ALIEN THEORY

The Decline of Materialism in the Name of Matter

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SYNOPSIS

The thesis tries to define and explain the rudiments of a 'non-philosophical' or 'non-decisional' theory of materialism on the basis of a theoretical framework provided by the 'non-philosophy' of François Laruelle. Neither anti-philosophical nor anti-materialist in character, non-materialism tries to construct a rigorously transcendental theory of matter by using certain instances of philosophical materialism as its source material.

The materialist decision to identify the real with matter is seen to retain a structural isomorphy with the phenomenological decision to identify the real with the phenomenon. Both decisions are shown to operate on the basis of a methodological idealism; materialism on account of its confusion of matter and concept; phenomenology by virtue of its confusion of phenomenon and logos. By dissolving the respectively 'materiological' and 'phenomenological' amphibolies which are the result of the failure to effect a rigorously transcendental separation between matter and concept on the one hand; and between phenomenon and logos on the other, non-materialist theory proposes to mobilise the non-hybrid or non-decisional concepts of a 'matter-without-concept' and of a 'phenomenon-without-logos' in order to effect a unified but non-unitary theory of phenomenology and materialism. The result is a materialisation of thinking that operates according to matter's foreclosure to decision. That is to say, a transcendental theory of the phenomenon that licenses limitless phenomenological plasticity, unconstrained by the apparatus of eidetic intuition or any horizon of apophantic disclosure; yet one which is simultaneously a transcendental theory of matter, uncontaminated by the bounds of empirical perception and free of all phenomenological circumscription.

INTRODUCTION

MATERIALISM, SCIENCE, PHENOMENOLOGY

Philosophy and Non-Philosophy

This thesis will attempt to articulate something that we shall characterise as a 'non-Decisional' or 'non-philosophical' materialism in accordance with the theoretical framework provided by François Laruelle's 'non-philosophy'. However, to explain what we mean by a 'non-philosophical' materialism, and why it in no way constitutes an anti-philosophical materialism, is to explain why the expression 'non-philosophy' as used by Laruelle is in no way indicative of an anti-philosophical stance. Thus, from the very outset, our attempt to communicate the powerfully original import of Laruelle's work through the elucidation of a non-philosophical materialism must first proceed by setting aside the immediately possible misinterpretations triggered by the expression 'non-philosophy'.

Laruelle's non-philosophy is not yet another voice joining in the clamorous post-modern chorus celebrating the supposed death of philosophy. Yet neither is it a variant of deconstruction, petitioning the undecidable in

order to effect a destabilization or dislocation of metaphysical decision. Non-philosophy is not an anti-philosophical doctrine but a *theory* for philosophy, a theory that, once applied to a philosophical material, radically reconfigures the structures of philosophical thought on the basis of that material. Far from seeking to terminate or to interrupt philosophical Decision[1], the Laruellean practise of non-philosophy constitutes a non-Decisional theory *for* philosophical Decision; a theoretical praxis which seeks to broaden the horizons of Decision and widen the conceptual possibilities available to philosophical thought by suspending the sufficiency of Decision as practised in its autonomously philosophical mode. Neither an autonomous philosophical position, nor an anti-philosophical alternative to philosophising *per se*, non-philosophy is rather an *organon* for the transformation and explanation of problems whose immediately philosophical form, Laruelle suggests, simultaneously compromises both their theoretical rigour and their ontological, ethical, aesthetic, or political pertinence.

Accordingly, one of our central objectives in this thesis will to be to demonstrate how, although producing no substantive philosophical Decisions in and of itself -whether these be ontological, ethical, aesthetic, or political in

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[1]The expression 'philosophical Decision' designates an important technical concept in Laruelle's thought. We will be setting out a preliminary philosophical delineation of this notion in the course of Chapters 2, 3, and 4, before providing a detailed account of its function in non-philosophical theory in Chapter 5.

character-, non-philosophical practise provides the 'working philosopher' with a rigorous but non-Decisional theory for Decision. In operating upon what Laruelle will characterise as the 'empirico-transcendental composites' of philosophical ontology, philosophical ethics, philosophical aesthetics, or philosophical politics, non-philosophy seeks to emancipate the rigorously transcendental, but non-ontological Identity[2] of ontology, the non-ethical Identity of ethics...etc. We shall see how, for every such composite structure constituted by 'the-philosophical-theory-of-X', wherein the elemental essence of 'theory' and of 'X' remains compromised through the bi-lateral correspondence of their philosophical envelopment, non-philosophical thinking will endeavour to separate both the relationless Identity and the unilateral duality of 'theory' and of 'X', an Identity and duality irreducible to their bilateral philosophical correspondence. More specifically, our aim in this thesis is to try to show how, operating on the basis of a 'philosophy-of-matter', non-philosophy can help discover materialism's non-materialist essence by developing the unilateral Identity and duality of 'theory' and of 'matter'.

Conscious of the fact that such formulations must appear chronically obscure at this introductory stage, we will try to introduce Laruelle's novel

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[2] Again, the Laruellean characterisation of 'Identity' as a non-philosophical concept will be explained

and undeniably difficult conceptual apparatus through a series of incremental steps, each one building on the one before in a succession of chapters presenting the reader with a gradually increasing degree of technicality. We hope thereby to allow the reader to become slowly acclimatized to an idiosyncratic but rigorously exacting theoretical vocabulary.

In order to facilitate the difficult conceptual transition from the philosophical to the non-philosophical register, the thesis is divided into two parts. Part I, 'The Decline of Materialism As Such', comprises Chapters 1 through 4 and will try to identify the conditions of the philosophical problem which we intend to treat non-philosophically in Part II, 'The Name of Matter Itself', which consists of Chapters 5 through 9. That problem is the materiological[3] amphiboly of matter and logos, or of phenomenon and hyle, as exemplified both in the 'material phenomenology' of Michel Henry and in the 'absolute hyletics' of Deleuze & Guattari. This amphiboly, we shall argue, leads to an fundamental indiscernibility between the theoretical postures of materialism and idealism, an indiscernibility in virtue of which philosophical materialism remains incapable of distinguishing itself from idealism. Consequently, 'the decline of materialism in the name of matter' describes that movement whereby any philosophical materialism which accepts the

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in Chapter 5.

premise of a transcendental distinction between 'thought' and 'matter' must forsake the attempt to encompass matter in the concept and abandon the materiological register in order to initiate a theoretical posture whereby not only does materialism no longer presume to circumscribe matter by way of a concept, it is now matter which determines materialism through its very foreclosure to every concept. In other words, Part I argues that transcendental materialism achieves its most rigorous theoretical consummation at the point where it necessitates its own elimination as a system of discursive statements 'about' matter.

Part II, 'The name of matter itself' constitutes the non-philosophical half of the thesis. It implements the radical shift in theoretical posture recommended in the final Chapter of Part I and describes the consequences devolving from that change of posture. The materiological amphiboly of matter and concept is replaced by a 'first-name' or 'non-conceptual symbol'[4] that *enacts* matter's transcendental foreclosure to thought *within* thought. It is now matter 'itself' as 'non-conceptual symbol', rather than matter 'as such' or as conceptually defined, which determines materialism through its foreclosure to conceptual thought. Where materialism implicitly presupposes that matter remains commensurate with thought, non-materialism lifts the premise of

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[3] For a preliminary definition of 'materiology' cf. *infra* , Chapter 1, pp.59-62.

commensurability in order to *universalise* the parameters of materialist theory on the basis of matter's foreclosure to thought.

Accordingly, the two-part structure of the thesis attempts not only to describe but also to provide a philosophically intelligible legitimation for the shift from a philosophical to a non-philosophical materialism, for it is on the basis of a philosophical problematic that the transition to the non-philosophical treatment of that problematic is rendered not only intelligible but also necessary. Thus, our hope is that the philosophical half of the thesis goes some way toward providing a stringently *philosophical* legitimation for its non-philosophical complement.

Conversely, from a non-philosophical perspective, the philosophical part of the thesis is non-philosophically validated insofar as the materialism articulated in the first half of the thesis provides the empirical occasion or material required in order to implement a non-philosophical theory of materialism. In other words, foregrounding the latent dimension of materiological amphiboly intrinsic both to the phenomenological and anti-phenomenological varieties of philosophical materialism furnishes us with the philosophical occasion required for mobilizing the resources of non-philosophical theory; a mobilization which will circumvent the equivocal

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[4] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 6, pp.267-277.

idealism common both to the phenomenologisation of materialism and to the materialisation of phenomenology by constructing a non-phenomenological theory of the phenomenon which is equally and simultaneously a non-materialist theory of matter. Accordingly, the second half of the thesis will attempt to show how a non-philosophical approach can render the problematics of transcendental phenomenality and transcendental materiality, which are philosophically incommensurable, non-philosophically commensurable by effectively outlining a *unified theory*[5] of phenomenality and materiality.

Thus, having introduced the transcendental framework subtending the materiological problematic in Chapter 1, Chapter 2 examines its phenomenological exemplification in the work of Michel Henry, while Chapter 3 investigates its materialist instantiation in the thought of Deleuze & Guattari. Chapter 4 draws out the philosophically intractable consequences of the materiological aporias delineated in the two preceding chapters, arguing that the theoretical conditions required for the resolution of those aporias exceed the resources of philosophical Decision. In so doing it prepares the transition to the non-philosophical stance pursued in the second half of the thesis. Chapter 5 describes the shift from the philosophical to the non-

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[5] 'Unified' but not unitary. In other words, a non-dialectical theory, capable of simultaneously

philosophical register by outlining the structure of philosophical Decision as that which must be suspended in order to effectuate a non-Decisional materialism. Chapter 6 argues both for the *a priori* validity and the irrecusable necessity of that stance, introducing the organon of non-materialist theory whilst explaining why it possesses the resources required for the simultaneous neutralisation and explanation -i.e. the *dualysation*[6] - of those materiological amphibolies. It does so by extracting from them the non-philosophical notions of a hyle without concept and a phenomenon without logos. In Chapters 7 and 8 we use the work of Quine and Churchland as a philosophical material on the basis of which to expand on the latter two notions, exploring the realm of radical phenomenological plasticity concomitant with the non-materiological identity of phenomenon and hyle. Finally, our Conclusion will attempt to explain how, by accepting that philosophy and capital are bound together in a relation of reciprocal presupposition, the non-philosophical identification of philosophy and capital as 'World-Capitalism' may yet be able to provide thought with the theoretical means whereby it can constitute itself as an instance of *a priori* resistance to intellectual commodification.

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articulating the identity and duality of 'phenomenon' and 'matter' without synthesizing them. Cf. Chapters 5 and 6.

[6]The notion of non-philosophical 'dualysis' is introduced and explained in Chapter 5, before being exhibited 'in effect' in the course of Chapters 6 and 7.

Moreover, the fact that we are taking the fundamentally methodological character of non-philosophical theory as our starting point explains this thesis' twofold heuristic strategy: in treating the problem of philosophical materialism non-philosophically our aim is to provide the reader with a philosophical perspective on non-philosophy at the same time as we furnish him/her with a non-philosophical vantage upon philosophy. Accordingly, on the one hand, we'll be attempting to map the 'quadrangular' philosophical space delineated through the shifting patterns of allegiance binding materialism to idealism, and phenomenology to realism, but also materialism to realism, and phenomenology to idealism, in order to shed some philosophical light on the relationship between 'thought' and 'matter'. On the other, by applying a non-philosophical methodology to a specific philosophical material, we hope not only to explain and critically evaluate its functioning, but also the extent to which, through its suspension of 'the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy'[7], it succeeds in its stated aim of opening up the restricted, 'six dimensional' realm[8] of philosophical Decision to a

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[7] Cf. Chapter 5.

[8] In Chapter VI of *Prinçipes de la Non-Philosophie,* Laruelle sets out a particularly complex 'transcendental analytic' of philosophical Decision. He analyses its architectonic structure in terms of a single 'vertical' axis or hinge articulating the reciprocally presupposing realms of position and donation; and three distinct 'horizontally' interleaved layers comprising the dimensions of transcendence, ground and unity on the side of position, and those of affection, reception, and intuition on the side of donation. The complex auto-positional and auto-donational structure of Decision is then characterised in terms of the reciprocal pre-supposition of position and donation; to wit, the reciprocal articulation of transcendence and affection; of ground and reception; and of unity and intuition. Hence

hitherto unanticipated, perhaps even potentially infinite domain of conceptual possibility.

Accordingly, following Part I, which sets out the philosophical conditions of materialism as a theoretical problem in a manner that presupposes no prior familiarity with non-philosophy, all of the fundamental Laruellean concepts we intend to mobilize for the purposes of this thesis will be introduced, defined, and explained in Chapters 5 and 6, the first two chapters of Part II, in order to be subsequently refined and expanded upon in Chapters 7 and 8.

Why Materialism?

Our goal is to articulate a non-Decisional materialism by effecting the non-philosophical transformation of that variant of philosophical Decision known as 'materialist'. This choice of philosophical material is not arbitrary. The materialist Decision is one that we feel compelled to make on the grounds of intellectual probity. Yet this fact must be coupled with the recognition that non-philosophy refuses to indulge in ontological Decision. Non-philosophical thinking can no more be described as 'materialist' than it can be characterised as 'phenomenological'. The non-philosopher refuses to

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the fundamentally six-dimensional structure of the space of philosophical conceptuality. Cf. Laruelle, 1996., pp. 281-370. Laruelle's non-philosophical analytic of Decision will be examined in detail in

add to what he regards as an excessive glut of equally contingent, equally unrigorous Decisions. Accordingly, we need to explain: 1. the empirical conjunction of philosophical circumstances in terms of which the materialist Decision appears to us as uncircumventable; and 2. why non-philosophy promises to provide the transcendental conditions in accordance with which the materialist Decision can be rigorously effectuated.

1.The empirical contingency of materialism's philosophical necessity

First, an admission of personal conviction: materialism seems to us to be the only serious, intellectually reputable ontological option available to the philosopher in the wake of those theoretical revolutions that have defined our intellectual modernity. We have in mind here primarily the unquestionably epochal scientific revolutions inaugurated by Copernicus, Darwin, and Einstein, insofar as they definitively undermined the hitherto unassailable legitimacy of the kind of philosophical anthropocentrism harboured by Judeo-Christian culture. But also the comparatively minor, more localised philosophical revolutions initiated by Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, in whose work the epistemological privileges previously ascribed to human subjectivity were effectively terminated.

Chapter 6, pp.301-305. The consequences of suspending and reconfiguring that six-dimensional structure will be explored in Chapters 7 and 8.

Closer to us in time, but just as significant as the remarkable breakthroughs in physics during the first half of the last century, there have been the succession of equally extraordinary advances in evolutionary biology in the latter half of the twentieth century; breakthroughs which, mobilizing new techniques of algorithmic modelling pioneered by dynamical systems theory and subsequently refined through developments in the fields of Artificial Intelligence and Artificial Life, have *via* the emergence of the 'complexity' paradigm, given rise to the possibility a single, unitary theoretical perspective on nature encompassing what were previously considered to be incommensurable domains of phenomena[9]. Paul Churchland has persuasively suggested that a generalised thermodynamics may well provide the most amenable theoretical framework for this fundamentally monistic physical perspective[10]: "*it is* [thermodynamics] *that renders*

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[9] Cf. Parts I and II of Dennett, 1995, pp.17-331. Stuart Kauffman (1993) provides the most fully realised theoretical articulation thus far achieved of the 'complexity' paradigm in biology. However, the philosophical consequences Kauffman chooses to draw from his own scientific work (e.g. in Kauffman, 1995) are, in certain regards, almost diametrically opposed to those we are drawing from it here. Assenting to the irrecusable philosophical consequences of scientific research does not mean assenting to the individual scientist's philosophical interpretation of his or her own work.

[10] Although made in the context of the eliminativist debate in the philosophy of mind, Churchland's suggestion provides a salutary corrective to claims made as to the putatively 'antireductionist' implications of complexity by certain of its champions –Stuart Kauffman being the most distinguished among them. That self-organising systems are substrate-independent or multiply instantiable does not mean that they are physically 'irreducible' in the sense that it would be impossible to provide a general physical characterisation of complex systems within the parameters of physics. Thus, Churchland writes:"*(...) it does not follow, from multiple instantiability per se, that no such general characterisation is possible. It follows only that the required characterisation cannot be expressed in the theoretical vocabulary peculiar to any one of the available substrates. It remains entirely possible that there is a level of physical description sufficiently abstract to encompass all of them, and yet sufficiently powerful to fund the characterisations required. As it happens, there is indeed a physical*

physically intelligible such things as the process of synthetic evolution in general, and the Sun-urged growth of a rose in particular. And what is human knowledge but a cortically embodied flower, fanned likewise into existence by the ambient flux of energy and information?"(Churchland, 1979, p.151) Thus, subatomic particle collisions, spiral nebulae, and carbon-based sapience could all ultimately be explainable as systems of negentropic energy capture. Moreover, in binding together the physico-chemical and bio-organic realms at this abstract level of thermodynamic energetics, the substrate independent algorithmic modelling approach favoured by complexity analysts, abstracting from the scalar distinction between micro- and macro-logical levels of analysis, effectively promises to provide something like a 'unified field theory' for the Neo-Darwinian synthesis in the natural sciences. A synthesis not only liquefying previously entrenched categorial divisions between the physical, the chemical, and the bio-organic, but also effectively neutralizing the distinction between 'nature' and 'culture' as such, thereby allowing for the naturalization of hitherto irreducibly complex socio-cultural phenomena[11].

Meanwhile, in the realm of physics, the 'superstrings' paradigm offers the possibility of reconciling the quantum microcosm and the cosmological

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theory of sufficient generality to encompass the activity of all of these substrates, and any others one might think of. The theory is thermodynamics -the general theory of energy and entropy." (Churchland, 1989, p.46). Cf. also Churchland's 'Is Thinker A Natural Kind?' in *Dialogue*21, no.2: pp. 223-238.

[11] Cf. for example Part III of Dennett 1995, pp. 335-521

macrocosm by supplementing the physics of four-dimensional space-time with seven higher dimensions. The hypothesis of 11-dimensional hyperspace promises at once to simplify the laws of nature and to unify all physical forces by reconfiguring them in accordance with a strictly geometrical paradigm[12]. That paradigm suggests that the apparently insuperable gulf between the sub-atomic realm governed by quantum field theory and the cosmological domain ruled by gravitational field theory is a consequence of distortions engendered by partial perspective. The unified field theory required in order to bridge the gulf and reconcile these conflicting perspectives suspends the assumption of the inherently four dimensional character of space-time, and postulates that both the quantum microcosm and the gravitational macrocosm have been abstracted from the seamless, encompassing consistency of a fundamentally 11-dimensional physical field[13].

As a result, the methodological conception underlying the program of physical unification can no longer be understood in terms of a straightforward process of physical 'reduction' through the uncovering of more and more 'fundamental' particles. It is instead a question of *supplementing* the

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[12] Interestingly, superstring theory proposes a thoroughgoing (but obviously non-Euclidean) *geometricisation* of nature; or, in other words, the thoroughgoing 'hyperspatialisation' of time. Perhaps the philosophical lesson to be retained from all this is that the 'phenomenon' of hyperdimensional space may well turn out to be far more mysterious than that of phenomenological time.

[13] Brian Greene (2000) sets out an exemplary overview of superstring theory for the uninitiated. Michio Kaku (1994) also provides an extremely clear layman's introduction .

impoverished perspective concomitant with a four-dimensional physics by *adding* to it the requisite higher dimensional complement. Thus, physical unification of microcosm and macrocosm is a matter of dissolving incommensurabilities or inconsistencies at the restrictive four-dimensional level through a process of re-integration into the 11-dimensional whole.

If superstring theory is of profound philosophical significance it is because it achieves a univocally consistent physical monism by revealing all scalar incommensurability across the material universe, such as that which apparently separates the realm of quarks and neutrinos from that of galaxies and nebulae, to be the result of a four-dimensional abstraction; a perspectival 'illusion' engendered by assumptions about physical space that are ultimately rooted in the limited parameters of phenomenological perception. As a result, the consequences of superstring physics as far as the phenomenological parameters of mammalian perception are concerned are perhaps even more damning than those associated with traditional physical 'reductionism'. For the implication is that in order to attain an adequate conceptual grasp of the unitary nature of physical reality, it is necessary to achieve a complete theoretical suspension of the image of the world derived from perceptual intuition. In other words, physical theory has to effect a rigorously mathematical circumvention of those imaginative limitations inherent in the

physiologically rooted cognitive apparatus with which an aleatory evolutionary history has saddled us. Thus, the chief obstacle standing in the way of a proper scientific understanding of the physical world would seem to be that of our species' inbuilt tendency to process information *via* epistemic mechanisms which invariably involve an operation of subtraction from the imperceptible physical whole. Phenomenology remains a function of physiology[14]. Perhaps not least among the many startling philosophical consequences of superstring theory is the way in which it seems to provide a rigorously physicalist vindication of Plato: phenomenological perception would seem to be akin to that of the prisoner in the cave who mistakes flickering shadows for 'the things themselves'.

We are <u>not</u> making the foolhardy claim that all these scientific developments in and by themselves somehow 'logically' necessitate or imply philosophical materialism. Nor are we suggesting that they are *a priori* incompatible with one or other variety of phenomenological approach.[15] What

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[14]An explicit philosophical rationale for this proposition is provided below in Chapter 8 *via* an examination of Paul Churchland's work. Cf. *infra*, Chapter 8, pp.383-389.

[15] See for instance the 'autopoietic' paradigm put forward in the work of H.Maturana & F.Varela, in which we find an attempt to ground the putatively irreducible phenomenological reality of intentional consciousness in an apparently thoroughgoing evolutionary naturalism. On our view, however, the trouble with such attempts becomes apparent when one realizes that the naturalization of intentionality comes at the price of a new categorial cleavage between organic and inorganic; a division moreover, which surreptitiously resurrects a form of organismic vitalism: only certain kinds of 'living things' -i.e. organisms - , are composed of the appropriate material 'stuff' required to qualify for the possibility of sentient awareness. But an important philosophical consequence of the neo-Darwinian synthesis is that the difference in kind between organic and inorganic, between the biological and the chemical, is ultimately untenable precisely insofar as it makes it impossible to explain how sentient, animate

we *are* claiming, however, is that the combined upshot of these various developments can be boiled down to a single prohibitive injunction, which, it seems to us, phenomenology, insofar as it simply begins by presupposing an irreducibly human dimension of subjective individuation[16], is singularly ill equipped to satisfy. The injunction in question is that of the impossibility of continuing to conceive of the human as if it constituted the unobjectifiable *exception* in terms of which the ontological validity of what the empirical sciences define as objective nature is to be gauged. This is not quite as banal or easily admissible a requirement for contemporary philosophy as some may initially think. Although many will readily concede the inappropriateness of Man's ontological designation as a *zoon logon echon* or a *res cogitans,* few

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biological 'life' could be constituted through (and not merely have 'arisen out of' as vitalism evasively puts it) nothing but insensate and inanimate chemical processes. Cf. H.Maturana & F.Varela, *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The realization of the living*, Dordrecht: D.Reidel, 1980; also *The Tree of Knowledge: The biological roots of human understanding*, Boston: Shambhala, 1992.

[16] The very notion of 'phenomenon' as that which shows or manifests itself *to* consciousness simply assumes the apprehending subjectivity as an irreducible and intuitively given datum for philosophy. Moreover, the fact that many phenomenologists have abandoned the use of the words 'consciousness' or 'subject' is, by itself, hardly a refutation: the reference to subjective apprehension is simply built into the phenomenological definition of 'phenomenon'. That phenomenology has moved from being an explicit and impenitent philosophy of transcendental subjectivity (Husserl), to one which is so only in an elaborately camouflaged fashion (post-Heidegger), does little to impede the substance of our attack, which targets the guiding spirit of the phenomenological project, rather than the letter of doctrine. In fact, the underlying assumptions of the project are rendered all the more dangerous for being so cleverly disguised. Even a putatively 'material phenomenology', of the sort espoused by Michel Henry (cf., Henry, 1990), which seeks to identify the pre-intentional, sub-representational materiality of the phenomenon with a radically immanent dimension of phenomenological 'Life' -characterised in terms of its absolute, auto-affecting ipseity-, never calls into question the transcendental privilege afforded to that subjective dimension of already individuated ipseity. Henry's phenomenology of an inapparent 'materiality' -perhaps on account of certain residual hylomorphic prejudices inherited from Husserl- simply refuses to countenance the possibility of a materiality not only withdrawn *a priori* from the realm of ekstatic phenomenality, but also from that of subjective ipseity *per se*. For an extended critical discussion of Henry, cf. *infra* , Chapter 2.

seem willing to admit that, after Darwin, it is no longer possible to continue to conceive of human being transcendentally, whether it be as *Subjekt*, *Geist*, or *Dasein*.

Challenged by the philosopher to provide something like an 'adequate' account of the phenomenon of human sapience, the scientist, distilling the various insights provided by evolutionary biology, AI, and thermodynamics, is in a position to put forward a perfectly precise response: human sapience, like many other instances of negentropic energy capture, is a carbon based variety of information processing system[17], *and nothing besides*. The philosopher of course will immediately protest that the response is 'inadequate' *vis a vis* the phenomenon in question because hopelessly reductive. But it is no more reductive than the claim that water *is* nothing but H2O; that temperature *is* nothing but mean molecular kinetic energy; or that the colour red *is* nothing but electromagnetic radiation with a determinate spiking frequency. All scientific truth is 'reductive' precisely insofar as it dissolves the veneer of phenomenological familiarity concomitant with the limited parameters of anthropomorphic perspective. The real question the philosopher has to ask him/herself is this: what is it exactly about the

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[17]Cf. for instance, Quine, 1960; Smart, 1963; Wiener, 1967; Sayre, 1976; Churchland, 1979 and 1989. In our opinion, Paul Churchland is the most sophisticated contemporary exponent of this sort of vigorously materialistic account of human sapience: information is physically encoded by the human

scientist's banal but remarkably well-supported statement that he or she finds so intolerably 'reductive'? Is not part of the philosopher's unease concerning scientific 'reduction' directly attributable to the unavowed wish that, as far as man is concerned, there always be 'something' left over besides the material: some ineffable, unquantifiable meta-physical residue, some irreducible transcendental remainder?

Nowhere is this unavowable philosophical longing more transparent than in the phenomenological project, which seems determined to stave off this putative 'disenchantment' of phenomena by science by delimiting a dimension of radically unobjectifiable transcendence[18]: that of the phenomenon's invisible *phenomenality*. It is with the inapparent 'how' of the phenomenon's appearing, rather than the 'what' which appears, that transcendental phenomenology concerns itself[19]. Yet the phenomenological conception of 'phenomenality' seems to us so dangerously narrow and parochial as to render the much-vaunted project of a 'transcendental

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brain in the form of neuronal activation vectors and subsequently processed *via* patterns of vector-to-vector transformation. Churchland's work will be discussed in some detail in Chapter 8.

[18] Or radically unobjectifiable immanence, in the case of Michel Henry. However, as we shall see in Chapter 2, Henry's invocation of immanence operates according to a logic of phenomenological idealisation which renders it ultimately transcendent.

[19] Similarly, Kantians claim that science itself remains constitutively incapable of investigating the objectivity of the object, and of uncovering the transcendental *a priori* conditioning the possibility of empirical actuality. Thus, phenomenological transcendentalism resembles its Kantian predecessor in this particular respect if not in others: it tries to provide scientific cognition with an *a priori* conceptual armature ultimately rooted in subjectivity.

phenomenological ontology'[20] into an insidious form of anthropomorphic imperialism. If the concept of 'phenomenon' is, in Heidegger's definition[21], that of something 'which shows itself in itself', a 'self-showing' which 'manifests itself in and through itself alone', then we require:

1. A rigorously *theoretical*, rather than intuitive, definition of individuation in order to explain what is to count as an individuated appearance, one which does not simply reinstate the metaphysical circularity implicit in Leibniz's maxim according to which, 'to be is to be one thing'.

2. A rigorously *theoretical*, rather than intuitive, account of 'appearance' or 'manifestation' which does not surreptitiously invoke the predominantly optical[22] paradigm of sensory perception with which we are empirically familiar.

On both these counts, phenomenology -whether it take intentional consciousness or human being-in-the-world as its starting point- seems to us to remain wanting: it illegitimately universalises a paradigm of 'phenomenality' constructed on the basis of intuitions about individuation and

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[20]Cf. for instance Heidegger's claim that "*Phenomenological truth is* veritas transcendentalis*[...] Philosophy is universal phenomenological ontology*" (Heidegger, 1962, p.62).

[21]Cf. Heidegger, 1962, pp. 51-55.

[22]The point being not that it is wrong to privilege vision as opposed to other sensory modalities, but that it is wrong to surreptitiously transcendentalise any empirical modality -especially one whose perceptual and cognitive capacities are as mired in evolutionary contingency as are those of the human body. Phenomenology is not sufficiently transcendental because it remains rooted in empirical physiology. Pure transcendental thought should be rigorously disincarnate, as we shall try to suggest in Chapters 7 and 8.

manifestation derived from our empirical perception of middle-sized objects[23]. Yet in exactly what sense, for instance, can the Big Bang, the Cambrian Explosion, or a 26 dimensional superstring (phenomena which are strictly unphenomenologisable precisely because they remain utterly unintuitable in terms of our habitual spatio-temporal parameters), be said to be things that '*show* themselves *in* themselves'? What are the parameters of this 'showing'? To whom and for who is it supposed to occur? Whence does the mysterious faculty of intuition that is supposed to provide us with an immediately pre-theoretical access to the phenomenological essence of these rigorously imperceptible entities originate?

The standard phenomenological rejoinder to such questions, which consists in protesting that these, along with all other varieties of scientific object, are merely 'theoretical' entities whose mode of being derives from that 'more originary' mode of phenomenality concomitant with our 'primordial' pre-theoretical engagement with 'the things themselves', is hopelessly question-begging. Belief in this pseudo-originary, pre-theoretical dimension

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[23]In Chapter 7, we shall see how a non-philosophical materialism -which is also thereby a non-phenomenology-operates according to a rigorously theoretical, and non-intuitive, conception of individuation and phenomenalisation. Non-materialist theory singularises its object of cognition by cloning it as an Identity-without-unity, whilst phenomenalising it according to the strictures of a non-intuitive, or non-thetic phenomenality, thereby satisfying the two requirements mentioned above. Cf. *infra*, pp.361-372.

of experiential immediacy is *the* phenomenological superstition *par excellence*.

Briefly: the claim that intentional consciousness subtends a continuum of eidetic intuition running from tables and chairs at one end to transfinite cardinals and hyperdimensional superstrings at the other is grotesquely reductive. Just as the suggestion that objects of 'regional ontology' such as quarks, leptons and black holes have as their ultimate ontological root Dasein's being-in-the-world (or the subject's infinite responsibility for the Other; or the auto-affecting pathos of subjective Life[24]) is an outrageous instance of anthropocentric idealism. If anyone is guilty of imperialistic reductionism as far as the extraordinary richness and complexity of the universe is concerned, it is the phenomenological idealist rather than the scientific materialist. Husserl's idealism is as punitive as it is unmistakable: "*The existence of a Nature cannot be the condition for the existence of consciousness since Nature itself turns out to be a correlate of consciousness: Nature is only as being constituted in regular concatenations of consciousness.*"(Husserl, 1982, p.116). When it was written in 1913 -a full 54

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[24]One will recognize here Levinas and Henry. Significantly, despite their critiques of Husserl and Heidegger, and in spite of their silence concerning the relation between phenomenology and science (a silence more likely to index contemptuous indifference rather than a cautious respect), neither of these thinkers is prepared to give up on the fundamental premise that it is the business of phenomenology to uncover the 'archi-originary' conditions of phenomenalisation; conditions upon which, if the latter are indeed 'archi-originary', the phenomena investigated through scientific cognition are inevitably supervenient.

years after the publication of Darwin's *On the Origins of the Species*- this statement was already profoundly reactionary[25]. Now, 142 years after Darwin, Husserl's idealism is utterly indefensible –unless it be by those who approve of phenomenology's apparently boundless contempt for natural science[26]. The choice with which we are confronted is as clear as it is unavoidable: either Darwin or Husserl. To continue to persist on the course initiated by the latter is to plunge headlong into intellectual disaster and the ruin of philosophy as a credible theoretical enterprise. The future vouchsafed to philosophy by phenomenology is too dismal to contemplate: a terminally infantile, pathologically narcissistic anthropocentrism. The situation is too grave, the stakes too high to allow for equivocation or compromise.

Once again, the issue seems to us to boil down to a simple matter of intellectual honesty, a blunt but irrecusable alternative that no amount of conceptual obfuscation or rhetorical sophistry can obviate. Either the

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[25]Compare Lenin, writing in 1908: "*A philosophy which teaches that physical nature itself is a* [psychical -RB] *product, is a philosophy of the priests, pure and simple.*" (Lenin, 1972, p.271). The magnificent verve of Lenin's anti-idealist invective in *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* provides a salutary corrective to the Jesuitical sophistries propounded by his phenomenological contemporaries.

[26]Although he continually invokes science, it is important to remember that Husserl seems to have approached it in terms of the typically 19th century distinction between the exalted *Geisteswissenschaften* or sciences of the spirit (pre-eminent amongst which are logic and mathematics, but also including psychology, history, etc.) and the lowly *Naturwissenschaften* or sciences of nature (which would include physics and biology). Thus, if Husserl deemed physics worthy of philosophical consideration, it seems to have been solely on account of its rigorous mathematisation, a fact which would render it an honorary sub-species of the *Geisteswissenschaften.* This might explain why Husserl apparently regarded biology as unworthy of serious philosophical attention, perhaps seeing in it an entirely empirical, sub-theoretical activity, and thus explain why phenomenology proceeds as if Darwin had never existed.

philosopher insists that man is *de jure* irreducible to the natural ontological order investigated by science because the essence of human being is transcendence (subjectivity, Spirit, *Dasein*, etc.), in which case everything science implies concerning the ontologically derivative rather than transcendentally constitutive character of *Homo Sapiens* is not merely irrelevant but *false*; or scientific statements of the type "Man is a carbon-based information processing system" are *true* -in exactly the same way in which a statement such as "the earth is not flat" is *true*, not just 'empirically adequate' or 'factually correct'-, and man is not a transcendent exception to the cosmos but just one relatively commonplace material phenomenon among others. There is no longer any room within the bounds of a univocally physical natural order for a special category of putatively trans-natural being called 'human'.

Thus, materialism as we understand it is nothing but the conviction that science -whether it be that of Copernicus, Darwin, or Einstein- is the formulator of truths endowed with a quasi-transcendental bearing, rather than the mere promulgator of empirical facts[27]. Consequently, *either* the

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[27]The 'quasi' here being used to index a crucial non-philosophical nuance *vis a vis* the transcendental status of scientific truth. For non-philosophy, scientific thought harbours a dimension of relatively autonomous, but nonetheless rigorously transcendental truth; one which is neither reducible to correspondence nor to coherence. Central to Laruellean thought is a reformulation of the notion of transcendental truth as adequation-without-correspondence. Non-philosophy as unified theory of philosophy and science provides an account of their Identity without unity and their Duality without difference, an account which tries to liberate the relative transcendental autonomy of scientific truth

philosopher accepts the irrecusable pertinence of scientific truth, and *a fortiori*, the scientific truth about human being; *or* he rejects wholesale the notion that science is in any position to formulate truths about man, in which case he subordinates scientific truth to a higher authority: to wit, the putatively unobjectifiable transcendence of human being. The latter option is, it seems to us, fundamentally indicative of the phenomenological stance in philosophy. Unfortunately, the popularity enjoyed by this stance among many contemporary philosophers -whether of a 'continental' persuasion or not- does not render it any less repugnant in our eyes.

