he locates in our physical, bodily existence. Human beings are to be “translated back into nature,” since otherwise we falsify their history, their psychology, and the nature of their values—concerning all of which we must know truths, as a means to the all-important reevaluation of values. (Janaway 2007, 34)

This is Nietzsche’s naturalism in the broader laundry list sense that Leiter considers to be too general.

The more specific kind of naturalism that Leiter has in mind is “Methodological Naturalism” (which he refers to as “M-Naturalism”), according to which “philosophical inquiry . . . should be continuous with empirical inquiry in the sciences” (Leiter 2002, 3). The distinction in M-Naturalism that Leiter draws upon to characterize Nietzsche’s naturalism is between, on the one hand, those M-Naturalists that

want to *replace* conceptual and justificatory theories with empirical and descriptive theories—for this they draw upon more-or-less Quinean arguments against conceptual analysis and foundationalist programs. And, on the other hand, those M-Naturalists who retain the *normative* and regulative ambitions of traditional philosophy, but emphasize that it is an *empirical* question what normative advice is actually useable and effective for creatures like us. (Leiter 2012, 1)

It is the latter definition that Leiter wants to work with, and he qualifies this position in reference to Hume, whom he characterizes as a speculative M-Naturalist. Leiter argues that a Speculative M-Naturalist is a philosopher, like Hume, who wants to “construct theories that are ‘modeled’ on the sciences . . . in that they take over from science the idea that natural phenomena have deterministic causes” (Leiter 2002, 5). The important qualifier here is that speculative M-Naturalists

do not . . . appeal to *actual* causal mechanisms that have been well-confirmed by the sciences, because if they did, they would not need to *speculate!* Rather, the idea is that their speculative theories of human nature are informed by the sciences and a scientific picture of how things work. (Leiter 2013, 577)

Leiter argues that “Hume models his theory of human nature on Newtonian science by trying to identify a few basic, general principles that will provide a broadly deterministic explanation of human phenomena, much as Newtonian mechanics did for physical phenomena” (Leiter 2013, 577). The difference is that the Humean theory remains speculative because its claims

about human nature are not confirmed scientifically, nor are they supported by any of the scientific developments of Hume's day. Leiter goes on to argue that

Nietzsche, like Hume, has a sustained interest in explaining why "human beings act, think, perceive and feel" as they do, especially in the broadly ethical domain. Like Hume, Nietzsche proffers a speculative psychology. . . . And this speculative psychology (as well as the occasional physiological explanations he offers in passing) appear to give us causal explanations for various human phenomena, which, even if not law-governed, seem to have a deterministic character (cf. Leiter 2002, 5). (Leiter 2013, 578)

For the purposes of this paper, I am putting aside questioning the details of Leiter's interpretation of Nietzsche, which for all intents and purposes is an interesting and compelling attempt to make Nietzsche useful to contemporary readers, albeit readers with a particular interest in moral psychology. What I am interested in signaling here, however, is the modeling relation that is operative in the speculative M-Naturalist approach. For Hume, it is Newtonian mechanics. For Nietzsche, it is the mechanics of psychology. What I'd like to argue here is that, for Deleuze, the model is mathematical, and it is a mathematical model of the logic of the calculus of problems.

#### THE MATHEMATICAL REAL AND HOW MATHEMATICS SERVES AS A MODEL FOR OTHER DISCOURSES

Deleuze gives the logic of the calculus of problems an informal mathematical characterization by tracing its development through an alternative lineage in the history of mathematics from Cauchy through Weierstrassian analytic continuity, to Poincaré's qualitative theory of differential equations, to Riemann's concept of qualitative multiplicity, or Riemann space. The work of Weyl on Riemann surfaces (Weyl 1913) is also instrumental to the development of the mathematical model that Deleuze develops. Weyl makes Riemann's intuitive representation of Riemann space more explicit by using a generalization of Weierstrass's analytic continuity—effectively demonstrating that Riemann surfaces are the surfaces of Weierstrassian power series expansions—to show that Riemann space is composed of Riemann surfaces, and therefore of Weierstrassian power series expansions.<sup>2</sup> It is this logic of the calculus of problems, modeled on mathematics, that Deleuze redeploys in relation to the history of philosophy as a logic of difference in order to generate the philosophical problematics that he then uses to construct a philosophy of difference.

