

From Metaphysics toward a Philosophy of Difference:

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Abstract

The famous French philosophers Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze are often called the philosophers of Difference to emphasize the importance of the Difference concept in their works (Vernon, 2012: p. 47-51). I will dedicate this article to the description of the said concept as well as to its role in the conception of the so-called Philosophy of Difference. But to fully understand the logics of these two philosophers, we will need to steer away from one of the strongest prejudices addressed to many post-modernist philosophers. That is, we have to give up the idea of considering them the opponents of any Metaphysics. I will try to prove that Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze begin as heirs of metaphysics and only then come to the impossibility of Metaphysics, the statement of which, however, requires paradoxical formulations – the Metaphysics points at its own impossibility and simultaneously at the impossibility of impossibility.

“... the difference is behind everything, but behind the difference there is nothing.”

G. Deleuze

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Introduction: the beginning of the beginning

To approach the notion of the Difference, let's at first answer a simple question – what is the philosophy's subject field any way? What differentiates it as a discipline from the variety of other disciplines? A textbook definition of philosophy by Aristotle is quite a suitable answer here: Philosophy is a study of the ultimate cause and the ultimate purpose (Shields, 2007: p. 139). The reference to the 'ultimate' here is essential. Philosophy is not just busy looking for a cause, it is seeking the absolute cause, fiducial marks, the original, before which nothing can exist. Philosophy is working on reducing the diversity of knowledge to the limited fundamental principles or the first principles of things - its task is to identify a single root or a single arche of what at first sight appears a chaotic experience of randomness. One can say that all the sciences without exception do the same. However, it is not quite so. If you like, none of the sciences goes as far as philosophy. Sciences take interest in the reduction of knowledge in limited areas. The peculiarity of philosophy is that its subject is the whole of reality, and hence the law to which philosophy will reduce its observations should be an ultimate metalaw – comprehensive and original (Politis, 2004: p. 365-378). Therefore philosophy is metaphysics (standing over physics). In addition, in contrast to philosophy, the sciences are not possessed by the purpose of finding such laws of the universe that cannot be reduced to even more basic ones. If the law of attraction can be explained by another, more general law, there is nothing wrong with it. But philosophy does not tolerate uncontrolled reductions – being an analytic (deductive) discipline it is used to find the particular in the general, and not vice versa, and therefore, defining the commencement that is further

irreducible (self-evident, axiomatic) is a matter of principle for it (Zimmerman, 2006: p. 167). So, philosophy starts as an experience of finding such a commencement that has nothing more primordial - this is the very statement of the problem that constitutes philosophy as a very special kind of knowledge (Inwagen, 1998: p. 125-127). Philosophy starts when it defines its origin as origin-al and its work as the experience of development of limits. These requirements are an important methodological technique of philosophy by which we accurately distinguish it from any other discipline.

Where exactly is philosophy going to start? According to Heidegger, its commencement is nothing but Existence, existence as such, or Being (Heidegger, 1962: p. 67). And it is the very Existence that is the commencement of all metaphysics. According to Heidegger, it is so as it surely displays the principal features of the eternity (Heidegger, 1961: p.71). Let's try to incorporate the concept of 'Being' ('Existence') into a higher generic concept (as a species). It is pretty difficult to do so. No less difficult it is for us when we think of 'Being' ('Existence') not as a concept but as a very real world, the entire existing world. Can we say that all that exists fits somewhere else? Probably not, because that place where all things could fit must exist as well, and therefore, must be part of all that exists. Thus, the whole world always entirely belongs to itself and in itself, and it also does not have a container, just like the concept of 'Being' does not have a generic name (Inwagen, 1998: p.125-126).

What was before the beginning?

Thus, the required commencement is found, examined as original, and philosophy, having found zero point, can move on. It is here that Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze are going to interfere with their critical objections. The main point of their criticism will be

reduced to one – what metaphysics suggests as the commencement is not in fact a commencement at all (Cisney, 2012: p. 80). In turn, an error becomes possible due to a piece of carelessness, accidental or intentional, but tremendous in its consequences, for it is as the result of this error that made the birth of philosophy possible.