Accordingly, and in conformity with the injunction stated above, the philosophical materialism we shall be attempting to radicalise non-philosophically in the context of this thesis will be characterised in terms of two complementary but nevertheless independent theses: univocity and naturalism.

a). *Univocity*: The thesis of ontological univocity reconciles two fundamental, but apparently contradictory materialist imperatives: that Being know of no differences in kind (hence the destitution of all equivocal ontological transcendence such as that which separates mind from matter, culture from nature, freedom from necessity, etc.); but also that it be

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from its subordination to philosophy, just as it seeks to emancipate the relative transcendental

untotalisable, that it remain unsubordinated to any overarching principle of transcendent ontological unity. If Being is multiple rather than One, it is because, as Badiou reminds us, God is dead and the One is not[28]. And it is precisely insofar as it tries to reconcile ontological immanence with ontological multiplicity that univocity stipulates that being always be said 'in the same sense'[29] of the untotalisable multiplicity of that which is[30]. The univocal ontological immanence required may be exceptionless precisely by virtue of the fact that it is *consistently excessive* (Deleuze); or, alternatively, one that is occasionally supplemented by virtue of its own constitutively *excessive inconsistency* (Badiou). Be that as it may, the crucial proviso

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autonomy of philosophy from its positivistic supervenience on an arbitrarily favoured science. Cf. chapters 7 & 8.

[28]We shall see how Laruelle can happily concur with statements like this precisely because the One he invokes is without-unity and without-Being.

[29]Clearly, the notion of 'sense' implied here must be neither semantico-linguistic, nor phenomenological, nor even hermeneutic. The ontological 'sense' invoked in the thesis of univocity must be formal-axiomatic rather than phenomenologico-hermeneutic. Particularly important in this regard is Badiou's claim that only the mathematical formalisation of ontology *via* axiomatic set-theory is sufficient to escape from the insidious reintroduction of hermeneutic equivocity into materialism, an equivocity rendering materialism vulnerable to idealist reappropriation through the combined re-phenomenologisation and re-hermeneutisation of the concept of 'materiality'. Badiou criticizes the Deleuzean naming of matter as 'anorganic Life' precisely because he believes it is a nomination which reintroduces equivocal transcendence into univocity. For its part, non-materialist theory will attempt to effect a transcendental axiomatisation and theorematisation of materialist Decision according to the radical immanence of 'matter' or 'hyle' as a first name or non-conceptual symbol cloned from philosophical materialism. As first name or non-conceptual symbol 'matter' remains meaningless or uninterpretable. The language of philosophical Decision serves only as an indifferent symbolic support for the theoretically rigorous but strictly meaningless series of axiomatic abstractions effected on its basis. Moreover, this radically immanent, or non-Decisional nomination, de-ontologises univocity. For clarification, cf. Chapter 6, pp. 267-277 and 289-295.

[30]Our definition of univocity here simply reiterates Deleuze's, although we shall later have occasion to criticize what we consider to be Deleuze's ontological idealization of immanence. Cf. *infra*, Chapter 3. Perhaps uniquely among 'materialist' philosophers, Deleuze ceaselessly insists on the equation 'immanence=univocity' as an uncircumventable *sine qua non* for any materialism worthy of the name.

required in order to maintain the univocal immanence necessary for a materialism concomitant with the premise of untotalisable ontological multiplicity is that the variously distributed instances of being *qua* multiple remain comprised within one and only one immanent Being (Deleuze: 'matter' *qua* anorganic Life; Badiou: 'matter' *qua* inconsistent void). Deleuze will be the exemplary representative of this thesis[31].

b). *Naturalism*: 'Naturalism' as we understand it does not involve the dubious hypostatisation of some supposedly 'natural' ontological realm in contradistinction to that of cultural artifice. Such an interpretation would render it immediately incompatible with the thesis of univocity. The naturalism we wish to invoke here is simply a thesis, which asserts the necessary interdependence of philosophy and science. Taking as given the empirical fact that all philosophical attempts to define conditions of possibility for scientific thought have proved to be dismally unsuccessful, we conclude that these failures are a matter of principle rather than empirical circumstance, and that it is the presumption that philosophy is in a position to provide a transcendental footing for science which must be abandoned. There

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Cf. for example *Difference and Repetition* , especially pp. 35-42; or *What is Philosophy?*, especially pp. 44-49.

[31]Although Badiou's materialism of the inconsistent void is arguably even more vigorously anti-phenomenological than Deleuze's, we will not be able to afford it equal consideration here.

is no first philosophy[32]. Consequently, although relatively autonomous *vis a vis* science, philosophical ontology can neither ground nor disregard the ultimately physical description of the universe provided by the natural sciences. W.V.O Quine and Paul Churchland will be our favoured philosophical proponents of naturalism in the sense that we have begun to give to the term here[33]. According to this definition, naturalism simply stipulates that, as far as science is concerned, philosophy can permit itself neither the privilege of legitimation nor the luxury of indifference.

Yet if philosophy can no longer afford to busy itself with contriving sophistical exceptions to the natural physical order by shrouding the phenomenon of human sapience in a veil of pseudo-transcendental mystery, still less can it afford to disingenuously minimize the profoundly corrosive consequences entailed by the perspective of scientific naturalism with regard to the complacent naivety of our own phenomenological self-image.

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[32]Cf. Quine, 1969, pp.126-127.

[33]Although we shall not be discussing it here, Daniel Dennett's work deserves to be mentioned alongside that of Quine and Churchland as the third member of the philosophical triumvirate representing a 'hardcore' naturalist *Weltanschaung* in the contemporary analytical pantheon. The broad synoptic sweep of Dennett's philosophical vision, coupled with his consistent ingenuity and tireless inventiveness, renders him in many ways the most eloquent and persuasive spokesman for the brand of philosophical naturalism we are invoking here. Cf. for example, Dennett 1978; 1987; 1993; & 1995.

In this latter regard, the recently touted prospect of a 'naturalized phenomenology'[34], the offspring of an unholy alliance between an unreconstructed Husserlianism and some of the more conservative strands in contemporary cognitive science, remains, from our point of view, vitiated by its ultimately oxymoronic character. Given that, as far as the philosophy of mind is concerned, the most distinctive philosophical feature of the naturalistic approach has been its excoriation of phenomenological intentionality as a perspectival illusion; there is something spurious about using it as the philosophical basis upon which to reinstate the latter. This attempt strikes us as the result of an insidiously reactionary equivocation implicitly motivated by the overweening desire to avoid the unsettlingly sceptical consequences devolving on the one hand from the deconstructive and/or post-structuralist critiques of Husserl's Cartesian phenomenology (Heidegger, Derrida, Lacan, Deleuze, etc.), and on the other, from the quasi-behaviourist and/or naturalist inspired attacks on the inviolable epistemic authority traditionally attributed to subjective interiority (Ryle, Quine,

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[34]For a particularly blatant example of such disingenuousness, one in which the primary theoretical motivation seems to be simply that of avoiding at all costs the profoundly counter-intuitive consequences devolving from the application of the 'natural scientific attitude' to consciousness, especially the destruction of such 'intuitively obvious' features of first-person phenomenology as that of its putatively pre-theoretical immediacy and its privileged access to data, see for example the essay by Woodruff-Smith, as well as the Introduction by Roy, Petitot, Pachoud, and Varela in the collection entitled *Naturalizing Phenomenology*, edited by Jean Petitot et al. Cf. Woodruff-Smith, 'Intentionality Naturalized?', and Roy, Petitot, Pachoud, & Varela, 'Beyond the Gap', in Petitot et al., 1999; pp.83-110 and pp.1-80 respectively.

Wittgenstein, Dennett, Churchland, etc.). Tip-toeing between what it doubtlessly regards as the Scylla of post-modern nihilism on the left, and the Charybdis of neurocomputational reductionism on the right, 'naturalized phenomenology' hopes to inaugurate a middle-path, a third-way; one that would add a reassuring gloss of scientific legitimation to the aura of unassailable epistemic privilege which many, faithfully kow-towing to a Cartesian inheritance, continue to ascribe to phenomenological subjectivity.

Against such reactionary philosophical protectionism, it is the business of a thoroughgoing naturalism to emphasize -rather than minimize- the corrosive power of scientific reductionism *vis a vis* both the tenets of phenomenological orthodoxy and the established parameters of socio-cultural consensus. That task can be achieved by exposing the entirely contingent, conventional character of the phenomenological self-image promulgated through the myth of subjective interiority; by denouncing the hallucinatory character of privileged access; and by inveighing against the illusory authority of the first-person perspective; myths which, whether taken separately or in combination, serve to shore up the subjectivist ideology through which liberal democratic capitalism convinces a stupefied population of consumers that they are sovereign individuals, naturally endowed with freedom of choice, and that the interests of subjective freedom coincide with the interests of a

free market economy[35]. It is by puncturing the persistent myths of first-person autonomy and of the irreducibility of consciousness; it is by excoriating the apparently inviolable ubiquity of the cultural privilege which folk psychological superstition has successfully arrogated to itself through the process of its enshrinement in the medium of natural language, that a virulently anti-phenomenological scepticism of the kind espoused by Quine, or an eliminative materialism such as that endorsed by Paul Churchland, suggesting as they do that a radical reconfiguration both of our own self-image and of our vision of the world around us is always possible, can help undermine those phenomenological *Ur-doxas*[36] which help perpetuate the cultural consensus manufactured by capitalism[37].

To sum up: philosophical naturalism, as far as we are concerned, entails taking the scientific world-view seriously, and accepting the profoundly anti-phenomenological consequences of that world-view insofar

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[35]It is by tirelessly promoting the illusion of individual freedom that capitalism successfully diverts attention from the reality of the population's collective socio-economic enslavement, from its nigh-on total political impotence. Consider for example how the invocation of the consumer's inalienable 'right to choose' is becoming increasingly synonymous with the notion of 'freedom' *tout court*. Now that the capitalist axiomatic identifies 'freedom' with the individual's freedom to keep consuming, philosophies defending the irreducibility of subjective interiority are also guilty of promulgating the myth of individual freedom by default, thereby furnishing the machinery of consumer capitalism with a useful ideological lubricant.

[36]Cf. the critique of the *Ur-doxa* by Deleuze & Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* ; a critique with which we wholeheartedly concur. Cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp. 80, 142, 178, 206, 207, 209.

[37]Accordingly, our Conclusion will suggest that non-materialism constitutes an instance of *a priori* resistance to the commodification of thought by being tantamount to a form of transcendental scepticism *vis a vis* those phenomenological *Ur-doxas* that are concomitant with the all-encompassing sovereignty of World-Capitalism. Cf. *infra*, pp.430-440.

as it necessitates expunging all vestiges of folk psychological superstition and anthropocentric narcissism from philosophy. 'Phenomenon'; 'consciousness'; 'intentionality'; 'Ego'; 'meaning'; 'sense-bestowing act': these are the folk psychological fictions which have provided the basis for an elaborately sophisticated, but disastrously misconceived theoretical edifice[38]. Phenomenology is folk psychology *transcendentalised*. Belief in the phenomenological mysteries, in the transcendental sovereignty of intentional consciousness, or in the irreducible reality of such denizens of the intentional realm as 'eidetic intuitions' or 'qualia', are now the contemporary philosophical equivalents of faith in the immortality of the soul or confidence in the ubiquity of phlogiston. "Consciousness", we might say paraphrasing Deleuze, "did not survive God"[39].

2.The transcendental necessity of materialism's non-philosophical transformation

At this stage, the reader will doubtless be starting to suspect that our convictions are borne of nothing more sophisticated than a naive relapse into dogmatic scientism. To which we are tempted to respond by pointing out that,

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[38]And it should be remembered that it is on the basis of such subjective intuitions that phenomenology has had the temerity to try to suspend scientific objectivism by spuriously conflating science with the natural attitude of common sense; not only withdrawing subjectivity from the ambit of scientific investigation, but effectively subordinating the latter to the former. In this regard, far from being a mere caprice, Heidegger's contemptuous antipathy toward the sciences is the logical extension of Husserl's paternalistic condescension.

since the indiscriminate use of this epithet as a blanket term of abuse by irate phenomenologists convicts of 'scientism' anyone who takes it on scientific trust that the earth orbits around the sun, or who believes in the existence of black holes and neutrinos -notwithstanding all phenomenological evidence to the contrary[40]-, then we can only plead guilty as charged. If 'scientism' simply means refusing the obligatory subordination of empirical science to transcendental philosophy, then by our lights, there is not nearly enough 'scientism' in contemporary philosophy.

Nevertheless, although happy to assent to the charge of 'scientism', we do not believe that the accusation of 'dogmatism' is justified. Were we to continue to operate in an exclusively philosophical register, wherein everything is ultimately reducible to the level of a basically aleatory Decision either for or against science, the accusation would be pertinent. However, it is precisely on account of our wish to circumvent the apparently deadly impasse between materialist scientism and phenomenological idealism, and in order to provide the materialist Decision with a rigorously *critical* degree of theoretical validity, that we wish to effect its non-Decisional transmutation.

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[39]Cf. Deleuze, 1994, p xix.

[40]It might be apposite to remind ourselves here that as far as the committed phenomenologist is concerned, contrary to what a flimsy scientific dogmatism mired in the natural attitude dares to suggest, *the earth does not move* (i.e. the 'archi-originary' earth subtending the 'transcendental' corporeality of phenomenological subjectivity). Divine surprise! Thus, and perhaps appropriately, the phenomenologist is one who believes that the earth *shall always be flat*. Phenomenological wonders

That transmutation, interestingly enough, is to be effected on the basis of a theoretical discovery which realizes a philosophically contradictory, not to say non-sensical, feat; one which withdraws Man from the domain of that which is ontologically problematisable without reinstituting him as a transcendental exception. Neither *Subjekt*, nor *Geist*, nor *Dasein*, Man's non-ontological essence is radical immanence[41]. And as radical immanence, "*Man is not-in-question*", Laruelle insists, "*because he is not-in-philosophy*"[42]. For non-philosophy, the essence of Man is that of an immanence without-essence and without-being, *ergo* non-human, precisely insofar as the 'humanity' predicated of the human has always remained within the parameters of the ontologically problematic. But it is as 'Given-without-givenness' (*Donné-sans-donation*) or 'vision-in-One' (*vision-en-Un*)[43]; as index of a 'humanity' shorn of all predicable 'human' attributes, a 'humanity' devoid of all recognizably human characteristics, that Man is the unproblematisable *par excellence*.

Consequently, it is precisely insofar as the 'human' is invariably a transcendent, anthropo-ontological construct, that for the non-philosopher,

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shall never cease. Cf. E.Husserl, *La Terre Ne Se Meut Pas* [*The Earth Does Not Move*], French trans. by D.Frank, Paris: Minuit, 1989.

[41]Cf. Chapter 5.

[42]Laruelle, 1991, p.36.

[43] Hopefully, all these claims will become intelligible during the course of Chapters 5 and 6, wherein the postulate of radical or 'non-Decisional' immanence will be discussed at some length.

Man is nothing human. Man is ontologically indifferent because he 'is' in-One and without-Being. Yet it is also on account of that radical indifference that he cannot be said to be in-human or trans-human. Thus, the unconditional immanence of Man's non-ontological Identity renders him equally indifferent to the temptations of humanism and anti-humanism.

As a result, the shift to the non-philosophical register begins once one has recognized the extraneously transcendent character of the philosophical gesture rendering Man's being problematic. For non-philosophy, Man is no longer of the order of an ontological problem formulated in terms of the human entity as constituting a Difference within, or relative to, Being ("What or Who is Man?", "How is his being articulated or given?"). His impredicable transparency as Given-without-givenness makes of him the inalienable but non-ontological solution, the *sine qua non* preceding and explaining the articulation of every ontological problem. Accordingly, non-philosophy proceeds on the basis of the discovery that Man as the One-without-Being (*l'Un-sans-l'Être*) is not an exception *to* Being; nor a folding or a placeholder *of* Being; nor even a fissure or hole *in* being; but rather that radically immanent foreclosure which functions as the last-instance determining all thinking 'of' Being.

Accordingly, for the non-philosopher, it is not Man who is transcendent or exceptional *vis a vis* Being, it is Being which is absolutely transcendent *vis a vis* Man. Yet if 'the problem' as far as non-philosophical thinking is concerned is no longer that of trying to 'think the Being of the human', still less is it that of trying to think the human 'in terms of' the foreclosure of immanence. It is rather that of trying to think *according to* (*selon*) Man's immanent foreclosure to the twofold transcendence of Being and of thought.

The 'solution' to that problem is the recognition that Man's immanence-without-essence and without-existence, his foreclosure to thought, can nevertheless become *effectuated* by thought. It is on the basis of Being's transcendence as occasional cause and material support that Man's radically opaque transparency becomes effectuated by non-philosophical thought, allowing him a *theoretico-practical* 'existence'[44] as transcendental clone or Stranger *for* the onto-cosmological order problematised in philosophical thinking. As a result, Man's ontological effectuation, his occasional 'existence' as Stranger or clone for the World, is simultaneously

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[44]Predictably, the non-philosophical translation of the concept of 'existence' bears only a nominal relation to the familiar Heideggerean or Sartrean versions. Here as elsewhere, Laruelle's use of a familiar philosophical concept in an entirely new, unfamiliar conceptual context inevitably invites misunderstanding. The effectuation or 'existence' of the non-philosophical subject or Stranger designates the complex structure of its theoretical articulation as non-thetic transcendence spanning the unidentity and unilaterality of transcendental clone and empirical support. All of this is of course unintelligible at this introductory stage. For clarification, cf. Chapter 6, pp.277-289.

theoretical and practical in character, without constituting a synthetic unity or hybrid of theory and practise. The Stranger-subject (*le sujet-Étranger*) of non-philosophical thought exists as the Identity-without-unity and Duality-without-difference of theory and practise.

Nevertheless, bearing in mind that the subject of non-philosophical thought enacts this performative coincidence of theory and practise, it is possible to state that Man 'is' only insofar as he exists as a theoretical Stranger for Being and for the World. Hence our continuously reiterated emphasis throughout the second half of this thesis on Man's radically inconsistent, non anthropo-logical, and ultimately *alien* existence as the transcendental Subject of extra-terrestrial theory. Accordingly, were we to distil the substance of this thesis down to a single claim it would be this: *the more radical the instance of humanity, the more radically non-anthropomorphic and non-anthropocentric the possibilities of thought*. By definitively emancipating Man's theoretically alien, non-human existence, non-materialist theory promises to purge materialism of all vestiges of phenomenological anthropomorphism.

It is this rediscovery of Man's irrefrangibly alien existence as a universal Stranger that prevents non-philosophy's gnostically inflected[45] 'hypertranscendentalism' from merely reinstating Kant's transcendental protectionism *vis a vis* man as *Homo noumenon*. In this regard, it would be a mistake to consign Laruelle to the long line of post-Kantian thinkers labouring to provide a definitive formulation of man's supposedly unobjectifiable essence. Such efforts are merely variations on the Kantian gesture of special pleading concerning the human; a gesture which, providing as it did a transcendental guarantor for the inviolable moral authority of religious faith, was always explicitly intended as a protective measure, designed in order to forestall the nascent threat of atheism harboured by the prodigious successes of scientific materialism[46].

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[45]For an account of the relation between non-philosophy and gnosis cf. *infra*, Chapter 6, pp.312-315; and our Conclusion, pp.430-440.

[46]Kant explicitly withdrew religious faith from the purview of critique -distilling it down to its inviolable noumenal core in the good will *qua* categorical imperative- in the same gesture with which he delimited the bounds of objective knowledge: "*I have therefore found it necessary to deny knowledge in order to make room for faith. The dogmatism of metaphysics, that is, the preconception that it is possible to make headway in metaphysics without a previous criticism of pure reason, is the source of all that unbelief, always very dogmatic, which wars against morality[...] Criticism alone can sever the root of materialism, fatalism, atheism, free-thinking, fanaticism, and superstition, which can be injurious universally; as well as of idealism and scepticism, which are dangerous chiefly to the schools, and hardly allow of being handed on to the public*". Kant, 1929, Bxxx-xxxv. Typically however, and fortunately for us, Kant's critical operation was intrinsically double-edged. For it is through the very same gesture whereby Kant sought to render faith cognitively unassailable, that he also terminated the discourse of rational theology, undermined the transparent sovereignty of Cartesian subjectivity, and ultimately paved the way for the sort of 'noumenal' or critical-transcendental materialism whose conditions of elaboration we intend to set out in the course of this thesis. Thus, whether they like it or not, materialists, fatalists, atheists, freethinkers, sceptics, and fanatics of all stripes remain profoundly indebted to Kant. Conversely, we shall consider that the superstitious idealists have found their true home in phenomenology; -more precisely, that the phenomenological

For the non-philosopher however, such attempts at special pleading condemn Man in the very gesture of Decisional transcendence through which they endeavoured to save him. Man as radically immanent phenomenon remains foreclosed to meta-physical inflation as well as to infra-physical reduction. If he is the non-redeemable *par excellence* it is only because he remains the already-redeemed, as indifferent to the promise of transcendental redemption as he is to the threat of empirical degradation. Philosophical attempts to immunize Man against the menace of material oblivion through perpetual reinjections of salutary transcendence only succeed in occluding his immanent foreclosure, his ultimate indifference to noumenal salvation as well as to phenomenal extinction[47].

Of course, for the philosopher, non-philosophy, which endeavours to think according to Man's foreclosure to Decision, necessarily appears as an impoverishment or diminishment of thinking conceived in terms of the

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elision of the distinction between phenomenon and thing-in-itself caters for the sense of transcendental reassurance that the latter so obviously crave.

[47]In saying this we do not, of course, intend to suggest, as Michel Henry does in his own phenomenologisation of radical immanence, that it is now as the latter that Man can be said to be eternal and immortal. The radical immanence invoked by the non-philosopher is not a phenomenological principle: it is a necessary but never a sufficient condition; a *sine qua non* which by itself yields nothing, produces nothing. We oppose the radical in-consistency of immanence as non-ontological condition, an in-consistent condition characterised in terms of a primacy-without-priority (Laruelle), to its phenomenological consistency as archi-originary ontological principle(Michel Henry). It is only by means of an empirical occasion that this inconsistent condition becomes effectuated in non-philosophical thought. Apart from that effectuation, its foreclosure guarantees nothing; *least of all an immutable and eternal phenomenological Life*. Thus, in order to forestall the danger of a quasi-phenomenological -which is to say, crypto-religious- misreading, it is necessary to insist that radical immanence as inconsistent condition is not so much eternal or immortal as foreclosed *a priori* to the

inviolable necessity of ontological Decision. But for the non-philosopher, the poverty, austerity and minimalism characteristic of the non-Decisional streamlining of transcendental thought remain the best guarantee of theoretical rigour, and, *a fortiori*, the best guarantee for the transcendental consistency of the materialist Decision.

For the question facing the materialist is whether a Decision carried out in the philosophical register furnishes him/her with the theoretical means required in order for him/her to live up to the desired degree of conceptual probity; in other words, whether philosophy allows the materialist to do as s/he says and say as s/he does. Laruelle, for reasons we will elaborate on later[48], believes that philosophical Decision falls short on this very count: the philosopher in the throes of Decision is never doing what s/he is saying or saying what s/he is doing. The problem of Decision then, is the problem of discovering the theoretical conditions according to which this performative consistency of saying and doing in Decision becomes realizable. It becomes realizable, Laruelle suggests, only by shifting from a posture whereby Decision constitutes an absolutely autonomous, self-positing act, to one wherein Decision becomes a relatively autonomous, heteronomously

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ontological alternative, or even the *différance*, between living and dying. For an extended critique of Michel Henry's phenomenologisation of immanence, cf. *infra* , Chapter 2, pp.80-97.

determined experience; the non-synthetic unity of theory and practice. A non-Decisional theory is not anti-Decisional; - it suspends the self-sufficiency of Decision, transforming its absolute autonomy into a merely relative autonomy. The point is not to abdicate from Decision but to permit a radically transcendental determination of Decision, one allowing for Decision to be carried out under scrupulously exacting theoretical conditions. It is the general lack of theoretical scruple concomitant with the absolute autonomy of Decision in its philosophical register which the non-philosopher objects to, not Decision as such. Consequently, our belief in the necessity of a non-materialist universalisation of materialism goes hand in hand with the conviction that non-philosophical theory alone provides the conditions under which the materialist Decision can be rigorously carried out. It furnishes the indispensable transcendental supplement required in order to render the materialist Decision unequivocally consistent in word and deed.

Man as Non-Materialist Identity of Philosophy and Science

Ultimately, the pertinence of non-philosophical theory for the brand of materialism we are interested in here is apparently twofold, but in reality onefold. The superficially twofold pertinence concerns the relation of

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[48]Cf. Chapters 5 and 6; but also for instance Chapters 2 & 3, where we try to show how the philosophical decision in favour of materialism invariably reinstates a form of idealism. In other words, the philosopher decides against idealism in a way that is still idealist.

philosophy and science on the one hand, and the non-exceptional status of Man on the other. If materialism as we understand it is implicitly predicated on the basically sound but unstated assumption that science and philosophy are and should be bound together in a relationship of reciprocal presupposition, then Laruelle's work is crucial because it promises to provide that unstated philosophical assumption with an explicitly articulated theoretical basis: non-philosophy promises to provide a 'unified' but non-unitary theory of philosophy and science[49]. On the other hand, non-philosophy is equally important as far as the injunction forbidding the philosophical conception of the human as ontological exception is concerned. Man is no longer conceived of as a locus of transcendence, but rather as the radical immanence whose foreclosure to all anthropomorphic predication renders it the *sine qua non* for a rigorously non-anthropomorphic theorising.

In the final analysis however, the superficial character of this double-aspect becomes apparent when one realizes that it is ultimately Man as radical immanence that constitutes the last-instance according to which the double articulation of philosophy and science simultaneously attains its

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[49]Thus, non-philosophy refuses to discriminate *a priori* between philosophy and science; it deals with them together *en bloc* as a single indivisible empirical datum. For non-philosophy, philosophy and science are necessarily bound together in a relation of reciprocal presupposition. It is on this basis that non-materialism tries to provide a *non-positivistic* radicalisation and generalisation of the naturalist thesis according to which philosophy supervenes on science. Cf. the discussion of Quine and Churchland in Chapters 7 and 8.

transcendental validity as well as its non-Decisional legitimacy. For it is Man's non-Decisional essence that provides an Identity-without-synthesis and a Duality-without-difference for all the Decisional hybrids of philosophy and science.

PART I

THE DECLINE OF MATERIALISM AS SUCH

CHAPTER 1

MATTER: *COMME TELLE* OR *TELLE QUELLE*?

"*When, in its better moments, materialism abandoned its empiricist concept of matter, on the whole it never proved able to go beyond the hyle, the identity of thought and the real, of ideality and matter -the level of relative materiality or of materiality 'as such'*[comme telle] *rather than of matter 'itself'* [telle quelle] *or absolute matter*." (Laruelle, 1981, p.78)

What would it be to think matter 'itself' or *absolutely*, as opposed to thinking it 'as such' or *relatively*? Is it - *pace* Hegel- possible to conceive of a matter 'outside' the concept, a matter distinct from every concept of matter? Or is any attempt to think along such lines inevitably doomed to relapse into pre-Hegelian naivety?

Clearly, the very formulation of the question points away from Hegel and back toward Kant. For the Critical turn is inaugurated in the gesture whereby Kant acknowledges what he calls 'the transcendental difference' between thought and thing, representation and represented, phenomenon and in-itself; or more generally, the difference between the *ideal* realm of that which is representable for the knowing subject, and the *real*

realm of that which subsists 'problematically'[50] or independently of the possibility of relation to the subject. Thus, from a quasi-Kantian perspective, one might say that whereas the ideal is intrinsically relational - a function of the *relation* to subjectivity-, the real -not to be confused with the empirical *reality* of the represented phenomenon- is simply defined negatively as the absence of relation. In other words, it is problematically or hypothetically defined as the in-itself: - that which is relationless or *absolute*. Yet according to Hegel it is this very difference between the ideal as relative and the real as absolute which turns out to be internal to thought itself. Subjectivity *qua* self-relating negativity, self-sundering and self-synthesizing Notion, is nothing but the processual identification of ideal identity and real difference, the ultimately Ideal relation of relation and non-relation, relative and absolute.

It is perhaps on account of its resolutely anti-Hegelian tenor, that Heideggerean phenomenology, at least as set out in *Being and Time*, seems to have inherited something of Kant's transcendental-idealist legacy. From our point of view, the constitutively 'idealizing' tendency of its transcendental

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[50]For Kant the realm of the problematic is that concerning which the judgement of existence or inexistence is inapplicable. The noumenal realm remains problematic insofar as we can neither say of it that it is or that it is not, since for something to be posited as being it must first be capable of being given through sensibility in an experience: "*The concept of a noumenon is thus merely a limiting concept, the function of which is to curb the pretensions of sensibility[...]What our understanding acquires through this concept of a noumenon is a negative extension; that is to say, understanding is not limited through sensibility; on the contrary, it itself limits sensibility by applying the term noumena to things in themselves (things not regarded as appearances). But in so doing it at the same time sets limits to itself, recognizing that it cannot know these noumena through any of the categories, and that it*

methodology find its canonical formulation in the Introduction to *Being and Time*, wherein Heidegger defines phenomenology in the following way: "*The expression 'phenomenology' may be formulated in Greek as* legein ta phainomena, *where* legein *means* apophainesthai. *Thus, 'phenomenology' means* apophainesthai ta phainomena *-to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself.*" (Heidegger, 1962, p.58) However, this dimension of phenomenal self-showing is necessarily bound to that of the logos as realm of discursive apophansis: "*The logos lets something be seen.[...]Discourse 'lets something be seen'* apo *(from itself) [...]that is, it lets us see something from the very thing which the discourse is about. In discourse (*apophansis*), so far as it is genuine, <u>what</u> is said is drawn <u>from</u> what the talk is about, so that discursive communication, in what it says, makes manifest what it is talking about[...] This is the structure of the logos as* apophansis."(Ibid, p.56) Heidegger's definitions here render the intrinsic link between showing and saying, or more exactly, between self-showing and self-saying in the transcendental structure of the phenomeno-logos, perfectly explicit. That transcendental bond between phenomenon and logos is assured through the dimension of apophantic disclosure necessary for the manifestation of the phenomenon *as*

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must therefore think them only under the title of an unknown something." (Kant, 1929, B311-B312, pp.

phenomenon. A disclosure whereby every phenomenon is necessarily manifested *as* some-thing by virtue of its coming-to-presence against a pre-given horizonal backdrop of intelligibility: - *Dasein's* Being-in-the-World. Moreover, Heidegger reminds us that "*because* logos *as* legomenon *can also signify that which, as something to which one addresses oneself, becomes visible in its relation to something in its 'relatedness', logos acquires the signification of relation and relationship*."(Ibid, p.58) It is in virtue of this constitutive structure of discursive apophansis that every phenomenon disclosed through the logos is intrinsically and indissociably related to every other through the overarching structural whole of which it remains an inextricable moment. Thus, from our point of view, the 'phenomenality' of the phenomenon as laid bare in Heidegger's phenomenological analyses still remains intrinsically bound to the ideal realm of the relational, the intelligible, the meaningful, etc. Being-in-the-world is an essentially holistic and inherently Ideal phenomenon[51].

Thus, although Laruelle's hypothetical separation of matter insofar as it is phenomenologically disclosed 'as such', through the logos, from matter 'itself', independent of every horizon of apophantic disclosure, is necessarily

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272-273).

[51]Interestingly enough however, chief among the many remarkable virtues of Laruelle's stunning reading of Heidegger in *Les Philosophies de la Différence,* is its explicitly anti-idealist or 'realist' (one might even say 'quasi-materialist') slant. Cf. Laruelle, 1986, Chapters 3 & 4.

a transcendental hypothesis, it is one which implies a rearticulation of Kant's transcendental agenda very different from that set out by Heidegger in Being *and Time*. For by distinguishing matter 'itself' from every phenomenological apprehension of matter 'as such', it seems to be suggesting that 'matter' -even if only problematically or hypothetically- is not only a real instance distinct from every ideal sublation of difference in the Concept, but also an unphenomenologisable 'in-itself'; 'something' which is neither a phenomenon showing itself from itself, nor even the inapparent phenomenality of showing as such. Yet it is difficult to see how such a distinction -a distinction that apparently distinguishes itself from the distinction of ontico-ontological difference as such- could even be entertained as a conceivable hypothesis.

Accordingly, in order to conceive of Laruelle's hypothetical separation of matter *comme telle* from matter *telle quelle* we shall be obliged to re-evaluate both the Kantian and the Heideggerean characterisation of the transcendental in terms of difference. Laruelle's hypothesis forces us to reconsider the extent to which this transcendental separation of matter 'itself' from matter 'as such' is ultimately differential in character. For it may be that the transcendental separation of the *comme tel* from the *tel quel* has to be conceived of in terms of immanence rather than transcendence, and in terms

of Identity rather than Difference. Furthermore, it may be that although this separation-without-difference is effected *in* thought and has some effect on the World, it is neither realized *through* the power of conceptual thought alone, as Hegel maintained, nor experienced on the basis of my being-in-the-world as Heidegger believed, but rather proves to be the result of a separation that is anterior both to the transcendence of thought and to that of the World; one to which thought and World themselves are ultimately subject. These are the possibilities that we are particularly interested in elucidating here, along with Laruelle. For our ultimate aim is to show how this transcendental separation of 'matter itself' from 'matter as such' must be conceived of solely according to an Identity of immanence proper to 'matter itself', rather than in terms of a transcendent Difference between 'matter as such' and 'matter itself'.

Now, of the many fascinating avenues of philosophical exploration delineated in Laruelle's *Prinçipe de Minorité* (1981), the most salient for our present purposes is his suggestion that the pursuit of these afore-mentioned possibilities necessitates a radicalisation of Kant's transcendental separation of the real from the ideal, of matter-in-itself from the phenomenal logos, in such a way as to effect the simultaneous withdrawal of matter from the idealized materiality of the representational object, and the subtraction of

thought from the reified ideality of the phenomenological subject. Only in this way does it become possible to forestall both the Hegelian identification of real and ideal within the domain of the Idea itself; and Heidegger's phenomenological idealization of the transcendental difference through *Da-sein's* unobjectifiable circumscription of the ontico-ontological *caesura* between real and ideal.