It is important to note that Deleuze eschews characterizing his redeployment of the logic of the calculus of problems as simply analogical or

metaphorical. He is careful to distinguish between those mathematical notions that are quantitative and exact in nature, which it is “quite wrong” to use metaphorically “because they belong to exact science” (Deleuze 1995, 29), and those mathematical problems that are “essentially inexact yet completely rigorous” (Deleuze 1995, 29) and that have led to important developments not only in mathematics and science in general, but also in other nonscientific areas such as philosophy and the arts. Deleuze argues that this sort of notion is “not unspecific because something’s missing but because of its nature and content” (Deleuze 1995, 29). An example of an inexact and yet rigorous notion is Henri Poincaré’s qualitative theory of differential equations, which develops the concept of an essential singularity. The different kinds of essential singularity are observed by virtue of the trajectories of variables across a potential function, rather than because there is a specific mathematical proof of their existence. Another example, is a Riemann space, which Deleuze describes as occurring “when the connecting of parts is not predetermined but can take place in many ways: it is a space which is disconnected, purely optical, sound or even tactile (in the style of Bresson)” (Deleuze 1989, 129). While Deleuze recognizes that citing mathematical notions of the exact kind outside of their particular sphere would rightly expose one to the criticism of “arbitrary metaphor or of forced application” (Deleuze 1989, 129), he defends the use he makes of mathematical notions of the inexact kind. He does so on the grounds that by “taking from scientific operators a particular conceptualizable character which itself refers to non-scientific areas” (Deleuze 1989, 129), the redeployment of this conceptualizable character in relation to another nonscientific area is justified. What this means is that the other nonscientific area “converges with science without applying it or making it a metaphor” (Deleuze 1989, 129). A useful way of characterizing the relation between the conceptualizable character of the inexact mathematical notion and this conceptualizable character as redeployed in other nonscientific areas, insofar as the latter converges with the former, is to refer to it as a modeling relation. That is, the conceptualizable character as redeployed in a nonscientific area is modeled on the conceptualizable character of the inexact mathematical notion. What distinguishes a modeling relation from a relation of analogy or metaphor is that there are “correspondences without resemblance” (Deleuze 1994, 184) between them. That is, there is a correspondence between the conceptualizable character in each instance; however, there is no resemblance between the scientific elements of the mathematical problem and the nonscientific elements of the discourse in which this conceptualizable character has been redeployed. It is this conceptualizable character that is characteristic of the two examples above and of all of the mathematical problems, including the concept of the differential, that Deleuze deploys in his philosophy as models to reconfigure philosophical problems and to construct alternative lineages in the history of philosophy.



While Deleuze does refer to his project as developing a “*mathesis universalis*” (Deleuze 1994, 181), he doesn’t consider there to be a definite system of mathematical laws at the base of nature. Mathematics is not privileged in this way over other discourses. There is, however, a peculiarity about the discourse of mathematics that remains a sticking point in other discourses, and that is the nature of the relation between the objects of the discourse and the ideas of those objects as expressed within the discourse. Mathematics is peculiar because all of its objects are actually constructed by the discourse itself. The ideas of the objects of mathematics are therefore directly and unproblematically related to the objects themselves.<sup>3</sup> It is for this reason that mathematics is figured as providing a model for our understanding of the nature of this relation in other discourses, where it is far from straightforward. Deleuze takes Lautman’s concept of the mathematical real, which includes the sum of all mathematical theories and the structure of the problematic ideas that govern them, and casts it as a model for our understanding of the nature of the relation between the objects of any one discourse and the structure of the problematic ideas that govern them within that discourse. Insofar as all discourses can be modeled in this way, Deleuze argues that there is a “*mathesis universalis*” (Deleuze 1994, 181). Deleuze is not positing a positive mathematical order to the universe, but he is rather nominating the Lautmanian mathematical real as a model for our understanding of the structure of all other discourses.