So what is this error or the piece of carelessness? Hegel, whose influence on Derrida and Deleuze is unquestionable, proved that it is impossible to limit ourselves at point zero with Being (Existence). Being requires its logical pair – Non-Being (Hegel, 1969: p.110). It is hard not to notice that when we position Being as commencement, it is already surrounded by Non-Being that makes it possible not to think about it only applying serious willpower or imposing intellectual embargo. In other words, Being is something that is not quite first or, rather, it is not the only first thing. It is more likely that a pair of concepts comes first: ‘Being and Non-Being’ (‘Existence and Non-Existence’). In connection with this situation we are aware of the textbook approach of the classical philosophy pioneered by Parmenides – Non-Being must be resolutely discarded because there is no Non-Being (Curd, 2006: p.171). We are also aware of the dialectic approach of Hegel – Non-Being should be retained if we are to speak not only of logic, but also of the physical world (Hegel, 1969: p.112). But the question now is not whether Parmenides or Hegel is right. We shall talk about what makes it possible to distinguish one from the other overall. In other words, we shall talk about the very Difference.

So, the first thing we have to is to correct ourselves saying, “of course, it is not Existence as much as it is not Non-Existence that is the commencement. The commencement is the Difference that separates one from the other, and only due to the loss of philosophical vigilance, it could happen that we did not notice it.” The true commencement is the Difference between Existence and Non-Existence; it is the Difference that has the right of primogeniture, and philosophy had better recognized that it was simply wrong with commencement. Can we

say that this incident is over, and metaphysics can continue after introducing to its categorical vocabulary certain changes? It is not quite so simple, and we shall now see why.

The modern French philosopher Vincent Descombes, an expert on Derrida and Deleuze, writes: «the difficulty lies in the fact that with the distinction of ultimate categories the case is different from the one with the distinction among the particular (non-ultimate) concepts. We understand that all oppositions need a third counterpart – the one where to or from the two opposites are separated. If A and B are different, then there is A, there is B, and there is a certain X that produces the very difference or where this difference occurs. This logical truism becomes a paradox, as soon as we try to apply it to the differentiation of ultimate categories. Indeed, if Being is different from Non-Being, then this something that distinguishes them should belong neither to Being nor to Non-Being. What, then, embraces Being and Non-Being when they are placed in opposition? Saying that the Difference is just there, would make it a part of Existence and thus eliminate it. Integrating the difference into the Non-Being is even more impossible - it would be equal to accepting it as non-existent, thus declaring that Being and Non-Being are the same” (Descombes, 1980: p.234).

Having found this unfortunate trickery at the very commencement of philosophical thought, we can once again to carefully review all its ultimate grounds for revealing possible logical flaws. The first thing you notice doing that is an obvious dual (contrary and in some cases contradictory) nature of philosophical foundations. When composing the taxonomy of its philosophical vocabulary, the classical metaphysics clearly tends to divide the world in two. Throughout its borders we meet the oppositions: subject-object, mind-body, reason-experience, transcendent-immanent, things-ideas, phenomenal-noumenal, etc. Moreover, modern philosophy insists that the world is divided into its conceptual pairs with no remainder. All of these pairs give the grounds to the beginning of analysis; having established

the division into two as the original, we can start our philosophical work. This very thesis about the originality of the ultimate opposites is argued against by Deleuze and Derrida (Descombes, 1980: p.256-257). For instance Deleuze consistently shows that in all these cases of establishing commencement philosophy misses the point – the pair is already non-original, the original remained behind it as a holding and organizing difference that makes the pair possible. “The commencement is always between the pair and a step behind it” (Deleuze, 1983: p.98). The elements of the opposition, which philosophy mistakes for a starting point, are the results of a hidden work done for invisible to us reasons. The difference, which is mentioned, for instance, by Deleuze, is intended to eliminate the established dualism of ultimate categories in classical metaphysics and witness another commencement – “a differentiating difference” (Deleuze, 1994: p.124). “Its own critical examination is inherent in the Difference: each time we face a restriction or experience it, just before or actually in the course of a conflict, we are to analyze the reasons for such a situation. It actually involves a splash of diversities, the pluralism of unrestricted differences, wild or untamed, the differential space and time - initial, protruding through the simplified limits or conflicts. In order for the confronting forces and restricted forms to become distinguishable, a more profound, real element is required, which can be defined and determined as an informal, potential variety. The confrontations can be envisioned as some coarse elements existing in a refined environment of the shifting perspectives, distances, interrelated contradictions and dissonances, heterogeneous potentials and intensities; the objective is not to suppress the tension in the identity, but to arrange the confronting elements of this multitude.” (Deleuze, 1994: p.167).