However, where Kant yoked the transcendental to subjectivity and rendered the notion of a 'material noumenon' into a purely limiting concept, by definition devoid of cognitive import, our goal here involves freeing what Deleuze called "*the prodigious domain of the transcendental*"[52] from the nexus of idealist relativity in order to formulate the conditions for a thinking of matter 'itself' in the positivity of its unconditionally immanent Identity; a thinking which, by simultaneously liberating matter from what Laruelle calls its 'materiological' subordination to the logos and by emancipating cognition from the constraints of phenomenological presentation, would furnish us with the theoretical means required in order to access 'matter itself' -'*la matière telle quelle*'. Our aim throughout, in this as well as in all subsequent chapters, will be to show how Laruelle's 'non-philosophy' can be used to explore the

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[52]Deleuze, 1994, p.135.

diversely ramifying consequences of this twofold but ultimately indivisible theoretical gesture.

In the first part of this thesis however, our preliminary investigation into the legitimacy of this distinction and the feasibility of such a gesture as far as the possibility of defining a 'non-materiological materialism' is concerned, will focus exclusively on their tentatively sketched articulation in Laruelle's *Prinçipe de Minorité*[53]. The specific feature of the work we intend to single out for analysis here can be stated in relatively simple terms: radicalising and generalizing his own earlier 'machinic materialist'[54] critique of philosophical idealism, set out in those texts making up his *Philosophie I*,

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[53]*Le Prinçipe de Minorité* is the key transitional work in the entire Laruellean *oeuvre*. It represents the pivotal moment where Laruelle takes his first philosophically unprecedented step away from the problematic of Difference governing his early works (that is to say, the theoretical problematic mapped out in the philosophical 'quadrangle' delimited by the proper names Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida and Deleuze),grouped together by him under the heading *Philosophie I*, toward the articulation of what he will later come to recognize as the non-philosophical project proper, the beginnings of which are set out in those works of Laruelle comprised under the heading *Philosophie II* (for full details concerning this division, cf. our bibliography, pp.441-443). From a heuristic point of view, its particular importance for us here, at a stage when we are trying to introduce the philosophical problem for which we will try to articulate the non-philosophical resolution, hinges in no small part on the fact that *Le Prinçipe de Minorité* is still conceived and written as a philosophical work, operating on the basis of a recognizable philosophical stance, an assessment which Laruelle's own comments about the book explicitly confirm: see for example, Laruelle, 1991, p.208. Although complex and difficult (like everything Laruelle has ever written), it is not yet entirely alien in its basic premises and outlook, in the way in which Laruelle's later, explicitly non-philosophical works will prove to be for the philosophical reader.

[54]The attempt to effect a 'machinic deconstruction' of the metaphysical and implicitly idealist theses of historical and dialectical materialism plays a significant role in several of Laruelle's works from *Philosophie I.* Thus, in his *Nietzsche contre Heidegger* (1977) for instance, Laruelle defines his version of machinic materialism in terms of three theses *displacing* and *occupying*, rather than opposing and negating, those of both dialectical and of historical materialism: 1. a materialist thesis asserting the primacy of libidinal matter over every form of representation; 2. a syntactical thesis asserting the primacy of *différance* over contradiction which it determines independently of form; 3. a machinic thesis proper asserting the primacy of materialism over the syntactical. Cf. Laruelle, 1977a, pp. 122-129.

and according to a gesture we shall see constantly reiterated throughout his non-philosophical work[55], Laruelle in *Le Prinçipe de Minorité* begins to discern in every variant of philosophical materialism (and *a fortiori* in philosophical thinking *per se*) something like an intrinsically idealist component, generally indexed by its persistent subordination of 'matter' (or what he will also call 'the real') to a 'materiality' whose theoretical status remains for Laruelle that of an idealized and invariably transcendent abstraction.

But what precisely does it mean to claim, as Laruelle does in *Le Prinçipe de Minorité*, that all species of philosophical materialism are ultimately kinds of materiological idealism? According to Laruelle, it means basically that these materialisms "*still subordinate in the last instance matter to the last possible form of the logos (logos or Idea of matter as such), instead of subordinating the logos of matter to matter, and initiating a truly dispersive becoming-real of ideality rather than a continuous becoming-ideal of the real.*" (Laruelle, 1981, p.107) What the initiation of a 'dispersive becoming-real of the ideal' would consist in is something we will only begin to elaborate on in Chapter 5. At this stage however, we will confine ourselves

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[55]In his indispensable *Initiation à la Pensée de François Laruelle*, Juan Diego Blanco sees in the operation of "radicalisation/generalisation" the fundamental theoretical trope lying at the heart of all Laruelle's non-philosophical thinking. Cf. Blanco, 1997, *passim*, but especially pp. 90-96.

to an examination of the first branch of the alternative: the materiological subordination of matter to the logos.

Materialism and Materiology

Laruelle identifies three invariant features in every philosophical materialism, then goes on to list those conceptual confusions that he takes to be constitutive of the materiological idealization of materialism[56].

Materialism =

1. Primacy of immanence over transcendence.
2. Primacy of the real over the ideal.
3. Exteriority of being to thought.

Materiology =

1. Confusion of real or ontic immanence with ideal or ontological immanence.
2. Confusion of irreversible or unilateral determination of the ideal by the real with a bi-lateral or reversible co-respondence, whereby the real ends up being co-constituted in return through the ideality which it is supposed to determine.

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[56]Cf. Laruelle, 1981, pp. 77-78.

3. Confusion of the exteriority of the entity 'itself', as instance of unobjectifiable immanence, to *all* forms of presentation, not just thought, with the unobjectifiable transcendence of the entity's Being 'as such' relative to intentional consciousness. Confusion, in other words, of the unobjectifiable immanence of the phenomenon 'itself' with the unobjectifiable transcendence proper to the *phenomenality* (=Being) of the phenomenon 'as such'.

What is Laruelle trying to distinguish here? What exactly is being elided in these three instances of materiological amphiboly between ontic and ontological; real asymmetry and ideal reciprocity; exteriority of immanence and exteriority of transcendence?

Basically, for Laruelle, each of these materiological amphibolies is a function of the idealizing -and crypto-Hegelian- elision of the transcendental distinction -which he insists on upholding- between an unobjectifiable dimension of real or 'ontic' immanence, and an unobjectifiable dimension of ideal or ontological transcendence. Whilst the refusal to recognize the claim of the former is for Laruelle symptomatic of idealism, materiology, for its

part, is invariably indexed by a philosophically confused *hybrid* or *mixture*[57] of ontic immanence and ontological objectivity. In other words, materiology mistakes the real but unobjectifiable immanence of the 'thing itself', independent of its phenomenological presentation, for the idealized or transcendent reality of the object 'as such'. More precisely, it operates on the basis of a variedly proportioned hybrid of real and reality, immanence and transcendence. It is this confusion of the phenomenon or entity's unobjectifiable exteriority with the unobjectifiable transcendence of its phenomenality 'as such', its Being, that underlies the materiological confusion of real with ideal and the confusion of the latter's unilateral determination by the former with their bi-lateral co-determination.

We will have more to say about the motif of unilateral asymmetry as far as the relation of real and ideal is concerned in the following chapter. For the time being, however, it is necessary to focus on this fundamental, constantly reiterated distinction between unobjectifiable ontic immanence and unobjectifiable ontological transcendence. What lays behind this apparently

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[57]Laruelle contends that all philosophical thinking is intrinsically constituted through the articulation of a hybrid or composite structure. Consequently, an analysis of materiological thinking which shows how it operates on the basis of a typically philosophical 'hybrid' or 'mixture' (*mixte*) of real immanence and ideal transcendence is the fundamental precondition for the non-materialist 'dualysis' of materiological Decision we intend to pursue. For a preliminary examination of this materiological hybridisation of real and ideal, cf. *infra*, Chapter 2, pp.90-97; but especially Chapter 3, pp.121-141. For general elucidation concerning the status of philosophical Decision in non-philosophical theory, and for an examination of the role played by its hybrid or composite structure as occasional cause and empirical material in the process of non-philosophical dualysis, cf. *infra*, Chapter 5, pp.218-258.

obscure Laruellean contrast between the unobjectifiability of the phenomenon 'itself' and the unobjectifiability of its phenomenality 'as such'?

The fundamental philosophical reference for understanding this Laruellean contrast lies in the 'material phenomenology' of Michel Henry. Central to the latter is the distinction between an 'en-static' dimension of real immanence and an 'ek-static' realm of ideal transcendence; a distinction formulated by Henry on the basis of a particularly trenchant phenomenological critique of Husserl and Heidegger. Consequently, following a brief recapitulation of that critique, the next chapter will try to show how Laruelle's transcendental separation of the *tel quel* from the *comme tel* must be understood in terms of a 'non-phenomenological' radicalisation of Henry's phenomenological distinction[58].

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[58]As we shall see, the crucial non-phenomenological nuance in the Laruellean radicalisation of Henry's distinction concerns specifically whether the enstatic immanence Henry invokes is to be understood in terms of the phenomenality of the phenomenon 'as such', or in terms of the phenomenon 'itself'. Although focusing specifically on the relation between Levinas and Laruelle, the comprehensive overview of the interface between phenomenology and non-philosophy provided in Hughes Choplin's *De la Phénoménologie à la Non-Philosophie* also includes a succinct but useful *préçis* of the Laruelle/Henry connection. Cf. Choplin, 1997, especially pp. 33-49 and 116-117. In contrast to Choplin however, the intent throughout our account of the relation between Laruelle and Henry will be to emphasize the profound discontinuity between the phenomenological and the non-philosophical invocation of radical immanence.

CHAPTER 2

MICHEL HENRY: MATERIAL PHENOMENOLOGY

En-stasis/Ek-stasis

In *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*[59], Heidegger famously proposes to identify the transcendental difference between phenomenon and in-itself with the ontico-ontological difference between the entity and its Being, phenomenon and phenomenality. He does so, moreover, by reading the schematising function of the transcendental imagination, its synthesizing of concept and intuition in the production of schemata as transcendental determinations of time -the *appearing* of appearances-, as an analogue for the temporalising function of Dasein's ekstatico-horizonal transcendence.

However, Henry, in *The Essence of Manifestation* and subsequent works[60], argues that Heidegger's alignment of the transcendental difference with the ontico-ontological difference between intra-temporal phenomena and temporalising phenomenality, wherein the latter dimension is originarily

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[59]Cf. Heidegger, 1990.

[60]Cf. Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation* (English translation 1973, original French publication 1962); but also *The Genealogy of Psychoanalysis* (English translation 1993, original French publication 1985); and *Phénoménologie Matérielle*, 1990.

anchored in Dasein's Being as ekstatico-horizonal transcendence, falls short of attaining the authentically transcendental and, Henry provocatively insists, constitutively *atemporal* essence of originary phenomenological Being. According to Henry, Heidegger, like Husserl before him, still operates within the parameters of what the former, following Husserl, refers to as a 'Worldly' and transcendent (i.e. ontico-empirical rather than rigorously phenomenological) characterisation of the phenomenon's transcendental phenomenality; which is to say, its Being. The hallmark of such worldliness, as far as Henry is concerned, is the failure to acknowledge the radical asymmetry or heteromorphy between two fundamentally incommensurable modes of phenomenalisation: the ideal, or ekstatico-temporal modality of phenomenalisation through which phenomena first become intentionally apprehended and given for consciousness according to the horizonal ekstasis of World; and the absolute immanence-to-itself of en-static auto-affection as the real but non-intentional and non-representable essence of phenomenalisation; the veritable phenomenological 'substance' of phenomenality, subtending all ekstatico-temporal manifestation. The asymmetry or heteromorphy regulating the relation between these two incommensurable modalities according to Henry is a variant on a classical but under appreciated Neoplatonic philosopheme: ekstatic transcendence

distinguishes itself unilaterally from enstatic immanence while the latter does not distinguish itself from the former in return. Accordingly, Henry maintains, the phenomenological 'substance' of ekstatic visibility, its originary phenomenality, is woven out of enstatic invisibility, but enstasis is never revealed, never disclosively articulated within ekstasis, its invisible opacity absolves itself from reflexive illumination in the light of ekstasis[61]: "*It is only as an un-seeing, in not relating to itself in a seeing, in not revealing itself through a seeing, and thus as un-seen, as invisible, that seeing effectuates itself.*" (Henry, 1990, p.111)

Thus, according to Henry, the genuinely real, phenomenologico-transcendental condition for the ideal, intentional structures of the temporalising ekstasis through which phenomena become apprehended by consciousness in the disclosure of the World is the immanence of enstatic auto-affection as the ontological (but, Henry insists, definitively non-metaphysical) *prima materia* through which the phenomenality of the phenomenon is originarily constituted. It is phenomenological materiality as that which remains entirely occluded, invisible in the light of ekstatic manifestation, absolute phenomenality or phenomenality in-itself as the real condition for the structures of intentional ideality through which the

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[61] As we will see below, Henry's mobilization of the theme of unilateral asymmetry will be subjected to

phenomenon is grasped in consciousness. Consequently, Henry will argue, "*'Matter', for material phenomenology as understood in its decisive opposition to hyletics, no longer indicates the other of phenomenality but its essence.*" (Ibid, p.58) Phenomenological 'matter' then, for Henry, is the 'always already' of radical immanence as pure Affectivity-in-itself; transcendental Affectivity absolved of the reference to the empirical exteriority of an affecting instance. It is absolute auto-affection wherein givenness and given are indivisibly locked together in the grip of archi-originary self-Impression.

Henry and Husserl

How does Henry arrive at these provocative conclusions? We will now attempt to provide some clarification for these initially puzzling claims by considering Henry's reconstruction of the problematic of phenomenological 'givenness' as formulated in his critique of the Husserlian analysis of internal time-consciousness[62] (a critique set out in the opening chapter of Henry's *Phénoménologie Matérielle*). We shall briefly recapitulate the main points of that critique here, without pausing to ask whether or not it does full justice to the labyrinthine intricacies of Husserl's text.

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a stringent critique by Laruelle on the grounds that it remains insufficiently rigorous and basically equivocal.

[62]Cf. Husserl, 1964.

For Husserl, the immanent flux of phenomenological subjectivity, which has as its locus the living present of transcendental consciousness, is self-constituting: it is at once that which does the constituting (or the giving), and that which is constituted (or given); the co-incidence of appearing and of that which produces appearing. This self-constituting character of the living present is rooted in the structure of auto-temporalisation accomplished according to the three modalities of temporal givenness: that of the 'now' or punctual present; that of retention; and that of protention. But Husserl's account shows these three forms of temporal synthesis to be intrinsically fissured by a constitutive structural equivocation: they are species of noetic intentionality implying at once an intra-temporal distinction in the order of their logical consecutiveness; and a transcendental distinction between that which is constituted or given through the synthesis, and that which does the constituting, the giving, or synthesizing.

Now, Henry identifies this latter distinction between synthesizing and synthesized, givenness and given, as one which is fundamentally phenomenologico-transcendental, rather than logico-temporal, in nature. But, he argues, an acknowledgement of the rigorously transcendental character of this distinction -insofar as it inheres intrinsically in the structure of transcendental synthesis *per se*- renders it incompatible with the logico-

consecutive structure of inter-articulation between these syntheses according to Husserl. For to characterise the inter-articulation of these modalities of transcendental syntheses according to an order of logico-temporal consecution would be to relapse from a strictly phenomenological to a worldly -i.e. empirico-transcendent, rather than transcendental-immanent- viewpoint: the synthesis of retentional giving would then be seen as something succeeding the present which it gives to intentional consciousness by retaining it, according to a temporal order of logical succession experienced by empirical consciousness.

However, Henry argues, this is precisely what Husserl does: he accounts for the upsurge of the 'now' in the consciousness of the living present through the retentive synthesis by which every 'now' is constituted as given, retained in the present as 'having just taken place'; and invokes the continuous upsurge of a perpetually renascent 'now' -one which remains fundamentally unconstituted, heterogeneously inserted within the immanent flux of transcendental consciousness through the transcendent auspices of a noematic 'impression'- in order to explain the origination of the retentive synthesis which will constitute it as the present 'now' given in consciousness. As a result, Husserl can only explain the genesis of these originary 'acts' of phenomenological synthesis by recourse to an already constituted synthesis:

"*each constitutive phase of the flux only accedes to phenomenality insofar as it is itself constituted[...]it never phenomenalises itself as constituting and [...] that which is ultimately constitutive remains 'anonymous*"'(Ibid, p.44)

Thus, for Husserl, even at the level of absolute transcendental consciousness, the given can only be given insofar as it is constituted as given. Yet at the same time, Husserl continues to insist that givenness and given cannot be isomorphic, that they are separated by an unbridgeable transcendental abyss, that the structures of the given cannot be projected back onto their constituting conditions: "*It is thus evident that the phenomena which are constitutive of time are as a matter of principle objectivities other than those constituted in time[...]Similarly, there can be no sense in saying of them that they are in the now, that they have been, that they are successive or simultaneous relative to one another.*" (Husserl, 1964, quoted in Henry, 1990, p.45) Consequently, Henry argues, Husserl is forced to maintain simultaneously two ultimately incompatible claims: that absolute transcendental consciousness is self-constituting, and that the unbridgeable divide between constituting and constituted effectively forecloses the possibility of the constituting synthesis ever being given as constituting. In other words, Husserl carefully traces the genesis of the given back to the

originary noetic syntheses of givenness, only to collapse the genesis of givenness *qua* givenness back into the realm of the given.

For Henry, this circularity marks Husserl's signal failure to explain the putatively auto-constitutive or self-giving character of absolute transcendental consciousness. By continuously shifting back and forth between the phenomenologico-transcendental and the worldly-empirical perspective whenever he tries to account for the origination of the constituting synthesis as such, Husserl compromises the rigour of his own categorical distinction between the realm of constitutive phenomenality - transcendental temporalisation as givenness of the given- and the domain of the constituted phenomenon as that which is intra-temporally or empirically given. Moreover, as far as Henry is concerned, it is precisely because the business of transcendental phenomenology lies exclusively in uncovering the originary modalities of phenomenality according to the 'how' of their phenomenalisation, rather than according to the manifested 'what' as constituted phenomenon, that Husserl's inability to grasp the originary upsurge of givenness *qua* givenness indexes a fundamental phenomenological failure.

The Ur-Impression as Coincidence of Phenomenon and Phenomenality

However, Henry maintains, the fact that Husserl's own account requires the origination of a perpetually renascent 'now' in the appeal to an 'Ur-impression' as something remaining heterogeneous to all consciousness of impression constituted as given through the 'now', provides a clue to the authentically transcendental, sub-intentional condition for all ekstatico-intentional phenomenality: "*Why impression is continuously there anew is something we have begun to understand: because nothing comes into being unless it be in the site wherein being first grasps itself in the pathos of its original Parousia. Because the origin is a pathos, because the latter is always in effect as such, nothing comes forth unless it be as an impression, which for that reason 'is always there'*" (Henry, ibid, p.49) Thus, Henry argues, Husserl's phenomenology of internal-time consciousness simultaneously encounters its own unarticulated condition and glimpses the veritable ontological essence of phenomenalisation in the hypothesis of the 'Ur-impression' as that which is irreducible to the consciousness of impression constituted in the present because 'always already given'. For Henry, it is the erroneous paradigm of givenness as intentional constitution articulated through the three passive synthesis of transcendental temporalisation which

prevents Husserl from seeing in the Ur-impression that through which the self-givenness of transcendental consciousness itself comes to be constituted; the archi-originary but sub-intentional or non-ekstatic paradigm of givenness in which the 'how' of givenness and the 'what' which is given finally achieve perfect phenomenological co-incidence. Thus, Henry maintains, a proper phenomenological comprehension of the Ur-impression demands that it be understood not simply as a 'something' that is impressed (a *quid*, a what, a phenomenon), but also as a *self-impressing*; as an impression coinciding with the 'how' of impressionality *per se*; the sheer phenomenality or Being of the phenomenon. More precisely, Henry suggests, the Ur-impression must be understood in terms of the indivisible co-incidence of the ontological 'how' and the ontic 'what', givenness and given, phenomenality and phenomenon. The self-impressing proper to the Ur-impression, says Henry, is the self-givenness of the given in and through itself alone: pure phenomenological Being as absolute, self-constituting, auto-affection; a sub-intentional immanence subsisting in-itself and on the hither side of temporalised phenomenality, furnishing ekstasis with the living phenomenological substance for the phenomenality of the phenomenon. This non-punctual coincidence of givenness and given in the absolute Parousia of an eternally self-impressing but unrepresentable 'living present' provides the timeless

ontological 'material' on the basis of which the passive syntheses of intentional consciousness effect their constitutively temporal articulation of phenomena.

'The Historiality of the Absolute': Eternal Subjective Life

Moreover, for Henry, in contrast to Heidegger, Husserl's inability to recognize the originary en-static essence of phenomenality cannot merely be the result of the failure to maintain a sufficiently rigorous distinction between ontological temporalisation and ontic temporality. According to Henry, Heidegger himself fails to recognize that the fundamental issue for phenomenology is no longer that of distinguishing between time and temporalisation, but that of acknowledging the radical asymmetry between temporalized and temporalising ekstasis on the one hand, and the atemporal enstasis that constitutes their essence on the other. The profound truth glimpsed by Husserl in the problematic of reduction, Henry suggests -one that Heidegger passed over inadvertently in his rejection of that problematic- , finds its authentic fulfilment in the recognition that, through the Ur-impression's absolute inherence-in-itself, ekstatic transcendence has, so to speak, 'always already' been transcendentally reduced; excluded from the indivisible self-inherence of enstatic immanence.

Thus, for all its originality, Heidegger's attempt at grounding the transcendence of intentionality in ekstatico-horizonal projection, Henry insists, merely replays the Husserlian amphiboly of conditioning phenomenality and conditioned phenomenon through which the ontological essence of temporalising phenomenality is apprehended on the basis of the temporal phenomenon, and the former reinvested with all the features of the latter. In the final analysis, Henry argues, both the noetico-noematic transcendence-in-immanence characteristic of the intentional structure of pure transcendental consciousness, and the horizonal projection of Dasein's standing-outside-itself are ultimately species of ek-stasis: "*How can one fail to notice that[...] 'being-in' consciousness as intentional inherence already designates nothing other than the 'There' of that 'outside' which the notion of* Dasein *seeks to think - how can one not notice that, far from being different in the two cases, the sense of the word 'being', of the* 'sein' *in* Bewußt-sein *and in* Da-sein, *insofar as it tries to designate phenomenality as such, is precisely the same?*" (Ibid. p.109)

Subsisting 'beneath' temporal ekstasis then for Henry lies its authentically non-temporal ontological condition; enstatic auto-affection as "*the irremissible, unsurpassable and irrefrangible embracing of life by itself, embrace in which there is no divide because the how of life's self-giving is*

neither Ek-stasis nor its endless production, but rather precisely this passivity which remains fundamentally alien to Ek-stasis, enduring [le souffrir] *as self-enduring of life in every point of its being: Impression.*" (ibid., p.57) But Impression as absolute affectivity, as hyperpassivity, is in turn the ontological essence of the *sub-jektum*; auto-affectivity is constitutively subjective: "*This originary self-givenness of givenness is the self-feeling* [le s'éprouver soi-même] *of absolute subjectivity, which is to say subjectivity itself as such[...]In the self-feeling of absolute subjectivity original Ipseity is born, the Self-same grasped in its internal possibility, to which every 'self', even the most external, secretly refers.*"(Ibid, p.74)

Consequently, for Henry, not only is phenomenological subjectivation - *contra* Heidegger- not fundamentally finite on account of its ekstatico-temporal constitution; the ontological essence of subjectivity turns out to be atemporal and eternal at its very phenomenological root. Yet, because it can only be characterised as indifferent to the metaphysical opposition between the immutability of the eternal and the mutability of the temporal, auto-affecting Life must be understood as changeless precisely by virtue of its ever-changing-ness, so that, as Henry writes "*When originary sensation withdraws, there is something that does not withdraw, and that is, we say, its essence as auto-affection of life. What remains is thus not like some*

unchanging substance in the midst of universal passing away, like a stone at the bottom of the river -it is the historiality of the absolute [l'historial de l'absolu], *the eternal coming into itself of life. Because this coming never ceases surging forth, that which remains is change, not dehiscence and escape outside itself at every instant but that which, on the contrary, in the feeling of itself and as the implosion of that feeling, attains to itself, grasps itself, increases itself from its own being.*"(Ibid, p.55)

So, underlying ekstatic finitude, according to Henry, but on the hither side of the metaphysical antagonism between being and becoming, lies the immutable mutability of enstatic Life in the unrepresentable plenitude of its eternal increase. That movement of increase, in its unreifiable metastasis, constitutes temporalisation's radically enstatic 'kinematicity', its originary, non-spatio-temporal essence, and it is this non-spatio-temporal kinematicity which is cryptically characterised by Henry -perhaps by way of an oblique allusion to Heidegger- in terms of the 'historiality' of absolute impression's perpetual self-impressing.

Now, the precise conceptual lineaments of Henry's philosophical relation to Heidegger are far too complex for us to delve into in any detail here. We shall, however, note the definite phenomenological link between the 'always already' of auto-affectivity as non-spatio-temporal -but nevertheless,

according to Henry, *historialising*- essence of subjectivation, and what Heidegger in *Being and Time* designates as that dimension of 'attunement' (*Gestimmtheit; Stimmung*) or 'pre-disposition' (*Befindlichkleit*) which is a constitutive component for the 'historial' (*Geschichtlichkeit*) character of Dasein's temporalized subjectivation. That link is important because the unilateral asymmetry in terms of which Henry describes the relation between the immanent reality of enstasis and the transcendent ideality of ekstasis is clearly neither that of a straightforwardly metaphysical opposition, nor one coordinated according to an order of merely logical priority. Enstasis is always indissociably constitutive of ekstasis (although clearly, the reverse is certainly not true).

More fundamentally, it seems to us that Henry wishes to root Dasein's unobjectifiable transcendence as site for the non-latency (*a-letheia*) of Being as spatialising-temporalising 'clearing' (*Lichtung*), in a dimension of unobjectifiable immanence concomitant with Being's archi-originary latency, with the invisibility of that self-forgetfulness[63] which is constitutive of Being's enstatic kinematicity. In other words, Henry wishes to root the finitude of Dasein's ekstatico-horizonal pro-ject (and *a fortiori*, the philosophically contestable privilege accorded by Heidegger to Dasein's

intrinsically futural orientation in the Ur-ekstasis of Being-unto-death), in the eternal pre-disposition of Affect as absolute immanence of Dasein's 'always already'; its radically unretainable and unrepresentable past.

Immanence/Transcendence: Two Versions of the Unobjectifiable

Thus, underlying all ekstatic *phusys* within what Heidegger calls 'the openness of the open' -that openness which coincides with Being's bestowal of presencing yet which is also inseparably conterminous with Being's auto-occluding withdrawal, its self-withholding as unobjectifiable transcendence- and subtending even the unobjectifiable withdrawal through which ekstasis is dispensed, Henry discerns enstatic immanence -the radically subjective root of phenomenality-in-itself- as that which has always already withdrawn from constituted presence. But even this formulation is misleading. For, as we said above, it is clearly not the case that enstasis and ekstasis can be contrasted as if they were two distinct metaphysical principles, with the former underlying the latter. If the unrepresentable immanence of enstasis constitutes the unobjectifiable essence of phenomenality, then it thereby also constitutes the unobjectifiable transcendence of ekstatic presencing. Thus, the withdrawal of

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[63]"*Life is forgetful by nature, as immanence, which insurmountably expels ek-stasis and thus all possible forms of thought.* "(Henry, 1993, p.211)

ekstatic transcendence has the withdrawal of enstatic immanence at its root: they are distinct but indiscernible. And it is in terms of this distinction of indiscernibles that the unilateral asymmetry previously alluded to must be understood. Unobjectifiable transcendence distinguishes itself from unobjectifiable immanence without the latter distinguishing itself from the former in return. The fact that the essence of presencing, in its enstatic immanence, has always already withdrawn from presence, constitutes and explains that originary self-withholding through which ekstatic transcendence withdraws from all constituted presence[64].

Consequently, what we will specifically retain from Henry's critique of Husserl and Heidegger is this radical phenomenological reworking of the transcendental distinction between real and ideal in terms of the indiscernible difference between enstasis and ekstasis. Where Henry's phenomenological predecessors situated that difference between phenomenon and phenomenality, time and temporalisation, Henry now rearticulates it as obtaining between two distinct but necessarily indiscernible instances of

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[64]Laruelle's reading of Heidegger in *Les Philosophies de la Différence* is particularly notable for the way in which it ascribes a version of this very thesis to Heidegger himself, albeit with the crucial proviso that, according to Laruelle's reconstruction, it is precisely because the unobjectifiability of enstasis is a function of the *phenomenon* of the *Da* as 'that being which is in each case mine' rather than of its *phenomenality* as rooted in the *Sein*, that the immanence of the former can constitute the real, non-ontological essence of the latter as ideal ontological ekstasis. Thus, it is by situating unobjectifiable immanence on the side of the entity or the 'Da', rather than that of its Being, that Laruelle implicitly sides with what he -at least in *Les Philosophies de la Différençe* - decides to call

unobjectifiability; two radically incommensurable yet phenomenologically inseparable forms of the withdrawal from reified presence: that of ideal, ekstatic transcendence, and that of real, enstatic immanence[65]. Moreover, it is Henry's rigorously phenomenological and transcendental -rather than speculative and metaphysical- redefinition of the 'in-itself' as radically immanent *sub-jektum*, eternally withdrawn from intentional illumination, that Laruelle will draw on in his critique of materiological thinking even as he subjects the notion of radical immanence to a thoroughly critical, and non-phenomenological, process of purification.

The Phenomenological Idealisation of Immanence

Thus, whilst crediting Henry with a rigorously argued demonstration of the way in which unobjectifiable transcendence presupposes unobjectifiable immanence, Laruelle maintains that Henry's *phenomenologisation* of immanence, his identification of it with absolute auto-affection, immediately compromises the radicality of Henry's own discovery. The hyperbolic[66] pathos of Henry's characterisations of radical

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Heidegger's 'transcendental realism' against what he takes to be the latent transcendental idealism in Henry's ontologisation of immanence. Cf. Laruelle, 1986, esp. Chapters 3 and 4; pp. 55-120

[65]Although, as we shall shortly see, Henry's rearticulation of the transcendental difference partially reiterates the structural amphiboly between given and givenness, constituted and constituting, condition and conditioned, which Henry himself had criticized in his phenomenological predecessors.

[66]Interestingly enough, in Henry's post-Heideggerean phenomenology of radical immanence as well as in Levinas's post-Heideggerean phenomenology of radical transcendence, the pathos of the hyperbolic is inextricable from the apophantic logic of the phenomenon 'as such'. Consequently, those

immanence (the absolutisation of subjectivity, the transcendentalising of Affectivity, the ultra-phenomenological vitalism) is in fact concomitant with Henry's philosophical Decision to *ontologise* immanence. For by identifying immanence with ontological auto-affection, Laruelle argues, Henry surreptitiously re-idealises it: he re-envelops the phenomenon of immanence 'itself' in the insidious transcendence proper to the phenomenality of immanence 'as such'. However, in order to rescue the baby of radical immanence from the sullied phenomenological bathwater of auto-affection, we require a fuller understanding of those underlying philosophical mechanisms responsible for Henry's idealization.

Henry's phenomenological idealization of immanence has two aspects: one ideological or superstructural; the other substantive or infrastructural. The former aspect is indexed by the glaringly arbitrary character of Henry's decision to identify 'materiality' with 'affectivity'; an apparently gratuitous identification which remains deeply unconvincing by any philosophical standards, not just Laruelle's. For it certainly seems difficult to reconcile Henry's claim to be the initiator of a 'material phenomenology' with such an otherwise classically idealist philosopheme as

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phenomenological conservatives (Husserlian fundamentalists) militating for a return to a rational phenomenological sobriety against the rigorously pathological radicalism of thinkers like Henry and Levinas, attacking the latter on the grounds that they are 'just exaggerating', or 'excessively

the above cited absolutisation of subjectivity, or with the more or less explicitly religious tenor of Henry's characterisation of Life as eternal subjective Pathos[67]. One cannot help feeling that, in the process of 'de-substantialisation' and 'de-hylification', 'matter' has become so thoroughly and successfully spiritualised by Henry that there is no longer anything remotely 'physical' left about it. Perhaps this is Henry's goal. For after this remainderless phenomenologisation of matter, the materialist hypothesis of an unphenomenologisable dimension of reality becomes effectively ruled out of court as an instance of pre-philosophical dogmatism. Thus, through a *tour de force* of tactical manoeuvring, Henry's pre-emptive idealization of matter robs the materialist wishing to contest the transcendental privileging of subjectivity of a fundamental resource in his *agon* with phenomenological idealism: the appeal to an *a priori* unphenomenologisable physical reality[68].

This surreptitious phenomenological imperialism renders it difficult to escape the feeling that there is something singularly disingenuous in Henry's choice of the term 'material phenomenology' to describe his philosophical project; a flagrant *quid pro quo* which can only confirm the fears of those

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hyperbolic', are typically missing the point. It may well be that phenomenological thought is constitutively pathological.

[67]The fact that Henry has recently published a book entitled *C'est moi la vérité. Pour une philosophie du christianisme* [*I am the truth. For a philosophy of Christianity*] (Paris: Seuil, 1996), hardly comes as a great surprise.

who suspect that phenomenology's presumptuous relegation of all physical science to the 'naive' realm of the natural attitude is invariably a prelude to the most disastrous varieties of anthropocentric idealism. Physicists, biologists, cosmologists, and other benighted denizens of the natural attitude may be forgiven for greeting with incredulity the revelation that 'materiality' in its ultimate ontological essence, far from having anything to do with particle collisions, DNA, or spiral nebulae, is in fact synonymous with Eternal Subjective Life. Coupled with this (typically phenomenological) transcendentalisation of subjective Affect, Henry's decision to equate 'Life' with 'Matter' not only seems more than a little *ad hoc*; at a more profound level, it seems to us to be indicative of the manner in which the expression 'material phenomenology' is doomed to remain forever oxymoronic on account of deep-rooted methodological assumptions intrinsic to the phenomenological enterprise as such; assumptions operating entirely independently of Henry's own superficial ideological prejudices[69].

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[68]Cf. our earlier comments concerning the parochial, dubiously intuitionistic character of the phenomenological conception of 'phenomenality' in our Introduction, *supra*, pp.24-27.

[69]Thus, anti-scientific prejudices of the most wearyingly familiar kind certainly play a fairly central role in the contempt Henry displays toward any suggestion that the physical sciences may have something to contribute to our philosophical understanding of materiality. And while he dismisses as "*barbarism*" the "*belief that scientific knowledge constitutes the unique form of genuine, veridical, objective knowledge*" (Henry, "Ce que la science ne sait pas" in *La Recherche*, 208, March 1989, pp. 422-426; quoted in Schmid, 1998), Henry seems entirely oblivious to the manner in which a 'material phenomenology' carried out in flagrant disregard of everything that the physical sciences have to teach about matter may in fact be tantamount to a form of intellectual barbarism.