It is important to note that Lautman’s references to a dialectic of ideas should therefore not be understood as being references to a general dialectic that exists independently of the mathematics. Lautman is quite explicit in claiming that the dialectic of ideas is the fourth point of view of the mathematical real (Lautman 2011, 183). The mathematical real is not just the sum of all mathematical theories. The former should therefore not be collapsed into the latter. To do so would lead to the mistaken thesis that mathematics provides evidence of an external and more general dialectic that is equally accessible by means of some kind of analysis performed in regard to or from within other discourses. What seems to be clear in Lautman’s work is that he considers himself to be working within the constraints of the discourse of mathematics, and the structure of the dialectic that he presents is determined as operating within the expanded concept of mathematics that he makes claim to: the mathematical real. The dialectic of ideas is independent of the mathematical theories, or the mathematics per se, but not of the expanded understanding of the mathematical real.

Lautman does claim that the structure of the dialectic is not the sole privy of the mathematical real, and that it can therefore also “be found” in other discourses. However, he does not claim that this is the case because the dialectic is able to be generalized, or insofar as it is transcendent with respect to the mathematical real. While Lautman makes strong claims to the unity of mathematics, which was controversial at the time and remains so today, he

does not make any claim whatsoever as to the unity of all discourses. What Lautman argues rather is that this is the case because the way that the structure of the dialectic operates in the mathematical real functions as a model for recognizing how it can be understood to operate in other discourses.

Lautman maintains that we are able to recognize the logic of relations structured by the dialectic in other discourses solely by virtue of the mathematical theories in which these relations are incarnated—as Lautman argues, “the effectuation of these connections is immediately mathematical theory” (Lautman 2011, 28). That is to say that it is the way in which the mathematical logic is deployed in other discourses that allows such a discourse to be understood to operate according to the dialectic. By dialectic Lautman means here the dialectic of the mathematical real. So mathematics is not privileged over other discourses according to Lautman because, on the one hand, he doesn’t consider there to be a definite system of mathematical laws at the base of nature, and, on the other hand, he does consider it to be intimately involved in our understanding of the very dialectical structure of those discourses. What this amounts to is that mathematical theories are not the sole privy of mathematics, or the mathematical real; they also provide the ground for understanding how the dialectic operates in other discourses. So when Lautman argues that “mathematical logic does not enjoy in this respect any special privilege. It is only one theory among others and the problems that it raises or that it solves are found almost identically elsewhere” (Lautman 2011, 28), by privileged, we should also understand exclusive to the mathematical real.

What is important about mathematics, for Lautman, Deleuze, and Badiou, is its *a priority*, which allows the dialectic of ideas to be recognized as a component of the mathematical real in a way that is not directly accessible in other discourses. This sets up the mathematical real, and the structure of the dialectic as it operates in the mathematical real, as a model for the structure of other discourses, and for how we can understand these other discourses to operate. It is the conceptual character of mathematical theories or problems that, when deployed in relation to other discourses, allows such a discourse to be understood to operate according to the dialectic, or to be structured by the dialectic. It is by tracing the history of the conceptual character of the differential as deployed in a number of developments in mathematics, and the deployment of the conceptual character of these developments in mathematics in relation to specific problems in the history of philosophy, that the structure of the dialectic of the mathematical real is developed as an important component of the structure of Deleuze’s philosophy.

