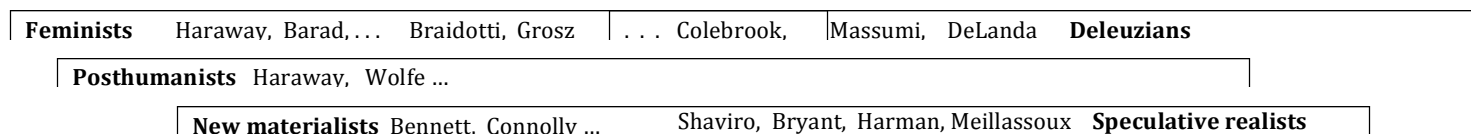
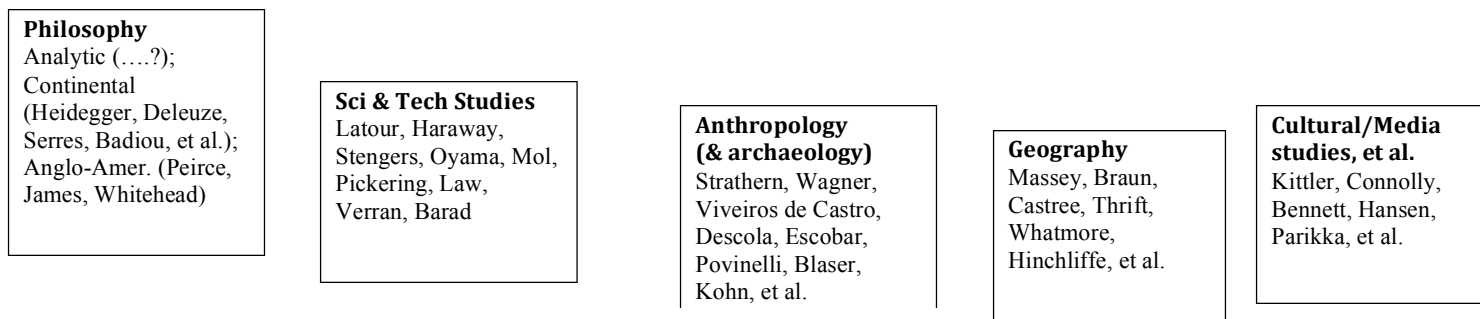


**Ontology Across the Disciplines: Orientations...**  
Some Mappings (of an Infinity of Possible Mappings)  
02. 19. 2015



**Common critical access points?**

- Beyond previous ‘turns’ (linguistic/social/discursive turn, reflexive turn, practice/performative turn, affective turn, posthuman turn, et al.) – but esp. beyond social constructionism
- Critique of ‘correlationism’ (Meillassoux)
- Critique of transcendence → preference for immanence, ‘flat ontologies’ (Harman, DeLanda)
- Critique of ‘mononaturalism’ (& multiculturalism couplet, i.e. nature-culture binary) (de Castro, Latour, et al)

**Common affirmative access points?**

- Reality as multiple & dynamic, enactive & performative, always in the making
- Agency as relational & heterogeneous (incl. humans & nonhumans, posthuman actants, assemblages)
- Openness to sciences (chaos/complex systems, self-organization, ecology/animal studies, Anthropocene)

**Holbraad, Pedersen, Viveiros de Castro position paper -- 3 senses of “ontology”:**

- 1) **Realist:** “How things are” (its politics: the “injunction to discover and disseminate” it)
- 2) **Anti-essentialist/deconstructivist/social-constructionist/‘critical’:** **critique** of ‘how-things-are’s
- 3) **Performative/enactive/‘worlding’:**
  - Plural (and hybrid) ontologies; “multiplicity of forms of existence enacted in concrete practices,” whose “politics” concerns how things could be *otherwise*; Being as that which differs from itself
  - Ontology as a “technology of description” [=ontography? cf. M. Lynch]
  - Politics: V. de Castro’s “permanent decolonization of thought”

**Discussion**

- Is ontology just a formalization of other ‘turns’ (affective, material, et al.)?
- Are some of the disagreements over style rather than substance? E.g., ‘diffraction’ (e.g., Haraway, Barad, Fortun, et al.) vs. synoptic systematization (Descola, Latour)
- For philosophers, ontology = claims about the world + a conceptual tool-kit of categories, etc. These can apply to comparative cultural projects. Is ontology what’s **not** socially constructed? Or not? Philosophers disagree.
- Immanence/transcendence duality: Is kinship ontological, a network of shared being? Can God be ‘ontologically black’? (Black Liberation theology)
- What does it **do** for us to take the ontological turn? Does it mean to take X (e.g., the things, the spirits) seriously in & of themselves, rather than just through their (human, discursive) interlocutors? E.g., Povinelli on intimacy, carnality, “the spirit mounts you”; Ochoa on the “society of the dead”
- Is the ontological turn a hyper-reflexive turn? A critique of culturalism, i.e., of the ‘mereness’ of culture?
- To what extent is the ‘onto-turn’ something promoted by secondary scholars to forward their careers by ‘packaging’ the work others have done?
- What are the risks of suggesting that a certain politics is inherent to a given ontology?