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Neuroscience and the Conditions of Critique^[1]

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Introduction : critique and neuroscience

At its most basic level critique entails a triangle: critique posits itself at a remove from two other points. Just consider the typical phrase: “on the one hand... and at the other hand”. Critique and critical thinking thus always assumes some kind of (Archimedean) point of view overlooking a binarized terrain.

However, has this kind of critique, typical of the humanities, not precisely become outdated by the neuro-turn itself? The neurosciences themselves offer a firm critique, laying bare the illusions involved not only in love or altruism, but also in thinking and rationality and hence of critique as such. Hence, it could be argued that, as the neurosciences (potentially) fully disclose the material base of rationality, they actually deconstruct the illusory Archimedean

position silently underpinning the humanities and their traditional forms of critique.

But of course, against this one can immediately respond that this meta-neuro-critique cannot but itself remobilize the scheme of the critical triangle: positing a point from which a critical gaze is launched at two other points. Consider for example a paper on aesthetics of neuroscientist Vittorio Gallese stating that, I quote:

(...) cognitive neuroscience can surrender us from the forced choice between the totalizing relativism of social constructivism, which doesn't leave any room to the constitutive role of the brain-body in cognition, and the deterministic scientism of some quarters of evolutionary psychology, which aims at explaining art exclusively in terms of adaptation and modularity (Gallese, 2015).

Or, if I am allowed to schematize: cognitive neuroscience is positioned by Gallese in this case as a third point and a mediator between those strands within human sciences opposing the determinism of some kinds of psychology. Gallese's move is moreover interesting because it separates what often is considered a monolithic issue: the neuro-scientific and the psychological. Gallese's neuroscientific aesthetics wants to *deconstruct* (Gallese uses this specific term), on the one hand, intersubjectivity and hermeneutics (the domain of the traditional humanities according to Gallese), and on the other, the experience we have of the world (the domain of evolutionary psychology).

Now, taking neuroscience as critique allows us to scrutinize the conditions of possibility of neuro-critique. As well known, critique always solicits a meta-critique, evaluating the very possibility of evaluating something. A question hence could be: what are the limits of neuroscientific deconstruction, at what point does it produce, to use Bruno Latour's phrasing, *fact-objects* that fill up the erstwhile deconstructed and emptied-out space? As such it is clear, neuroscience denounces illusions of fullness, empties them out, but at the same time it engenders the fact-objects of the brain, the connectome, the synapse... And here a second question arises, if these are the fact-objects, what is then the stuff of which these natural objects-apparitions are made? And here I already come to the crux of my argument, for, isn't it precisely here, in the alleged bare facts, that the old humanist and psychological

assumptions come back to haunt what was meant to replace them? That is, one can argue that the deconstructive machine of the neurosciences necessarily has to start from humanist and psychological *theories*. In brief: to argue that X is understandable in neuro-terms requires certain humanist/psychological conceptions of X. Eventually, what is put under the scanner is not a body, it is even not the psychological features one wants to find the neural underpinning for: what is put under the scanner is, I argue, a psychological *theory*. Crucial for neuroscientific research on, for example, aggression is the *psychological theory* that makes aggression operative, it's from here that the stimuli (images, videos or other scenarios) offered to the subjects in the MRI-tube are designed. Here, the choice between a cognitive behavioral theoretical framework or psychoanalysis, for example, is, obviously, decisive. To this we must add that, not only do neuroscientific experiments start from psychological theory, they also end up with psychology. That is, eventually a typical neuroscientific experiment concludes, after having discussed brain areas, neurotransmitters, and so on, with a *theoretical-psychological* speculation on the observed. Eventually, it's psychology which is mapped onto the brain, psychology which provides the pencils to color the brain (De Vos, 2016a). Consequently, given this dependency, it becomes questionable whether the neurosciences can deliver an unproblematic, non-Archimedean perspective to launch a neuro-critique from: for they unwittingly have to scaffold their critical position with a silent partner, psychology. This issue of psychologization is where the critical triangle of neuroscience as critique threatens to collapse.