Deleuze is not alone in being influenced by the work of Lautman. In *Being and Event*, Badiou openly declares that what he owes to Lautman’s writings, “even in the very foundational intuitions for this book, is immeasurable” (Badiou 2005, 482). Indeed, Badiou’s thesis that “ontology is mathematics” (Badiou 2005, 13), which is developed in relation to axiomatic set



theory, and Cohen's extensions of it, is a formalization of the structure of the dialectic of ideas. It is therefore not a response to the dialectic of ideas, but a formal restatement of its structure within the mathematical real. Axiomatic set theory, as qualified above, operates as the mathematical theory that provides the ground for understanding how the dialectic operates in other discourses, namely the four conditions that Badiou proposes: Science, Politics, Art, Love. So for Badiou, an Event, whether characterized in the mathematical real or another discourse, is a dialectical Idea, and felicity to it operates according to the structure of the dialectic of ideas.

What distinguishes Deleuze from Badiou is that Deleuze is not committed to such a bold thesis statement as Badiou, so Deleuze's claims are not dependent on the success of axiomatic set theory to provide foundations for mathematics and therefore for all other discourse. Deleuze's claims are rather epistemically modest. While set theory operates as a formal restatement of the structure of the dialectic of ideas for Badiou, the mathematics that Deleuze draws upon operates as an informal restatement of this structure. It is informal since it is dependent upon a collection of intuitive results in the work of Poincaré and Riemann, rather than on rigorous formal proofs. Rather than claiming that it is *the* mathematical model, as Badiou does with axiomatic set theory, for Deleuze, it is *a* mathematical model that he considers to be more useful than other potential models that had been proposed.

The work of Lautman, Deleuze, and Badiou does more than merely provide descriptive accounts, using different terms, of an overarching dialectic of ideas that subsumes the operations of all discourses. Rather, their respective works are arguments for a particular kind of dialectic of ideas that can be understood to operate in relation to other discourses by virtue of the way that it operates in the mathematical real. The detail of the structure of the dialectic can only be offered in terms of the mathematical real; however, this structure can be used to model the structure and mode of operation of other discourses. So the structure of the dialectic of ideas can indeed be found in other discourses, as Lautman states; however, it is only by virtue of the extent to which the structure of other discourses can be determined to operate according to the model of the mathematical real that this can be achieved.

For Deleuze, the manner by means of which an idea is implicated in the mathematical theory that determines it serves as a model for the manner by means of which a philosophical concept is implicated in the philosophical problematic that determines it. There is therefore a correspondence between the logic of the calculus of problems and the logic of the theory of relations that is characteristic of Deleuze's philosophy of difference, insofar as the latter is modeled on the former. There are "correspondences without resemblance" (Deleuze 1994, 184) between them, insofar as both are determined according to the same logic, i.e., according to the logic of differentiation, but without resemblance between their elements. The philosophical implications of this convergence, or modeling relation, are developed

by Deleuze in *Expressionism in Philosophy* (Deleuze 1990) in relation to his reading of Spinoza's theory of relations in the *Ethics* (see Duffy 2004; 2006), and in *Bergsonism* (Deleuze 1988), and *Cinema 1* and *2* (Deleuze 1986; 1989) in relation to his understanding of Bergson's intention "to give multiplicities the metaphysics which their scientific treatment demands" (Deleuze 1991, 117).

## PRICE AND SUBJECT NATURALIST PRAGMATISM

So the claim I am making in this chapter is that Deleuze does have a model that fits with the speculative side of Humean speculative M-Naturalism. However, there are real problems fitting Deleuze into the Methodological-Naturalist side of speculative M-Naturalism. The main difficulty turns on the foundational role of certain "semantic" or "representationalist" presuppositions in this form of naturalism.