But what could it be, taking into account that parts resulting from its performance exhaust the universe of possible definitions? It can be neither an idea, nor a thing, neither the

body nor the mind, neither a product of reason nor a product of experience, neither existing nor non-existing (Bell 2006). The difference between Existence and Non-Existence finds itself in a difficult position – it is impossible that it does not exist, but it is equally impossible that it does. That is why in all the process of moving apart the ultimate opposites the attention is focused on the location and the principle of such moving – an intermediate term. Where is it? Who or what produces it?

Deleuze implies the Difference turns out to be the very *tertio*, in light of which all oppositions are made (Pearson, 1997: p.411-414). However, this very Difference needs to remain behind the scenes, it must be productive, but it cannot be detected as a result of its own performance, otherwise the paradox of differentiating the ultimate categories will be restored. Literally, *tertium non datur*, but everything is given in the light of this hidden *tertium*. It seems, then, that the Difference is an instance that is difficult to grasp in the same terms, which it differentiates. That is why earlier we had nothing to say when asking the question of existence or non-existence of the Difference. But the difference understood in such a way is incomprehensible, it cannot be grasped by any concept, it is a non-conceptual condition of everything else (Keith, 1997: p.238-241). On such terms it can be included in the philosophical categories as something that is given, as always, to be non-given.

“The same thing is the same only taking the form of a different thing”...

Let's go back to the question set above, which has not been unaddressed yet, namely, whether the Difference revealed, though elusive and indefinable, can, however, replace the commencement, become the right commencement of metaphysics? Indeed, much of what is said about the Difference can give us a reason to see it as a genuine metaphysical commencement that meets all the above requirements. For example, does not Deleuze tell us:

“... the difference is behind everything, but behind the difference there is nothing” (Deleuze, 1994: p. 289)? Is this not a rather authentic metaphysical definition of the original? This is one of the most sensitive issues, and if Deleuze and Derrida agree to answer it then it does that only in an evasive manner. Understanding the motivation of such evasion would be easy if we realize that Difference is the most unfortunate way to start anything at all. “Such is the eternal ambiguity of the notion of the beginning: the origin lays the foundation of the world, which is already cast down in the overall collapse” (Deleuze, 1994: p.156). It is unfit due to the fact that any commencement must meet the requirements of permanence and identity. The minimal requirements to commencement are such that it should 1. be present (available) and 2. coincide with itself, remain the same (the Identity). But it is these requirements that Difference cannot meet in any way. Its nature is paradoxical: it can remain identical, i.e. always be the Difference only if it is always different, including different from itself (Beistegui, 2004: p.302-310). Let us consider this point in more detail. We said that the Difference must not only differentiate, but be different; moreover, it should do so always and everywhere. Only this way it will be true to itself – ceasing to differentiate in its case means nothing else but ceasing to be the Difference. But if the Difference is always required to differentiate, then it must also be different from itself, since it cannot be identical to itself, or otherwise it would cease to function as a differentiation, and serve as identification, i.e. it would cease to be the Difference and become the Identity. The mystery of the Difference lies here – it can be itself only not being itself (Descombes, 1980: p. 384). It is possible to keep the Identity only at the cost of the Difference. As Derrida says, “the same thing is the same only taking the form of a different thing” (Derrida, 1999: p. 253). It is in this sense that his Difference is intended to be different from the classical difference. If the latter is opposed to identity, then the former must allow us to think the difference not only as a non-identity, but also as “the difference between identity