In this particular case, the methodological assumptions underlying this phenomenological idealization of immanence have their substantive root, their infrastructural basis, in the structure of the philosophical Decision through which Henry articulates his phenomenologisation of matter. In fact, the unilateral asymmetry governing the relation between enstatic immanence and ekstatic transcendence belies a particularly complex triadic structure, which we shall come to recognize as characteristic of all philosophical Decision as far as Laruelle is concerned[70]. For we have to bear in mind that, according to Henry, immanence is at once absolute, indivisible, autonomous; *and* coordinated with the dyadic distinction which it composes as constituting term reciprocally articulated with the constituted counterpart. Thus, enstatic auto-affection simultaneously constitutes, on the one hand, an absolutely relationless, self-inhering invisibility; and on the other, the *relation* between the invisible essence of appearing and its visible ek-sistence. It is at once the self-constituting, invisible, essence of phenomenality; and the dyadic coupling composed by the constitutive invisibility of phenomena and their constituted visibility. As a result, the invisible-in-itself as radical immanence or absolute Indivision is surreptitiously sub-divided by the relation between the visible and the invisible as a transcendent dyad or Division.

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[70]Cf. *infra*, Chapter 5, pp. 218-230.

The Relative Absolute

Consequently, what Henry initially presents as a strictly unilateral asymmetry between the absolute self-inherence of radical immanence and the relative, ekstatic exteriority of transcendence, actually presupposes an ultimately bi-lateral symmetry, a reciprocal co-respondence between absolute and relative, immanence and transcendence. The fact that, for Henry, enstasis has to *absolve itself* from ekstasis, even as it constitutes the latter, renders it relative to ekstasis once again. For even in excluding transcendence from itself through its absolute self-inherence, immanence has to relate to it precisely as that which it must exclude in order to achieve its absolute self-inherence. Absolute immanence bears a latent, implicitly constitutive reference to transcendence within itself by very virtue of the fact that it expels it. As a result, Henry's phenomenology of absolute immanence does not succeed in interrupting the quintessentially philosophical (or quasi-Hegelian) circle that always posits the relation of relation (transcendence) and non-relation (immanence); the ultimate relativity of absolute and relative.

Crucially, it is in order to dispense once and for all with this pernicious residue of ultimate relativity in the very notion of 'absolute' immanence, that Laruelle will invoke an immanence whose radicality resides in its *foreclosure* or *indifference* -rather than exclusion or opposition- to all

those instances of dyadic coupling which are variations on the originary dyad of immanence/transcendence: thinkable/unthinkable; absolute/relative; unilateral/bilateral; asymmetry/symmetry; identity/difference, and so on. If immanence is to be truly radical rather than absolute, Laruelle argues, then it can be neither thinkable nor unthinkable; nor even the *différance* between the thinkable and the unthinkable; it can only be that which is simply foreclosed or indifferent to the dyad thinkable/unthinkable, without that foreclosure becoming retroactively constitutive of its immanence. In other words, Laruelle insists, our *nominal* definition or characterisation of immanence in terms of its foreclosure to all forms of dyadic Decision is in no way *constitutiv*e of immanence *qua* immanence. It is not our description of immanence as indifferent that constitutes it as indifferent. To suggest the contrary is, for Laruelle, to relapse into idealism: it is to maintain that thought is always co-constitutive of the real. Thus, if radical immanence is real, it must remain indifferent to our characterisations. And it is that radical indifference which guarantees that our definitions can be entirely adequate (albeit only in the last instance) to immanence without somehow becoming constitutive or determining it. We shall return to these crucial points in Chapter 5. For the time being, suffice it to say that if immanence is foreclosed to the dyadic articulation or *différanc*e between the thinkable and the

unthinkable, this is not the same as saying that it resists it, expels it, or is otherwise obliged to absolve itself from that dyadic distinction. On the contrary, Laruelle insists, immanence's radical autonomy lets the dyad subsist by allowing it its own relative autonomy[71].

Thinkable/Unthinkable

The impenetrable opacity of Henry's absolute immanence, by way of contrast, is that which, by unilaterally absolving itself from the dilatory transcendence of ekstatic differentiation, effectively crushes dyadic couplings such as those of being/becoming, phenomenon/phenomenality; thought/unthought. Its absolute, unrepresentable immediacy forcibly compresses the terms coupled together through dyadic mediation, flattening them onto one another at the point of their indivisible, enstatic coincidence; crushing them together in their absolute immediation. Most importantly for our present purposes, in absolving itself from mediation through the dyadic articulation thinkable/unthinkable, enstatic immediacy ultimately becomes co-constituted by it: the absolute immediation of the dyad thinkable/unthinkable requires that, for Henry, immanence be thinkable *as* unthinkable and unthinkable *as* thinkable. The result is idealism. In other words, the determination of the ideal (i.e. thought) by the real (i.e.

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[71]Cf. *infra*, Chapter 5, pp. 248-251.

immanence) is secured only through that of the real (immanence) by the ideal (thought). Henry's absolute immanence is constituted as unthinkable through thought, just as thought or the thinkable is constituted through unthinkable immanence.

A consideration of Henry's reconstruction[72] of Descartes' proto-phenomenological reduction in the *Meditations* should help clarify this point. In that reconstruction, Henry suggests that a transcendental distinction between the dubitability of constituted appearance and the indubitability of its sheer appearing, its originary phenomenality, is crystallized in Descartes' "*At certe videre videor*" ("At the very least, it seems to me that I see"), wherein the *videor*, that originary upsurge of seeming which is irreducible to the seen, figures for Cartesian phenomenology as the self-appearing of appearances, the enstatic self-sensing of thought which remains invisible and unthinkable in the ekstatic exteriority of intentional representation: "*Thought's primal sensing, the* sentimus nos videre *(i.e. the self-sensing that originally presents thought to itself and makes it what it is, appearance's self-appearing) is radically opposed to the sensing that rules seeing, hearing, touching, and even understanding (insofar as it is a seeing,* intueri*); it is opposed to transcendental seeing in general, which inhabits all these determinations and*

has its essence in ek-stasis. Thought's essential self-sensing is not merely different from ek-static sensing; it excludes it, and precisely this exclusion determines the concept of immediacy." (Henry, 1993, p.22).

According to Henry then, enstatic immediacy at once constitutes thought's absolutely immediate self-sensing, the transcendental element within which thought has 'always already' begun to think; yet it is simultaneously unthinkable precisely insofar as it constitutes consciousness' unrepresentable, unintelligible grasping of itself. Consequently, the enstatic essence or originary phenomenality of thinking is simultaneously qualified by Henry as inhering constitutively in all thought, as the essence of the thinkable, through which thought has always already begun thinking; but also as constitutively unthinkable, as utterly recalcitrant to exposure in the ekstatic realm of intentional cogitation. Yet that unthinkability is thought through the thinking it has made possible; just as thought 'is' through its unthinkable ontological essence. And although the enstatic immanence of thought's self-sensing is the absolute immediation of the transcendent distinction between the thinkable and the unthinkable, that absolute immediation, that self-sensing, subsists in and as thought: it both constitutes thought's self-sensing essence as immediate coincidence of thinkable and unthinkable; but is also

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[72]Cf. Henry, 1993, esp. Ch.1, pp. 11-40. The discussion of Descartes continues through Chapters 2 &

inseparable from, and ultimately co-constituted by, the intentional thinking or 'transcendental seeing' within which the dyadic distinction between thinkable and unthinkable subsists. The result is that, for Henry, thinking is simultaneously something separate *and* inseparable from auto-affection; immanence is both thinkable *and* unthinkable. Moreover, it is thinkable *as* unthinkable, as self-sensing of thought; while its unthinkable essence constitutes the essence of the thinkable as 'transcendental seeing'.

Immanence 'itself' or Immanence 'as such'?

What are we to conclude then from Henry's characterisation of radical immanence as absolute immediation of the thinkable and the unthinkable? This primarily: that auto-affecting immanence as enstatic immediacy of the thinkable and the unthinkable, absolving itself from the dyadic distinction between thinkable and unthinkable, engenders a quasi-absolute idealism of auto-affection wherein the 'reality' of enstatic immediacy is only separable as real *through* its ideal inseparability from the transcendence of ekstatic mediation. In other words, real immanence is *posited* as absolutely separate through its inseparability from the transcendent ideality of thought; conversely, thought's transcendent positing is putatively constituted through the absolute separation of real immanence. In the final analysis, real

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3, pp.41-102.

immanence is obliged to absolve itself from ideal transcendence by transcendent means. Thus, Henry's phenomenological immanence is *posited* as the absolute immediation of given and givenness; it is posited as absolute in virtue of a transcendent Decision through which the unilateral asymmetry between enstatic immediation and ekstatic mediation is surveyed from above, seen from a viewpoint of transcendent exteriority and circumscribed within an encompassing reversibility, an ultimately bi-lateral symmetry[73].

This is the price to be paid for the ontologisation of immanence. Immanence affects itself in order to phenomenalise itself, but through that auto-phenomenalisation, it is the phenomenality of immanence 'as such', rather than the phenomenon of immanence 'itself' that is manifested. Moreover, we have seen how this ontological idealisation of immanence has its source in Henry's phenomenologically motivated elision of the transcendental separation between the *comme tel* and the *tel quel*, thought and thing, description and constitution; a refusal which leads him to construe immanence as consisting in the auto-affecting 'immediation' of

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[73]Although implicit critiques of Henry abound throughout Laruelle's *Philosophie II*, an explicit non-philosophical critique of Henry's philosophy of radical immanence does not appear in Laruelle's work until *Philosophie III*, in *Prinçipes de la non-philosophie* (1996). Moreover, although the main points of our critique here draw on certain features of Laruelle's analysis there, we have not attempted to reiterate it any detail because of its considerable non-philosophical technicality. Cf. Laruelle, 1996, pp. 116-125; 133-143; 228-231.

phenomenality and phenomenon; thought and thing; description and constitution.

It is in terms of this phenomenological elision that we can understand Henry's attempt to trace the ekstatic distinction of thought and thing back to its veritable phenomenological condition in the indivisible enstatic coincidence of phenomenality and phenomenon, thinking and being; and his invocation of the asymmetry between their enstatic coincidence and their ekstatic distinction. It is this attempt to root transcendence in immanence, ekstasis in enstasis, through the absolutisation of the latter, which leads to an idealism of auto-affecting immanence; to the absolute ideality of an immanence which posits itself for itself through its own transcendent other (ekstasis). Henry conflates the phenomenon of immanence as radically separate (but separate-without-separation) and foreclosed to transcendence, with the phenomenality of immanence as absolute distinction that repels transcendence. The latter leads to an absolutisation of immanence through the expulsion of transcendence, but an absolutisation which merely reinforces the reciprocal co-dependence between immanence and transcendence; a reciprocity inscribed within the intrinsically circular structure of philosophical Decision as relation of relation and non-relation.

By way of contrast to Henry's ontologisation of absolute immanence as immanence-*to*-itself -a *self*-relation concomitant with the phenomenological idealization of immanence 'as such', wherein the 'to' indexes the enstatic immediation of immanence's self-inherence-, Laruelle's *Prinçipe de Minorité* invokes a phenomenon of immanence which is "*positively devoid [...] of relation to...self. This new immanence can be said to be ontic or real. Ontic, and not ontico-ontological: the objective entity, the one which appears as an object, is an ontico-ontological hybrid* [mixte]*, and it is usually this hybrid which is mistakenly confused with the entity.*" (Laruelle, 1981, p.125) Moreover, it is in terms of the unobjectifiable immanence proper to the phenomenon of immanence 'itself', rather than that ontico-ontological hybridisation of phenomenon and phenomenality, real and ideal, associated with the phenomenality of immanence 'as such', that we must seek the identity proper to the phenomenon of matter itself; a radically immanent identity which is separate (yet without-separation) from that process of ontological idealization whereby it is confused with the phenomenological hybridisation of phenomenon and phenomenality.

Thus, Laruelle's non-phenomenological radicalisation of the separation between thought and thing, phenomenon and phenomenality, *comme tel* and *tel quel*, will necessitate a reconceptualisation of unilateral

asymmetry wherein immanence's radical autonomy neither constitutes nor excludes, but rather *gives-without-givenness* transcendence's relative autonomy; a non-phenomenological giving which will transform the bilateral correspondence between immanence and transcendence into an Identity without synthesis or unity, and a Duality without distinction or difference[74]. Instead of the idealism of Henry's bilateral correspondence between immanence and transcendence; instead of the circle of auto-position whereby the indivisible immediacy of phenomenon and phenomenality simultaneously constitutes and is constituted by the mediating division through which it is determined as immediate; Laruelle's non-phenomenological radicalisation aims at a separation whereby a phenomenon-without-phenomenality unilaterally determines the Decisional or phenomenological mixture of phenomenon and phenomenality; and the Real as given-without-givenness unilaterally determines the Ideal self-positing circle of given and givenness; the Ideal self-giving hybrid of real and ideal.

A fuller account of the precise ramifications of Laruelle's position - specifically of the initially baffling description of radical immanence as 'separate-without-separation'- will have to wait until Chapters 5 and 6. Nevertheless, we are now in a position to understand how Henry's 'material

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[74]Once again, this is an anticipatory, but for the time being rather obscure, contrast. Further

phenomenology' instantiates the three structural amphibolies in terms of which we characterised materiological thinking in the previous chapter[75]: it deliberately synthesizes the real phenomenon of immanence 'itself' with the ideal phenomenality of immanence 'as such'; it substitutes an ultimately bilateral co-determination of the ontologically ideal and the ontically real for the strictly unilateral determination of the ideal by the real; finally, it roots the unobjectifiable transcendence of ekstasis in the unobjectifiable immanence of enstasis only to render the ontological absolutisation of the latter constitutively inseparable from the former.

Thus, Henry confuses the unrepresentability of Being *qua* absolute immediation of giveness and given, phenomenality and phenomenon; with that of the Real as given-without-givenness, phenomenon-without-phenomenality. Consequently, although by invoking Being's unrepresentable exteriority *vis a vis* ekstatic intentionality, Henry's 'material phenomenology' proposes a non-metaphysical radicalisation of the Marxist thesis asserting Being's exteriority to thought, it is able to do the former only insofar as it has characterised Being in terms of the enstatic immediation of phenomenon and phenomenality. Yet we have seen how, far from vouchsafing the radical separation of real and ideal, their enstatic immediation indexes an idealism of

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clarification will be provided in Chapters 6 and 7.

ontological auto-affection. In fact, Henry's 'material phenomenology' merely supplants classical metaphysical materiology, such as that of Marxism for instance, with a transcendental materiology. For as Laruelle points out, the Marxist thesis of the exteriority of Being to thought is itself the result of an idealist elision of the distinction between the entity 'as such' and the entity 'itself', a confusion of the entity with its Being and of the real with the ideal: "*Being never opposes itself to thought, the problem does not arise, it is the real that is capable of opposing itself to those forms of ideality=of being=of presence wherein one must include thought.*" (Laruelle, 1981, p.78) In other words, whereas the vulgar versions of Marxist materialism posit the exteriority of Being to thought at an entirely empirical or ontic level, on the basis of a 'weak' or empiricist interpretation and critique of the Parmenidean axiom[76] for which Hegel and Heidegger, albeit in their very different ways, provide a 'strong' or quasi-transcendental reading; Henry posits Being's 'exteriority' as transcendental *vis a vis* the realm of intentional ekstasis, but does so in terms of the enstatic immediation of thinking and Being. Thus, whereas the pre-Heideggerean variants of materialism remain materiological

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[75]Cf. *supra*, Ch.1, pp.59-61.

[76]Usually rendered in English as "*It is the same thing to think and to be*". The identity-in-difference of thought and being posited by Parmenides is interpreted by Hegel in terms of the becoming-substance of subject and the becoming-subject of substance through the self-sundering, self-synthesizing Notion; while Heidegger for his part interprets it in terms of the originary *Austrag* or *Unterschied* through

on account of an empiricist failure to recognize the ontico-ontological -which is to say, quasi-transcendental- status of the difference between ideal and real, phenomenality and phenomenon, thought and thing; for Laruelle, post-Heideggerean materiologies such as that of Henry operate on the basis of a quasi-Hegelian 'sublation' (*relève*) of that difference.

Nowhere is the immense power of this 'sublation' better exemplified than in the explicitly anti-phenomenological materialism promulgated in Deleuze's work (both with and without Guattari). Significantly in this regard, Laruelle's *Prinçipe de Minorité* contains a powerful but indirect critique of Deleuze's 'machinic' materialism. The latter, Laruelle argues[77] "*consummates the logico-transcendental and synthetic tendency contained within Kantianism. Nietzsche's four or five fundamental theses (identity of force and of differential relation; identity of force and of the subject of force; identity of force and of its effects, etc.) provide the basis for an absolute hyletics* [hylétique absolue] *which remains the hyletic form of absolute idealism. It is along this filiation that we find the ultimate avatar of the Man-machine, albeit*

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which thinking is 'enowned' to Being and Being 'enowned' to thought. For a discussion of the way in which non-philosophy suspends the Parmenidean axiom, cf. *infra*, Chapter 5, pp.259-263.

[77]The reader should bear in mind that here as throughout almost all his writings, Laruelle deliberately indiscerns Nietzsche and Deleuze, so that whenever he says 'Nietzsche', he also means 'Deleuze', and vice versa. This is more than capricious indolence or lack of scholarly rigour on Laruelle's part. Since the Deleuze-Nietzsche tandem is used by Laruelle to index a specific variety of philosophical Decision, which is to say, a transcendentally rather than historically determined set of abstract conceptual structures -a system of a priori syntactical invariants rather than a historically identifiable body of doctrine- the proper names 'Nietzsche and 'Deleuze' are used by him indifferently. Cf. in this regard

an obviously non-mechanistic one, that of the generalised industrial machine and of the cog-man [l'homme-rouage] *(in a non-metaphorical sense), that of 'desiring-machines', and of the 'machinic' as synthesis of hyletic syntheses, re-affirmation of the affirmation of relations of force, etc[...].*"(Laruelle, 1981, p.79)

The next chapter will set out a detailed examination of Deleuze's work, and specifically of his collaborations with Guattari, in order to try and clarify Laruelle's oblique critique of what he designates here as the 'hyletic form of absolute idealism', and to show how, in spite of Deleuze & Guattari's virulently anti-phenomenological stance, the Decisional structure of their machinic materialism reinstantiates those three instances of materiological amphiboly identified earlier in the context of Henry's phenomenology.

We shall proceed in two stages. We will first set out the preconditions for Deleuze & Guattari's *materialist transvaluation of the transcendental* in the Deleuzean critique of representation. Then we will try to show why Laruelle believes the price to be paid for Deleuze & Guattari's 'machinic constructivism' -matter's becoming-thought and thought's becoming-matter within an all encompassing hyletic continuum- is ultimately a kind of absolute hyletic idealism.

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the 'User's Guide' to Laruelle's *Philosophies of Difference* (Laruelle, 1986, pp.5-14),wherein the

rationale for this flagrantly anti-scholastic methodology is explained.

CHAPTER 3

DELEUZE & GUATTARI: ABSOLUTE HYLETICS

Materializing the Transcendental

The initiating gesture of Deleuze & Guattari's philosophical project consists precisely in the attempt to effect a materialist transvaluation of the transcendental. In *Anti-Oedipus* the relation between 'deleuzoguattarian' schizo-analysis and the Kantian Critical apparatus is explicitly addressed: "*In what he called the Critical revolution, Kant set out to discover criteria that were immanent to knowledge so as to distinguish a legitimate and illegitimate use of the syntheses of consciousness. In the name of a transcendental philosophy (immanence of the criteria) he denounced the transcendent use of these syntheses such as it appeared in metaphysics. In the same way, we must say that psychoanalysis possesses its own metaphysics, to wit, Oedipus. And that a revolution, but this time a materialist one, can only proceed through the critique of Oedipus and by denouncing the illegitimate use of the syntheses of the unconscious as revealed in Oedipal psychoanalysis, in such a way as to rediscover a transcendental unconscious defined through the*

immanence of its criteria, along with a corresponding practise of schizoanalysis." (Deleuze & Guattari,1972, p.89) [78]

Underlying this libidinal-materialist appropriation is the Deleuzean claim that, as far as the empirical realm is concerned, the business of a genuinely critical transcendentalism lies in articulating real conditions of ontological actuality rather than ideal conditions of epistemological possibility. Transcendental philosophy requires the critique of representation rather than its legitimation. Thus, for Deleuze, the transcendental is not a substantive philosophical *thesis* affirming the subordination of objectivity to subjectivity, ontology to epistemology, but rather a polymorphic *method* wherein subjectivity and objectivity are suspended as equivocal, pre-philosophical categories and immanence becomes the operative functional criterion. In order to clarify the full philosophical import of these claims, however, let's briefly recapitulate the Deleuzean critique of representation as set out in *Difference and Repetition* (1968) and *The Logic of Sense* (1969).

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[78]In upholding the rights of transcendental immanence against the claims of metaphysical transcendence, Deleuze & Guattari accord explicitly with the strictures set out by Kant: "*We shall entitle the principles whose application is confined entirely within the limits of possible experience,* immanent*; and those, on the other hand, which profess to pass beyond those limits,* transcendent*[,,,]Thus,* transcendental *and* transcendent *are not interchangeable terms. The principles of pure understanding which we have set out above, allow only of empirical, and not of transcendental employment, that is, employment extending beyond the limits of experience. A principle, on the other hand, which takes away these limits, or even commands us actually to transgress them, is called* transcendent. *If our criticism can succeed in disclosing the illusion in these alleged principles, then even these principles which are merely of empirical employment may be called, in opposition to the others,* immanent *principles of the pure understanding.*" (Kant, 1929, A295-296/B352-353, p.299).

The Deleuzean Critique of Representation

Already in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* Deleuze is explicitly striving to liberate a rigorously transcendental but sub-representational realm from what he takes to be the extraneous and transcendent set of phenomenological theses with which it had been saddled by Kant and Husserl. Against both, Deleuze argues that "*The error of all efforts to determine the transcendental as consciousness is that they think of the transcendental in the image of, and in the resemblance to, that which it is supposed to ground.*" (Deleuze, 1990, p.105) A rigorously immanent deployment of the transcendental problematic, Deleuze maintains, should transform it into a philosophical method capable of suspending every remnant of transcendent empirical presupposition. Those presuppositions are grounded and spuriously legitimated, Deleuze argues, in the apparatus of representation, with its four cardinal hinges: identity in the concept, opposition in the predicate, analogy in judgement, and resemblance in intuition[79]. These representational 'collars' at once shackle thought and predetermine the parameters of possible experience, confining philosophy within the bounds of a categorial grid excluding the anomalous and uncategorisable incidences of difference unsubordinated by conceptual

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[79]Cf. Deleuze, 1994, for instance pp.29-35; pp.137-138.

identity, external to the form of opposition, independent of analogy in judgement, and unrecognisable by intuition. Moreover, the representational grid staked out by these categorial syntheses is itself ultimately grounded in the form of the 'I' (cogito or apperception) as paradigm of identification, condition of opposition, model of analogy and locus of intuition: "*The 'I think' is the most general principle of representation - in other words, the source of these elements and of the unity of all these faculties: I conceive* [through the concept], *I judge* [through opposition], *I imagine, I remember* [through resemblance], *and I perceive* [through intuition] - *as though these were the four branches of the Cogito.*" (Deleuze, 1994, p.138)

Thus, Deleuze, a keen reader of Hume, reminds us that the form of the Self as ground of representation is something that needs to be explained, not an incontrovertible Given from which all explanation must begin. To assume subjective consciousness as something from which philosophy must begin, as was once supposed of God, is, argues Deleuze, to yield too quickly to a latent dimension of crypto-theological superstition disguised beneath the empiricist prejudices of common sense. Deleuze's philosophical audacity lies in his willingness to try and effect the transcendental suspension or circumvention of the first person phenomenological perspective, along with the supposed indubitability of subjective individuation, as an extraneous

albeit particularly resilient form of dogmatic presupposition. This move is significantly more radical than the superficially similar but still phenomenologically rooted attacks on metaphysical subjectivism and the Cartesian theatre of representation[80], for it effectively explodes the very kernel of subjectivity, subverting it at its originary root by dismantling the principle of ontological individuation through which it is constituted, rather than, say, merely questioning its substantive status as an ontologically separate realm, or highlighting the quasi-transcendental structure of aporia through which intentional consciousness as self-presence is simultaneously constituted and deconstituted at a point where subjective individuation has already been given as a discrete field[81]. From a Deleuzean point of view, it matters little whether one posits consciousness as an internalised theatre of representation or an externalised set of intentional relations to the world; as long as the field of phenomenological investigation is delimited within the space of what Foucault called the 'empirico-transcendental doublet'[82], it continues to perpetuate "*the vicious circle which makes the condition refer to the conditioned as it reproduces its image.*" (Deleuze, 1990, p.105)

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[80]Of the sort initiated by Nietzsche and Heidegger, and which subsequently became one of the few incontrovertibly central strands running through much twentieth-century philosophy, common to thinkers as otherwise dissimilar as Wittgenstein and Merleau-Ponty.

[81]Cf. for instance, Derrida's deconstruction of the Husserlian 'living present' as locus of transcendental consciousness in Derrida,1973.

[82]Cf. Foucault, 1970, pp. 318-328.

So far then, it might seem as if Deleuze were doing little more than reiterating Henry's critique of the (Kantian/Husserlian) principle of empirico-transcendental parallelism. This impression, however, is misleading. Where Deleuze's materialization of the transcendental goes beyond anything envisaged in Henry's phenomenologisation of matter is in its explicit refusal to accept the form of the Self as absolute paradigm of all possible individuation[83]. If philosophical thought is to stop shamelessly reiterating the pieties of good sense and start undermining the orthodoxies of common sense, Deleuze insists, it must not shirk from positing a radical incommensurability between the individuated realm of subjective experience (whether it be that of intentional consciousness or that of sub-intentional enstasis) and the pre-individual domain which conditions that realm while bearing no resemblance to it. Consequently, Deleuze cannot remain satisfied with Henry's predominantly negative characterisation of transcendental immanence as sub-representational, un-conscious, and non-intentional. If it remains strictly incommensurable with the categories of representation it is because, *pace* Kant, it teems with a-categorial determinations and anomalous

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[83]The vital importance of Simondon's work for the Deleuzean critique of phenomenology cannot be overestimated (cf. Simondon, 1995). However trenchant his critique of ekstatic representation may be, never for one moment will Henry envisage undermining the principle of the unity of the phenomenon or abandoning the form of the Self as paradigm of individuation. Thus, whereas the figure of a radicalised Cartesianism provides the main resource for Henry's material phenomenology, Deleuze's transcendental materialism finds what may well be its chief philosophical inspiration in a cross-fertilization of Spinoza and Simondon.

differentiations; if it remains rigorously irreducible to the dimensions of consciousness it is because, *pace* Freud, it is cosmic, anonymous, and anorganic; finally, if it remains utterly heteromorphic *vis a vis* the form of the Self it is because, *pace* Henry, it is comprised of impersonal individuations and pre-personal singularities. This pre-individual, impersonal transcendental field sought for by Deleuze, constitutes the empirically inexhaustible realm of virtual singularities, 'real without being actual, ideal without being abstract', nomadically distributed *via* the limitlessly productive, perpetually dynamic disequilibrium of an auto-differentiating, ontological 'heterogenesis': "*Despite Sartre's attempts we cannot retain consciousness as a milieu while at the same time we object to the form of the person and the point of view of individuation. A consciousness is nothing without the form of the I or the point of view of the Self. What is neither individual nor personal are, on the contrary, emissions of singularities insofar as they occur on an unconscious surface and possess a mobile, immanent principle of auto-unification through a nomadic distribution, radically distinct from fixed and sedentary distributions as conditions of the syntheses of consciousness. Singularities are the true transcendental events and Ferlinghetti calls them 'the fourth person singular'. Far from being individual or personal, singularities preside over the genesis of individuals and persons; they are distributed in a 'potential'*

which admits neither Self nor I, but which produces them by actualising or realizing itself, although the figures of this actualisation do not at all resemble the realized potential. Only a theory of singular points is capable of transcending the synthesis of the person and the analysis of the individual as these are (or are made) in consciousness. We cannot accept the alternative which thoroughly compromises psychology, cosmology, and theology: either singularities already comprised in individuals and persons, or the undifferentiated abyss. Only when the world, teaming with anonymous and nomadic, impersonal and pre-individual singularities, opens up, do we tread at last on the field of the transcendental." (Deleuze, 1990, pp.102-103)

The fundamental components for the kind of transcendental materialism that will be elaborated in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* are already in place in this passage: the decomposition of the phenomenological perspective on the world (= dismantling of subjectification, signification, and interpretation, the three structural hinges of Oedipal representation); the emission of self-assembling virtual singularities by means of nomadic distribution upon an unconscious surface (= inscription of molecular intensities/machinic assemblages upon the body-without-organs or plane of consistency); the actualisation of an impersonal virtual unconscious through whose processual auto-differentiation or 'heterogenesis'

the empirical realm is effectively produced as actual (=machinic construction of the real *via* connective, disjunctive, and conjunctive syntheses of desiring-production).

This last feature in particular will prove absolutely central in Deleuze & Guattari's anti-phenomenological brand of machinic constructivism, wherein the transcendental is reconfigured in terms of primary processes of ontological production engendering a real no longer circumscribed by the categorial syntheses of representation.

Machinic Constructivism

If the immanence of the transcendental method requires the dissolution of the phenomenological perspective invariably tied up with the viewpoint of subjective individuation (a viewpoint, Deleuze insists, whose derivative character as constituted *via* representational mediation it is the task of a transcendental-materialist critique to expose by uncovering the ontogenetic realm of disintegrated singularities and impersonal multiplicities underlying representation), then philosophical method as such ceases to be instrumentalisable through the agency of an *ex machina* philosophical subject manipulating it from without. The transcendental immanence of philosophical method requires that the method become subject of the real as a function of the machinic unconscious 'itself'. In other words, it is not the philosopher *qua*

subject who thinks the real; it is the real which singularises itself as an impersonal event of thought to which the philosopher is merely accessory. Thus, the full force of Deleuze & Guattari's hypercritical -and hence anti-representationalist- machinic constructivism becomes clear: in the materialist transvaluation of the transcendental, methodological immanence realizes itself through a limitless becoming-subject of the real in what Laruelle calls a 'techno-ontological' or 'hyletic' continuum: "*It is this victory of method, its universal reign as a techno-ontological continuum, its becoming a thinking thought and a nature, simultaneously subject and substance, that we think under the preliminary title of* [the] *transvaluation of the transcendental.*" (Laruelle, 1981, p.18-19.)

The deliberately Hegelian echoes in this Laruellean description of the 'becoming-subject of method' should not be misinterpreted. We are emphatically *not* proposing some dubious assimilation of Deleuze & Guattari's thought to that of Hegel. If we invoke this Laruellean formulation here, it is in order to point to an illuminating analogy between the Hegelian and Deleuzoguattarian critiques of representational subjectivism: in both instances, it is not the philosophical subject who represents the real, but the real that thinks itself by means of the philosophical subject. The crucial difference being this: for Hegel, matter is internally animated by mind, and

the becoming-subject of substance already encompassed within *Geist* as absolute self-sundering or self-relating negativity, so that the apex of philosophical illumination comes with the realization that Spirit includes its own distinction from nature within itself[84]. But for Deleuze & Guattari, mind is a transcendent abstraction from matter, and the categorial distinction between 'nature' and 'culture' collapsed within the neutral univocity of an all-encompassing mechanosphere, so that the highpoint of philosophical meditation necessitates an ateleogical or 'machinic' becoming-substance of the philosophical subject through the restitution of univocal being as plane of immanence.

However, in order for philosophical thought to accede to its genuinely impersonal or pre-subjective transcendental dimension, in conformity with the Deleuzean commitment to this rigorously univocal ontological immanence, both the representational cleavage between subject and object, and the phenomenological intentionality binding thought and thing, noesis and noema, must be disqualified as instances of equivocal transcendence. For Deleuze & Guattari, philosophy only attains an authentically transcendental

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84 "*The self-knowing Spirit knows not only itself but also the negative of itself, or its limit: to know one's limit is to know how to sacrifice oneself. This sacrifice is the externalisation in which Spirit displays the process of its becoming Spirit in the form of its free contingent happening, intuiting its pure Self as Time outside of it, and equally its Being as Space. This last becoming of Spirit, Nature, is its living immediate Becoming; Nature, the externalised Spirit, is in its existence nothing but this eternal externalisation of its continuing existence and the movement which reinstates the Subject.*"(Hegel, 1977, p.492).

stance when it becomes able to set aside the categorial constrictions of representation as well as the equivocal structure of phenomenological intentionality, transforming thinking as such into a means for mapping the unrepresentable (i.e. virtual) regions of the real. It is no longer a question of the philosophical concept adequately representing the real (i.e. materiality-in-itself or the unrepresentable); it is rather a question of the concept becoming a material segment of the real -material in the transcendental as opposed to empirical sense-; a segment which is fully commensurate and entirely coterminous with materiality as *intensively* rather than extensively defined.

The development of this transcendental continuity between 'thought' and 'matter' at the level of sub-representational immanence identified by Deleuze & Guattari, with the attendant characterisation of the real as an uninterrupted continuum of intensive materiality, a continuum within which philosophical thinking is itself inscribed, and whose 'smooth space' it is the philosopher's task to map *via* the suspension of representational transcendence, can be charted through the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*[85], right up to *What is Philosophy?*. Thus, in *Anti-Oedipus*, the auto-production of the real is characterised in terms of the passive syntheses of desiring-production (presumably by way of deliberate contrast to the active

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[85]Volume I: *Anti-Oedipus* , 1972; Volume II: *A Thousand Plateaus* . 1980.

syntheses of apperception in Kant): "*If desire produces, it produces the real. If desire is something that produces, this can only be production in reality and of reality...The real follows from it, it is the result of the passive syntheses of desire as auto-production of the unconscious.*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972, p.34) In *A Thousand Plateaus* this production of the real *via* the auto-assembling of the machinic unconscious has become a function of rhizomatic proliferation. Philosophical thought is a rhizome-thought: "*For both statements and desires the issue is never to reduce the unconscious or to interpret it or to make it signify according to the tree model. The issue is to produce the unconscious, and with it new statements, different desires: the rhizome is precisely this production of the unconscious.*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p.18) Finally, in *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze & Guattari explicitly equate their transcendental materialism with a radical form of pragmatic constructivism: a virtual chaos of material intensities (i.e. of impersonal individuations and pre-personal singularities) actualises itself in the philosophical concept as paraconsistent segment of the real, with the latter serving as immanent element of the concept (i.e. the plane of immanence or consistency upon which it is deployed): "*A concept is a set of inseparable variations that is produced or constructed on a plane of immanence insofar as the latter crosscuts the chaotic variability and gives it consistency (reality).*

A concept is therefore a chaoid state par excellence; it refers back to a chaos rendered consistent, become Thought, mental chaosmos." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.208)

The Hyletic Continuum

It is now possible to begin to make a little more sense of Laruelle's claim that Deleuze & Guattari's machinic materialism constitutes a form of 'absolute hyletic idealism'. If, for Deleuze & Guattari, intensive materiality becomes essentially auto-productive, self-constituting, self-synthesizing, then it is 'materiality' as passive synthesis of (auto-)production, Laruelle argues, that has the power to "*synthesize itself, to relate to itself by itself alone through an inclusive cut or difference.*" (Laruelle, 1981, p.78) This inclusive cut is epitomized by the Deleuzean characterisation of intensive materiality as *inclusive disjunction*[86] of difference in degree and difference in kind, qualitative and quantitative, intensity and extensity, virtual and actual, etc[87].