Naturalism has two registers, both ontological and epistemological. "As an ontological doctrine, it is the view that in some important sense, all there *is* is the world studied by science. As an epistemological doctrine, it is the view that all genuine knowledge is scientific knowledge" (Price 2011, 185). According to Price, these views constitute what he refers to as "*object naturalism*" (Price 2011, 185), and Leiter's M-Naturalism represents a subset of the latter epistemological doctrine of object naturalism. Despite being widely endorsed in contemporary philosophy, there are a number of both supporters and critics who consider object naturalism to lead to some serious difficulties. One of the implications is that, "in so far as philosophy is concerned with the nature of objects and properties of various kinds, its concern is with something in the natural world" (Price 2011, 186). In spite of the fact that "there are very different ways of talking about the world-as-studied-by-science"—for example, as "different "modes of presentation" of aspects of the same natural reality, . . . the object of each kind of talk is an aspect of the world-as-studied-by-science. . . . The difficulties stem from the fact that in many interesting cases it is hard to see what natural facts we could be talking about" (Price 2011, 186). A range of candidates is generally offered, including "meaning, value, mathematical truth, causation and physical modality, and various aspects of mentality" (Price 2011, 186). Regardless of which side of the issue one stands on, i.e., whether you are a naturalist or an opponent of naturalism, there is a shared conviction in most of contemporary philosophy that "the list is non-empty" (Price 2011, 186). Price refers to these difficulties as "*placement problems*" (Price 2011, 186) and considers them to "stem from a presupposition about the ontological scope of science—roughly, the naturalist assumption that all there is is the world as studied by science" (Macarthur and Price 2007, 94). The difficulty with this kind of ontological assumption is that the question of how "moral facts, mathematical facts, and meaning facts" (Price 2011, 187) are to be

“placed” becomes pertinent. How are topics of these kinds to be located within a naturalistic framework, thus conceived? Either these topics are forced “into a category which for one reason or another seems ill-shaped to contain it,” or, they are to be regarded “as at best second-rate,” i.e., not as genuine areas of fact or knowledge (Price 2011, 187).

One option in response to this dilemma could be to reject naturalism, i.e., to be non-naturalistic in the same ontological or epistemic registers. The argument in support of this view being that “[i]f genuine knowledge need not be scientific knowledge, genuine facts not scientific facts, there is no need to try to squeeze the problem cases into naturalistic clothing” (Price 2011, 187). In this way, placement problems, as Price calls them, “provide the motivation for much contemporary opposition to naturalism in philosophy” (Price 2011, 187). The other option in response to this dilemma, which is endorsed by Price, is “to reject the naturalism that produces it” (Price 2011, 187), i.e., to be a different kind of naturalist. The idea being that one can “reject *object* naturalism, in favor of a subject naturalist approach to the same theoretical problems” (Price 2011, 187).

One way of thinking about the distinction between object naturalism and subject naturalism is to understand that according to the latter, “philosophy needs to begin with what science tells us *about ourselves*. Science tells us that we humans are natural creatures, and if the claims and ambitions of philosophy conflict with this view, then philosophy needs to give way” (Price 2011, 186). On this view, subject naturalism is no more than an obvious corollary of object naturalism, and contemporary “naturalists,” whom Price refers to as object naturalists, would have no problem with also claiming that they are subject naturalists. This is also the kind of naturalism that Leiter proposes in referring to both Humean and Nietzschean naturalism as speculative M-Naturalism—the speculative component is secondary to the object naturalism that underpins it.

What Price wants to do, and this is what is interesting about Price’s position, is to reverse the presumed priority of object naturalism over subject naturalism. According to Price, “Subject naturalism comes first, in a very important sense” (Price 2011, 186). Price proposes two theses. First, a “Priority Thesis,” which states that: “Subject naturalism is theoretically prior to object naturalism, because the latter depends on validation from a subject naturalist perspective” (Price 2011, 186). And, second, an “Invalidity Thesis,” which states that: “There are strong reasons for doubting whether object naturalism deserves to be ‘validated’—whether its presuppositions do survive subject naturalist scrutiny” (Price 2011, 187). Price’s argument for this claim depends on “the role of certain ‘semantic’ or ‘representationalist’ presuppositions in the foundations of object naturalism” (Price 2011, 184). In order “to avoid a universal subjectivism,” a problem that non-naturalist positions are left to deal with, the subject naturalist approach to the placement problems presented by Price relies on the fact that “these problems *originate* as problems about human linguistic usage” (Price 2011, 187). This