and non-identity” (Deleuze, 1994: p.155). So, both philosophers introduce Difference as different from itself or even from another self, because, neither real nor conceptual, it only brings differentiation. Thus, the Difference determined by the philosophy of philosophy of difference is intended to be differentiated from the difference adopted in metaphysics. But will it then be able to replace the classic commencement in such a form, to cope with the role of being a commencement? The best description of the situation in connection with this issue is given by the ‘original delay’ metaphor, to which Derrida repeatedly resorted in his works (Derrida, 1999: p. 119). If we look carefully at how the Difference functions, then we will have to accept that we will never manage to get to the very commencement – whenever we would arrive hoping to catch the commencement, we would always be somewhat late. This happens due to the fact that we are destined to meet only with the results of the Difference-commencement’s work, but not with the Difference itself (Harvey, 1986: p. 25). No one can be present during the work of the Difference, first of all because the very Difference is never present. Neither in thought nor in experience does it appear in the way metaphysics believed its own commencement – Being-Existence present. The latter can be and can be produced, because it coincides with itself, it is a pure Identity. The Difference, however, is not the same even with itself. Deleuze is also in the agreement with the said: “The Difference, which is understood in such a way, is not an object of notion. The notion, as an element of metaphysics, subdues the Difference to the identity, even if it refers it to the *tertium* as the “referee” for the two terms, which should distinguish (between the Being *and* the things in existence). But metaphysics cannot ideate the Difference in itself and the meaning of that, which differentiates or connects (the differentiating). The Difference has neither synthesis, nor mediation, nor reconciliation, but, quite the opposite, it has persistent differentiation”. (Deleuze, 1994: p. 198). What do we intend to meet then?

But although we are ready to question the existence of the Difference, it is still impossible to deny it being real, because this is testified by its traces, the remaining results (traces) of its work (Derrida, 1973: p.58-75). It is precisely those quasi-ultimate categories with which the classical metaphysics used to start. Their presence indicates that the commencement that is never present in the act of direct perception successfully coped with its task. But that is why you can only be late for the meeting with the commencement. No matter how early we would appear, we cannot find the commencement in any place, and only the traces of its retreat will be revealed to us. The Difference will never be that very Difference, it will always be different, and, in turn, no matter how carefully we would try to come closer to it, we shall always be set back by the work of the differentiation itself. In this sense, the Difference is an extremely controversial candidate for the role of metaphysical commencement, and the very least could be done here is that the very idea of the philosophical commencement must be reconsidered. A new look will allow us to say that the commencement is neither nature nor existence, neither presence nor availability, in short, nothing that could be caught as a kind of objectivity (Baudrillard, 1994: p.48-51). With such input, if we remain in the old language of metaphysics, then having separated commencement from both existence and presence, we should simply state that there is no commencement. There is no step one, although there is step two, three, etc. As much as we tried to piece together the whole set, it is the first item in the row that will always be missing. It would be more correct to compare such a world with “a play that is always being watched from the second act” (Cortazar, 1987: p.389).

Ultimately, that commencement can still be retained if only we forever give up the hope to describe it in terms of presence. The Difference itself is not present, although it organizes the presence of everything else. It has no pair (identity); however, all pairs

(including the classic pair of ‘identity-difference’) arise in the course of its productive work. Finally, it cannot be substantiated as substance must meet the criteria of permanence. Surrounded by solely negative statements the Difference could become an eternally delayed commencement of metaphysics, a metaphysical story that it is or must be somewhere (Beistegui, 2009: p.305-306).

How Difference works?

But, if we cannot objectivate the mysterious instance of the Difference, can we at least gain greater clarity in the understanding of how it is produced? The concept of the *differance* should answer this question, which, according to Derrida (who is the author of the concept), “is neither a word nor a concept” (Derrida, 1973: p. 98). It is a neographism that appeared with the introduction of the letter **a** to the French noun ‘difference’ (meaning ‘differentiation’, ‘distinction’). The noun is derived from the verb *differer* that in its turn has two meanings: 1. ‘to differentiate’ and 2. ‘to defer’, ‘to separate in time’, ‘to postpone for later’. Curiously, the noun ‘difference’ means only ‘differentiation’, while the second meaning of ‘deferring’, ‘postponing’ disappears from it. Derrida says that it is this loss of meaning that he tries to compensate with the word *differance* (Derrida, 1978: p. 177-190). Overall, the introduction of letter **a** is associated with the demonstration of three ideas: 1. The most essential to the *differance* meaning of ‘postponing’ and ‘deferring’ must be also preserved in the noun (as it will play the role of a key concept) 2. the difference between the letters **a** and **e** can only be seen in the written word, it cannot be heard (we shall explain below why the second point is important), 3. the concept denoting the Difference should be different from itself – it is not just a difference (classic), but what makes it possible in the act of anticipatory, even earlier Difference.

