

**„BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA  
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY  
DOCTORAL SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY**

**BETWEEN ONTOLOGICAL AND TRANSCENDENTAL.  
PHILOSOPHY OF DIFFERENCE OF IMMANUEL KANT , GILLES  
DELEUZE AND SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK**

**SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS**

**Thesis supervisor:**

**PROF. UNIV. DR. CIOMOȘ VIRGIL**

**PhD student:**

**MARTA CLAUDIA**

**2023**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>5</b>
--------------------------	----------

## CHAPTER 1

### **ELEMENTS OF TRANSCENDENTAL IDEALISM IN IMMANUEL KANT**

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
--------------------------	-----------

<b>1.1. THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE NOUMEN AND THE TRANSCENDENTAL OBJECT .....</b>	<b>17</b>
---	-----------

<b>1.2. FROM ANALYTIC TO DIALECTIC. FROM CONDITIONED TO UNCONDITIONED .....</b>	<b>34</b>
---	-----------

<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>55</b>
----------------------	-----------

## CHAPTER 2

### **THE PHILOSOPHY OF DIFFERENCE IN GILLES DELEUZE**

<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>57</b>
--------------------------	-----------

<b>2.1. <i>TRANSCENDENTAL EMPIRICISM</i>.....</b>	<b>59</b>
---	-----------

2.1.1. From Representation to Production.....	61
---	----

2.1.2. The difference. Individuation. Life .....	74
--	----

<b>2.2. <i>ONTOLOGICAL REALISM</i>.....</b>	<b>93</b>
---	-----------

2.2.1. Difference and repetition .....	94
--	----

2.2.2. From sexual difference to the abolition of all difference.....	116
---	-----

<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>133</b>
----------------------	------------

**CHAPTER 3**  
**ELEMENTS OF MATERIALIST ONTOLOGY**  
**TO SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK**

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>136</b>
<b>3.1. <i>BODY WITHOUT ORGANS OR ORGANS WITHOUT THE BODY?</i> .....</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>3.2. <i>DISPARITY AND PARALLAX</i> .....</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>184</b>
<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>200</b>

## **KEY-CONCEPTS:**

object, subject, phenomenon, Noumen, representation, multiplicity, antinomy, intensive, individuation, virtual, actual, Real, reality, antagonism, self-reflexivity

## **SYNTHESIS OF THE MAIN IDEAS**

### **Research methodology**

Our research is fundamental (theoretical) and interdisciplinary. As a methodology specific to the field of philosophy, we inevitably resort to hermeneutics. We recognize the limit of this approach as it contains a petition of principle: what we discover is always predetermined by how we approach the problem. However, the merit of this method is that it allows a bibliographic, conceptual and theoretical research that includes criticism and personal input. The method of systematic presentation is applied to the first and last chapters, in which the research focused on the paradigmatic correlation between concepts and the position they have within the systems of idealism and materialism, respectively. The second chapter has a heuristic character, being in tune with the "dramatization" method proposed by Deleuze. In this, rigid distinction is not pursued, but precisely the introspection of thought. Our thesis sheds light on the concept transfer method, this being her greatest achievement.

### **Introduction**

Any ontology represents an attempt to synthesize heterogeneous domains, a leap over the abyss that separates the objective from the subjective, the world from language. Our thesis is such an attempt. It seeks to consolidate a unitary vision of the "philosophy of difference" in Immanuel Kant, Gilles Deleuze and Slavoj Žižek. The synthesis of heterogeneous domains is always a debate between the choice of transcendental or ontological approach to the question. We try to show, starting with the fundamental assumption of our thesis, that a theory of ontological reality cannot escape a transcendental residue, regardless of whether this reality is described idealistically, realistically, or materialistically. Each of the three authors we analyze correspond in turn to approaches of this kind. We aim to analyze the rift introduced by Immanuel Kant through the distinction

he made between the "transcendental object" and the Noumen as the inaccessible "Thing", and between consciousness and apperception. Let us analyze how Slavoj Žižek brings back the theory of the subject from the perspective of the psychoanalytic reconceptualization of the cogito. Between these two, let us analyze the plane of the philosophy of difference proper by Gilles Deleuze, whose divergent convergence with the theme of objectivity is reflected in the theory of "multitudes", and the divergent convergence with the theme of subjectivity is reflected in the theory of "individuation". Following them, we expect to understand "representation" as the operation of a "desubstantialization" that receives the title of "category" in Kant. Let us understand the way in which Deleuze directs his criticism precisely against "representation" as the preferred model of thought and proposes, through transcendental empiricism, the immanentization of the conditions of genesis within the substance, refuting the necessity of the subject-object correlation. Let's understand how Žižek proposes, following a Hegelian dialectic, a kind of synthesis of the truths from both positions, dissolving the necessity of correlation by conceiving the subject as an object, but also accepting the realist premise regarding immanence, the Deleuzian "virtual reality".