So perhaps we should consider another, more classic, triangle, one which still puts philosophy or, for that matter, the human sciences, in motion. This one would involve, on the one hand, the spontaneous, everyday folk-psychology of the human and, on the other, the objectified, scientific assessments of the human. Philosophy in this scheme claims the critical point of view to deal with both perspectives. The question of course will be whether this assigning of psychology to the layperson will suffice to keep the specter of psychologization at bay and keep the critical triangle stable enough. To explore this, I'll engage with Ray Brassier's project of merging Wilfrid Sellars' critical realism with Thomas Metzinger's neuro-philosophical approach to the Self in order to re-mount a philosophical critique attempting to be compatible with today's neurosciences.

The myth of folk-psychology

Let me start with Sellars: for Sellars there are two images of man-in-the-world: “the manifest image of man” concerning our everyday, folk-psychological way of dealing with ourselves, the others and the world; and “the scientific image”, concerning how science looks at humanity and the world. The manifest image is the level of conceptual interpretation (“giving and asking for reasons”) and the scientific image concerns ontological descriptions and explanations. The philosophical task, then, for Sellars, is to achieve a properly stereoscopic integration of the manifest and scientific images, such that the language of the first would enrich scientific theory, and to allow the latter to be directly wedded to human purposes (Brassier, 2007, p. 6).

Here we have again the triangle of critique, so what are, then, the different corners? To begin with: the manifest image is for Sellars the framework in terms of which man comes to be aware of himself as man-in-the-world: “man couldn't be man until he encountered himself” he writes (Sellars, 1963, p. 6). While the manifest image took shape “in the mists of pre-history”, the scientific image is relatively young (Sellars, 1963, p. 5). The main difference is that the manifest image concerns concrete, experiential things (“persons, animals, lower forms of life and ‘merely material’ things”) (Sellars, 1963, p. 9) while science involves the postulation of imperceptible entities to explain the behavior of perceptible things (Sellars, 1963, p. 7). Philosophy, then, has the task of establishing a stereoscopic view, encompassing, “in one view the two images of man-in-the-world” (Sellars, 1963, p. 6).

Importantly, Sellars does not privilege the manifest image over the scientific one, nor the other way around. For Sellars the two images are not fully reducible to each other. He even argues that to the extent that the manifest image would not survive in the synoptic view, man himself would not survive. It would hence be “folly to replace [the manifest image] piecemeal by fragments of the scientific image” (Sellars, 1963, p. 15). However, what makes it the case that the manifest image has a surplus which escapes the scientific grasp is not precisely clear. He does provide some hints: we do not get our folk-psychological outlook on life from a supposed direct and intimate contact with our own psychological states; rather, this is from the very start a matter of language and intersubjectivity (related to family, community and

society). As this intersubjective manifest image is the basis for our self-understanding, it remains for Sellars out of the purview of science.^[3]

But does this not still raise the question: why does the manifest image defy scientification? For, in the end, is Sellars “giving and asking for reasons”, determined by language and intersubjectivity, really a zone out of reach for science? Are not precisely today’s neurosciences, ranging from neuropsychology to neuro-aesthetics to neuropolitics, claiming jurisdiction here? However, whether this claim is legitimate or not might not be of central importance. The central issue, rather, is to understand why the irreducibility of the manifest image is crucial not only for the Sellarsian theoretical construction *but also for* what we here sweepingly might call the neuro-turn within the (human) sciences.