Is there a way to specify the mysterious instance of difference? Again, we shall have some help from the definition of the sign and the language proposed by Saussure that certainly played a major role in the whole philosophy of difference. Let us very briefly recall that, according to Saussure, “in language there are only differences. ... a difference generally implies positive terms between which the difference is set up; but in language there are only differences without positive terms. ... language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic, differences that have issued from the system” (Saussure, 1983: p. 121). Does this mean that difference is the language itself? Not really, but we can say it is quite ‘close’. Difference functions the same way as the language described by structural linguistics; it forms and carries meanings, it acts as a pure and extra-substantial ‘movement of differentiations’. In other words, the work of difference completely repeats the work of language. Language generates its meanings through the opposition and replacement of signs, and the same is true of the mechanics of the difference. We can say that difference differs from the language in a minimal way, but it does not coincide with it. The main obstacle to the identification is that the principle of pure differentiation is applicable not only to the languages as the objects of linguistic studies, but to all sign systems. Therefore, as a first approximation the difference should be understood not as a language, but as any sign system in general. The difference is what allows phonemes to differentiate within the oral speech, and the letters within the written speech. It will also be what differentiates the sound from the letter, and the written word from the spoken one. In a sense, this is the very principle of differentiation that inevitably precedes and mediates any commencement (Wood, Bernasconi, 1988: p.455-462). This is not the language, but what makes the language possible and not just any system of signs, but the process in which some system of notations can emerge and function. “... difference can be attributed to what in the

classical language can be called a source of differences, a process of their production, the differences between the differences, a game of differences” (Derrida, 1999: p. 243). This is a principle that in general makes it possible to create a system of meanings in order to operate them after – whether it is a mechanism of philosophical categories or any other language for describing the world. Any knowledge techniques are constructed according to the laws of differance, first there is differentiation, and then comes everything else. That said, commencement always remains in between, it remains a pure, nameless and objectless movement in the middle of what we mistake for the original meanings. Thus, the differance is never present (it allows one to differentiate the ‘presence’ from the ‘absence’), and that is why it is difficult to say that it exists (it differentiates ‘exists’ from ‘does not exist’) in order to finally give it a standard definition. Earlier we talked about it. It is impossible to give a name and place to something that cleans places and gives names on its own. Differance organizes the presence of meanings (at least an illusion of their presence), but it cannot be present by itself. You cannot cash out the mechanism of referrals, you cannot fix it and show - that would be tantamount to turning it into the identity. Since it always only differentiates and differs, it makes sense to say that it continues, but it makes no sense to say that it exists. With all the mystery of this state it can still be justified – because announcing the Difference identical to itself means expressing a plain contradiction. If the Difference is held merely by differentiating from itself, not coinciding with itself and not being itself, it becomes easier to understand why “there is no name for something that constantly breaks into chains of its own substitutes” (Derrida, 1999: p. 63). Therefore, it should be talked about the Difference in apophatic rhetoric, although, as we shall see below, it is intended to be differentiated from any put out transcendences. In this regard Derrida says the following, “... even if the differance ~~is~~ (I stress this is crossed ‘~~is~~’) what makes the concept of being-present possible, it never reveals

itself. ... difference is not, does not exist and is not any sort of being-present. Any exposition would expose the difference to disappearing as a disappearance. It would risk appearing, thus disappearing” (Derrida, 1999: p. 241).

Still, making it as clear as possible, we say that difference should be understood as a mechanism for the formation of any concepts and meanings as something that allows acquiring the meaning only in the game of relations with others. Difference makes itself felt through keeping the movement of mutual references and replacements, being thus responsible for the genesis of sense overall (Gasché, 1986: p. 411-453).

It is therefore necessary to admit that its work precedes the appearance of ultimate philosophical categories related to each other with opposition. Specifically for philosophy, as much as it is true and for any other theoretical discipline, any knowledge, it means - all that can be known, described, seen and voiced is determined by the internal resource of the system of signification. Knowledge comes as a second step, when the system of distribution of meanings has been already started. Knowledge, therefore, is the application of the terms, the semantic of which is determined from the inside; it is transition from notion to notion, from concept to concept within the existing mechanism of notation. The work of knowledge, including philosophic one, can be illustrated by a game of chess, in which all possible moves have been worked out in advance, but each time a new set can be played. However, any action unfolding within the space of checkerboard is guided by the principle of internal rules and dispositions arrangement – by the work of differentiation. Perhaps, it is possible, then to play philosophy; having learnt the rules of moving within the categorical system of philosophy where the roles of the King or Queen are played by the concepts of Being, Essence and Subject, we can play an exciting game of ‘learning’, announcing every new set a new philosophical theory. It is this primordial, the originality of the work of Difference setting the

game rules, the disposition of figures and movements, that we intuitively felt when wondering what differentiates basic 'ultimate' philosophical categories. "... difference opens up the very space in which onto-theology - philosophy - produces its system ... The difference encompasses and irrevocably surpasses onto-theology or philosophy" (Derrida, 1999: p. 222).