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[86]For Deleuze's account of intensive difference as 'inclusive disjunction' of virtual and actual, cf. Deleuze, 1994, p.239. Although the expression itself first appears in *Anti-Oedipus* (co-written with Guattari) and doesn't occur as such in Deleuze's earlier work, the concept of inclusive disjunction is clearly present throughout *Difference and Repetition*, specifically in the form of what Deleuze calls there an 'asymmetrical synthesis' or 'pathos of distance'.

[87]Crucially however, this Deleuzoguattarian methodology of machinic constructivism as abstract, intensive, self-synthesizing process of transcendental materialization, simultaneously cutting across subject and substance, remains for Laruelle a variant on a quasi-universal structural invariant governing the constellation of contemporary theoretical problematics clustered around the philosophical motif of Difference: "*We call infinite hyletic Flux, or hyletic Continuum, this process of the infinite synthesis and difference of opposites, the river into which all thinkings of Difference (including Heidegger, who reinscribes Difference in the Same) flow. This hyletic flux divides and produces itself, it carries out on itself cuts, divisions, an entire process of 'differing', by means of techniques which it produces and*

Moreover, Laruelle continues, in order to posit this co-incidence of matter (or 'the real') and of its philosophical logos (or 'the ideal') within the infinite hyletic continuum (or 'chaos') transected by the philosophical concept, a non-representational form of materialism must proceed (as we noted above) by transcendentally suspending the validity of all phenomenologically given or representationally mediated instances of empirical transcendence, insofar as these remain subsumed beneath analogical and categorial relations of negation and exclusion. In other words, the passive syntheses (connective; disjunctive; conjunctive) of desiring-production through which the machinic unconscious produces itself can be identified only on the basis of an initial methodological reduction isolating the sub-representational and pre-phenomenological domain of transcendental immanence. Thus, strange as it may sound, for Laruelle, Deleuze & Guattari's materialism operates on the basis of an *idealizing transcendental reduction* of the phenomenological and representational realms: "*One cannot raise the law of [hyletic] continuity to the level of principle, of an auto-productive instance enjoying absolute autonomy, of a transcendental, rather than empirico-legal, continuity, without reducing all external, exclusive or transcendent instances*

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which co-belong to it, and with which, as Same or instance of Repetition=Reproduction, it is coextensive. Here is where transcendental philosophy ends up with Nietzsche and Heidegger after the neo-Kantian interlude: with the constitution of a universal a priori which is at the same time or

of synthesis which are simply traced from the given: unity of the object, unity of experience under laws, unity of the understanding, of its categories and of the I think, unity of the ego, synthesis of the imagination, etc.(...)The procedures for constituting a pure hyletic flux as auto-constitutive or causa sui, are thus those of a transcendental reduction, but one which is classical, which is to say idealizing. It renders synthesis immanent to itself, relative to itself or absolute -and thus cancels the external, coded or reified forms of unity, reducing them to the state of continuous cuts." (Ibid, p.79)

Just what is meant by this last comment about the transcendental materialist reduction of all empirical instances to the status of 'continuous cuts' will become clearer in the penultimate section of this chapter[88]. For the time being however, it is necessary to focus on the very specific character of the idealizing transcendental reduction through which Deleuze & Guattari isolate this absolute hyletic continuum. In fact, the absolute transcendental sphere isolated through this materialist reduction is none other than that of the plane of immanence upon which the philosophical Concept is to be deployed.

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simultaneously the material, the technical means, [and] *the result of its becoming.*" (Laruelle, 1981, p.18).

The Plane of Immanence

The plane of immanence is what remains after all empirico-transcendent instances of synthesis have been suspended or reduced; yet at the same time it is 'prephilosophical'[89], or that which must be presupposed as 'always already' in effect in order for the creation of a philosophical Concept to take place: "*The concept is the beginning of philosophy, but the plane is its instituting.*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.41) Moreover, if Deleuze & Guattari compare the instituting of the plane of immanence to a form of "*groping experimentation*" involving "*dreams, pathological processes, esoteric experiences, drunkenness and excess*"[90], it is because a reduction which necessitates the simultaneous 'bracketing' or casting aside of the Self as subject of experience, of the Object as locus of cognition, and of the World as horizonal backdrop, will be more akin to a form of radical cognitive experimentation rather than to a rationally orchestrated program of methodical doubt; a form of cognitive experimentation aiming at the subversion of all fixed and stable epistemic guarantors, rather than an instance of epistemological investigation hoping to excavate an indubitable basis for knowledge. Only such experimentation is liable to succeed in instituting the

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[88]Cf. *infra*, pp.154-161.

[89] "*Prephilosophical does not mean something pre-existent but rather something that does not exist outside philosophy, although philosophy presupposes it.*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.41).

unenvisageable immanence of that prephilosophical plane concomitant with the essentially anomalous image[91] of philosophical thought.

Why describe this form of experimental reduction as 'idealising'? Clearly, if the instituting of the plane requires the bracketing of all instances of transcendent synthesis such as that of Self, World, and Object, then this reduction cannot be equated with the kind of methodological voluntarism characteristic of Husserlian reduction. The latter can be described as idealising precisely insofar as it seeks to reduce the World and the Object on the basis of the transcendental Self;- the self as empirical instance is bracketed but not the form of subjective individuation as such. Husserl maintains subjective individuation as that absolute and irreducible 'given' on the basis of which it becomes possible to isolate both the originary givenness of the World and of the Object. The thesis of the independent existence of objectively given entities is suspended in order to isolate the originary intentional syntheses through which those worldly objects come to be constituted as given in and through transcendental consciousness.

By way of contrast, what is 'idealising' about the Deleuzoguattarian reduction is that the plane is instituted not according to the form of absolute

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[90]Ibid., p.41.

[91]The genuinely philosophical image of thought is 'anomalous' or nomadic by way of contrast to those normative and sedentary images of thought regulated in conformity with the prejudices of good sense and common sense.

consciousness as 'self-giving'[92], but rather through the philosophical Concept as 'self-positing' or as a relative-absolute which pre-supposes the plane in and through its own self-supposing or self-positing[93]: "*Philosophy is at once concept creation and instituting of the plane[...]The plane is clearly not a program, design, end or means: it is a plane of immanence that constitutes the absolute ground of philosophy, its earth or deterritorialization, the foundation on which it creates its concepts. Both the creation of concepts and the instituting of the plane are required, like two wings or fins.*" (Ibid., p.41) Thus, the plane is instituted as limit or locus of absolute deterritorialization *through* the Concept that pre-supposes it; it is pre-supposed as that which institutes itself as absolute limit or ground for philosophy through its philosophical positing. The plane has to be philosophically constructed; yet it is also that which constructs itself through philosophy; it is at once 'always already there' or pre-supposed; and something that has to be laid out or constructed; which is to say, posed. In other words, the plane is pre-supposed only insofar as it 'will have been' posed; but posed only insofar has it 'will

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[92]On the phenomenological requirement that absolute transcendental consciousness be 'self-giving', which is to say, self-constituting, cf. *supra*, Chapter 2, pp. 66-70.

[93] "*The concept is defined by its consistency, its endoconsistency and exoconsistency, but it has no reference; it is self-referential; it posits itself and its object at the same time as it is created. Constructivism unites the relative and the absolute.*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.22).

have been' pre-supposed[94]: "[...]*even the 'prephilosophical' plane is only so called because it is laid out as presupposed and not because it pre-exists without being laid out.*" (Ibid.,p.78) As a result, the plane of immanence isolated through this transcendental suspension of categorial synthesis and representational transcendence is self-synthesising, self-constituting: relative only to itself, immanent only to itself. Moreover, if this plane of immanence is immanent only *to* itself[95] rather than to the Self, the World, or the Object, it is because it lays itself out through the self-positing of the philosophical Concept; thus, there is a sense in which it, just as much as the Concept, must also be said to be self-positing, self-constructing. And it is *via* forms of cognitive experimentation involving a total suspension of the apparatus of

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[94]One will recognize here the distinctive temporality of the future anterior as index of the transcendental: for Deleuze, the time of transcendental immanence is the Aionic time wherein the immemorial and the unheard of; the unrememberable past and the unanticipatable future, coincide virtually. The plane of immanence is Aionic or virtual as that which simultaneously occupies the 'already' and the 'not yet'. Interestingly enough, the process whereby immanence is simultaneously posited and pre-supposed in the philosophical Concept is remarkably reminiscent of the interplay between positing and pre-supposing reflection as articulated in Hegel's 'Logic of Essence': "*Reflection thus finds before it an immediate which it transcends and from which it is the return. But this return is only the presupposing of what reflection finds before it. What is thus found only comes to be through being left behind; its immediacy is sublated immediacy*"(Hegel, 1989, p.402). Cf. *op. cit.* , especially pp. 399-408. As we shall see, if immanence is conceived of as that whose pre-philosophical immediacy must be posited and pre-supposed in the Concept, then its immediacy as unconditional exteriority for thought becomes the result of its having been 'always already' sublated , or conceptually mediated, in accordance with a gesture of idealizing transcendence which is strikingly consonant with Hegel's absolute or 'objective' idealism.

[95]Cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp.44-49. We shall be highlighting the problematic character of Deleuze & Guattari's characterisation of immanence as 'immanence-*to*-itself' below. Cf. *supra*, pp. 136-142.

categorial representation, a systematic disordering of all the faculties[96], that the philosopher must seek out that point of indiscernibility between the unenvisageable 'prephilosophical' immanence which thought has always already pre-supposed, and the initiatory crystallization of the Concept through which that unenvisageable pre-supposition can be philosophically posed.

The hyletic reduction effected by Deleuze & Guattari is idealizing then because it reduces transcendence on the basis of an immanence which is irreducible precisely insofar as it is self-presupposing or *causa sui* [97]; a self-presupposing immanence that is fundamentally indissociable (because posited as presupposed and presupposed as posited) from the self-positing of the philosophical Concept. The hyletic reduction operates by isolating its pure transcendental residue in that point of indiscernibility between supposition and pre-supposition; Concept and plane of immanence. That point, that

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[96]For Deleuze's account of the manner in which a discordant use of the faculties engenders an anomalous or nomadic image of thought, shorn of the dogmatic prejudices of good sense and the restrictive concordances of common sense, cf. Deleuze, 1994, p.143.

[97]It is on account of this indiscernible coincidence of (or absolute hyletic continuity between) immanence as extrinsic ground for the Concept, and immanence as intrinsically pre-supposed in the Concept's self-positing, that the plane can function as an absolute, or self-constituting, hyletic residue. So it is with the plane of immanence or hyletic continuum as *causa sui* in mind that Laruelle writes: "*As far as given synthesis is concerned, there is always some, and always too much, but the task of absolute materialism, which must, by virtue of this very fact, remain a hyletics, an identity of matter and logos, is to render that synthesis productive, capable of itself or cause of itself. The principle of an intensive rather than extensive material continuity is isolated through a reduction which one could with some justification entitle phenomenologico-transcendental because it isolates the residue of a matter -as hyle- in the instance of an absolute phenomenon or absolute objective appearance, and it identifies Being with that phenomenon as a whole. Within an immanent realm of this sort, the phenomeno-logical and the materio-logical remain exactly coextensive.*" (Laruelle, 1981, p.79) The plane of immanence is the hyletic continuum as absolute phenomenon; abstract or intensive materiality

indiscernible residue, is nothing but the plane as synthesis of synthesis; inclusive disjunction of positing and pre-positing. And this indiscernibility ultimately coincides with that between the supposition of thought and its unthinkable pre-supposition; for the plane of immanence is also characterised as "*at the same time, that which must be thought and that which cannot be thought. It is the non-thought within thought [...] the most intimate within thought and yet the absolute outside [...] the not-external outside and the not-internal inside*" (Ibid., p.59). Consequently, the philosopher thinks on the basis of an unthinkable exteriority which lies at the heart of thought; an unenvisageable immanence upon which the anomalous image of philosophical thinking is deployed in the Concept.

We cannot fail to notice here a triadic structure echoing that which we saw at work in Henry's phenomenologised immediation of thinkable (ekstatic intentionality of the *videre*) and unthinkable (absolute immanence of the *videor*)[98]. The plane of immanence is an absolute transcendental residue of the reduction of transcendence, but a residue posed as a pre-supposition for philosophical thinking in and through the self-positing of the Concept; a residue that is nothing independently of the operation of experimental construction by which it is laid out in and through the Concept. Thus, the

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as point of indiscernibility between the phenomeno- and materio-logical realms. It is the full body of

unthinkable is at once absolute limit and ground of deterritorialization, which is to say, deterritorialized earth or body-without-organs; and pre-supposition which is internally posited as unthinkable exteriority *via* the self-positing of thought in the Concept. Here we re-encounter that complex triadic structure which we will come to recognize as definitive of philosophical Decision for Laruelle: on the one hand, immanence as absolute deterritorialization, unthinkable Outside; on the other, philosophical thinking as reciprocal presupposition or indiscernibility of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, outside and inside, presupposed plane and conceptual supposition. Or again: on the one hand, immanence as full body of the Earth, limit of absolute deterritorialization, is of course the inclusive disjunction of the 'not-internal' inside and the 'not-external' outside; of relative supposition and absolute pre-supposition. While on the other, philosophy as indiscernibility of position and presupposition, thought and unthought, inside and outside, functions as the relation of relation and non-relation. For Deleuze and Guattari, immanence can be affirmed as absolute exteriority only insofar as it is indissociable from its presupposition in the Concept. In other words, immanence functions as limit of deterritorialized exteriority, or as *Real*, for thought only insofar as it has been *ideally* presupposed in the position of the

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the Earth; the Deterritorialized; Being as inclusive disjunction.

Concept; an auto-position according to which the latter operates as point of indiscernibility between -which is to say explicit *mixture* or *hybrid* of- thinkable and unthinkable; territorialization and deterritorialization; supposition and presupposition; transcendence and immanence; relative and absolute; etc.

Thus, if Deleuze & Guattari's hyletic reduction is idealizing it is because it establishes an ideal, self-constructing or self-assembling immanence as that absolute transcendental residue wherein *physis* and *nous*, hyle and logos, coincide[99]. The plane of immanence is Being as abstract or intensive materiality; the smooth space of nomadic distribution upon which the Concept is deployed as the aleatory point of indiscernibility inclusively disjoining -rather than dialectically synthesizing- an impersonal philosophical subject and a pre-individual intensive substance. Consequently, the reduction through which the plane of immanence is laid out establishes the hyletic continuum as that absolute transcendental residue or irreducible *sub-jektum* on whose basis the coextensiveness of the phenomeno-logos and the materio-logos in the philosophical Concept can be initiated. Having secured this transcendental coextensiveness, Deleuze & Guattari can proceed to map out

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[98]Cf. *supra*, Chapter 2, pp.87-90.

[99] "*The plane of immanence has two facets as Thought and as Nature, as Nous and as Physis.*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.38).

the rhizomatic lineaments of nomadic distribution insofar as it now governs the smooth space of abstract hyletic continuity between 'phenomenon' and 'matter'.

Thus, the plane of immanence *transects* the hyletic continuum; it 'slices through the chaos' of intensive materiality[100]. As performed by Deleuze & Guattari, this methodological transection results in two fundamental features that we wish to focus on now. First, that of the constitutive *aparallelism* between smooth and striated, virtual and actual; the aparallelism between representational extensity and non-representational intensity circumscribed upon the plane of immanence and which can only be apprehended on the basis of reduction. Second, that of the process of nomadic distribution as operator of machinic conjunction through which the elements of the plane are distributed and the plane itself constructed.

Parallelism and Asymmetry

In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze recuses the early Heidegger's inscription of ontico-ontological difference as *Da-sein*, along with the concomitant privileging of 'being-in-the-world' as an integrated structural

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100 "*The plane of immanence is like a section of chaos and acts like a sieve.*" (Ibid., p.42).

whole and transcendent horizon of pre-ontological understanding[101]. He thereby jettisons both what he considers to be the residual phenomenological isomorphy or parallelism between transcendental and empirical, Being and beings, in the project of a 'fundamental' ontology; and the ontologically equivocal subordination of the 'regional' to the 'fundamental'. For Deleuze, once the categorial filters of representational mediation have been transcendentally suspended, the ontic realm ceases to consist either of fixed, stable, self-identical entities amenable to representation, or phenomenologically apprehensible series of shifting perspectival adumbrations (*Abschattungen; esquisses*) encompassed within a unified eidetic horizon; there are only self-dissimilar, unrecognisable, unidentifiable dispersions of simulacra, shorn of all resemblance, whether it be to an originary model or another copy; differences which are neither different relative to another identity nor identical to themselves since they remain differences of differences of differences..., "*demonic images, stripped of resemblance*", images that have "*externalised resemblance and live on difference instead.*"[102]

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[101] "*The same attitude of refusing objective presuppositions, but on condition of assuming just as many subjective presuppositions (which are perhaps the same ones in another form), appears when Heidegger invokes a pre-ontological understanding of Being.*" (Deleuze, 1994, p.129)

[102]Deleuze, 1994, p.128.

Conversely, for Deleuze, intensive difference, the Being of simulacra, is not 'a' difference but the sheer *differing* of differences; the Disparate or Unequal-in-itself[103]. The latter surges forth as that by virtue of which a difference is 'made' or produced[104] and simulacra given in their differing, says Deleuze, through an act of transcendental determination whereby a part of the virtual actualises itself. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze distinguishes a complex triad of interrelated terms here: the realm of problematic singularities or Ideas whose intensive *differentiation* renders the virtual entirely determinate; a dimension of *differenciation* in extensity which is actually determinable; finally, '*different/ciation*' as the determination of the determinable by the determinate through the chiasmatic explication of virtual intensities in actual extensity, and envelopment of extensive actuality by intensive virtuality. Thus, transcendental determination occurs *via* the simultaneous explication of the intensive in extensity and envelopment of the extensive by intensity. The catalyst for this reciprocal envelopment/explication of virtual and actual is the circumscription of a circuit of problematic virtualities in an intensive *spatium* as field of individuation. It this *spatium* as individuating threshold which functions as

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[103]Cf. Deleuze, ibid., pp. 222-223.

[104] "*We must therefore say that difference is made, or makes itself, as in the expression 'make the difference'* [*faire la difference*]." (Deleuze, ibid., p.28).

the intensive determinant precipitating the process through which a part of the virtual actualises itself[105]. Consequently, although virtual differen*t*iation determines actual differen*c*iation, it is the process of intensive individuation as *different/ciating* integration of problematic disparity (i.e. as extensive integration of the Unequal-in-itself) which functions as the sufficient reason for the actualisation of the virtual[106]: "*Individuation is the act by which intensity determines differential relations to become actualised, along the lines of differenciation and within the qualities and extensities it creates. The total notion is therefore that of: indi-different*/c*iation*" (Deleuze, 1994, p.246).

It is important to note then that, according to Deleuze, intensive individuation functions as the 'sufficient reason'[107] for the process of actualisation precisely insofar as it is conceived in terms of this complex integration or chiasmic interpenetration of virtual intensity and actual extensity. Thus, Deleuze's conception of transcendental ontogenesis as process of 'indi-different/ciation' is explicitly composite or hybrid in character. Moreover, the site of ontological 'indi-different/ciation' as chiasmic locus for the interpenetration or envelopment of the virtual in the

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[105] "*Intensity is the determinant in the process of actualisation.*" (Deleuze, 1994, p.245).

[106]For all the above cf. Deleuze, 1994, especially pp. 244-256.

actual and of the actual by the virtual is the plane of immanence. The latter is the transcendental element of their chiasmic indiscernibility, of their perpetually circuitous exchange: "*The plane of immanence at once comprises the virtual and its actualisation, without there being an assignable limit between the two. The actual is the complement or the product, the object of the actualisation, but the latter has only the virtual as its subject. Actualisation belongs to the virtual. The actualisation of the virtual is singularity, whereas the actual itself is the constituted individuality. The actual drops out of the plane like fruit, whereas actualisation relates it back to the plane as to that which makes the object subject once again.*" (Deleuze, 1986, pp.180-181). Consequently, every actualisation of a present communicates *via* a 'wide' circuit of exchange with the virtual as heterogenetic totality or Aionic coincidence of an unrepresentable past and an unanticipatable future. At the same time, however, Deleuze also distinguishes the process of intensive individuation in terms of a 'narrow' circuit of exchange binding the actual image of the object and its virtual counterpart as "*unequal, odd halves*"[108]. This is a circuit according to which individuation occurs as the process of temporalising crystallization through the actual or

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[107] "*The reason of the sensible, the condition of that which appears, is not space and time but the Unequal in itself, disparateness as it is determined and comprised in difference of intensity, in intensity as difference.*" (Ibid., p.222-223).

[108] Ibid., pp.209-210.

present object's integration of that virtual half of itself which subsists in the absolute past. Accordingly, it is through the actual present's integration of its own unrepresentable virtual image that individuation occurs as that processual crystallization through which the *passing* of the present can take place: "*This perpetual exchange of virtual and actual defines a crystal. It is upon the plane of immanence that crystals appear. Actual and virtual co-exist, and enter into a narrow circuit which brings us back continuously from one to the other[...]The two aspects of time, the actual image of the passing present, and the virtual image of the past conserving itself, distinguish themselves in actualisation even while having an unsinkable limit, but exchange themselves in crystallisation, to the point of becoming indiscernible, each borrowing the role of the other.*" (Deleuze, 1986, p.185).

Thus, according to Deleuze's account of the relation between virtual and actual, the plane of immanence designates at once (as we saw above[109]) the site for that point of indiscernibility or indistinction between virtual (past) and actual (present) in the local circuit of crystallization or individuation; but also that of their unassignable limit, which is the unilateral or asymmetrical distinction between virtual and actual in the large circuit wherein the virtual's self-actualisation is the result of an individuating integration of problematic

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[109]Cf. *supra,* pp.120-124.

differen*t*iation. As a result, individuation as sufficient reason for the virtual's self-actualisation inscribes a circuitous loop; a relative asymmetrical parallelism between virtual intensity and actual extensity; a reciprocal co-implication whereby every actual differen*c*iation of the virtual immediately implies a co-responding virtual differen*t*iation of the actual. Crystallization as intensive individuation requires the initiation of a positive feedback loop from virtual to actual and back to virtual again, according to an ultimately autocatalytic process of ontological genesis. In this process, the plane of immanence describes an instantaneously reversible oscillation; inclining itself for that 'transdescendence'[110] whereby the actual drops out from the processual boughs of intensive 'different/ciation' as individuated fruit in the wide circuit of actualisation, only to immediately reverse the direction of its inclination in order to allow for that 'transascendence' through which individuated actuality feeds back into the realm of virtual problematicity in the narrow circuit of crystallization *via* the intensive 'in-different/ciation' which is continuously generating new virtualities for actualisation.

As a result, the non-resemblance or heteromorphy between virtual and actual posited by Deleuze, would seem to be grounded in an ultimately *reversible* asymmetry. Bi-lateral reciprocity, and with it the immediately

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[110]Cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.45. The distinction between 'transascendence' and

circular reversibility between conditioned and condition denounced by Deleuze[111], has been abolished. But Deleuze's reconfiguration of the problematic of transcendental genesis in terms of the ontogenetic production of that which is given as actual through the process of its ontological 'in-different/ciation', obliges him to posit the indissoluble co-belonging or co-incidence of virtual production and actual product; the complex or differentiated unity of intensive individuation and individuated extensity. Deleuze has maximized the non-resemblance between conditioned and condition by way of the unilateral disjunction between virtual production and actual product, but he has not managed to sever a more deeply rooted parallelism between them; a parallelism of which the autocatalytic circuit 'virtual-actual-virtual' is the most explicit indicator.

Thus, Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, his insistence on 'starting in the middle', with the weed rather than the root, in accordance with a rhizome-thought[112]which engenders the plane of immanence as site for the 'in-between' or inclusive disjunction of virtual and actual, production and product, substitutes an asymmetrical parallelism for the symmetrical

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'transdescendence' comes from the work of Jean Wahl.

[111]Cf. *supra*, p.104.

[112] "*A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, intermezzo[...] The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed. Between things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other*

parallelism with which Kantian and Husserlian transcendentalism contented themselves. However, far from being the result of some lapse or inconsistency in Deleuze's ontogenetic approach, this parallelism is in fact the latent premise rendering that approach possible precisely insofar as it continues to conceive of the separation of transcendental and empirical, condition and conditioned, in terms of an essentially differential disjunction; a 'between'. Like Heidegger before him[113], Deleuze affirms non-representational difference as 'the between', rather than binding it to the distinction between hypostatised terms. Nevertheless, the articulation of that 'between' in philosophical thought remains structurally supervenient on an empirically given term. And the empirically available term which rhizomatic thinking relies upon as its point of leverage must invariably also be, by Deleuze's own light, the transcendent product, the residue, of a process of transcendental production. Thus, it is because of the constitutive ontogenetic fissure between its two 'odd, unequal halves' -its virtual image and its actual image- that the actualised, individuated fruit can serve as the explicitly composite or hybrid crystal around which the plane of immanence as disjunctive interface between intensive virtuality and extensive actuality can be constructed. It is the object as fissure, as 'in-between', that relays the

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away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle."

narrow circuit of indiscernibility between virtual and actual in individuation, *and* the wide circuit of unilateral distinction between them in actualisation, thereby providing the complex chiasmatic locus, the empirico-transcendental intersection on the basis of which the branchings of intensive in-different/ciation can be pre-supposed in the philosophical Concept.

Accordingly, where phenomenology maintains the isomorphic symmetry between the two branches of the empirico-transcendental doublet, Deleuze prizes the forks of the coupling as far apart as is conceivable the better to affirm their non-symmetrical heteromorphy; their inclusive disjunction. But however valiantly he twists and distorts the tines, however ingeniously he coils them around one another so that intensive virtuality and extensive actuality become wrapped together in a distended double-helix of reciprocal presupposition, he cannot shatter the parallelism once and for all. And that helical spiral through which intensity envelops extensity whilst extensity explicates intensity is delineated by those 'infinite movements'[114] *via* which the plane of immanence effects the instantaneous oscillation between the self-actualisation of the virtual and the re-virtualisation of the actual.

(Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p.25).

[113]Cf. Heidegger, 1969.

[114] "*The plane envelops infinite movements that pass back and forth through it[...]*"(Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.36). Cf. ibid, pp.35-60.

Nowhere does this instantaneous interchange, and a *fortiori*, the constitutively hybrid or composite nature of the plane as virtual/actual interface, become more explicit than in Deleuze & Guattari's account of the relation between smooth and striated space in *A Thousand Plateaus*. There they write that "*we must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, tranversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space[...]But the de facto mixes do not preclude a de jure, or abstract, distinction between the two spaces. That there is such a distinction is what accounts for the fact that the spaces do not communicate with each other in the same way: it is the de jure distinction that determines the forms assumed by a given de facto mix and the direction or meaning of the mix[...]*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p.475)

Here, the *de jure* asymmetry, the non-reciprocity between smooth and striated, is invoked in order to account for the *de facto* reversibility concomitant with their empirical mixture;- i.e. the way in which a smooth nomadic space becomes striated and 'sedentarised'; or the process of striation itself reimparts a smooth space. Since Deleuze & Guattari would vigorously

deny the accusation that they are simply *tracing*[115] or abstracting the *de jure* distinction from the *de facto* mixtures, presumably on the grounds that such a procedure would render the distinction into a transcendent, gratuitously reified ideality, we can only conclude that the empirical mixtures of smooth and striated, their *de facto* reversibility, are already included *a priori* in the *de jure* asymmetry as such. Which is to say that the former remains indissociable from the latter as a matter of principle; and these *de facto* striations of smooth space and smoothings of striated space, are necessarily inextricable from their *de jure* separation; their *a priori* asymmetry. In other words, the unilateral asymmetry or disjunction between sedentary striation and smooth nomadism; like that between extensity and intensity; molar and molecular; or actual and virtual; is subordinated to an overarching reversibility that encompasses both terms of the disjunction and guarantees their reciprocal communication at a level that is always *transcendent* to the terms themselves. And it is this transcendence, this distance of survey or overview, which guarantees the reversibility, the unitary encompassing of symmetrical striation and asymmetrical smoothing; whilst also rendering the subtle form of empirico-transcendental parallelism perpetuated by Deleuze & Guattari possible.

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[115]For the distinction between representational *tracing* and rhizomatic *mapping*, cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, pp.12-13.

Moreover, it is the transcendence implied by this distance of survey or overview, the transcendence implied in this remove of unobjectifiable exteriority whereby virtual and actual, intensity and extensity, smooth and striated, are subject to unitary encompassment, which is responsible for reinjecting a subtler, more rarefied form of transcendence into the immanence which Deleuze & Guattari lay claim to. While the plane of immanence remains devoid of all *reifiable* instances of transcendence such as those subsumed under the generic rubrics of Self, World, and God, it nevertheless presupposes an unreifiable or unobjectifiable form of transcendence in the shape of a latent distance of transcendental *objectivation*[116]; a residual impersonal intentionality indexed by its definition as 'immanence *to* itself'. For this 'to' is not as innocent as it seems; it is symptomatic of the procedure by which Deleuze & Guattari are obliged to synthesize construction and intuition[117]; the positing and the pre-supposing of the plane; in and through the agency of the philosophical Concept in a manner that reinscribes unobjectifiable immanence within an equally unobjectifiable

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[116]Not to be confused with empirical objectification (i.e. reification; hypostatisation).

[117] "*But there is no reason to oppose knowledge through concepts and the construction of concepts within possible experience on the one hand and through intuition on the other. For according to the Nietzschean verdict, you will know nothing through concepts unless you have first created them- that is, constructed them in an intuition specific to them: a field, a plane, and a ground that must not be confused with them but that shelters their seeds and the personae who cultivate them. Constructivism requires every creation to be a construction on a plane that gives it an autonomous existence.*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.7).

but nevertheless 'objectivating' transcendence[118]. This is a distance of objectivation as independent of the reified form of the Subject as it is irreducible to the figure of the World as horizon of intentional ekstasis. It is the unobjectifiable distance implied in the philosophical Decision through which immanence is *posited* as immanent in a gesture of thought. The simultaneous positing and pre-supposing of the plane through the Concept re-envelops immanence in the pure and empty form of transcendence as delineated by the 'infinite movement' through which the plane achieves its immanence-to-itself. Thus, the 'to' indexes the plane's infinite movement of folding as described in the instantaneously reversible oscillation between actualisation and virtualisation. Without that movement, without that infinite folding, immanence is no longer immanence to itself, for as Deleuze & Guattari insist "*Transcendence enters as soon as the movement of the infinite is stopped*" (1994, p.47).

Accordingly, it is through this instantaneous oscillation that immanence is effectively folded back upon itself in a movement that simultaneously envelops and is enveloped in the infinite speed of that finite

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[118]For the crucial distinction between unobjectifiable immanence and unobjectifiable transcendence; and the importance of disentangling the former *qua* index of the Real-in-itself, from the latter *qua* principle of an Ideal ontological objectivation (or phenomenologisation), cf. *supra*, Chapter 2, especially pp.78-80 and 90-96.

movement according to which the Concept achieves its own self-survey[119]. For although the Concept surveys its components without transcendence or distance, the infinite speed of survey which renders it immediately co-present to all its components "*requires a milieu that moves infinitely in itself -the plane, the void, the horizon*" (Ibid., p.36). As a result it remains ultimately inextricable from the infinite oscillatory movement, the 'fractalisation', through which the plane both folds itself and enfolds thought in the Concept: "*It is this fractal nature that makes the planomenon an infinite that is always different from any surface or volume determinable as a concept. Every movement passes through the whole of the plane by immediately turning back on and folding itself and also by folding other movements or allowing itself to be folded by them, giving rise to retroactions, connections, and proliferations in the fractalisation of this infinitely folded up infinity (variable curvature of the plane)*" (Ibid., p.39). Thus, if the plane indexes the Earth, the Deterritorialized, the Outside, as an "*infinitely folded up infinity*", then the singular surface of the Concept on the plane marks the folding of finite and infinite movement; the former's envelopment by the latter and the latter's explication by the former. As juncture for the finite folding of the infinite and infinite folding of the finite, the fold of the Concept is both constitutive *of* and

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119"*The concept is in a state of survey [survol] in relation to its components, endlessly traversing them*

comprised *in* the plane's fractal curvature; in other words, it simultaneously posits and pre-supposes it; constructs it and expresses it. And it is precisely insofar as it constitutes a fold that is also an enfolding *of* the plane, that the pre-supposing of the plane *via* the self-surveying Concept recomposes part of that objectivating (but unobjectifiable) transcendence through which immanence is infinitely folded back upon itself in this self-folding, fractalising curvature.

It is the 'to' in the formula 'immanence *to* itself' that expresses this unreifiable distance of objectivation, this movement of unobjectifiable transcendence through which the plane successfully purges itself of all reified transcendence in its infinitely self-folding fractalisation. Thus, in his 'Reply to Deleuze'[120], Laruelle argues that as far as the invocation of immanence is concerned "*The injunction to itself rather than to something else is certainly imperative, but it conceals an indetermination, an ultimate ambiguity. An amphiboly resides within the 'to' of 'to itself', one which reintroduces the pure form of transcendence itself as distance or relation, as surface or universal plane, in the absence of reified instances of transcendence. The philosophically normal but theoretically amphibological concept of a plane of immanence signifies that the latter still orbits around the plane and as plane;*

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according to an order without distance. It is immediately co-present to all its components or variations,

still orbits around the to (to itself) as axis of transcendence. Immanence thereby remains objective even if it is without an object, it remains an appearance of objectivity and gives rise to a new image of the Real and of thought. Instead of being absolutely faceless, unenvisageable, it takes on the facial aspect of a plane, of a topology, of survey and contemplation." (Laruelle, 1995b, pp. 63-65)

This objectivation of immanence is, according to Laruelle, intrinsic to the structure of the philosophical Decision through which Deleuze & Guattari, like Henry before them, unwittingly *posit* immanence as self-giving according to a subtly idealizing gesture of objectivation; instead of accepting it as *already given* or as *given-without-givenness*; as rigorously unenvisageable and necessarily foreclosed to all conceptual position and pre-supposition. Decision posits unobjectifiable immanence in a gesture of objectivating transcendence. To decide *in favour of* unobjectifiable immanence as Henry does, or as Deleuze & Guattari do (albeit in very different philosophical registers), is to effect its transcendent ontological objectivation. And in the context of Deleuze & Guattari's materialist Decision to equate the plane of immanence with intensive materiality, the result is yet another materiological idealization of matter itself. Thus, in seeking to affirm 'matter' as

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at no distance from them, passing back and forth through them[...] " (Ibid., p.20-21).

unobjectifiable immanence, both Henry and Deleuze & Guattari end up affirming a Decisional hybrid of matter 'itself' and matter 'as such'; a Decisional composite of the materially real *qua* unobjectifiable immanence and of the ontologically ideal *qua* unobjectifiable transcendence.