is what distinguishes object naturalism from subject naturalism. With the former, placement problems begin with the objects themselves, whereas with the latter, placement problems begin with “linguistic (or perhaps psychological) data” (Price 2011, 187). So for the subject naturalist, the “placement problems are initially problems about human linguistic behavior (or perhaps about human thought)” (Price 2011, 189), whereas object naturalism “turns such a concern into an issue about something else—about value, mathematical reality, causation, or whatever” (Price 2011, 189). Attention is shifted away from the *term*, to what it is *about*. The shift relies on what Price calls “the *representationalist* assumption” (Price 2011, 189), which is the assumption “that the *linguistic* items in question ‘stand for’ or ‘represent’ something *non-linguistic*” (Price 2011, 189).<sup>4</sup> It is this assumption that grounds the shift in focus for the object naturalist “from the *term* ‘X’ or *concept* X, to its assumed *object*, X” (Price 2011, 189). The object naturalist’s mistake is precisely to follow this representationalist path, into what Price refers to as “the *cul de sac* of metaphysics” (Macarthur and Price 2007, 97), i.e., by asking metaphysical questions that attempt to raise the question of what is being spoken *about*. Object naturalism is based upon the kind of theoretical framework that is derived from such a representational view of language. Price argues that “[t]he object naturalist’s instinct is always to appeal to the representational character of language to bring the issue back to the material level” (Price 2011, 198), whereas, on the contrary, subject naturalism “remains in the linguistic realm,” dealing with what Price refers to as the “puzzle about a plurality of *ways of talking*, of forms of human linguistic behavior” (Price 2011, 199). The challenge for the subject naturalist, as Price sees it, “is to explain in naturalistic terms how creatures like us come to talk in these various ways. This is a matter of explaining what role the different language games play in our lives—what differences there are between the functions of talk of value and the functions of talk of” things (Price 2011, 199). The “guiding intuition” of Price’s subject naturalism “is that if we can explain how natural creatures in our circumstances naturally come to speak in these ways, there is no further puzzle about the place of the topics concerned, in the kind of world described by science” (Macarthur and Price 2007, 95). If this were the case, then placement problems would be resolved.

Because of the subject naturalist alternative proposed by Price, it is clear that the placement problems that object naturalism is faced with are not problems for naturalism *per se*. Subject naturalism does not challenge the view that in some respects, philosophy should properly defer to science. Indeed Macarthur and Price argue that subject naturalist pragmatists are “happy to stand with the folk,” i.e., with ordinary, nontechnical natural language vocabulary:

and to affirm the first-order truths of the domains in question—to affirm that there are beliefs, and values, and causes, and ways things might have been, and so on. What they reject is any distinctively metaphysical

theoretical perspective from which to say more about these matters—that they do or don't *really* exist [realism versus fictionalism], that they are *really* something subjective [subjectivism], or whatever. (Macarthur and Price 2007, 100)

Pragmatism in Price's sense is thus a "no metaphysics" view rather than an antirealist view. Subject naturalist pragmatists, in addition to being representational quietists, are metaphysical *quietists*, i.e., not antirealist, but quietist on realism, where "quietism about a particular vocabulary amounts to a rejection of that vocabulary, for the purposes of philosophical theory" (Macarthur and Price 2007, 116). Macarthur and Price offer the following theological example of quietism:

a theological quietist is not merely agnostic about the issues that divide theists from atheists. She rejects theological discourse altogether, at least as a vocabulary for theoretical investigation. She may reject it for all purposes, simply declining to play that language game at all; or she may regard it as playable with some other point. In the latter case, her attitude is analogous to that of a typical semantic deflationist, who doesn't want to abandon the truth predicate altogether, but merely to insist that it has no independent role to play in marking a legitimate topic of theoretical investigation. (Macarthur and Price 2007, 116)

An example of the kind of language game that Macarthur and Price have in mind involves assertoric language, which, they argue, seems to facilitate and encourage the tendency toward conformity across our communities. Within the assertion game, Macarthur and Price argue that

we give voice to our psychological dispositions in ways which invite challenges by speakers with contrary dispositions. ("That's false" and "That's true" are markers of challenge and concession, respectively . . .).