Strictly speaking, the principle of difference, in which one is always defined in terms of another, and concepts are never present on their own as self-identical things and meanings, does not allow us to place basic metaphysical oppositions in a contrary order – the difference between them is dissolved in favor of the very Difference. Let us note once again that difference as a principle of concept allows us to understand something, or, even more broadly, to deal with reality through the fact that what is understood is always a result of its differentiation from other elements of the system. It is important here that precisely the self-identity of the elements is impossible in itself, outside and beyond the reference to another, outside the system of differential relations. If we apply this principle to the fundamental oppositions, we shall see that establishing the ultimate (as further irreducible, utmost), which is fundamentally important for philosophy, cannot be done. The opposition pairs are mobile at least in the sense that they make sense exceptionally due to references to each other. A 'subject' is something that is not an 'object'; 'mental' is something that is not 'physical'; an 'idea' is something that is not a 'thing', etc. Of course, this oscillating mechanism of establishing meanings does not agree with the metaphysical task of acquiring knowledge about what is Subject, Idea or Consciousness beyond its immediate conceptual pair. But that is not all. Do not forget that the adequately conceived Difference is different from itself – coincidence with itself annihilates it completely. This means that, having reviewed all known philosophical concepts, we must state their mismatch with themselves, their 'differed-differing' character. Even making an oscillating movement from one to the other, neither one

nor the other is ever going to be only the 'one' or only the 'other'. This is connected with the fact that the final concept and the ultimate meaning are never present, but only guide us to a circle of significant references that only promise the presence of meaning. What does the understanding of this give us? First of all, that we cannot rely on the pairs of basic philosophical concepts as confidently as we did before. The opposition is not only non-primary, it is also quite unreliable. The opposition cannot be relied upon at the very least due to release of tension and pressure (contrast) among its members. This, in turn, means that important for the classical philosophy understanding of dualistic structure of both knowledge and world is in fact extremely artificial. Doubting the dualisms, we could, however, assume that there are no duplications whatsoever at the heart of the world in general, but rather there is something that allows us both to form and to curtail any opposition of something, that being different from itself creates all other differences. "... philosophy lives in and from difference ... We could thus take up all the coupled oppositions on which philosophy is constructed, and from which our language lives, not in order to see opposition vanish, but to see the emergence of a necessity such that one of the terms appears as the difference of the other, the other as "differed" within the systematic ordering of the same (e.g., intelligible as differing from the sensible, as sensible differed; the concept as differed-differing intuition; culture as differed-differing nature; and all the terms designating what is other than physis – techne, nomos, society, freedom, history, spirit, etc. – as physis differed or physis differing)" (Derrida 1999).

Conclusion: Is Difference a metaphysical concept?

At this point of the argument that is coming close to depleting the topic of difference, we should make one last comment. Despite all that has been said about the difference (Difference), we must not forget that it has nothing to do with any restoration of the

transcendent (represented by the Difference-differance). The space of concept distribution is immanent to itself, as well as the mechanism that organizes it does not control the process from the outside, but from the very commencement belongs to it on the grounds of some structuring emptiness. In other words, Differance should be described solely in terms of immanence. It is located not over the other side of meaning, but is rather involved in its very movement, built into the reference network and, therefore, belongs to the internal dimension of signs. Thus, the concept of classical commencement in metaphysics should be reconsidered as well. From now on, such a commencement is understood not as a law or a set of rules located on the other side of the system of philosophical meaning, but as an internal movement that is immanently inherent to it. That brings us back to that intuition of the Difference, which we have already encountered in the Deleuze's works: "The Being is expressed in a single meaning, but what differs is how it is expressed: it is expressed in the Difference itself. ... The Being actually is the Difference in that notion, in which it ascribes the Difference to itself." (Deleuze, 1994: p. 302).