By way of contrast, that on the basis of which we shall be attempting to release the identity of matter 'itself' from its materiological intrication with matter 'as such' is an immanence that is not only unobjectifiable but foreclosed to all Decision, even to the Decision in favour of the unobjectifiable;- a non-Decisional immanence that is not so much undecidable as radically indifferent to the Decisional alternative between decidable and undecidable; just as it remains foreclosed to the alternative between thinkable and unthinkable[121]. However, we shall have to wait until Chapter 5 to see in what way the discovery that this immanence is already given necessitates reconfiguring the apparatus of materialist theory in order to invent a thinking that operates *according to* 'matter's' immanent foreclosure to Decision.

That immanence is amenable to a process of production, that it needs to be constructed, is the inescapable correlate of the Decision through which

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[120]Written as a critical rejoinder to Deleuze & Guattari's *What is Philosophy?* Cf. Laruelle, 1995b.

[121]Rather than constituting the enstatic immediation of thinkable and unthinkable, as in the case of Henry. Cf. *supra*, Chapter 2, pp.87-90.

Deleuze & Guattari re-envelop the unobjectifiable immanence of matter 'itself' in the unobjectifiable transcendence of matter 'as such'. Since that process of machinic construction operates under the auspices of nomadic distribution, it is to an examination of the latter that we now turn in order to grasp the ultimate philosophical consequences of Deleuze & Guattari's objectivation of immanence.

Nomadic Distribution

Without oversimplifying the complexity of their thought too drastically, it's possible to discern two fundamental chains of terminological equivalences running through Deleuze & Guattari's work. On the one hand, we have 'fuzzy sets' of distributed nomadic elements, what Deleuze & Guattari refer to as 'zones of continuous variation': assemblage; rhizome; plateau; Concept. On the other, we have a surface of nomadic distribution, or what Deleuze & Guattari call a transcendental field of machinic consistency: the body-without-organs or plane of immanence. Yet both of these would seem to be supervenient on a *distributing principle* as that which coordinates the distribution of the distributed. This principle of nomadic distribution is the syntactical operator of machinic synthesis. Deleuze & Guattari refer to it at various times as 'conjunctive synthesis'; 'aparallel evolution'; 'double becoming'; 'abstract line'; 'nomos'. These are all names for the process of

machinic heterogenesis through which intensive multiplicities are assembled. And whereas the extensive manifold remains representational and thus quantifiable or denumerable, the characteristic feature of intensive multiplicities according to Deleuze & Guattari is their non-denumerability. Non-denumerable multiplicities are indexes of intensity as 'the Disparate'; 'the Unequal in-itself': the multiple ceases being attributable to any transcendent molar unity when it becomes autonomously substantive as a rhizome, a flat multiplicity of n-1 dimensions in perpetual heterogenesis produced through the power of continuous variation proper to 'and' as operator of conjunctive synthesis: "*What characterises the non-denumerable is neither the set nor its elements; rather, it is the connection, the 'and' produced between elements, between sets, and which belongs to neither, which eludes them or constitutes a line of flight*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p.470).

Being as heterogenetic production, as rhizomatic becoming, is nothing but this process of differential coordination through which the non-denumerable is conjugated. '(A)nd' is the distributive tensor capable of effecting machinic assemblage and of releasing pure, virtual continuums of intensive variation. Instead of delineating the actual determinations of constant relations between variables, or tracing variable relations between

discrete, punctual constants, the abstract line[122] of rhizomatic becoming conjugates heterogeneous variables by initiating a flux of continuous variation. So whereas systems of structural arborescence distribute variable relations between constants and constant relations between variables, in accordance with a fixed, sedentary coordination of identity and difference, continuous variation substitutes infinite differences of differences for finite constant difference and replaces a variability in extensity which remains subordinated to the power of the constant with an ungovernable, intensive differentiation which abolishes the constant, exceeds the sedentary distribution of identity and difference, and transforms the structural tree into a rhizome: "*In this sense 'and' is less a conjunction than the atypical expression of all the possible conjunctions it places in continuous variation. The tensor therefore is not reducible either to a constant or a variable but assures the variation of the variable by subtracting in each instance the value of the constant (n-1)*" (Ibid., p.99). In other words, every machinic conjunction of the form: 'a *and* b *and* c...etc.' simultaneously expresses an infinite disjunction: '*neither* a *nor* b *nor* c...etc.' because it is continuously subtracting the value of the constant, so that the function through which the series 'a+b+c+...*n*' is constructed becomes 'n-a+(n-a+n-b)+(n-a+n-b+n-

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122 "*There are no points or positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root.*

c)+...etc'. By establishing this perpetual disjunction across a series of elements that are continuously varying according to the constancy of the function 'n-1', the 'and' as tensor of machinic synthesis simultaneously effects their infinite exclusive conjunction.

Accordingly, a continuum of intensive variation is a rhizome line passing between two determinate points and constituting a block of becoming that is neither a relation of identification, analogy, or similitude; nor the reciprocal exchange of individual characteristics, but rather an event that is entirely distinct from, and irreducible to, the relation in extensity of the two terms between which it passes. Through this process of machinic heterogenesis or double-becoming, say Deleuze & Guattari, the reciprocal deterritorialization of separate terms creates an autonomous zone of virtual indiscernibility or continuous variation: the becoming-A of B and becoming-B of A does not result in another term C which would be a synthesis of A and B, but in an event of molecular transmutation, a non-localizable conjunction which sweeps away the fixed identity of both terms and carries each into micrological proximity to the other; a nomadic zone of intensive continuity wherein the border proximity AB remains distinct from, and irreducible to, either the contiguity or the distance between A and B.

There are only lines." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p.8).

Nomadic multiplicities 'are' insofar as they are in perpetual heterogenesis through intensive variation. Thus, for Deleuze & Guattari, the notions of 'becoming' and of 'multiplicity' remain strictly inextricable if not indistinguishable from one another. '(A)nd', the tensor of nomadic distribution, expresses being *as* becoming precisely insofar as it is the operator of machinic construction, of rhizomatic conjugation, through which multiplicity bypasses the opposition of the One and the Multiple to become instead an autonomous ontological substantive;- but a substantive which subsists in a state of perpetual heterogenetic transformation: "*A multiplicity is defined not by its elements, nor by a center of unification and comprehension. It is defined by the number of dimensions it has; it is not divisible, it cannot lose or gain a dimension without changing in nature. Since its variations and dimensions are immanent to it, it amounts to the same thing to say that each multiplicity is already composed of heterogeneous terms in symbiosis, and that a multiplicity is continually transforming itself into a string of other multiplicities, according to its thresholds and doors"* (Ibid., p.249).

Moreover, it is also becoming as event that releases the hyletic continuum of intensive matter, the machinic phylum composed of impersonal individuations and pre-personal singularities: "*The machinic phylum is materiality, natural or artificial, and both simultaneously; it is matter in*

movement, in flux, in variation, matter as a conveyor of singularities(...)" (Ibid., p.409).Thus, the machinic phylum is materiality defined as perpetual flux, continuous variation, infinite becoming, nomadic distribution, etc. For if becoming constitutes multiplicity as an ontological substantive, conjugated in accordance with the 'and' as tensor of continuous variation, then the latter, as operator of machinic synthesis, is ultimately synonymous with 'materiality' as intensively defined. Consequently, for Deleuze & Guattari, 'and' is as much one of the proper names for abstract materiality as are 'the Earth', or 'anorganic Life', or 'the Deterritorialized'. This is important because it reveals how Deleuze & Guattari have ontologised matter, rendering it coextensive with the philosophical Concept, in and through the same procedure of transcendental reduction by means of which they sought to purge of it all representational mediation.

Once again, we glimpse here the materiological amphiboly underlying Deleuze & Guattari's transcendentalisation of intensive materiality. Let us recall that materiological thinking, according to our characterisation of it, confuses the transcendental separation between matter 'as such' and matter 'itself', with an ontological disjunction between matter as representational phenomenon -i.e. extensity- and materiality as non-representational residue, or transcendental production -i.e. intensity; the Disparate; the Unequal-in-

itself. That is to say: materiology envelops the unobjectifiable immanence of the transcendental separation between the *tel quel* and the *comme tel* in the unobjectifiable transcendence of the ontological disjunction between the intensive and the extensive. In Deleuze & Guattari's case, that amphiboly is initiated through the very gesture whereby hyletic reduction engenders an instantaneously reversible asymmetry between the phenomeno-logos of representational extensity and the materio-logos of machinic intensity on the plane of immanence.

It is this reversibility that makes of *What is Philosophy?* at once a materialist noology and a noological materialism. Where the categorial filters of representation inaugurated a mediatory transcendence *vis a vis* the chaos of intensive matter, the Concept 'counter-effectuates' that chaos through the process of its own immanent auto-construction. Because the Concept is infra-representational, it is no longer immanent *to* matter (i.e. to the Real); it is immanently self-assembling in and through materiality (the Real) as such (positing and pre-supposing the plane of immanence). Thinking no longer represents the multiple; it constructs it. It ceases being cogitative, legislative, or reflexive, in order to participate in the self-effectuation of the Real *qua* intensive materiality. For Deleuze & Guattari, philosophical thinking consists not so much in forging concepts capable of 'apprehending' pre-individual

singularities and asubjective individuations, but of engendering the impersonal singularisation of thought by counter-effectuating an intensive chaos in the Concept, thereby creating Concepts that are themselves chaoids, haecceities, plateaus; "*self-vibrating regions of intensity whose development avoids any orientation toward a culminating point or external end*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.22). Every Concept is composed of virtual singularities and conjugates lines of continuous variation according to their intrinsic compatibility, thereby rendering their grouping consistent and bringing about an intensive stabilization of the power (*puissance*) of thought. Concepts are rhizomes: smooth, singular continuums of nomadic distribution; plateaus of molecular becoming. They represent nothing, denote nothing, signify nothing. They are self-assembling, self-referential; positing themselves and their 'objects' at the same time as they are created. They are virtual events: real without being actual; ideal without being abstract; incorporeal without being immaterial[123].

Yet given that Deleuze & Guattari insist that the plane of immanence is neither a Concept of concepts, nor a fundamental ground or principle of any sort, what then is the precise nature of the relation between Concept and plane? Concepts are events, but the plane is the 'absolute horizon for all

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[123]On all these points cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1996, pp.15-34.

events';- they inhabit and compose it without dividing or interrupting its indivisible continuity. Concepts are absolute, self-contained surfaces or volumes composed through finite movements executed at infinite speed; whereas the plane is the boundless interweaving and reciprocal enfolding of the many different finite movements or becomings making up its endlessly variegated, differential texture, its fractal composition or 'variable curvature'[124]. Yet the plane itself is always singular, indivisible, 'pure variation'. It is the 'absolute horizon' that makes "*the event as concept independent of a visible state of affairs in which it is brought about*"[125]; the Rhizosphere of infinite machinic consistency with which every finite becoming intersects in its rhizomatic consistency. Thus, the plane constitutes the *Eventum Tantum*; the infinite Event enfolding but never encompassing all others. It is the Deterritorialized; the event of the Earth's infinite becoming. This infinite movement necessarily intersects with all finite movements, so that the plane's infinite enfolding, its fractal curvature, is constituted through the absolute but finite surfaces or volumes which compose it.

As a result, if 'and' is indeed one among the many names which Deleuze & Guattari use to describe abstract matter, then it not only functions as the tensor of nomadic distribution whereby the rhizome conjugates lines of

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[124] Cf. *supra*, pp.137-139; and Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p.39.

continuous variations; it is also an index of the disjunctive synthesis through which virtual intensity and actual extensity are inclusively disjoined on the plane of immanence. Consequently, if the plane of immanence is neither one nor many, it is because the folding of the infinite - 'the' plane- repeats itself in every finite fold - 'this' or 'that' plane. 'Each' plane is 'the' plane. For the 'and' as distributive tensor entails that "*Every plane of immanence is a One-All: it is not partial like a scientific system, or fragmentary like concepts, but distributive -it is an 'each'*"(Ibid., p.50). Thus, the plane's infinite folding is simultaneously the generating tensor of the conjunctive synthesis which produces intensive becoming; *and* the singular event or continuum, the finite fold generated by that tensor, that folding, so that the former is continuously repeating and recombining itself as its own higher form by means of the latter. The hyletic continuum of impersonal individuations and pre-individual singularities constitutes itself through the machinic syntax of continuum/cut (*continuum/coupure*) -disjunctive synthesis- by in-different/ciating an immanence which is always already different/ciated; an immanence which is always a composite of virtual intensity and actual extensity; so that this infinite continuum repeats itself in every finite cut as the absolute differing of the Disparate or Unequal-in-itself. But because the cut, the moment of

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[125]Deleuze & Guattari, ibid., p.36.

differing, is a *means* for this repetition, one passes in a continuous fashion from a singular continuum or cut ('an' abstract machine; 'a' plane of immanence) to its absolute or Ideal form in the 'and' as ontogenetic tensor of nomadic distribution ('the' plane; 'the' hyletic continuum as One-All or Rhizosphere). Consequently, the 'and' is at once the machinic phylum as *Eventum Tantum*, producing events, becomings, lines of continuous variation, etc.; but also an event, a becoming, a variation which is produced; thereby immediately re-producing itself through its product but always as its own Ideal, meta-immanent form. The 'and' raises itself to its *nth* power as principle of its own Ideal repetition; it marks the indiscernible co-incidence of *the* hyletic continuum as One-All and of *a* continuum of continuous variation as haecceity. Accordingly, if the univocal immanence of intensive matter bypasses the opposition between the One and the Multiple, it is precisely because the plane is folded over itself:- infinitely self-folding; infinitely self-objectivating; *causa sui*. It is immanent *to* itself because it is its own meta-immanent, Ideal form.

What makes it Ideal is the fact that the 'and' as syntactical operator of continuous variation is always reconstituting itself as transcendental on the basis of a syntagmatic instance which is ultimately identified with its syntactical condition; a conditioned endowed by Deleuze & Guattari with the

power of transcending itself, not only *toward* but also *as* its own condition, thereby co-constituting the latter. Moreover, this ultimately transcendent continuity between becoming as infinite continuum and becoming as finite cut, between Rhizosphere and rhizome, is established on the basis of the plane's hybrid -i.e. empirico-transcendental- composition, and in accordance with that parallelism, that reversible asymmetry between actual extensity and virtual intensity, which we diagnosed earlier. The plane of immanence remains Ideal because it operates according to a logic of absolute self-relation: immanence is no longer attributive as immanence 'to' a transcendent universal, but only at the cost of becoming this self-positing, self-presupposing hybrid of the transcendental and the transcendent -which is to say, of unobjectifiable immanence and unobjectifiable transcendence- , so that every continuous multiplicity, every molecular becoming is simultaneously virtual and actual, molecular and molar, smooth and striated, dividing itself interminably between these two states, passing from one to the other in a continuous circuit. As a result, Deleuze & Guattari's infinite hyletic continuum is perpetually obliged to re-affirm itself as transcendental, as unobjectifiably immanent, by means of its own Ideal repetition, its own unobjectifiable transcendence. It is *causa sui*: Ideal and self-positing[126].

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[126]It is this capacity for absolute 'auto-position' which, as Laruelle himself puts it in *Prinçipe de*

Hyletic Idealism

Now at last, as well as beginning to appreciate the full import of Laruelle's characterisation of Deleuze & Guattari's machinic constructivism as a form of 'absolute hyletic idealism', perhaps we are also in a better position to understand Laruelle's earlier cryptic remark[127] concerning the status of all empirical instances as 'continuous cuts' in the hyletic continuum. Every empirical instance, every finite cut, simultaneously indexes an infinite hyletic continuum; every concrete assemblage transcends itself as a continuous cut toward the infinite continuity of the plane of consistency. As a result, the plane of immanence bears all the topological hallmarks of a transcendental Möbius strip: a flat, single sided surface continuously twisting around itself through 180° so that it op-poses its inner and outer face to one another even as it renders both opposites virtually contiguous through the single surface by virtue of which they continue to flow smoothly into each other[128]. In the case of the plane of consistency, this infinite twisting whereby inner and outer face are adjoined without distance, coinciding on single

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Minorité, makes of the hyletic continuum the equivalent of a 'transcendental Deduction in act' and hence a paradigmatic philosophical Decision (cf. *infra*, Chapter 5): "*The limitless hyletic flux is doubtless perfect, it is at once (but this is not what is problematic about it from now on) hetero- and auto-production of itself. Causa sui. [It constitutes] a true transcendental Deduction in act because it synthesizes itself as 'objective reality' (unity of the real and of ideal objectivity), legitimating itself and demonstrating its own objectivity to itself on the basis of criteria drawn from itself because they shift and transform themselves along with it.*"(Laruelle, 1981, p.88).

[127]Cf. *supra*, p.115.

continuous surface, is constituted through the 'in-different/ciation' whereby virtual and actual are disjunctively conjoined in an instantaneously reversible exchange;- or through the movement of becoming in which the intensive and the extensive, the smooth and the striated, are inclusively disjoined. It is through this infinite torsion, this perpetual transversal communication between virtual and actual, that every finite cut in the hyletic continuum comes to represent an infinite continuum for another cut, and every real division becomes a means through which the indivision of an Ideal continuity continuously reaffirms itself. Consequently, as Laruelle puts it in *Prinçipe de Minorité*: "*Precisely because the cut is only ever a means at the hands of Repetition* [i.e. the 'and' as tensor of disjunctive synthesis- RB]*, one passes in a continuous manner from empirical cuts to ideal or hyletic cuts, from the empirical and transcendent to the ideal* [i.e. transcendentally immanent-RB] *form of division. This continuity of processes is the Idea as such; Repetition is the Idea or Being effecting its relation to the data of Representation through the cut constituted by Difference. Division simultaneously divides* itself and *divides experience. It forms a continuous line that re-turns in itself and whose every point adjoins an empirical surface* and *an ideal surface, both of which are pure (still ideal). Being and Becoming, the flux and the cut, flow through*

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[128]Laruelle explicitly discusses the transcendental topology of the plane of immanence in terms of the

experience whilst remaining irreducible to it, just as experience flows through the Idea, identifying itself with it, but precisely in an ideal mode. There is a prior identity, a precession of the Idea as the Same [i.e. the indivisible co-belonging -RB] *of empirical and ideal cuts, and this prior identity is invested in experience as well as in the Idea. As a result, experience is no longer an ontic region opposed to the realm of the Idea, it is an ontico-ontological degree of the Difference/Idea complex, but one which is diluted, distended, depotentiated, disintensified*" (Laruelle, 1981, p.70).

Thus, between the infinite Ideality of the ontological continuum and the finite actuality of the ontic cut, there is neither a straightforwardly representational identity nor a crudely categorial opposition; there is instead a hyletic indiscernibility; a machinic reversibility generated according to this Ideal contiguity of transcendental virtuality and empirical actuality on the plane of consistency. Perhaps the charge of idealism becomes readily comprehensible once we have understood how, within the ambit of Deleuze & Guattari's machinic materialism, there can be no possibility of distinguishing between the Idea of continuous multiplicity (i.e. the Rhizosphere) and its empirical actuality as exhibited in the heterogeneous, empirical manifold of rhizomatic assemblages. Deleuze & Guattari's

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Möbius strip in his 'Reply to Deleuze', pp. 69-72.

materiology delineates the ontico-ontological disjunction between extensive actuality and intensive virtuality on the basis of a preliminary suspension, a methodological 'sublation', of the representational distinction between the heterogeneous, empirical manifold of assemblages, and the homogeneous, transcendental continuity proper to the plane of consistency. In so doing however, they liquefy every singularity, haecceity, becoming, or event, into a virtual ontological equivalence with every other. Every event is dissolved into the universality of the *Eventum Tantum*; every cut in the phylum must also be continuous. This indiscernibility between One-becoming and All-becoming precludes the possibility of discovering a radically discontinuous manifold as index of a One that would never reconstitute itself as an All; or a cut that would not prove to be re-included a priori within the seamless, ideal continuity of the machinic phylum. It is the phylum's infinite and Ideal relational continuity[129], its elision of the separation of matter 'itself' in the sovereignty of matter 'as such' *qua* nomadic distribution as inclusive disjunction of representational extensity and machinic intensity, which inhibits the possibility of discovering an Identity proper[130] to matter 'itself', independently of the Idea and outside the Concept; according to the

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[129]As exhibited in the machinic syntax: continuum/cut/continuum/etc...; or virtual/actual/virtual/etc...

[130]Since the Identity in question is non-ontological -non-unitary and non-consistent-, it invokes no surreptitious privileging of 'propriety' or of 'the proper' in any obviously deconstructible, ontotheological sense.

foreclosure of its immanence devoid of transcendence; in its multiplicity without Being.

In obscuring the purely transcendental separation of matter 'itself' from matter 'as such' through the ontological disjunction between virtual intensity and actual extensity, in deliberately maintaining an empirico-transcendental hybridisation of immanence, Deleuze & Guattari effectively perpetuate a more insidious phenomenalisation of matter; one which is asubjective and anobjective, neither noetically circumscribed by intentional consciousness nor horizonally encompassed within being-in-the-world, but one which is nevertheless coextensive with that pure and empty form of objectivating transcendence through which immanence or 'matter' is simultaneously posited and pre-supposed in the Concept. Consequently, not only are those three amphibolies which we characterised as definitive of materiological thought in Chapter 1[131] perfectly instantiated in Deleuze & Guattari's materialism;- machinic constructivism transforms those amphibolies into structurally necessary, explicitly constitutive features. What was unintentional amphiboly in the work of Henry becomes deliberate synthetic hybridisation in the case of Deleuze & Guattari. Thus, machinic constructivism deliberately synthesizes real, ontic immanence with ideal,

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[131]Cf. *infra* , Chapter 1, pp.59-61.

ontological immanence; it explicitly replaces unilateral determination of the ideal by the real with an immediately reversible coincidence whereby every virtual different/ciation of the actual is indissociable from a reciprocal in-different/ciation of the virtual; finally, the radically unobjectifiable immanence of matter 'itself' is methodically and systematically reenveloped in the unobjectifiable transcendence of matter 'as such' *qua* nomadic distribution.

Accordingly, and in spite of the remarkable vigour and sophistication of Deleuze & Guattari's transcendental materialism, in spite of their exhilarating commitment to experimentation and invention, it would be a mistake to oppose, in a naive or ideological manner, their brand of machinic constructivism to the apparatus of Representation *per se*. Let us recall the remark by Laruelle that we cited above: "*Repetition is the Idea or Being effecting its relation to the data of Representation through the cut constituted by Difference*"[132]. Remembering that, according to the account of Deleuze & Guattari's thought which we have just provided, 'Repetition' as Idea or Being is none other than the 'and' as tensor of continuous variation, and that the 'cut' constituted by Difference likewise finds expression in the 'and' as inclusive disjunction of intensity and extensity; we see that it is the latter as

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[132]Cf. *supra*, p.155.

'Being' or 'Idea' which is perpetually reinscribing and reincluding representational extensity within the immanence of the hyletic continuum as its unavoidable complement of disintensification or depotentiation; its actualised residue; its fallen fruit. Thus, it is the transcendental topology proper to the plane of consistency as Möbius strip which ensures that there is -not only in fact but also by right- a constitutive continuity between representation and Concept; an *a priori* hybridisation of representational extensity and machinic intensity; of representational striation and nomadic smoothing. Deleuze & Guattari abolish the structures of categorial analogy, with its equivocal circumscription of extensive difference in the concept, in order to attain to the pure and empty form of Representation through the Concept's rhizomatic counter-effectuation -its simultaneous positing and pre-supposing- of intensive Difference as Being, as Idea. Machinic constructivism ditches representation *qua* equivocal analogisation of the real, the better to effectuate Representation *qua* univocal analogue of matter.

Thus, in an ambiguity characteristic of the transcendental varieties of materiological thinking, only the localised, objectively unified representations of matter are dissolved and dismantled, the better to proceed to the transcendental identification of matter with that Ideal, unitary continuity guaranteed through an all embracing disjunctive synthesis. The hyletic

continuum is the Idea of matter 'as such' *qua* universal tensor of nomadic distribution. But this position and pre-supposition of immanent materiality in and through the Concept, this machinic phenomenalisation of intensive matter 'as such' in terms of the differential syntax of nomadic distribution, of the 'and' as tensor of machinic synthesis, is in fact Representation, or the Idea, in its highest form, Representation raised to its own *nth* power. It guarantees the intensive continuity between thought and matter and establishes an instantaneous reversibility between the reality of/in the Concept and the Concept of/in the real. As a result, machinic materialism appears not so much as the immediate negation of empirical realism, but rather as its transcendental sublation.

Transcendental Materialism versus Empirical Realism

As far as the transcendental materialist is concerned, empirical realism is a prejudice concomitant with those forms of pre-philosophical naivety engendered in accordance with representational common sense and phenomenological *doxa*. The phylum's infinite continuity is perpetually liquefying the reified stolidity of empirical actuality. Machinic constructivism actively pulverizes the dogmas of empirical realism and the *doxas* of phenomenological experience by continuously reinjecting infinite movement into the hypostatised stasis of representational extensity. As we saw above,

the discontinuity of empirical extensity is seamlessly re-integrated into the Ideality of the intensive continuum, but as a distillate - a 'disintensification' or 'depotentiation'- of an infinite movement of actualisation. In the words of Laruelle which we cited earlier[133]: "*Experience is no longer an ontic region opposed to the realm of the Idea, it is an ontico-ontological degree of the Difference/Idea complex, but one which is diluted, distended, depotentiated, disintensified*" (Ibid.).

However, as Laruelle himself rather caustically points out in his 'Reply to Deleuze', this indiscernible contiguity between the transcendental ideality of virtual intensity and the empirical reality of actual extensity on the plane of consistency, relegating as it does 'experience' *qua* empirical actuality to the status of a residue distilled from the process of becoming, entails a set of "*(d)isastrous consequences for 'empirical data'* [données empiriques]*: not only are they devoid of reality; they are above all necessarily conceived of as deficient or degraded, as a reification or 'actualisation' of becoming. Their reality is an illusion, an appearance, a deficiency of their auto-position in and through the strip* [i.e. the Möbius strip or plane of consistency-RB]. *That which is 'auto'-posited (just as one says 'suicided'), and posited by that which is more powerful than it, the möbian*

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[133]Cf. *supra*, p.156.

form of all autoposition, is thus not posited in itself or by itself and is obliged to sever all continuity with its empirical 'double' or 'indication', or reckon it as a mere appearance. Such is the most general presupposition of all absolute idealism, and perhaps of all philosophy; an idealism which in this instance constitutes an equally absolute realism ('real without being actual; ideal without being abstract'): 'experience' is in general, and from the very outset, reckoned as devoid of all reality" (Laruelle, 1995a, p.76)[134].

What 'reality' and which 'experience' does Laruelle accuse Deleuze & Guattari of 'suiciding' here? Representational reality? Phenomenological experience? Everything hinges on whether the accusation of 'idealism' is made against machinic materialism - and, *a fortiori*, against philosophy - in a spirit of pious conservatism, on behalf of a representational realism and a phenomenological experience, or alternatively, in the name of an altogether

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[134]Interestingly, Laruelle's arguments here anticipate Badiou's in *The Clamour of Being*; to wit; that Deleuze's transcendental reduction of representational extensity on the plane of immanence entails a derealisation of the actual. Cf. Badiou, 1997b, *passim*, but especially pp. 65-81. In other words, both Laruelle and Badiou argue that, for Deleuze, actuality as product remains intrinsically subordinate to intensive virtuality as realm of machinic productivity. However, although we have been arguing here, along with Laruelle and Badiou, that there is a very strong sense in which Deleuze's philosophy is ultimately -albeit unconventionally- idealist in tenor, we do not believe that this constitutes an unpardonable indictment in and of itself. The real question, it seems to us, consists in asking whether or not Deleuze's peculiar brand of idealism is necessarily a bad thing. For insofar as it excoriates a certain dogmatic phenomenological realism, an excoriation which seems to us entirely consonant with the pulverizing of phenomenological reality effected by the natural sciences, Deleuze's hyletic idealism strikes us as entirely honourable. Where we find that idealism problematic -which is also the reason why we find the ramifications of Laruelle's critique particularly valuable- is on account of the residual dimension of quasi-phenomenological presupposition entailed by the indissociable coincidence of virtual and actual in Deleuze's thought. In other words, Deleuze does not go far enough in his suspension of all phenomenological presupposition: there is still a residual phenomenalisation of matter 'as such' entailed in Deleuze's objectivation of immanence through the positing and pre-supposing of

unrepresentable 'reality' and a definitively unphenomenologisable 'experience'.

Since -as will hopefully become perfectly clear in the second half of this thesis- Laruelle has absolutely no interest in providing reactionary *apologias*, whether it be for the good-sense of representation, or for the *Ur-doxas* of phenomenology, it is necessary for us to provide a brief explication of the implicit but unstated series of argumentative steps which furnish the correct framework for understanding why the 'reality' and 'experience' invoked by Laruelle in this protest against 'idealism' are neither representational nor phenomenological.

First, we need to clarify what exactly Laruelle means by the expression 'empirical data' (*données empiriques*) when he claims that the continuum's absolute auto-position deprives the latter of their autonomy and reality because it turns the actual into a reified remainder, a residue leftover from the movement of infinite becoming. Fortunately, Laruelle supplies us with an explicit definition of what he means by 'empirical data' -one which is neither representational nor phenomenological but overtly non-philosophical- in a text from 1988 (also ostensibly 'about' Deleuze)[135]-: "*By 'empirical data'*

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the plane; a 'machinic' phenomenalisation of matter engendered as a result of immanence's idealization as an empirico-transcendental hybrid or composite.

[135]The text in question, which appeared in issue number 5 of *La Décision philosophique,* the journal edited by Laruelle between 1987 and 1989, is entitled 'Letter to Deleuze'. This 'Letter', written by

I understand that which is posited by philosophical decision and by its sufficiency in order to affect the latter, in other words, that which is in the philosophical decision by means of which it is also interpreted" (Laruelle, 1988g, p.102).

How are we to interpret this definition ? Indisputably in this instance, some degree of familiarity with the non-philosophical context it presupposes is indispensable. Thus, for instance, we need to be aware of the fact that, as far as Laruelle is concerned, it is intrinsic to the structure of philosophical Decision insofar as it invariably instantiates an empirico-transcendental doublet that it incorporate or encompass *a priori* the empirical wing of the doublet as the necessary complement of factical contingency through which it achieves its own absolute auto-affection and auto-position. Accordingly, in this non-philosophical definition of 'empirical data', the latter provide that initial leverage-point whose empirical presupposition is subsequently seen to

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way of reply to an unpublished missive in which Deleuze asked Laruelle "What distinguishes the One from Spinoza's substance?", is one of those texts which Laruelle classifies among his explicitly experimental or 'hyperspeculative' exercises in 'philo-fiction'. In an obvious allusion to Spinoza's *more geometrico* , it responds to the Deleuzean query by elaborating a non-philosophical axiomatic in a series of numbered definitions running from 1.1 to 15.2. In spite of its considerable formal austerity, this particular text remains remarkably helpful because it furnishes us with explicit definitions of all the basic conceptual components of non-philosophical theory (at least in the form in which these existed in *Philosophie II. Philosophie III* purifies and refines all these components further still, sometimes adding new ones, but it does not make any significant retractions;-save for discontinuing *Philosophie II*'s residually philosophical identification of non-philosophy with science). The contrast - which we are trying to highlight here- between 'the empirical' *qua* intra-Decisional ideality and 'the empirical' *qua* non-Decisional reality, occurs in definitions 5.1 and 5.2 respectively. 5.1 defines 'empirical data' *qua* intra-Decisional component; 5.2 defines empirical data *qua* Decision itself as occasional cause or support for non-philosophical theory. Cf. Laruelle, 1988g.

have been retroactively posited *a priori* in and through an ultimately self-sufficient transcendental operation;- a structure we saw verified in Deleuze & Guattari's delineation of the methodological reduction whereby the actuality of the given comes to be seen as the result of a process of production -an actualisation-; but a process in which it is the initial *presupposition* of empirical extensity as enveloped in the plane of immanence -the suspension of its empirical autonomy- which allows for the uncovering of its conditions of production and its subsequent *positing* as a component in the philosophical Concept. Thus, the aleatory contingency of empirical actuality is posited by the Deleuzoguattarian Decision, in order to furnish it with an exploitable resource; a pseudo-heteronomous component which Decision will always already have pre-supposed. Empirical actuality effectively serves as the 'vanishing mediator' in the circle of reciprocal position and presupposition between plane and Concept; a circle in which the empirical immediacy of the actual is invariably understood to have been 'always already' transcendentally suspended and preserved; 'sublated' as a posited intermediate; or as the product of an actualisation[136].

Consequently, if philosophical thinking for Laruelle is necessarily and constitutively idealist in character -or *formally idealising* regardless of

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[136]Cf. *supra*,pp.127-130.

whether or not it is recognized as explicitly or *substantially idealist*- it is because the intrinsically self-positing, self-presupposing structure of Decision -what Laruelle calls its 'sufficiency'- guarantees that 'empirical data' ('actuality', 'the given', etc.), are always encompassed *a priori* as grist for the Decisional mill, so that they remain merely of the order of a pretext, an exploitable resource devoid of any real independence or autonomy, ready to be processed and integrated as a homogeneous structural component in the mechanism of Decision[137].

By way of contrast to this transcendental imperialism of Decision as practised in its autonomous, self-sufficient mode -the imperialism of transcendental sufficiency or absolute auto-position whereby the independence of the empirical is denied-, in the same text from 1988 which we have just cited, Laruelle defends the *relative autonomy* of a non-representational, non-phenomenological empirical instance by effecting the transformation of Decision itself -*ergo*, of intra-Decisional 'empiricity' as representationally and/or phenomenologically defined- into an 'occasional cause' or 'material support' for non-Decisional theory: "*By support or occasion, I describe those ideal or empirical data which are necessary as the*

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[137]Clearly, the credibility of this account, which we shall return to in greater detail in Chapter 5, depends on the plausibility of the claim that all philosophy, whether it recognize it or not, and regardless of its stated antipathy to the term (e.g. the British empiricists; Hegel; Nietzsche; the later

material from which thought extracts real a prioris, in other words, that which existing in the philosophical decision, has its condition of reality in something else or in the real as last instance" (Ibid.)

Once again, this definition of the empirical as 'support' or 'occasion' is neither representational nor phenomenological but explicitly non-philosophical (which is to say, at once rigorously theoretical and radically universal): the empirical data that have their *ideal* but heteronomous existence as posited in and through Decision, have their *real* or *relatively autonomous* existence -their unrepresentable condition of reality, as well as their unphenomenologisable condition of experience- in the immanence of the Real as radically unobjectifiable last-instance.

Since, at this stage, it is still too early to attempt to provide all the necessary technical clarifications required for an exhaustive analysis of this non-philosophical translation of 'empiricity', we can only hope to provide the reader with an anticipatory sketch of the transformation that has occurred in the shift from the philosophical to the non-philosophical perspective; a sketch whose initial aura of impenetrable obscurity will, we hope, become

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Heidegger; etc.) is ultimately transcendental in the very broad, generic sense used by Laruelle; which is to say, *essentially Decisional*.

considerably diminished in the light of subsequent clarifications furnished in Chapter 5 of Part II[138].