The point of entry here might be the predominance of the scopic element with Sellars (using terms as *images, stereoscopy, synoptic view...*), which he does not justify or elaborate on. Sellars posits “man-in-the-world” as endowed with a naïve *gaze*, embedded in history and intersubjectivity. This first gaze results in the manifest image. This gaze, then is redoubled in the scientific gaze, constituting thus a man, *scientific man*, I would argue, not *in* but *outside* the world, looking from this Archimedean position at sublunar man. Here we could already ask if Sellars’ first, perhaps all too easily advanced “man-*in*-the-world” is indeed not above all an *image*, that is, a fiction, only seeing light through the scientific gaze itself? Or, put differently, it’s the scientific gaze which calls into life a world out there in which it posits a naïve, reflective “man-in-the world”. Sellars, moreover, supplements these two gazes with a third one, the “synoptic view” of philosophy. Hence, can we not argue that Sellars *needs* the manifest image, the “man-in-the-world”, *to be irreducible to science*? Not only does this irreducibility constitute an object for the sciences (it creates the necessary outside for the sciences), it also calls for a third player, that is, philosophy. For, only because science eventually “fails to provide a point of view outside the manifest image” (Sellars, 1963, p. 28), philosophy can be called upon to deliver a stereoscopic view. The Sellarsian critical triangle thus stands or falls with the alleged irreducibility of the manifest image. The basis assumption of Sellars is thus that there is something like a folk psychological man who testifies to some pre-scientific or extra-scientific realm that is only truly assessable from the philosophical, critical vantage point.

Contra this scheme, my critique is that this manifest image, this pre- or extra-scientific or *folk-psychological man* is only an *effect* or an *invention* of modernity. Modern philosophy and psychology seem to be based on the construction of the image of a naïve, common human with his folk psychological ways of dealing with himself, others and the world. And this is still central to the neuro-turn in the human sciences: the idea of folk-psychology and the irreducible manifest image is the necessary counterpart, to be explained - but not to be explained away, as that would cut the ground out from under the neurosciences. Against this myth, we can argue that since modernity our being in the world, which arguably collides with our reflection on it, passes fully over the *scientific* gaze. Hence is not the idea of a pre-scientific naïve presence in the world eventually false? Everything we do, from cooking, eating, sleeping, having sex, raising children, up and to gardening, I would claim, is informed by, embedded in, structured by science. For, do we not all know what the academic experts say about how to cook, eat, sleep, have sex, raise our children and do the gardening? Our life-world, our habitat is Academia.

The advent of science can thus be said to have resulted in a fundamental shift of subjectivity in modernity. Science, as Edmund Husserl argued, “abstracts from everything subjective” (Husserl, 1970, p. 6). The modern sciences with their enormous capacity for objectification engendered not a so-called proto-scientific subject, but, rather, a full-blown *subject of the sciences*, looking at itself, others and the world, *as a scientist*. So contra Sellars’ preservation of an irreducibility to the manifest image, and contra Husserl’s refuge into the life-world, one could argue that both the folk-psychological man-in-the-world and the life-world itself are emptied out: we have all joined the ranks of the scientific community. Or, what Sellars calls our “giving and asking for reasons” passes through scientific discourse. The modern subject is hence not pre-scientific and even not proto-scientific: science does not merely color or influence our image of ourselves: science is our self-image. This is how we can understand Jacques Lacan saying that the subject of psychoanalysis is the subject of science (Lacan, 1966): this subject of science is the modern subject as such. Hence if Sellars writes that to the extent that the manifest image would not survive in the synoptic view, man himself would not survive, perhaps what he refrains from considering is the possibility that man indeed has not survived the advent of science: has the old “man” not died, only, without knowing it, only

to live on like a zombie? At the least, here also Sellars' critical triangle collapses.

Arguably, this is not the conclusion Ray Brassier makes when he engages with Sellars in his paper "The View from Nowhere" (2011). His attempts instead to reground the critical triangle and safeguard the vantage point of philosophy, precisely by claiming that, although the manifest image is not reducible to the scientific one, this irreducibility itself is not inaccessible to science. As we will see, Brassier, leaning on Thomas Metzinger, will claim that the neurosciences actually reveal a "point of view from nowhere," one that plays a role in the (illusionary) constitution of a Self.