In his turn, Derrida in his «Differance» devoted to the analysis of this concept says, "Precisely what is in question here is the requirement that there be a *de jure* commencement, an absolute point of departure, a responsibility arising from a principle. Thus what I put forth here will not be developed simply as a philosophical discourse that operates on the basis of a principle, of postulates, axioms, and definitions and that moves according to the discursive line of rational order. In marking out differance everything is a matter of strategy and risk. It is a question of strategy because no transcendent truth present outside the sphere of writing can theologically command the totality of this field" (Derrida, 1999 : p. 223).

Thus, taking the Difference as a quasi-metaphysical commencement climbing to the root and the first principle turns out to be unachievable in the same style, as it was adopted in

classical metaphysics. If classic stood on narrowing down to the commencement, to arche, then in case of Difference that strategy is extremely difficult to use. Since the Difference escapes all known classical procedures of narrowing down (to the One), in relation to it we can find appropriate not genus-species classifications but quite beyond-classification distributions of meaning. This means that the meanings of world phenomena (of things, states, of everything in relation to which the use of meaning, value, and hence understanding is appropriate) do not own their existence to a primordial (transcendental) Meaning transcending the world. At the heart of the world there is no such central distributor of senses – senses and meanings are established by differentiating interconnectedness with each other, and not in relation to a dominant instance determining a place for each thing in the hierarchy. Deleuze will call such a distribution of meanings a “wondering distribution”, differentiating it from the “settled” (classical hierarchical) distribution. “This is not a similar Being, which is distributed between the categories, which provides definite gains to the existing; the settled distributions of similarity are confronted by the wondering distributions of anarchy... Only then they can exclaim “Everything is equal!” ... But “Everything is equal” can be said only when the endpoint of the Difference is reached.” (Deleuze, 1994: p. 279).

There is nothing surreal in all these arguments. Philosophy of Difference is only trying to build ontology on new foundations. It invites us to look around and bear witness that we find only differences everywhere. The search for an adequate commencement leads precisely to this statement. Based on it, Philosophy of Difference proposes to update our philosophical vocabulary – from now on philosophy that has always been the philosophy of Identity may try to become the Philosophy of Difference. We should finally say goodbye to the obsolete project, the project of metaphysics. However, Philosophy of Difference is far from identifying the task as easy to implement. Pitfalls await us everywhere – for example,

saying that everything is the result of Difference alone means forming a metaphysical statement. Philosophy of Difference tells us “there is nothing but Difference in the world,” trying to muffle the metaphysical tinge of its conclusion. Ultimately, the intention to find a commencement, though not the one to which everything is reduced by the genus-species classification, but which, nevertheless, controls everything, is the very foundation of the metaphysical project. Taking into account the persistence with which metaphysics restores its domination Philosophy of Difference is even ready to admit that its task lies not in overcoming the metaphysical legacy, but rather in changing it towards greater realism. The problem is not so much in the very project of metaphysics, but in the way it was executed within the Western European rationality. But if there is something that stops us from exclaiming, “why, this original Difference is no different from Being (Identity, the One) that disseminates its authoritarian rule everywhere!; this is the real metaphysics!,” then it is the fact that the Difference, as we said, does not exist and “is not being-as-reality, no matter how unique, important, or transcendent it would look” (Derrida, 1999: p.167). In contrast to the ‘commencement’ of classical metaphysics, which is introduced as something that is, the ‘commencement’ of ‘metaphysics’ in Philosophy of Difference is defined as that which is not. This is their main difference. “Thus, it can be concluded that there is no real beginning in philosophy, or rather that the real philosophical beginning, i.e. the Difference, is the Repetition in itself.” (Deleuze, 1994: p. 189). However, due to the fact that this non-existence is productive and creates all that we know as existing, it may seem to us that the very non-existence is not absolute, but perhaps is the result or consequence of some awkward activity, unsuccessful attempts to find it and give it a name. According to Philosophy of Difference, it is precisely this failure that metaphysics repeatedly suffers; moreover, we cannot even grasp or represent the Difference in its language. And that is why Philosophy of Difference declares its

withdrawal from the metaphysical game. In an apparent hope that it will be more fortunate in the search for the original outside its limits.

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