As ordinary speakers, of course, we don't understand that this is what assertoric language is for—we just do it, as it were, and from our point of view, seem to be "saying how things are." But the function of this practice of "saying how things are" is . . . [that] of altering our behaviourally significant commitments much more rapidly than our individual experience in the environment could do, by giving us access to the corresponding states of our fellows (and much else besides).

The suggestion is thus that "representational" language is a tool for aligning commitments across a speech community. But though in this sense a single tool, it is a tool with many distinct applications, corresponding to the distinct primary functions of the various kinds of psychological states that take advantage of it—that facilitate their own alignment by expressing themselves in assertoric form. (Macarthur and Price 2007, 114)

It is arguably these sorts of language games, backed by a deflationary metaphysics rather than simply an antimetaphysical ironism, that Deleuze can be understood to be engaging in with the range of vocabularies that he develops across his different works, and in his work with Guattari.

## DELEUZE AS A SPECULATIVE SUBJECT NATURALIST PRAGMATIST

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze offers a critique of the presumption of a connection between an idea and something that it represents. For Deleuze, the “idea” is not bound to the representation of an object or a concept, nor is it the property of individual consciousness. Difference, in Deleuze’s sense of the term, is also not tied to representation, thus it does not involve a comparison of one thing or concept to another. Deleuze insists that “[d]ifference is not and cannot be thought in itself, so long as it is subject to the requirements of representation” (Deleuze 1994, 262).

One aspect of the way that mathematics models the logic of the calculus of problems for Deleuze is that the mathematics that he draws upon to develop this model also actually models the nature of the illusory relation of representation between an idea and that which it represents in discourses other than mathematics. Deleuze draws upon the work of Salomon Maimon on mathematics to develop this aspect of his critique of representation. According to Maimon, the operation of integration functions as a mathematical rule of the understanding that is applied to the elements of sensation, which are modeled on differentials, in order to bring the manifolds of sensation to consciousness as sensible objects of intuition. What appear to us as external objects are therefore constructed as such by the understanding, and the retrospective explanation of the construction is that it is the result of the application of a mathematical rule of the understanding to the elements of sensation. In the first step of the process, two different manifolds of sensation characterized by different differentials are brought into consciousness by virtue of the application of integration as a rule of the understanding to the elements of sensation or differentials. The real relation between the two qualities themselves, as sensible objects, is modeled on the real relation between their differentials. A primary physical judgment is then made about the products of integration, which determines them as sensible objects. What this amounts to is that all physical judgments whatsoever are predicated on a prior mathematical judgment, which “escapes consciousness” (Gueroult 1929, 64). It is therefore an illusion that sensible or real objects appear as external objects to us, when in fact they are the product of our understanding. While Deleuze’s campaign against representation looks as though it fits the bill as far as pragmatic non-representationalism is concerned, can the same be said of Deleuze’s metaphysics of the calculus?



I have argued that the metaphysics of the calculus on which Deleuze models his calculus of problems is a deflationary metaphysics modeled on mathematics. I would therefore argue that it is naturalist in the requisite way for subject naturalist pragmatism, in so far as it “properly defers to science.” However, despite this, it is probably not quietist enough on metaphysics for the subject naturalist pragmatist. Indeed, Deleuze’s non-representationalism is also probably not quietist enough on representation for the subject naturalist pragmatist. For this reason, I’d like to propose that Deleuze rather be thought of as a speculative subject naturalist pragmatist. What I mean by this is that Deleuze be thought of as “speculative” in the same way that Leiter speaks of Nietzsche and Hume, but without Leiter’s commitment to the priority of object naturalism. Not only does this approach provide a useful way of thinking about how Deleuze’s philosophy can contribute to contemporary philosophical debate, but it also provides a perspective from which to develop a critical appraisal of Leiter’s Nietzsche, on the presumption that a case can be made that Nietzsche would fit more neatly into the subject naturalist mold rather than that of object naturalism in which Leiter attempts to place him.