According to this sketch, where philosophical Decision invariably presupposes the autonomous, pseudo-immanent reality of empirical data, the better to dissolve the autonomy of that pseudo-immanent reality *via* the process of its ideal sublation in and through a self-positing transcendence; non-philosophy, in accordance with the radical autonomy of the Real *qua* Given-without-givenness, recognizes the relative autonomy of an empirical realm now identified with Decision itself in its ideal, self-positing transcendence;- but does so the better to extract a set of real -i.e. non-representational and non-phenomenological- *a prioris* from that ideal, transcendently posited reality and experience. These non-Decisional *a prioris* determine-in-the-last-instance the Decision's own *a priori* idealisation of reality and experience[139]. In other words, by discovering the 'real' or non-Decisional *a priori* for the 'ideal', Decisional *a priori*, non-philosophy determines philosophical determination. It discovers the Real, radically unobjectifiable condition for Ideal objectivation. Thus, where materiological Decision undermines a certain restricted or localised form of representational

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[138] For an explanation of philosophical Decision as relatively autonomous occasional cause for non-philosophical thinking, cf. *infra*, Chapter 5, especially pp.249-251.

[139] Cf. *infra*, Chapter 6, pp.301-305.

objectification and phenomenological presupposition, only to replace these with a subtler, unobjectifiable form of objectivation, a subtler, pre-phenomenological form of phenomenalisation; the non-Decisional transmutation of materiological Decision into an empirical occasion extracts from the latter the non-objectivating, non-phenomenalising[140] *a prioris* determining these ultimate residues of objectivation and phenomenalisation themselves.

Obscurity notwithstanding, we hope at least to have furnished the reader with some inkling of the manner in which a concept which in its ordinary philosophical usage invariably remains representational and/or phenomenological, is radicalised and generalised (i.e. universalised) non-philosophically so that it achieves a rigorously transcendental theoretical validity. It is crucial to notice the way in which this process involves a *change of scale*: the concept of the empirical instance is radically expanded from that of an intra-Decisional component whose representational and/or phenomenological pre-supposition involves at once an idealizing sublation of empirical autonomy and an empirico-ideal hybridisation of the

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[140]This is a particularly delicate point. We must distinguish between intra-Decisional phenomenologisation; Decisional phenomenalisation; and non-Decisional phenomenality. Although the *a prioris* of non-Decisional theory are neither straightforwardly phenomenological, nor phenomenalising in the subtler sense in which the empirico-transcendental or hybrid structure of Decision itself constitutes a phenomenalising principle, they are nevertheless 'phenomenal-in-the-last-instance' insofar as they are determined by the immanence of Real as 'the Phenomenon-in-itself', or as

transcendental; to that of Decision as such in its inviolable, self-sufficient integrity as an indecomposable structural whole. Thus, the non-philosophical definition of the empirical now encompasses the empirico-transcendental structure of Decision in its autonomous, self-positing sufficiency. But its autonomy as self-positing and self-giving is now merely conditional rather than absolute, for Decision is now given and posited as *relative* to the radical autonomy of a Real which is given-without-givenness and posited-without-position. Absolute auto-position is now heteronomously posited in its inalienable relativity to radical immanence: it has becomes relatively autonomous.

Accordingly, if non-philosophy defends the inviolable integrity and relative autonomy of the empirical, it is precisely insofar as the empirical has now been definitively purged of every trace or residue of representational and/or phenomenological pre-supposition. Whereas the machinic materialist's critique of representational realism and phenomenological experience remains trapped in a double-bind, condemned to presuppose the irrecusable pertinence of empirical actuality in order to effect that transcendental suspension of its validity which is the prerequisite for uncovering its sub-representational and sub-phenomenological conditions of production; non-philosophy proceeds on

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'Phenomenon-without-phenomenalisation'. Cf. *infra*, Chapter 6, p.293; pp.296-301; and Chapter 7,

the basis of a suspension of the empirical *qua* Decision that has always already been achieved; always already been realized in accordance with the inalienable immanence of the Real as ante-Decisional *sine qua non* for all Decision. Thus, non-philosophy presupposes nothing -certainly nothing empirical- unless it be the impredicable immanence of the Real as posited-without-position. Moreover, *if* the empirical presents itself, it presents itself in terms of nothing more substantial than an entirely contingent *occasion* or *support* for thinking. It is purged of all representational and phenomenological concretion, of all factical overdetermination, the better to be retained as an empty invariant, a purely formal structure of position and pre-supposition now amenable to a potentially limitless variety of structural reconfigurations.

Significantly then, there is a sense in which the (non-representational) 'reality' and (non-phenomenological) 'experience' of the empirical which Laruelle defends against the idealism of the continuum's absolute auto-position are those of philosophical Decision itself as an empty formal invariant; as an occasion and support for a potentially infinite series of non-representational and non-phenomenological redescriptions through which the substance, tenor, and character of intra-Decisional 'reality' as well as of intra-

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p.360.

Decisional 'experience' can be perpetually renegotiated beyond the limits of what is empirically pre-supposed and transcendentally posited as given within those ontological parameters governed by the sufficiency of Decision. For in the final analysis, the continuum's absolute, self-positing autonomy, the Ideal transcendental continuity through which machinic constructivism attacks the good sense of representational realism as well as the *Ur-doxas* of phenomenological experience, masks its amphibological structure, its empirico-transcendental hybridisation; and thus its ultimately empirical reliance on the data of representation and phenomenology; a reliance which procures their localised subversion at the cost of their global perpetuation.

In order to clarify this latter point, let us reconsider those philosophical mechanisms through which machinic constructivism effects its critical subversion of representational reality and phenomenological experience.

For Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*[141], the ruin of representation is effected in accordance with the Nietzschean logic of the dice-throw: the unconditional affirmation of Chance, of the Outside, as an incompossible or virtual whole -i.e. as a representational impossibility-, results in the philosopher's counter-effectuation of chaosmotic Chance as

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[141]Cf. for instance Deleuze, 1994, pp.198-200; & Deleuze, 1990, especially pp.127-161.

event; an effectuation whereby the phenomenological 'I' is cracked open and representational subjectivity exploded, releasing those impersonal individuations and pre-personal singularities that swarm through the cosmic fissure in thc self. It is this moment of Nietzschean affirmation -the auto-affirmation of impersonal Chance as an incompossible whole through the philosopher as purified automaton- which seems to coincide with the self-positing of the philosophical Concept, its counter-effectuation of intensive chaos, in *What is Philosophy?*[142].

Crucially, for Deleuze, it is because thought's dice-throw is an affirmation of the event's unconditional exteriority that representational reality and phenomenological experience do not need to be deconstructed, since neither thought nor experience are necessarily 'inscribed' within them: subjectification, signification and organization are no more than superficial overlays; sedentary arrests; temporary interruptions of infinite movement;- both 'thought' and 'experience' are *already outside*[143]. Thus, if rhizomatic thinking deploys itself immediately and unproblematically in the element of libidinal intensities, it's because it's already operating outside, carried along by that movement whose infinite speed allows it to evade the tri-partite

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[142]Cf. Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp.159-160.

[143]"*One will never cease returning to the question in order to succeed in getting outside it. But getting outside never happens like this. Movement always occurs by itself, behind the thinker's back, or at that moment when he blinks. Either one is already outside, or it'll never happen.*" (Deleuze, 1977, pp.7-8).

cloister of phenomenological subjectivation, linguistic signification, and corporeal organization.

But in fact, things are not so simple, for as we have seen, machinic thought is not so much already Outside as *in-between* inside and outside; or rather 'outside' precisely insofar as it is on the margin or cusp 'between' virtual and actual; between smooth and striated. This problematises the machinic materialist's insistence that thought and experience are already operating in what Deleuze calls 'the great Outside' [*le grand Dehors*]; for if the thinking deployed upon the plane of immanence always starts in the middle, 'in-between' virtual and actual, it turns out that this Outside is in fact always a hybrid or mixture of nomadic intensity and stratified (or 'representational') extensity. As we saw above[144], the immanence affirmed by the transcendental empiricist is constructed around that point of indiscernibility, that reciprocal exchange, between virtual and actual, so that the heteromorphy, or unilateral disjunction between nomadic intensity and stratified extensity, remains circumscribed within a unitary parallelism: the hyletic continuum's infinite movement encompasses at once the continuous variation of nomadic distribution; and the deceleration, the arresting of movement in stratified representation.

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[144]Cf. *supra*, pp.129-131.

What then are the consequences of this continuity concerning the relation between representational reality and phenomenological experience on the one hand; and the destratified thought and experience of the Outside on the other ? Since, for machinic constructivism, the distinction between 'appearance' and 'reality' remains intrinsically representational, it is not so much a matter of denouncing subjectivation, signification, and organization as illusory, but rather of effecting their transcendental circumvention by maintaining the infinite speed through which rhizomatic thinking accelerates beyond subjectification; and by perpetuating the infinite movement through which the plane of immanence liquefies all eruptions of reified transcendence.

However, once again, things are not quite so simple. For hyletic continuity entails that the unilateral disjunction between representation and rhizome also necessitates their residual reciprocity, their constitutive hybridisation, so that infinite speed and absolute movement remain *relative to* the slow speeds and relative movements captured by stratic synthesis. Thus, the transcendental hybridisation through which the continuum is constituted means that the 'absolute' movements of the plane maintain a constitutive reference to the relative movements of subjectification, signification and organization: as with Henry, the absolute remains relative to

that from which it absolves itself[145]. As a result, the absolute Outside continues to remain liminal, occupying the borderline between the signifying and the asignifying, between the subjectified and the impersonal, precisely on account of its unconditional, self-positing continuity.

This is the price to be paid for that necessary reversibility, that inevitable complementarity whereby all deterritorializations remain "*inseparable from correlative reterritorializations*"[146]. In other words, Deleuze & Guattari maintain a transcendental amphiboly between, on the one hand, a 'reality' and an 'experience' construed in terms of representation and phenomenology: i.e. subjectified, signifying, organized; and, on the other, the impersonal, asignifying, anorganic movements of a plane of consistency which supposedly knows nothing of those processes of sedentary stratification. But it is precisely insofar as this mixture of deterritorialized exteriority and reterritorialized interiority, this hybridisation of absolute impersonality and empirical subjectivity, fatally occludes the unrepresentable 'reality' of an immanence which remains foreclosed to all objectivation; just as it obscures the unphenomenologisable 'experience' of an immanence which is foreclosed to subjectification, signification and organization, that Laruelle accuses Deleuze & Guattari of idealism.

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[145]Cf. *supra*, Chapter 2, pp.85-87.

It is in order to preclude the possibility of such empirico-transcendental hybridisation, that Laruelle, by way of contrast, will inaugurate an irreversible unilateral duality 'between' a radically autonomous immanence; one that remains definitively foreclosed to all representation, phenomenologisation, or Conceptual pre-supposition; and a relatively autonomous empirical instance, constituted by the philosophical hybridisation of immanence and transcendence as such. The latter will serve as the occasional cause on the basis of which to effect the non-Decisional separation -the 'dualysation'- of the machinic materialist's Decisional mixture of deterritorialized exteriority and reterritorialized interiority.

Using this strictly unilateral separation between the radical autonomy of Real immanence and the relative autonomy of empirico-ideal transcendence as its basis, non-materialist theory proposes to maintain a distinction between the empirical and the transcendental that would neither reinstate an ontological dualism of subjective ideality and substantial reality; nor effect the ontological sublation of that dualism in the self-positing Idea[147]. The latter move invariably prefigures the collapse of the separation between matter 'as such' and matter 'itself' in the hyle as ontological Idea. We have

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[146]Cf. for instance Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p.509.

[147]This particular dilemma constituted a problem which, in one form or another, plagued much post-Kantian philosophy. We have in mind here Schelling's account of the development of post-Kantianism

already seen how hyletic idealism typically dissolves the distinction between matter as empirical *datum* and matter as ideal *a priori* by effecting their ontological reconciliation in the hyletic continuum as self-positing, self-presupposing Idea.

Moreover, to the extent that it ends up reaffirming that sublation, there is a sense in which Deleuze & Guattari's materialism remains consonant - albeit in a particularly abstract fashion- with a certain underlying anti-Kantian thread uniting an otherwise utterly disparate set of philosophical problematics: like Hegel, Husserl, and Heidegger, each in their very different ways before them, Deleuze & Guattari unequivocally reject the premise of an irrecusable transcendental separation between thinking and being. This transcendental separation, lest we forget, is emphatically not ontological[148], for Kant - through a concatenation of gestures he himself only dimly appreciated- effectively terminated the epistemic privileges of Cartesian subjectivity and the *aporias* of ontological dualism -which is to say, the dualism of subject and substance- in the same move whereby he prepared for the separation of matter 'itself' from matter 'as such'. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the ontological elision of Kant's transcendental distinction invariably results

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as set out in *On the History of Modern Philosophy* . Cf. Schelling, 1994, especially pp.94-185. But cf. also Miklos Vetö's reconstruction of the post-Kantian problematic in Vetö, 1998 and 2000, *passim*.

[148]On this very point, cf. Allison, 1983, pp. 3-13 and *passim* .

in one or other variation on the theme of absolute idealism[149]. In Deleuze & Guattari's case, the result is probably the most philosophically sophisticated - hence, the most dangerously seductive- version of absolute idealism thus far achieved (one which, despite the oft-cited exoteric divergences, retains a certain esoteric affinity with that of Hegel[150]): it argues for the virtual indiscernibility, the inclusive disjunction, between the Ideal continuity of matter 'as such' and the Real discontinuity of matter 'itself'.

Since Being as continuous variation, as infinite hyletic continuum, abolishes the separation of matter 'itself' from the Idea of matter in the perpetual becoming-matter of thought and becoming-thought of matter, it no longer makes sense, according to Deleuze & Guattari, to protest that there is an immanence irreducible to Conceptual pre-supposition, or a matter irreducible to Conceptual counter-effectuation. In aligning ourselves with this sort of protest we surely appear guilty of the worst form of pre-philosophical

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[149]Positivism, for example, can be considered as an absolute *empirical* idealism.

[150]It is not difficult to reiterate the long litany of everything that supposedly serves to separate Deleuze from Hegel: the attack on the reactive character of negation; the critique of opposition as representational inversion of difference-in-itself; the emphasis on the externality of all relation; the suspension of teleological transcendence...etc. Nevertheless, it might be useful to remind ourselves of a certain tone of deliberate comic exaggeration in Deleuze's remorseless excoriations of Hegelianism; of a certain mischievous humour in the Deleuzean caricature of Hegel as punitive taskmaster for the interminable labour of the negative; despotic suzerain of mediation; shameless apologist for the Christian State; as well as in the Deleuzean execration of the dialectic as ultimate avatar of pious *ressentiment*, bad conscience, and all the rest. This diversionary smokescreen should not be allowed to obscure the possibility of a subterranean concordance between the Deleuzean and Hegelian doctrines of the self-positing Concept. Compare for example Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, pp.15-34, with Hegel, 1989, pp.67-78. For an extremely interesting attempt at articulating the relation between Hegel and Deleuze using Kant as an intercessor, in a manner that is notably free of superficial ideological

naivety; the kind of naivety which Husserl denounced in the transcendental realism which he took to be concomitant with the scientist's 'natural attitude', and which he dismissed as phenomenologically 'counter-sensical'[151].

Curiously then, and in spite of their avowedly anti-phenomenological materialism, Deleuze & Guattari would seem to invite the assent of phenomenological idealism when, presumably invoking the intensive power (*puissance*) of the Concept rather than the 'sense-bestowing' (*Sinngebung*) power of consciousness, we imagine them arraigning the non-conceptual realism which insists on upholding the transcendental separation between matter 'as such' and matter 'itself' as a species of transcendental idiocy[152]. Nevertheless, it is this idiocy, we wish to suggest, which ultimately indexes the unobjectifiable immanence of matter itself.

However, lest the non-philosophical idiocy concomitant with the distinction between matter 'as such' and matter 'itself' collapse back into pre-philosophical stupidity by way of an arbitrary Decision in favour of a hypothetically posited 'in-itself', we must explain how the transcendental condition on the basis of which we are articulating that distinction precludes

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prejudices, cf. Juliette Simont's *Les 'Fleurs Noires' de la logique philosophique. Essai sur la quantité, la qualité, la relation chez Kant, Hegel, Deleuze* , Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997.

151 "*The countersense only arises when one philosophises and, while seeking ultimate intelligence about the sense of the world, never even notices that the world itself has its whole being as a certain 'sense' which presupposes absolute consciousness as the field where sense is bestowed*[...]" (Husserl, 1982, p.129).

the transcendent positing and presupposing of immanence through Decision. Specifically, the next chapter will suggest that as far as the transcendental separation of the *tel quel* from the *comme tel* is concerned, the only proper index of its ante-Decisional immanence resides in the performative consistency of material utterance (*énonciation*) and materialist statement (*énoncé*); the rigorous, but non-logocentric co-incidence of materialist 'saying' and 'doing'.

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[152] Both 'idiom' and 'idiocy', as Juan Diego Blanco observes, have their root in the Greek ιδιοζ, meaning 'the proper' or 'singular'. Cf. Blanco, 1997, p.103.

CHAPTER 4

FROM MATERIALISM 'AS SUCH' TO MATTER 'ITSELF'

In the course of the last three chapters, we have been criticizing the materiological conceptualisation of matter 'as such' on the basis of a hypothetical postulate:- the 'transcendental realist' postulation of matter 'itself'. Yet how can we be sure that this postulation does not in turn reinstate a conceptual equivocation ? That we are not reinscribing 'matter itself' in a concept in the very process of invoking it in discourse ? What theoretical conditions need to be met in order to ensure that the invocation of matter 'itself' does not collapse into a materiological circumscription of matter 'as such' ?

In this chapter we shall attempt to define these conditions by examining Section 27 of *Le Prinçipe de Minorité*, entitled '*Le réel contre le matérialisme et l'idéalisme*'('The real versus materialism and idealism')[153]. It is in the argument of this brief but particularly complex section that Laruelle tentatively outlines for us the necessary preconditions for a truly non-materiological -which is to say, non-philosophical- materialism. By way of

contrast to those 'constative' varieties of philosophical materialism circumscribing matter 'as such' through Decision, non-philosophical materialism, we shall try to argue, must constitute a rigorously 'performative' material theory, enacting a set of theoretical operations determined (in-the-last-instance) by 'matter itself' now characterised as immanently foreclosed to Decision. Where the sufficiency of the materialist Decision against idealism invariably envelops the unobjectifiable immanence of matter 'itself' in the objectivating transcendence of matter 'as such', thereby instituting an idealized materiality, a composite of real immanence and ideal transcendence; non-Decisional materialism, suspending the sufficiency of materialist Decision, will operate on the basis of an immanence which does not presuppose a transcendent Decision about the difference between materialism and idealism; -in other words, it shall operate in accordance with an immanence which is foreclosed to the transcendent distinction between material immanence and ideal transcendence.

'Materialism'/ 'Idealism'

'Materialism' and 'idealism', Laruelle reminds us, cannot be accepted as ready made or pre-given categories. Neither their content, nor the distinction between them is ever absolute or unvarying:- on the contrary, they

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[153]Cf. Laruelle, 1981, pp. 103-109.

are varyingly fulfilled and exemplified according to the vagaries of doctrine. Consequently, Laruelle continues, rather than ask what 'materialism' and 'idealism' are 'in themselves', as if they were determinate doctrines, we should enquire into the immanent transcendental conditions in accordance with which these philosophical categories are *generated* or *produced*. Thus, instead of treating 'materialism' and 'idealism' as determinate doctrines, Laruelle suggests we try to uncover the genetic *a priori*[154] conditioning the production of 'materialist' or 'idealist' doctrine. In other words, rather than trying to identify the putative essence of 'materialism' or of 'idealism' *via* an empirical process of inductive generalisation which consists in abstracting from historically contingent systems of doctrine, Laruelle insists on the necessity of transcendentally deducing those *a priori* conditions of theoretical production determining the conceptual economies proper to 'materialist' or 'idealist' discourse quite independently of the particular system or doctrine produced. 'Materialism' and 'idealism' gain a specifically philosophical autonomy *vis a vis* the neighbouring domains of science and politics within which these discursive markers also circulate, when, rather than being considered as heteronomously conditioned doctrines, they achieve an

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[154]In Chapter 6, we shall see how -unlike Husserl's- this 'genetic *a priori* ' *qua* 'non-conceptual symbol' will turn out to be real rather than ideal, and dualysing rather than unitary or synthetic.

autonomous 'metatheoretical' status as immanent transcendental criteria conditioning philosophical doctrine.

At the same time however, Laruelle points out that 'materialism's' peculiar theoretical specificity comes from the way in which it not only indexes its own metatheoretical conditions of production, but also their *a priori* distinction from, and opposition to, the metatheoretical conditions proper to 'idealism'. This marks a crucial unilaterality in the economy of relation between the genetic *a prioris* proper to 'materialism' and 'idealism' respectively: the mode of theoretical production proper to 'materialism' must generate or produce its own *a priori* distinction from that of 'idealism', while the latter is not necessarily obliged to distinguish itself from the former[155]. Consequently, Laruelle concludes, in order to attain a rigorously transcendental criteria specifying the conditions of reality -as opposed to ideality or possibility- for materialist discourse, conditions precluding the materiological idealization of matter 'as such', we must identify the real, genetic difference through which a theoretical utterance distinguishes itself *a priori* as intrinsically 'materialist' -regardless of its stated meaning- *vis a vis* a modality of utterance which is *a priori* 'idealist'- again, regardless of the utterance's meaning: "*One simultaneously determines materialism's genetic*

difference from idealism, and a real, otherwise-than-materialist conception of their a priori difference and its power of genesis. Against the empiricist mistake, which consists in injecting into these categories an 'immediate' content which is in reality already mediated, it is a question of thinking them at once in themselves and in terms of what is more important than them, their relation, and more important than their relation: their absolute difference" (Laruelle, 1981, p.104.).

However, this genetic or 'absolute difference'[156] conditioning the *a priori* distinction between the conditions of theoretical production appropriate to 'materialism' and those appropriate to 'idealism', cannot be located at the level of the doctrine which it conditions; it cannot be identified as a 'materialist' or 'idealist' statement of any kind. But if it cannot be characterised as explicitly 'materialist' or 'idealist' in its conceptual content, it must remain intrinsically non-conceptual; which is to say: a-signifying. Thus, the genetic *a priori* distinguishing 'materialism' from 'idealism' can

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[155]That is to say: it can, but for Laruelle this identification is not a prerequisite for the operational efficacy of idealism in the way in which it seems to be for all critical -post-Kantian- materialism.

[156]Because *Le Prinçipe de Minorité* remains a transitional work, preparing the non-philosophical perspective that will find its rigorous formulation in later texts, it is one in which Laruelle continues to operate within a predominantly philosophical register: hence the talk of an 'absolute difference' between materialism and idealism. The critique of Henry's conception of 'absolute immanence' in Chapter 2 already hinted at the way in which, in Laruelle's non-philosophical work proper, the notion of 'the absolute' comes to be identified with that of philosophical Decision as such in its pretension to pure, auto-positional and auto-donational sufficiency. In fact, as we shall see, it is by operating according to 'matter itself' as *first name* or *non-conceptual symbol* for radical immanence -one which is foreclosed to the transcendent distinction between 'materialism' and 'idealism'- that non-materialist

only reside in those distinct but non-conceptual or a-signifying modalities of utterance through which the conceptual significations of 'materialism' or 'idealism' are produced.

Laruelle lists three varieties of categorial definition for 'materialism' and 'idealism'; definitions that, he believes, fail to provide a satisfactory account of this *a priori* genetic difference. The inadequacy of the first two, still operating at the level of empirical objectivity and conceptual content, should (we hope) be immediately apparent in the present context, thus requiring no further explication on our part. Laruelle passes them over without further comment. However, it is useful to list them here, not only in order to appreciate the superiority of the third *vis a vis* its immediate predecessors, but also to understand in what way the latter's ultimately unsatisfactory character hinges in large part on a residual form of empirical objectivation and conceptual idealization carried over from its predecessors.

'Matter' and 'Idea' , Laruelle insists, cannot be taken as indexes of:

1. *Supposedly given* objectivities such as techno-economic production on the one hand; ideology on the other.

2. *Supposedly given* conceptual significations, whereby, on the one hand, the concept of 'Matter' combines general features of 'materiality'

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theory allows at once for a unilateral duality -rather than an 'absolute difference'- and an identity

abstracted from nature with empirical characteristics drawn from sense-perception; while, on the other, that of the 'Idea' combines general features of 'ideality' abstracted from culture with empirical characteristics drawn from 'inner sense' or self-consciousness.

3. 'Discursive categories' which are *supposedly produced* rather than immediately given. Thus, in what Laruelle refers to as 'structural Marxism' (i.e. Althusser[157]), 'idealism' and 'materialism' remain devoid of immediate conceptual signification, but are endowed with a 'differential' meaning produced through the complex interplay of various theoretical and political positions. The meaning of 'idealism' and 'materialism' as discursive categories is produced *via* the differential combination and determination of these positions relative to one another. Thus, the difference between 'materialism' and 'idealism' is no longer articulated with reference to objectivities, or conceptual generalities, or even statements as such: it is now characterised in terms of a theoretical statement's *relation* to differential elements which are in themselves devoid of meaning, but which nevertheless determine the production of discursive sense. 'Materialism' and 'idealism' are no longer defined at the level of reified, determinable sense; they are no longer conceptually hypostatised in intraconsistent systems of discursive

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without synthesis, of 'materialism' and 'idealism'.

statement; they are now the result of differential relations between a-signifying modalities of utterance; the product of modes of discursive production which have no intrinsic meaning in themselves.

This 'structural Marxist' account clearly comes closest to grasping the necessarily a-signifying, non-conceptual character of the sought-for genetic *a priori* conditioning the intrinsic distinction between the modalities of 'materialist' and 'idealist' utterance. Consequently, Laruelle's objection to this structural Marxist account focuses on a single question: how can the sought-for genetic *a priori* be at once a-signifying and non-conceptual, whilst remaining intrinsically differential and constitutively relational, which is to say: dependent on an objectively ideal structure of signifying coordination between irreducible empirical elements? Although, the elements through which theoretical sense is produced are neither conceptual nor signifying in themselves, they remain empirically presupposed; they are already objectively given as subject to a determinate socio-economic articulation, and thus already mediated through various forms of conceptual presupposition. Structural relationality, Laruelle insists, reintroduces ideality, which invariably involves a residual dimension of transcendent objectivation and conceptual signification. The real, *a priori*, transcendental separation between

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[157]Laruelle provides no textual references, but cf. Althusser & Balibar, 1997, *passim* ; and Althusser,

'materialism' and 'idealism' as intrinsically distinct modalities of theoretical utterance cannot be confused with the ideal, *a posteriori* and ultimately empirical differentiation between 'materialism' and 'idealism' as distinct discursive modalities produced through relations of reciprocal determination.

Thus, although in the structural Marxist account, the distinction between 'materialism' and 'idealism' is neither supposedly given as empirically objective, nor supposedly given as a conceptual signification, it nevertheless remains empirical insofar as it is supposedly produced as given rather than being transcendentally producing or giving. Moreover, as far as Laruelle is concerned, structural differentiation cannot but presuppose a supra-conceptual ideality; it continues to operate within an ultimately Ideal, objectivating continuum of relation. Discrete differential elements remain subsumed within an all-embracing continuum of differential relativity: "*In the primacy of 'relations' (of production, of force, of texts, of power) which we took for materialism, and which is one in effect, that is to say, an offshoot of idealism, there is only a* transfer *of difference in and as the Idea,[...] an ultimate primacy of ideality over the real, of Being over the entity*" (Ibid., p.106).

1996, pp.161-224.

Thus, in structural Marxism, 'materialism' and 'idealism' lose their pseudo-absolute, empirically pre-given meaning as 'theories in themselves', only to have that self-positing absoluteness now taken over by the differential complex of politico-economic relation through which they are produced; a relational continuum which is autonomous and no longer relative to its terms because it is relative only to itself; which is to say, self-positing. But this latter feature, as we saw in the case of machinic constructivism, is invariably an index of idealism. And in structural Marxism just as in machinic constructivism, if 'materialism' and 'idealism' are no longer hypostatised, ready-made doctrines standing in perpetual opposition to one another, it is because they now form instead a chiasmic nexus, each alternately serving as continuum or as cut, as relay or as interruption, for the other. Of course, it is this chiasmic nexus which now constitutes the ideal transcendental instance of materiality, the *a priori* dimension of hyletic synthesis through which 'materialism' simultaneously distinguishes *and* relates itself to 'idealism'; as if, Laruelle maintains, in the complex differential nexus out of which 'materialism' and 'idealism' are temporarily crystallized; "*the 'materialist' side or aspect of the assemblage, continuous point of dispersion of materialism and idealism,* simultaneously *inhibited, limited the idealist side or aspect, and re-joined, reconstituted a continuous system, an assemblage*

that is necessarily 'idealist' precisely insofar as it is an assemblage. Idealist to the second degree, to the nth degree. Generally, in the systems of Difference, materialism is merely idealism in the nth degree, in the 'andth' degree, infinitely intensified. In raising ideality to the level of auto-production in this circular fashion, which is to say, to the status of causa sui *('will to power'), they* [the systems of Difference-RB] *confirm ideality through itself, rendering the genesis of ideality and of its forms impossible* " (Ibid., p.106-107).

It seems then that in structural Marxism just as in machinic constructivism, the dogmatic empirical opposition between 'materialism' and 'idealism' becomes transcendentally suspended or reduced. The difference between them is produced, not given; it becomes a relative, contingent, aleatory product; the result of abstract processes of hyletic production. Thus, for the transcendental materialist, the abstract materiality of hyletic synthesis upon which all theoretical praxis is ultimately supervenient -whether that praxis be determined through differentials of socio-economic force in infrastructural production, or constituted through collective assemblages of enunciation in the machinic phylum[158]- entails that 'materialism' and 'idealism' considered as systems of signifying statement become materially

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[158]Cf. for instance Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, pp. 75-110.

equivalent at the level of a-signifying utterance; indifferently encompassed within an all-embracing continuum of self-differentiating hyletic production. One philosopher's putative 'idealism' provides the basis for another's equally putative 'materialism'[159].

However, as we saw in the previous chapter, in absolutising abstract materiality in this way, in raising the hyletic continuum to the level of a *causa sui*, transcendental materialism collapses into an absolute hyletic idealism which effectively precludes the possibility of achieving a rigorously transcendental separation of 'materialist' discourse from that of 'idealism'. It forecloses the possibility of discovering a genetic *a priori* which would distinguish the mode of utterance proper to 'materialist' theory from that concomitant with 'idealism'. In absolutising hyletic continuity, transcendental materialism renders itself indistinguishable from absolute idealism.

The Materiological Amphiboly of Utterance and Statement

To appreciate this latter point, it is necessary to understand how, in *Prinçipe de Minorité* as well as in Laruelle's later, explicitly non-philosophical work, 'idealism' is no longer a system or a doctrine but a noological syntax: it is that thinking which asserts the irrecusable primacy of Relation; of the All as infinite, self-positing relation. It is a thinking that

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[159]Hegel and Marx being the most famous example of this particular syndrome.

proceeds in and through the absolute, self-positing element of an infinite relational continuum. But just as for Spinoza the idea of a circle is not itself circular[160], for Laruelle, the transcendental condition that explains the genesis of relationality, and by implication, ideality, can be neither relational nor ideal. Relational ideality cannot account for its own genesis unless it be viciously. More precisely, the Idea as *causa sui* occludes the possibility of a rigorously theoretical account explaining the genesis and structure of relational ideality in non-ideal, non-relational terms[161].

Transcendental materialism deliberately suspends the transcendent, empirical distinction between thought and thing, subject and substance. The problem however is this: if, according to the versions of transcendental materialism we have been discussing here, Matter is Relation, or infinite hyletic continuity, then it is one with the Idea of matter, with its Decisional circumscription as absolute, self-positing relationality. But then the critical-transcendental separation of matter 'itself' from matter 'as such' is dissolved

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160 "*A true idea (for we have a true idea) is something different from its ideal (ideatum). For a circle is one thing, and the idea of one another; for the idea of a circle is not something having a circumference and a centre, as is a circle, nor is the idea of a body the body itself*". (Spinoza, *Treatise on the Correction of the Understanding*, VI, 33) Cf. Spinoza, 1923, p.236. It is important to remember that Spinoza is not reiterating a banal categorial dualism of thought and thing. The idea/ideatum distinction is inter-attributive; and attributes, each equally expressing substance's infinite and eternal essence in a different way, are not categories. Although epistemically incommensurable, they remain ontologically indistinguishable.

161 We shall see how throughout his non-philosophical work, Laruelle will insist on the necessary heterogeneity of transcendental theory *vis a vis* that which it is supposed to theorize. Thus, a transcendental theory of Decision cannot itself be Decisional.

along with the dogmatic-empirical distinction between subjectified thought and objectified thing. The result, as we know, is a form of absolute idealism in which there is no longer a *real* distinction, a radical separation, between 'matter' and its Decisional circumscription in the philosophical Idea.

More precisely, just as it posits its own presupposition, materiology deliberately reinscribes its own conditions of enunciation within the enunciated theory[162]. Like a serpent swallowing its own tail, it absorbs the real conditions of utterance for materialism within the ideal realm of materialist theory. However, in so doing, it insidiously subordinates the real, unobjectifiable condition for materialist utterance to the ideal, objectivating statements of materialist theory. It abolishes the representational codification of materialist doctrine, liquefying its hypostatisation in terms of signifying statements, the better to render the distinction between the transcendent ideality of statement and the immanent reality of utterance, the ideality of the *énoncé* and the materiality of its *énonciation*, perfectly porous, not to say ultimately reversible, so that every utterance functions as a statement for another utterance and vice versa. Thus, as Laruelle puts it, the utterance's a-

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[162]This distinction between utterance and statement, *énonciation* and *énoncé*, roughly corresponds - albeit at an entirely abstract, conceptual level- to what, in a completely different philosophical context, Levinas calls the distinction between ethical 'Saying' and ontological 'Said'. Cf. Levinas, 1990, especially pp.16-20; 64-67; 78-86; and 239-253. However, whereas Levinasian 'Saying' as *epekeina tes ousias* or 'Good beyond being' is an index of unobjectifiable transcendence, the notion of 'utterance' as used here obviously indexes unobjectifiable immanence.

signifying material immanence simultaneously serves as interruption and as relay, as cut and as continuum, *vis a vis* the statement's ideal, signifying transcendence. The materiality of utterance and the ideality of statement are hyletically synthesized, inclusively disjoined in the machinic phylum, flowing into one another in perfect intensive continuity.

As a result, machinic constructivism effectively neutralizes the hermeneutical aporias of significational inscription. It successfully circumvents an interminable post-phenomenological negotiation with the metaphysical signifier predicated on the representationalist assumption of the linguistic sign's empirical reality by transcendentally suspending the equivocal dualism of signifier and signified. But it does so at the cost of effecting an idealizing sublation of the real distinction between the immanence of material utterance and the transcendence of materialist statement.