There is no *no* point of view from nowhere

Brassier makes his point in a discussion with Habermas. Habermas clearly wants to preserve an irreducible, interpersonally constituted first-person fully disjoined from the scientific image and its third-person perspective. Here Habermas can be said to be on the same track of Sellars' putting forward the irreducibility of the "manifest image". But while Sellars is committed to the priority of the scientific image, Habermas is not. Brassier writes:

Thus, according to Habermas, attempts to explain agency naturalistically fail because "the social constitution of the human mind which unfolds within interpersonal relationships can be made accessible only from the perspective of participants and cannot be captured from the perspective of an observer who objectivates everything into an event in the world." (Brassier, 2011, p. 10).

For Habermas self-objectification would irrevocably estrange us from ourselves: persons describing themselves in such a way "cannot recognize themselves as persons anymore" (Habermas quoted in: Brassier, 2011, p. 11). Here one could already remark that Habermas misses that this alienation perhaps is always already part, if not the core, of modern subjectivity as such. But what is most important is, as Brassier shows, that Habermas here evokes a *point of view from nowhere*, in order to immediately dismiss it. Habermas contends that "the gaze of a purportedly absolute observer" is always tied to the subject and its position in the community.

It is precisely this *point of view from nowhere* that Brassier wants to re-establish, precisely by grounding it in biology. That there is “a constitutive link between subjectivity and rationality”, Brassier writes, “is not to preclude the possibility of rationally investigating the biological roots of subjectivity” (Brassier, 2011, p. 9). Here Brassier turns to Thomas Metzinger’s “phenomenal self-model,” which attempts to account for how the first-person subjective perspective arises out of subpersonal representational mechanisms at the neurobiological level (Brassier, 2011, p. 13). Metzinger’s “phenomenal self-model” starts from a representational model to explain consciousness: “Conscious experience (...) consists in the activation of a coherent and transparent world model within a window of presence” (Metzinger cited in: Brassier, 2011, p. 13). Self-consciousness is about the representing of the system’s own states to itself. And here the notion of transparency is crucial: the Self is its own appearance only insofar as it does not perceive itself as a model. That is, only insofar as it is transparent to itself, is the self phenomenologically constituted. Or, as Metzinger puts it, you can see through your self-representations, they are transparent, and that is why they are cognitively impenetrable and not accessible for the system itself. This unavailability of the representational character of the contents of conscious experience is for Metzinger the very base for our experience of having a self.

It is here that Brassier wants to ground the point of view from nowhere, by imagining, together with Metzinger, the possibility of a “selfless experience”. That is, Metzinger contemplates the possibility of a system whose representational models would *not* be transparent but fully opaque. While in the case of transparency there is an introspective unavailability of all the earlier processing stages which have produced the Self, a system presented with opacity would “continuously recognize [the earlier processing stages] as a representational construct, as an internally generated internal structure” (Metzinger cited in: Brassier, 2011, p. 18). Such a system would not have a self, only a system-model.^[4] Such a system would be, according to Metzinger, “nemocentric”: it would be functionally egocentric, while remaining phenomenologically selfless. Brassier argues that this nemocentric perspective is a strong argument for the neurocomputational processing underlying objectifying representation: it foregrounds the objective processes through which objectivity is partly produced. And this is where, Brassier argues, one might find *the view from nowhere* rejected by Habermas:

The nemo-centric subject of a hypothetically completed neuroscience in which all the possible neural correlates of representational states have been identified would provide an empirically situated and biologically embodied locus for the exhaustively objective “view from nowhere,” which Habermas denounced as a conceptual impossibility (Brassier, 2011, p. 18).

So when for Habermas there is no escape from the subjective, first-person perspective — even the absolute observer is tainted by it — Brassier in contrast argues that precisely within that first-person perspective this objective *point of view from nowhere* is potentially to be found.^[5] Rejecting on this ground Habermas’ irreducibility of the subjective and the normative, Brassier wants to ground Sellars’ synoptic view as one that integrates the subjective and the objective, reasons and causes (Brassier, 2011, p. 19). Situating the point of view from nowhere primordially in the sub-personal dimension of the manifest image of man-in-the-world itself, Brassier arguably consolidates the critical triangle of Sellars.

