

Department of Philosophy & Religion Colloquium

Strange Ideas: Deleuze and the Overturning of Platonism

Professor Joshua Ramey

April 20, 2009

11:00am—12:00pm

Bunce Hall, Room 107

Plato believed that nothing in the physical universe, nor anything in the entirety of human experience, could be understood strictly on its own terms. For Plato, nothing in experience can be known—indeed, nothing can exist—without an ideal Form, a paradigm or model in which that experience more or less participates. At the end of the 19th century, Friedrich Nietzsche declared that it must be the ambition of modern philosophy to “overturn” Platonism. Several important 20th-century philosophers, including Whitehead, Bergson, Heidegger, Foucault, and Irigaray, attempted to develop philosophical positions that do not reject but radically re-interpret Plato’s ideas. This paper attempts to explain how Platonism is overturned in the work of the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995), a thinker who, versed in the most contemporary debates in logic, aesthetics, epistemology, and philosophy of science, found much to appreciate—and contend with—in Plato’s thought.

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