### **Synthesis of chapters**

In the first chapter, dedicated to Kantian transcendental idealism, we saw how according to the principle that differentiates between phenomena and Noumen, we, as humans, only experience appearance (the object as phenomenon), not the Thing-in-itself, and space and time are only subjective forms of intuition, the noumenal domain being excluded from this intuitive register. Transcendental idealism is opposed to transcendental realism for which space and time are not ideal but real forms (independent of our intuition). The difficulty was to conceive what would then be a "real" object in space, since Kant calls "transcendental" knowledge that deals not with objects, but with our way of knowing objects. Transcendental realism is thus guilty of the metamorphosis of mere representation into the Thing-in-itself. But, equally, we must distinguish between transcendental idealism and empirical idealism in which, although the reality of space is recognized, the reality of objects in space is not recognized, since existing reality cannot be inferred from the mental state. Kant distinguishes between two kinds of empirical idealism: the dogmatic that objects in space do not exist (Berkeley); the problematic one which claims that although it is possible for objects to exist, we cannot infer their existence or non-existence (Descartes). Transcendental idealism has been shown to be a form of empirical realism (ie a synthesis of the other two) because it implies that we have

immediate (not inferential) and certain knowledge about the existence of objects in space, only that this access passes through self-consciousness. The view of transcendental idealism is that objects are empirically real in space, but not transcendently so. For this reason I distinguished, in the first subchapter, between the Noumen and the transcendental object (as a pure form of the relationship, appearance as a phenomenon). Kant thus replaced ontology's claims to know reality with a more "modest" analytic of concepts, but forever dislocated the philosophical discourse to the question of the possibility or impossibility of the disjunction or conjunction of heterogeneous registers.

In the second chapter, we have presented most extensively the main theme of our thesis, which is the philosophy of difference. Follow, in the first subchapter, the way in which criticism is produced but also Deleuze's convergence with Kantianism. If Kant pursued the necessary and universal conditions of possible experience, Deleuze wanted to account for the genesis of real experience, here and now, of the concretely existing individual. Deleuze is not totally against the transcendental method, he just elaborates on the way in which the "immanent" creates its transcendental, which is also the meaning of transcendental empiricism: not a condition of possibility, but of realization. The transcendental proved to be an act and not a condition. That is why the critique of "representation" will make reality a spatium of becoming through intensity, and philosophy must follow the conditions of realization through internal difference, not through the conceptual one, as it was with Kant. Ontogenesis presupposes intensive difference through the simultaneous actualization of thought and matter, thought individualizing the matter it constitutes by presupposing it. We wondered, however, why the intensive, which is already pure difference, would want to choose the path of outsourcing? Is the Deleuzian response of individuation really an ontological necessity of the real? The conclusion is that sensibility can only ground the aesthetic response. We had to follow a logic of chiasm and topological change, in order to have a minimal theory on these two mysterious individuations: "life" and "consciousness" which are extensive transitions of the intensive.

The third chapter is the analysis of how Žižek engaged in dialogue with Deleuze and Kant, thus wanting to close the circle and recapitulate the "cascade". For Žižek, ontology was linked to ethics, just as for Deleuze it was linked to aesthetics, and for Kant to science. Žižek has a theory of the Lacanian Real which he argues by appealing to the Hegelian dialectic in which the Real is the unsymbolizable impossibility, the obstacle that prevents the totalization of reality and keeps it ontologically "open", subject to contingency. we analyzed the consequences of the emergence of this "causality through

freedom", which remains as indeterminable as living matter was from the beginning of our work. Žižek introduced self-reflexivity into the signifying order to account for the non-mechanical causality of Ideas themselves. Subjectivity is the domain of abstract Ideas, which as such has ontological dignity, not just transcendental, being the only phenomenon that is autonomous and becomes an agent against its own substance. \$ was thus defined as its own failure to be substance. But this autonomy should not be seen as a willed action, Žižek's materialist thesis being that this emergence happened in an entirely contingent way, in and out of nature that excludes no possibility. From an epistemological point of view, the transcendental framework resembled a "reduction" of the empirical given, but from an ontological point of view, materialism assumed the complete immersion of the subject's point of view in reality itself. I claimed that we lack an outside vantage point from which we could see what kind of "mistake" we have made about the "reality" theses. We must assume in a dialectical manner that our "transcendental" theses coincide with the ontological state of affairs and exclude the possibility of a meta-language. The tension between empirical reality and nominal determination we have asserted as immanent to reality, a feature of things themselves.

### **Conclusions and personal contributions**

We believe that through these arguments we have managed to make visible the impasse through which the philosophical discourse cannot overcome the transcendental register of any approach in ontology. We consider the most original parts of the work to be the subchapter "From representation to production", dedicated to the transition from Kantian representation to Deleuzian production. He captured, in an interdisciplinary methodology, the difference between philosophy and science, a difference given by the act of transcendental reflection. Since transcendental schematism is irreducible, we cannot deduce anything about material reality from the categories of pure reason. But empirically one can ascertain the existence of living matter, matter which has been shown to be distinct from the category of substance as "real" in space. Deleuze, taking into account the dynamic factors of the 197 Kantian doctrine, proposed his own theory on the emergence of life by discovering that region where intensive difference initiates an individuation. In addition to providing a systematic theory of how Kant assumed the ultimate unity of "nature," this subchapter has argued uniquely that Imm. Kant has an ontology of matter, not just a transcendental description of it.

Another original chapter is the one entitled "From Sexual Difference to the Abolition of All Difference," which further pursued the question of "substance." The life process is seen as an inorganic and impersonal force. These characteristics emerged through a pharmaco-logical analysis given to the "drug", as a substance caught between metaphysics and chemistry. The question of how we might embody the power that drugs give without also creating the addicted man was posed in order to illustrate how desire bypasses the symbolic order and directly invests perception and the perceived.