To be clear, I value Brassier’s quest for a point of view from nowhere, but let me formulate where I need to disagree. Brassier rightfully rejects the first-person perspective discourses à la Habermas and other phenomenological, hermeneutical approaches as he, leaning on Metzinger, attempts to, as it were, radically empty out the self. However, does Metzinger, and with him Brassier, in the end not refrain from completely emptying the self out? That is, Metzinger clearly bases his phenomenal self-model on the presupposed phenomenological everyday experience of oneself *as a self*. However is this (pop)psychological image of a self not the construction of a straw man in order to then perform the deconstruction? For is not, in contrast, the basic primordial modern experience precisely one of *the loss of the self*, of selflessness or even un-selfness? This is where one should replace Metzinger’s very starting point —the, illusory, pre-reflexive experience of being someone— with the basic lesson of psychoanalysis: namely that the self, or better, the subject, only exists in relation to its non-being, its being split, its lack. This basic alienation is always already operative at the very phenomenological level: it is the inextricable shadow of any experience of being a self. In this sense, Brassier’s phrase “PSM is all we are” —speaking about a “full immersion” as he echoes Metzinger’s terms “total simulation” (Brassier, 2011, p. 17) — is not unproblematic. I’d

argue against this: to be immersed in the world requires a spot, a symptom, a doubt: is this real or is it a dream? This minimal doubt, that this self is not all (that it could be different, could be more...), that minimal alienation, and hence minimal distance is constitutive, as it opens a vantage point and a perspective for engaging with oneself, others and the world. Here both Metzinger and Brassier are unwittingly swimming in psychologizing waters. Consider the concepts used by both Metzinger and Brassier in relation to PSM such as “exhibiting behavior” “self-regulation”, “agency” “information processing”... These are by no means objective categories founded in biology: they refer to the specific psychological theories (which one could refute or deconstruct from other psychological theories) that inadvertently underlie the PSM model.

Here, against Metzinger’s *self* and Sellars’ *manifest image of man*, which apparently took shape “in the mists of pre-history”, I oppose the Lacanian *barred subject* and connect this to the, as already mentioned, modern subject as the “subject of science”: the subject that, since the advent of the modern sciences, came to look upon itself from an external scientific point of view. Hence, the manifest self-understanding of modern man is not only scientifically informed (or proto-theoretical as Sellars has it), *it is as such structured as a scientific discourse*. Does this not mean, and this is my main argument, that modern subjectivity is centered around the scientific, objectifying point of view from nowhere? Hence, the view from nowhere rejected by Habermas and sought for by Brassier in the realm of the sub-personal neurobiological genesis of the Self, is only understandable by the advent of scientific discourse itself! From here follows that the alleged outside of science – that is, the particular, the normative, the hermeneutic— by no means is an independent terrain that the “human sciences” such as psychology, sociology –or for that matter, philosophy— could straightforwardly overlook and access. Giving weight and flesh to this outside of science requires the construction of a myth, the construction of a straw man, the resurrection of the humanistic subject. While Sellars’ manifest image ultimately nods at this artificial homo folk-psychologicus, the question is if in the end Brassier too is not in its grip. This is missed in the, in my opinion, misconstrued differentiation between “weak-phenomenological notions” of “what it is to be a self” and stronger theories of what a self is. To be clear, my point is not only that the manifest image of “man-in-the-world” is theory-laden, but, above all, that the manifest image, folk-psychology, or, for that matter, the alleged naïve-empirical notion of the everyday

experience of being a self, only emerged with the gaze of the modern sciences.