The speculative aspect of what I’m referring to as Deleuze’s speculative subject naturalist pragmatism can be regarded as Deleuze’s commitment to attempt to give an account of what determines or conditions the “psychological states” or “dispositions” that make up the basic units of Macarthur and Price’s subject naturalist pragmatism—when they talk about the assertion game as facilitating the alignment of our own psychological states with the “corresponding states of our fellows (and much else besides)” (Macarthur and Price 2007, 114). It may well be that Macarthur and Price consider such issues and the speculative efforts to account for them to be either too ontological and/or more anthropological, and therefore to lie outside of philosophy *per se* as conceived by subject naturalist pragmatism.

Characterizing Deleuze’s work as being speculative subject naturalist pragmatism would on this view be something like speculative ontology and/or an anthropological deployment of subject naturalist pragmatism. I don’t necessarily have a problem with either of these characterizations. Indeed the former squares well with my own research on Deleuze and mathematics, and the latter squares well with the interdisciplinarity that is at the core of Deleuze’s project, and is a major research focus in Deleuze studies.

Even within the subject naturalist pragmatist fold, there are different views about what counts as philosophy for the subject naturalist pragmatist. Indeed, Macarthur’s pragmatism differs from that of Price insofar as Macarthur questions whether or not some of the investigations in science<sup>5</sup> that Price undertakes actually count as philosophy on this model. Price concedes that this is no challenge to his kind of pragmatism as such, but only to “its right to call itself philosophy” (Macarthur and Price 2007, 119). Such concessions are instructive both for Deleuzians and pragmatists. So, even though pragmatists may well turn their backs on what I’m calling Deleuze’s

speculative subject naturalist pragmatism, this speculative approach, to borrow a phrase from Price, is “at least compatible with, if not mandated by, the pragmatist doctrine that we understand problematic notions in terms of their practical significance” (Price 2010, 231).

Whether or not such a deflationary account of Deleuze’s metaphysics would be acceptable to those working in the field of Deleuze studies remains an open question; however, the Deleuze presented in this chapter has the flexibility to underpin research in all areas of Deleuze studies regardless of the particular interdisciplinary mix. For this reason I look forward to the research output that embraces the deployment of such a “sober and more mundane” (Lefebvre 2008, xiv) but ultimately more useful Deleuze.

## NOTES

1. The real risk with Paul Patton’s approach to the relation between Deleuze’s work and pragmatism in Patton 2010 (reprinted in this volume), where he attributes to Deleuze a Rortyeian-style “antimetaphysical ironism” (62), is that some important aspects of Deleuze’s thought are underplayed in order to better draw connections with pragmatism. For instance, the metaphysics of the calculus that Deleuze develops falls out of Patton’s reading in the name of this antimetaphysical ironism. The aim of the present paper is to provide a deflationary account of Deleuze’s metaphysics that functions as a model for the range of vocabularies that Deleuze develops across his different works, and in his work with Guattari, to supplement Patton’s approach.
2. Deleuze is aware of Weyl’s work on Riemann via Lautman’s commentary on Weyl, which Deleuze cites in Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 485. See Lautman 2011, 133–137 and Duffy 2013, 103–115. The importance of Lautman’s work to Deleuze’s engagement with mathematics in Deleuze (1994) is explored in Duffy 2013, 117–136.
3. And this is regardless of subsequent questions about the status of those objects within the philosophy of mathematics, or even about competing constructions in mathematics itself.
4. Price points out that “for present purposes the special case in which the subject matter is also linguistic” is “left aside” (Price 2011, 189).
5. See for example Price (1996) and Corry and Price (2007).

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