From here we should radically think the modern subject from *its zero level of subjectivity*; as that which structures, even at the basic phenomenological level, its being with itself, others and the world. The origin of this *zero level of subjectivity* is in the first instance to be situated within the objectifications of science: the sciences empty out the life-world of meaning, engender a process of un-signifying, eventually leading to the void of subjectivity. The resulting non-sense subject (as opposed to Sellars' idea of man "giving and asking for reasons") is hence both the product of the modern sciences, and the very basis for the disinterested, emptied-out point of view from nowhere that makes modern science possible! Hence the "stain" in objectivity is not the subject as it is viewed in classical critiques (such as Habermas') – a full humanistic subject. It is instead the point of view from nowhere itself, it is the fact that objectivity cannot but be framed and formulated in terms of *the zero-level of subjectivity*. In short, the problem of objectivity is not the subject, it is the zero-level of subjectivity.

This is why we should subvert the classic understanding of the view from nowhere. Thomas Nagel's well-known book *The View from Nowhere* (Nagel, 1989) claims that there are two viewpoints to view the world from: the subjective and objective viewpoint. The subjective viewpoint is the allegedly obvious immediate and pre-reflective perspective, which, as Nagel points out, is precisely becoming visible by stepping further and further outside of oneself into an objective perspective. But for Nagel there are limits to this movement. One cannot fully transcend the initial starting point: eventually the "view from nowhere" remains an impossibility. Now if in contrast Brassier does claim a "point of view from nowhere", I would give this a further twist and put forward: there is no *no* view from nowhere. That is, I argue that the "manifest image of man" and so called "folk psychology" are but myths of science: one cannot but look upon oneself, others, and the world starting from a point of view from nowhere. And since modernity this point of view from nowhere is connected to the objectifications of science. But to be clear, this gaze is precisely launched from the impossibility nested within (and eventually grounding) objectivity, that is, from a zero-level of subjectivity which constitutes the modern subject as the subject of science. This means that in the end the true impossibility is not the impossibility of the objective view, as Nagel had it,

but, rather, this impossibility is primordially situated at the level of the subjective view. There is no subjective view, there is no first-person perspective, there is no folk psychology, there is no manifest image. The subjective view *is* the point from nowhere.

Conclusions: cause and object of critique

What then can be the critique of the neurosciences? Critique of course is inevitably defined by a “darkness from which it works”. The blind spot in the first critical triangle I’ve sketched – Gallese’s positing of neuroscience as a critique vis-à-vis both the humanities and psychology— can, as argued, be found in the neurosciences’ structural, but also occluded reliance on psychology. The blind spot of the second critical triangle, putting philosophy in gear vis-à-vis both the (neuro)sciences and folk-psychology, is eventually the denial of a zero-level of subjectivity, leading to the erroneous fleshing out of a (folk-)psychological subject allegedly irreducible to the scientific image.

Now, to explore the possibility of elevating this zero-level of subjectivity to the very principle of critique, let us use the so-called logic of representation as developed by Slavoj Žižek. Following Alain Badiou, Žižek differentiates between, on the one hand, “anti-philosophy” as the assertion of pure presence, irreducible and excessive with regard to the network of representations (Žižek, 2012, p. 841), and, on the other hand, the Hegelian position of positing nothing beyond phenomenality or beyond the field of representation (Žižek, 1989, p. 232). Hence, transposed to our discussion, the first, anti-philosophical option is to understand subjectivity as that which remains or withstands the storms of the sciences and their objectifications. Thus, *what I am, what my true subjective core is*, is conceived as that which remains after all the biological, neurological, and psychological reductions. Here we have a *too much*, an excess at the site of subjectivity. This is where Habermas can be situated and his argument that the first-person perspective is not reducible to the scientific image and its third-person perspective. This is also where the neurosciences are for example criticized for their being unwittingly embedded in cultural, political and economic contexts. But of course the neurosciences could counter-argue that this cultural realm is by no means out of the reach of science itself: it can be criticized, deconstructed and incorporated by the neurosciences. This is where Gallese and eventually also Brassier can be situated, who both

put the neurosciences in the position of being able to fully grasp, potentially at least, the domain of (inter)subjectivity without anything left over. To be clear, even if one can object that besides Gallese, also Metzinger and Brassier unwittingly rely on psychologistic and humanistic notions, there is some truth in their neuroscientific-inspired deconstructive critique of the humanities. At the least it lays bare that the humanistic critique itself lacks a final ground for its critique. Put differently, the neuro-turn does not *effect* a crisis in the humanities, it only brings in the open the old longstanding crisis of the humanities.

And here we can return to the second option in the logic of representation, which argues for a *too much* on the side of objectivity. The 'garb of science', so to speak,^[6] is too big for the world it wants to cover. This means not that *there is too much subject for science*, but, rather, that *there is too much science for (or of) the subject*. The modern subject is precisely nothing other than this *too much*; the subject *is* the excess, the surplus resulting from the sciences. This is the situation of the colourful brain scan engendering an "oh-my-god-is-this-what-I-am" subject: science creates a new subject, contemplating itself, others, and the world from the scientific perspective. Hence, Hegel's idea that philosophers cannot transcend their social and historical context (Hegel, 1991[1821]) perhaps should be properly dialecticized: the modern subject as such is always already in its very kernel outside the social and the historical. Being the subject of science, I always already transcend the social and the historical, as I participate in the detached and objectifying scientific outlook on the human and the world. Here, perhaps, the zero-level of subjectivity can be elevated to the driving principle of critique. That is, the critique of the neurosciences should not be a critique of objectivity (a critique wanting to lay bare the underlying cultural/political biases), but rather it should be a critique of subjectivity: addressing how modern subjectivity is linked to a vantage point (albeit a virtual and empty one) beyond culture, politics and history. A critique of the neurosciences should thus explore the conditions of (im)possibility of the modern academic subject and from there explore how both the neurosciences and the human sciences more often than not miss that the human being has since long left the human zoo and joined the other side of the bars, that is, the ranks of the scholars.

In this respect Ray Brassier's claim "Nature is not our or anyone's 'home'" has sense only if we couple it to Lacan, who wrote that the discourse of science leaves no place whatsoever

for man (Lacan, 1991, p. 171). Or, as science objectifies, it inevitably empties out subjectivity. The subject is nowhere at home, neither in thinking, nor in nature – the latter being after all but the double of science. This homeless subject, this *barred* subject to use the Lacanian parlance, is what critique now more than ever should be about: the blind spot as cause and object of critique.



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Notes

[1] Abridged and slightly reworked version of "What is Critique in the Era of the Neurosciences? . In J. De Vos

& E. Pluth (Eds.), *Neuroscience and Critique. Exploring the Limits of the Neurological Turn* (pp. 22-40). London: Routledge." (De Vos, 2016b), presented at the International Symposium: "(Neuro)psychoanalysis, its critique, its critics." Ghent (BE), June 24, 2015

[2] Even though Sellars himself does not mention the concept of folk psychology in his seminal text "Philosophy and the Scientific Image of Man" (1963), most of his interpreters connect the manifest image to it. See for example (de Vries, 2007).

[3] It is here that Sellars differs from similar intentionalist and mentalist theories of folk psychology. For example, also for Paul Churchland (1981) and Daniel C. Dennett (1987) folk psychology is about the attribution of propositional attitudes and intentional states to others and ourselves in order to understand others and ourselves. But for Dennett folk psychology is above all a biologically grounded issue, while for Churchland folk psychology cannot but be flawed: so it needs to be replaced by scientific theories.

[4] However, in that hypothetical case, the system would be burdened by a computational overload of representations: as Brassier and Metzinger argue, it would have to find a way to deal with this in order to not get trapped into infinite loops of self-presentation. However, neither Brassier nor Metzinger explain how exactly such a system would be able to ward of this potentially infinite computational overload.

[5] The argument thus is that although the PSM of Metzinger does not function with a point of view from nowhere, it shows how it potentially (hence virtually) would function, that is, within the nemo-centric perspective. My point of course is that the point of view from nowhere is not potentially/virtually involved, but rather is involved in a Real (in a Lacanian sense) way.

[6] I am referring of course to Husserl's "garb of ideas" (Husserl, 1970).