How are we to prevent this slide from transcendental materialism to absolute idealism ? The solution to the problem requires a formulation of the critical-transcendental distinction between relational phenomenality and the unobjectifiable realm of the 'in-itself' that would not surreptitiously resurrect the transcendent distinction between thought and thing, subject and substance.

Having seen how even an ostensibly anti-phenomenological instance of

materialist Decision involves a more subtle objectivation and phenomenalisation of matter 'as such', it is clear that the solution to the problem can only reside in a non-Decisional reformulation of the critical-transcendental distinction such that it would now obtain between the realm of phenomenality *qua* objectivating Decision and the unobjectifiable dimension of the 'in-itself' *qua* ante-Decisional immanence. Thus, the sought-for genetic *a priori*, the transcendental instance, separating the conditions of enunciation proper to materialist theory from those characteristic of idealism is no longer intra-philosophical, which is to say, Decisional. Moreover, it cannot even be characterised as 'material' in that ontologically ideal sense through which materialist Decision reinscribes its own putatively real ontological presupposition within the charmed circle of its own idealizing auto-position. Every Decision in favour of materialism *qua* system or doctrine, carried out in accordance with the presumed self-sufficiency of Decision, remains *formally* idealizing and hence ultimately indiscernible from a Decision in favour of idealism. The real precondition for a rigorously 'materialist' enunciation cannot itself be 'material', short of reinstituting the idealist circle of auto-position.

Accordingly, the separating instance, the genetic *a priori*, now passes between 'materialism' and 'idealism' *qua* intra-philosophical Decisions, and

a non-Decisional immanence which is indifferent or foreclosed to the transcendent distinction between 'materialism' and 'idealism', but which nevertheless provides a real or non-posited presupposition on the basis of which a non-materiological theory can effect the non-Decisional positing of 'matter itself' as *first name* or *non-conceptual symbol*[163] for the unobjectifiable immanence of the 'in-itself'.

The Decline of Materialism

What are the consequences of this non-philosophical reformulation as far the relation between material utterance and materialist statement is concerned ? In what way does it avoid the materiological encompassment of the reality proper to material utterance within the ideality of materialist statement ?

Crucially, in this reformulation, instead of perpetuating the materiological subordination of 'matter itself' to the Decisional circumscription of matter 'as such', we effect the subordination of materiological Decisionism to 'matter itself' as first name or non-conceptual symbol for that non-Decisional immanence which is the real determinant for

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[163]This is a real or non-Decisional positing (which we shall also refer to as a 'cloning') - as opposed to an ideal or Decisional auto-position- of 'matter itself'. Thus, our non-Decisional positing of *the radical hyle* as 'first name' or 'non-conceptual symbol' for radical immanence functions in such a way as to preclude the idealising elision of the separation between 'matter itself' and 'matter as such', as well as preventing real immanence's re-envelopment in ideal transcendence.

all Decision. The next chapter shall explain the function of this non-conceptual symbol in the non-materialist axiomatic in considerable detail. For the time being, suffice it to say that it is as non-conceptual symbol for the unobjectifiable immanence of the 'in itself', determining Decision without being determined by Decision in return, that the first name 'matter itself' (or *the radical hyle*, as we shall begin calling it in the next chapter) maintains the transcendental separation between Real immanence and Ideal Decision in such a way as to prevent the slide from transcendental materialism to absolute idealism.

Thus, the genetic *a priori* through which the real conditions of enunciation for material utterance become radically separated from that ideal reversibility between the reality of utterance and the ideality of statement -that reversibility in accordance with which material utterance is perpetually reinscribed in materialist statement- is finally discovered when 'matter itself' is allowed to function as one among other possible first names for that unobjectifiable immanence in virtue of which utterance remains foreclosed to Decision, whether 'materialist' or 'idealist'. Accordingly, transcendental materialism attains its rigorous performative consistency only when the a-signifying immanence of material utterance becomes liberated from the Decisional hybridisation of signifying statement and a-signifying utterance.

'Matter itself' no longer designates ineffable transcendence. It is henceforth immanently separated –without a transcendent Decision of separation- from its Decisional hybridisation with the idealized phenomenality of matter 'as such'. It is a non-conceptual symbol for the unobjectifiable immanence of a radically a-signifying utterance; one indexing an unequivocal performative consistency of saying and doing whilst remaining semantically in-consistent; which is to say, foreclosed to every form of conceptual or hermeneutic delimitation.

It follows that in order to purge itself of the materiological hybridisation of signifying ideality and phenomenological intelligibility, transcendental materialism should be prepared to effect its own discontinuation as a system of signifying statements. Materialism must be willing to ruin the conditions of its own idealized theoretical intelligibility; to sacrifice its sufficiency and autonomy as a self-positing, self-presupposing mixture of asignifying utterance and signifying statement in order to achieve its ultimate theoretical vindication by enacting the rigorously transcendental separation of matter 'itself' *qua* first name for the reality of utterance's unobjectifiable foreclosure to Decision, from matter 'as such' *qua* ontologically objectivated Decision.

This is what we shall refer to -following Laruelle- as 'the decline of materialism'. It represents the culminating point toward which the previous three chapters have (we hope) been inexorably progressing. Materialism must first consent to its own liquidation as a Decisional category, deliberately eliminating that part of itself which consists of a system of doctrine or constative statement, the better to secure its ultimate theoretical vindication as a rigorously consistent form of performative utterance: "*In order to stay faithful to its inspiration and achieve a definitive victory over idealism, materialism should first consent to its own partial liquidation -as category and statement-, it should consent to the subordination of its materialist statements to a process of utterance that is in itself material, relative or hyletic, then consent to stop conceiving of this utterance as an ideal, relative process.* The decline of materialism in the name of matter, and of matter as hyle in the name of the real. *No longer materialism, but a more secret knowing of matter, one which would no longer tread the luminous paths of the logos..., nor the amphiboly, the limitless fusion of ideality and the real in the hyle*" (Ibid., p.107)

Here at last we find ourselves at the threshold of a rigorously non-Decisional theory of matter 'itself': a non-materialist theory. That 'more secret knowing of matter' invoked by Laruelle comes within our grasp once

both 'materialism' and 'idealism' -or, more exactly, the materiological hybridisation of 'materialism' and 'idealism' in the absolute autonomy of the hyletic continuum as self-positing, self-presupposing Idea- comes to play the role for us of an indifferent material index, an empirical support for a rigorously performative transcendental theory operating according to 'matter's' foreclosure to 'materialism' as well as 'idealism'. Whereas in materiological theorizing the ideality of statement invariably became co-constitutive of the reality of the utterance through which it was produced, the statements of non-materiological theory now allow themselves to be axiomatically determined by the unobjectifiable reality of utterance -*via* the intervention of 'matter itself' as non-conceptual symbol- without presuming to co-constitute the reality of utterance in return.

We have now identified the necessary (albeit not sufficient) conditions for a transcendental theory of 'matter itself'. More exactly: we have begun to delineate the conditions for a thinking operating *according to* the unobjectifiable immanence of 'matter itself' as foreclosed to Decision; the conditions for a thinking that is no longer 'of' matter in the sense of attempting its Decisional objectivation, but 'of' matter in the sense of being adequate to matter's foreclosure to materiological determination. It is important to emphasize how the basic parameters for materialist theorizing

have been transformed: instead of effecting a materiological determination of matter in conformity with the idealizing elision of the transcendental separation between 'matter itself' and 'matter as such', we are about to reposition ourselves so as to allow the unobjectifiable immanence of material utterance to determine thought through the non-Decisional positing of 'matter itself' as its non-conceptual symbol. In other words, we have shifted from a posture wherein thought and materiality (or the Real) are co-constituting or amphibologically coextensive, to one wherein matter determines thought without thought determining matter in return. Thought -specifically, the philosophical or materiological idealization of matter- will provide the empirical material from which the unobjectifiable immanence of 'matter itself' shall extract a non-materiological thinking; one that is unilaterally determined by the immanence of material utterance. Instead of idealising matter according to the arbitrary strictures of thought, we shall materialise thought in accordance with matter's necessary foreclosure to thought.

It is here that a further nuance explaining the requirement of a sufficient as well as a necessary condition for non-materialist theory is needed. For if 'matter' is foreclosed to intentional objectivation, indifferent to thought, then how is it possible even to construct a thinking that would operate 'according to' that radical foreclosure to thinking? Clearly, 'matter

itself' as first name for the unobjectifiable immanence of material utterance is characterised by a radical indifference to thought which withdraws it from the order of the problematisable. Radical immanence is non-problematic: it does not call for thinking, it does not petition Decision, it simply has no need for thought. But since *there is* thinking, or since philosophical Decision is the immediate, empirically given form within which thinking is already operating[164], non-materialist theory will use the Decisional hybridisation of thought and matter, the materiological amphiboly of unobjectifiable reality and objectivating ideality, as its occasional but non-determining cause. That is to say, non-Decisional materialism will use thought's transcendence, its pretension to absolute, self-positing sufficiency (exemplified by the hyletic continuum's absolute auto-position) as the contingently given empirical occasion for thought's determination by the necessary but non-sufficient immanence of material utterance. The unobjectifiable immanence of utterance as necessary condition for theory does not need discursive objectivation, but since the form of philosophical thinking has, in a sense, 'always already' articulated itself within that amphibological mixture of utterance and statement, the latter can be used as the occasional cause, the empirical support, for a thinking-in-accordance-with the unobjectifiability of utterance

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164 We will have more to say concerning this particular point in the next chapter's account of

taking that objectivating amphiboly, that Decisional hybridisation itself, as its object.

The key difference is this: whereas materiological thought mistakes its own hybridisation of unobjectifiable immanence and objectivating transcendence for the Real (i.e. matter as Idea) because it believes that Decision is sufficient unto the Real, non-materiological thinking unilaterally determines the Decisional mixture of objectivating transcendence and unobjectifiable immanence on the basis of unobjectifiable immanence alone. It uses materiological Decision as the occasion for a non-materiological theory which lets the unobjectifiable immanence of material utterance determine or *dualyse* the materiological confusion of 'matter itself' and 'matter as such' *via* the non-Decisional positing of 'matter itself' as first name for the unobjectifiable immanence which determines all Decision in-the-last-instance.

Philosophical Summary and Transition to Non-Philosophy

Let's briefly recapitulate the movement charted thus far in the four chapters that make up the first half of this thesis. We saw how the transcendental hypothesis of a critical/problematic separation between 'matter itself' and 'matter as such' was turned into an ontological dualism of enstasis

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philosophical Decision .

and ekstasis in the material phenomenology of Michel Henry and subjected to an idealizing sublation in the absolute hyletics of Deleuze & Guattari. Henry's discovery of a quasi-radical or 'enstatic' immanence remains vitiated by its phenomenologisation. By absolutising immanence as pure auto-affecting ipseity continuously absolving itself from transcendent objectification, Henry renders unobjectifiable immanence relative once more to the ekstatico-horizonal transcendence from which it distinguishes itself. Henry transcendently posits the unilateral asymmetry between enstatic immanence and ekstatic transcendence within the element of Decisional transcendence. Thus, Henry re-envelops immanence in transcendence through the very gesture whereby he attempts to render it radically autonomous. In the case of Deleuze & Guattari, immanence is withdrawn from the realm of phenomenological ipseity and shorn of the transcendent interruptions of Self, World, and Object only to be absolutised once again in a familiar philosophical gesture. Thus, although immanence is immanent only *to* itself, its auto-constructing character, its positing and presupposing in and through the philosophical Concept with which it remains coextensive, renders the immanence of intensive materiality into a paradigmatic instance of absolute idealist auto-position.

Moreover, this materiological hybridisation of unobjectifiable immanence and objectivating transcendence in both Henry and Deleuze & Guattari is more than an idiosyncrasy of doctrine. On the contrary, it is a necessary precondition for their Decisional circumscription of materiality in and through philosophical thinking. Thus, in this chapter we tried to show how materiological thinking operates by continuously reinscribing the unobjectifiable materiality of asignifying utterance into the constative statements of materialist theory. It is in order to interrupt this self-presupposing circle of absolute auto-position and to forestall this idealizing elision of the distinction between the constative circumscription of matter 'as such' and the radically immanent performativity of material utterance as index of matter 'itself', that we proposed the drastic reorganisation of the syntax of materialist theory outlined above. Consequently, we have argued that it is only what we call 'the decline of materialism' *as such* which promises to vouchsafe the triumph of materialism *itself*. More precisely: the decline of philosophical materialism *as such* coincides with the rise of non-materialist theory as non-materiological essence of materialism *itself*.

In effect, the successful transition from the speculative materiological idealism of philosophical Decisionism 'about' matter to a non-materialist axiomatic determined-in-the-last-instance by matter 'itself', entails replacing

the Decisional transcendentalisation of matter with a transcendental materialisation of Decision. Accordingly, in the second part of this thesis we shall be using materiological hybridisations of matter 'as such' and matter 'itself', as articulated in certain selected instances of philosophical materialism, as the empirical material from which we shall extract or clone the rudiments of a non-materialist axiomatic. Moreover, we shall do so through the non-Decisional positing of *the radical hyle* as non-conceptual symbol for the unobjectifiable immanence of material utterance.

We are now ready to enter into the properly non-philosophical part of this thesis, in which we shall attempt to explain in what way this decline of materialism in the name of 'matter itself' promises an unexpected enlargement, rather than an impoverishment, of the possibilities of materialist theory. Focusing in particular on the constantly reiterated function of the prefix 'non-' in non-materialist thought, the following chapter will begin to set out the methodology in accordance with which the non-materialist axiomatic shall operate. Subsequent chapters will explain in greater detail this new economy of non-philosophical relation between 'the radical hyle' as non-conceptual symbol for unobjectifiable immanence; the hyletic continuum as occasional cause or empirical support for a unified theory of phenomenology

and materialism; and 'the Alien-subject' as transcendental locus for the non-materialist identity of utterance and statement.

PART II

THE NAME OF MATTER ITSELF

CHAPTER 5

LARUELLE'S RAZOR

"*The apprenticeship of radicality is an ascesis of thought rather than a new* position" (Laruelle, 2000a, p.76)

Throughout the preceding account of materiological idealism, we have continuously maintained that the materiological hybridisation of unobjectifiable immanence and objectivating transcendence remains an ineluctable structural feature of every materialism predicated on an immediate, quasi-dogmatic faith in the sufficiency of philosophical Decision. Materiological idealism is an inevitable consequence of this spontaneous belief that philosophical Decision is sufficient unto matter. And it is by way of contrast to this spontaneous philosophical faith in Decisional thinking that we have constantly invoked, and tentatively delineated, the possibility of a non-Decisional theory 'of' matter; a thinking that by suspending this belief in the sufficiency of Decision, would try to proceed instead in accordance with a non-Decisional positing of 'matter's' foreclosure to Decision. What we call a non-Decisional materialism will suspend the spontaneous philosophical faith in the sufficiency of Decision to determine matter, the better to let Decision be determined by matter.

None of this will be clear however, until we have clarified what we mean by 'philosophical Decision' and what we mean by 'non-Decisional' thinking. Thus, it is now necessary to explain more fully our Laruellean usage of the 'non-' prefix, in the hope that this explanation will serve to clarify the way in which our non-Decisional positing of the radical hyle as first name of 'matter itself' marks a profound change of posture *vis a vis* the materiological positing of matter as a hybrid of immanent reality and transcendent ideality.

'Non-'

The crucial, all-pervasive[165] function of the prefix 'non-' in Laruelle's thought provides the key to his entire theoretical enterprise. To understand what Laruelle means by 'non-philosophy' is to understand what Laruelle entails in his rigorously idiosyncratic use of the prefix 'non-'. But that use can only properly be explained through an account of the structure which Laruelle refers to as 'the philosophical Decision'. That is to say, the expression 'non-philosophy' must be understood essentially as meaning 'non-Decisional philosophy'. Over and above metaphysics, representation, logocentrism, and ontotheology, the philosophical Decision, Laruelle insists, is the universal structural invariant presupposed by any and every possible variant on the philosophical gesture as such, including the recent critiques or

deconstructions of representation and logocentrism themselves. Accordingly, if the singular import of Laruelle's thought is to be properly grasped, it is necessary that the 'non-' in the expression 'non-Decisional philosophy' be interpreted as the rigorous but anexact counterpart of the 'non-' in the expression 'non-Euclidean geometry'[166]. By suspending[167] the spontaneous philosophical faith in the sufficiency of Decision –as expressed in what Laruelle regards as the latent 'Principle of Sufficient Philosophy' implicitly presupposed in every Decision- Laruelle initiates a philosophically unprecedented type of transcendental theory, one which takes the myriad Decisions of philosophical ontology itself as its basic empirical material.

In suspending the sufficiency of Decision, the Laruellean 'non-' suspends a specific structural condition that has hitherto served only to delimit and constrain the possibilities of thought. Thus, the 'non-' is somewhat akin to the lifting of a speed restriction. It expresses the ascent[168]

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[165] E.g. 'non-phenomenology'; 'non-epistemology'; 'non-technology'; 'non-psychoanalysis'; 'non-religion'; 'non-aesthetics'; 'non-intuitive'; and perhaps most fundamentally 'non-philosophy'.

[166] Cf. Laruelle, 1989, pp.99-129.

[167] In a manner roughly analogous to the suspension of Euclid's fifth axiom concerning parallels carried out by Bolyai and Lobatchevski, then by Gauss and Riemann

[168] Although our use of the term 'ascent' in this context is intended to echo the Quinean strategy of semantic ascent which involves the shift from first-order talk about things –object talk- to second-order talk about object-talk, an unbridgeable gulf nevertheless separates this Quinean strategy of metalinguistic ascent as strategic logical possibility (i.e. Decision) from what is, from a Laruellean perspective, the ineluctable character of 'metatranscendental' ascent as index of an inalienable, non-logical (non-Decisional) reality. Furthermore, the non-philosophical suspension of the onto-logical *a priori* simultaneously neutralises and de-stratifies the hierarchical distinction between meta-language and object-language, thereby incorporating every variety of metalinguistic discourse within the bounds of its empirical material. These issues should become clearer in the next chapter when we discuss how

from the quasi-transcendental level of the ontological determination of exclusive conditions of possibility for experience (the philosophical Decision), to a 'hypertranscendental'[169] or non-Decisional level determining the real equivalence of any and every possible ontological Decision concerning experience. Where Decisional thinking produces intelligible possibilities for cognition on the basis of that which is already empirically known as 'real', non-Decisional thinking discovers un-intelligible possibilities for cognition on the basis of the Real as unknown.

As a result, the Laruellean 'non-' entails -as we will hopefully show- an unprecedented change of scale *vis a vis* the intra-Decisional units of ontological measure. In Decisional thinking, the internal structure of Decision functions as a systemic grid governing conceptual coordination, and hence as the implicit ontological yardstick in accordance with which every variety of philosophical perspective –whether it be 'materialist' or 'idealist'- seeks to

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Laruelle's thought both radicalises and generalises certain aspects of Quinean physicalism. For an account of semantic ascent as philosophical tactic cf. Quine, 1960, pp.271-276.

[169] By 'hypertranscendental' we mean the radically immanent but non-ontological instance capable of determining every transcendental instance of ontological determination. It should be emphasised however, that the term 'hypertranscendental' is not one Laruelle has ever used or one he would be likely to favour precisely because he adamantly rejects any attempt to categorise non-philosophy as some kind of metaphilosophical enterprise. Such an enterprise would presuppose the validity of the eminently philosophical distinction between object-language and meta-language. But it is precisely these kinds of hierarchical division, Laruelle maintains, that are completely invalidated from within the unconditional immanence proper to the non-philosophical perspective. Laruelle refuses any attempt to conflate the real but non-Decisional dimension of transcendental immanence within which non-philosophical thinking operates, with the ideal, metastructural hierarchies of philosophy. He does so, he insists, because what philosophers call 'transcendental' is merely a transcendent, metaempirical construct.

limn the grain and texture of the real. But in non-Decisional thinking, the absolute sufficiency of Decision becomes relativised *vis a vis* a radically autonomous invariant, and hence the internal structure of ontological Decision subjected to variation on the basis of its determination by that non-ontological invariant[170]. Thus, the absolute sufficiency of Decision as practised in its spontaneous philosophical mode becomes relativised,- it becomes one among a potentially infinite manifold of equivalent but incommensurable ontological Decisions each of which has been determined-in-the-last-instance by a radically autonomous but non-Decisional invariant. By separating non-Decisional immanence from Decisional transcendence, Laruelle's razor discontinues the auto-positional and auto-donational circle of Decision, and suspends the hallucinatory sufficiency through which Decision continues to function as a syntactical invariant for all philosophising.

In order to clarify this function of the 'non-' in the expression 'non-Decisional materialism' this chapter will provide:

1. a brief, general description of the structure of Decision in terms of its key characteristics of 'auto-position/auto-

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[170]This is a controversial point in our mobilisation of non-philosophical theory, and one with which we believe Laruelle himself would in all likelihood probably disagree, insisting that the cloning or determination-in-the-last-instance of Decision does not constitute an intervention *within* the latter's internal structure. Thus, cf. for instance Laruelle, 1989, pp. 247-249. We shall consider the question concerning the peculiar nature of non-philosophical 'agency' in our Conclusion; specifically, the sense in which the non-philosophical cloning of Decision does or does not constitute an intervention within Decision *qua* World. Cf. *infra*, pp.430-440.

donation', wherein the 'auto-' expresses the absolute sufficiency of Decision.

2. an account of the link between the absolute sufficiency of Decisional auto-position/auto-donation and the structure of Decision as a transcendental deduction in effect. The latter explains what Laruelle takes to be the exclusive or totalising character of all philosophical Decision.

3. an explanation of how the razor allows for what we shall describe as a 'non-Decisional cloning of Decision'. The radical separation effected by the razor between Decision and non-Decisional immanence allows the former to function as the *occasional cause* for a non-Decisional thinking wherein immanence's foreclosure to Decision becomes effectuated as a determination of Decision in accordance with immanence.

Once this has been done, it should hopefully be easier to understand the entirely positive character of our attempt to effect a 'non-Decisional' suspension of the hallucinatory sufficiency of materiological Decisionism. We shall see how the expression 'non-Decisional materialism' must be understood as shorthand for the 'non-auto-positional/non-auto-donational' radicalisation of materialism; one that entails a generalisation of 'materiality'

beyond the restrictive confines of its materiological circumvention within the viciously circular ambit of Decision. Which is to say: a 'non-Decisional materialism' expresses the shift from the Decisional idealisation of matter, to the non-Decisional materialisation of Decision.

The Structure of the Philosophical Decision

A non-Decisional materialism does not negate the materialist Decision but radicalises its basic possibilities by suspending its constitutive pretension to unconditional, self-sufficient autonomy. But what is it in this unconditional sufficiency, this 'auto-Decisional' materialism that warrants the need for a heteronomous, non-auto-Decisional suspension of its spontaneous autonomy ?

Laruelle's answer is, at first glance, extremely simple: the autonomy grounding the possibility of all materialist thought expresses the materialist's philosophical faith in the supposition that the nature of matter can be sufficiently determined through a Decision, and hence, by implication, through thought, even in the limit-cases where it is decided that 'matter itself' must remain undeterminable, unthinkable or undecidable.

This philosophical faith in sufficient determination finds expression in the two basic structural features of a Decision: it is self-positing (auto-positional) and self-giving (auto-donational). All philosophising, Laruelle

insists, begins with a Decision, with a division traced between an empirical (but not necessarily perceptual) datum and an *a priori* (but not necessarily rational) faktum, both of which are *posited as given* in and through a synthetic unity wherein empirical and *a priori*, datum and faktum, are conjoined. Thus, the philosopher posits a structure of articulation which is simultaneously epistemological and ontological, one which immediately binds and distinguishes a given empirical datum, whether it be perceptual, phenomenological, linguistic, social, or historical; and an *a priori* intelligible faktum through which that datum is given: e.g. Sensibility, Subjectivity, Language, Society, or History.

What is crucial here is the way in which such a structure is immediately independent of yet inseparable from the two terms which it both serves to connect and differentiate. It is a basically fractional structure comprising two differentiated terms and their difference as a third term that is simultaneously intrinsic and extrinsic, immanent and transcendent to those two terms. Thus, for any philosophical distinction between two terms (or Dyad), such as, in the simplest possible case, knower and known, or perceiver and perceived, the distinction is simultaneously intrinsic and immanent to the identity of the distinguished terms, *and* extrinsic and transcendent insofar as it is supposed to remain genetically constitutive of the difference between the

terms themselves. For the division is inseparable from a moment of indivision (=One) guaranteeing the unity-in-differentiation of the Dyad of distinguished terms. The result is a composite structure wherein the condition that guarantees the coupling of the related terms -e.g. (and again in the simplest possible case) the knowing that binds knower and known, or the perceiving that binds perceiver and perceived- remains irrevocably co-constituted by the two terms it is supposed to condition and so implicitly contained within both. And because it is posited as given in and through the immediate distinction between empirical datum and *a priori* faktum which it is supposed to constitute, this structure ends up presupposing itself empirically in and through the datum which it constitutes, and positing itself *a priori* in and through the faktum which is posited by it[171].

So insofar as the extrinsic genetic difference between condition and conditioned is already intrinsic to the identity of the conditioned, all the moments of a philosophical Decision remain irrecusably self-positing (or auto-positional) and self-presupposing (or auto-donational): a given datum achieves empirical manifestation by being posited *a priori* through some faktum which in turn is only articulated *a priori* insofar as it is empirically presupposed through some datum, and so on. In other words, every

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[171] We saw a particularly sophisticated version of this structure at work in our account of the relation

philosophical Decision is a species of what Foucault called the 'empirico-transcendental doublet'[172], and as such remains a viciously circular structure that already presupposes itself in whatever phenomenon or set of phenomena it is supposed to explain. Consequently, there is a sense in which explanations of phenomena couched in terms of philosophical Decisions explain nothing because the formal structure of the explanatory theory, the *explanans*, already constitutes the content of the thing to be explained, the *explanandum*, and vice versa. Thus, a philosophical Decision is neither genuinely explanatory nor authentically theoretical *vis a vis* the phenomena it pretends to encompass: it is at once insufficiently heterogeneous *vis a vis* the phenomena in question and lacking in any rigorously theorematic consistency.

At its most abstract then, a philosophical Decision is a Dyad of immanence and transcendence, but one wherein immanence features twice, its internal structure subdivided between an empirical and a transcendental function. It is at once internal to the Dyad as the empirical immanence of the datum coupled to the transcendence of the *a priori* faktum, but also external as that supplement of transcendental immanence required for gluing empirical immanence and *a priori* transcendence together. Every Decision divides immanence between the empiricity of a datum that it *supposes as given*

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between Concept and plane in Deleuze & Guattari. Cf. *supra*, Chapter 2, pp.116-124.

through the *a priori* faktum, and a transcendental immanence which it has to invoke as *already given* in order to guarantee the unity of a presupposed faktum and a posited datum. It is as a result of this Decisional splitting of immanence that philosophy requires the latter to intervene both as the empirical corollary of transcendence and as the transcendental guarantor for the unity of *a priori* condition and empirically conditioned – or 'experience'. For crucially, in order to secure this coincidence of positing and presupposition, the reciprocal articulation of faktum and datum -the *a priori* positing of a datum and the empirical pre-supposing of a faktum- necessarily petitions a dimension of unobjectifiable immanence as already given (without-givenness), one which is itself neither posited nor presupposed. Thus, Decision simultaneously posits as given an objectivated immanence as a moment of dyadic division and assumes an unobjectifiable immanence as already given in order to ensure the indivisible unity of the Dyad. According to the complex structure of philosophical Decision then, the One as indivisible immanence is simultaneously internal and immanent, *and* external and transcendent, to the Dyadic division between immanence and transcendence. More precisely, the unobjectifiable immanence of transcendental Indivision is both constitutive of and co-constituted by the

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[172] Cf. Foucault, 1970, pp.318-322.

transcendent moments of dyadic Division between empirical objectivity and *a priori* conditions of objectivation.

The Laruellean razor then will 'cut' into this complex Decisional mixture of empirical immanence, *a priori* transcendence and transcendental immanence, separating the radically indivisible immanence of that which is already given independently of all Decision, from the Decision which uses it to secure the bond between an empirical immanence which it presupposes as given and an *a priori* transcendence which it posits as given. By discontinuing the reciprocity or reversibility which Decision introduces between that immanence which is already given (without-givenness) and that immanence which is empirically presupposed as given through the transcendence of an *a priori* positing, non-Decisional thinking inaugurates an irreversible separation between the radical indivision of unobjectifiable immanence on the one hand, and the Decisional hybridisation of unobjectifiable immanence, objectivating transcendence and empirical objectivity on the other.

What prevents this 'cutting' from amounting to yet another Decisional scission between immanence and transcendence is the fact that it constitutes a suspension of Decision effected on the basis of an immanence which has not itself been decided about; an immanence which has not been posited and

presupposed as given through some transcendent act of Decision, but already given independently of every perceptual or intentional presupposition, as well as from every gesture of ontological or phenomenological position. This is an immanence that does not even need to be liberated from transcendence because it is precisely as that which is already separated (without-separation) from the Decisional mixture of immanence and transcendence that it functions as the inalienable *sine qua non* for the transcendental synthesis of immanence and transcendence in Decision. Non-Decisional immanence does not absolve itself from Decision as did Henry's phenomenologised version of radical immanence. On the contrary, it causes Decision to absolve itself as absolutely transcendent in relation to it, even though the Decisional synthesis of immanence and transcendence petitions that immanence as its own *sine qua non*. It is foreclosed rather than opposed to Decision –which is to say: radically indifferent to the dyadic distinction between immanence and transcendence as well as to every other Decisional dyad such as for instance the one distinguishing the absolute from the relative. In other words, it is radically indifferent to all dyadic couplings of the form: thinkable/unthinkable; decidable/undecidable; determinable/undeterminable.

At this juncture, it is important that we pause briefly in order to stave off in advance certain automatic but misguided philosophical objections.

Thus, for instance, one of the most frequently reiterated philosophical objections to radical immanence is the one which tries to argue that in characterising immanence as unobjectifiable or non-Decisional we have unwittingly allowed it to become co-constituted once again by the objectifiable or by Decision, reinscribing it in the dyad objectifiable/unobjectifiable or Decision/non-Decision. Objections of this type are mistaken on two counts.

First, whereas philosophical thinking seems to assume a fundamental reciprocity or reversibility between conceptual description and ontological constitution, non-philosophical thinking operates on the basis of their radically irreversible duality. Thus, our characterisation of radical immanence as unobjectifiable does not constitute it as unobjectifiable. Radical immanence is ontologically foreclosed; which is to say that it remains non-constitutable not because it opposes or resists constitution but because it is foreclosed or indifferent to the dyadic distinction between description and constitution. It is that very foreclosure which guarantees that our discursive descriptions of radical immanence are adequate-in-the-last-instance to it without being constitutive of it. Moreover, that radical immanence is foreclosed to conceptual characterisation does not mean that it is unconceptualisable. On the contrary, it becomes limitlessly conceptualisable

on the basis of any given conceptual material precisely insofar as it already determines our descriptions of it as being adequate-in-the-last-instance to it, without any of our conceptual characterisations or linguistic descriptions becoming co-constitutive or co-determining of it. Thus, where Decisional thinking posits and presupposes a reversible equivalence between immanence's indivisible reality and the transcendent divisions of its own linguistico-conceptual idealisations of immanence, non-Decisional thinking installs an irreversible duality between them, so that immanence's indivisible reality unilaterally determines all the idealised divisions of linguistico-conceptual usage.

Second, the separation between the Decisional and non-Decisional is not itself dyadic, which is to say, Decisional. To maintain that it is to fail to recognise the way in which that separation has *already* been effected in accordance with the nature of radical immanence as given-without-givenness or posited-without-position, quite independently of all Decision. Accordingly, it is imperative that we appreciate the peculiar radicality of the manner in which the 'non-' as razor separates the Decisional from the non-Decisional. It is not two distinct 'things' that are being separated. If it were, we would still be operating within the ambit of Decision. What the razor serves to separate is the realm of separability in its entirety (Decision) and the Inseparable as that

which is already separated prior to the need for a separating act. In other words, the razor separates Decisional separation (scission, distinction, differentiation, division, etc.) from the Inseparable as that which is already separated independently of any separating gesture.

Of course, it is intrinsic to the character of Decisional thinking that it remain incapable of acknowledging the fact that that separation is already realised, already achieved. It is precisely on account of radical immanence's foreclosure to Decision that Decision remains incapable of recognizing the former's radical, non-Decisional autonomy. But to insist that immanence's foreclosure to Decision amounts to another instance of Decisional division is to mistake immanence's non-Decisional suspension of Decision for an intra-Decisional opposition to Decision, or an anti-Decisional annihilation of Decision. By now however, the reader should be beginning to appreciate in what way immanence's foreclosure to Decision, as expressed by the 'non-', cannot be reduced to either of these two philosophical alternatives. Instead of opposition or annihilation, the Laruellean 'non-' promises an unprecedented radicalisation and universalisation of the possibilities of Decision. It cuts into the charmed circle of auto-positional and auto-donational sufficiency, subjecting Decisional autonomy to a process of radically heteronomous determination. In other words, the reciprocal articulation or tri-lateral

reciprocity between that which is empirically presupposed as given, posited *a priori* as given, and transcendentally invoked as already given –which is to say: the Decisional hybridisation of empirical objectivity, objectivating transcendence and unobjectifiable immanence- is to be replaced by a non-reciprocal separation or unilateral duality between unobjectifiable immanence as already given or radically separate -without the need for an act of Decisional separation- and the entire structure of self-positing, self-presupposing hybridisation on the other.

It is important that we note the way in which the ubiquity of the adverb 'already' functions as a marker of non-thetic immanence as such, as an index of an unconditionally given 'real', one which has always preceded the need for any constituting process of 'realisation'. This 'already' indexes that which is non-Decisionally or non-thetically 'given' independently of every operation of phenomenological 'givenness' articulated through Decision. Thus, the use of 'already' in all these descriptions is effectively shorthand for 'non-Decisional'. But since we have already identified the defining characteristic of Decision in terms of the structure of reciprocal articulation whereby the *a priori* posits its own empirical presupposition while the latter presupposes its own *a priori* position *via* their mutual and complementary *auto*-position/donation, then clearly the 'non-' in the expression 'non-

Decisional' must itself be understood as an abbreviation for 'non-auto(-positional/donational)', where the prefix 'auto-' is now seen as perfectly condensing the essence of Decisional sufficiency. For if, as Heidegger's own 'turning' in thought (*Kehre*) attests[173], every philosophical Decision carries an implicit ontological charge as a 'de-scission' (*Unter-schied*) wherein Being operates as the One-of-the-Dyad –the indivisible division which discloses and withholds, joins as it dis-joins- , then as Laruelle points out, the self-positing, self-presupposing transcendence articulated in the Decisional 'auto-' will also express the essence of all ontological transcendence insofar as it is Decisionally deployed: "*To the extent that philosophy exploits 'transcendence' or 'Being' in a privileged and dominant manner (...) the essence of transcendence or Being according to their philosophical usage (...) is the Auto, that is to say, the idea of philosophy's absolute autonomy in the form of a circle, of a self-reference such as becomes apparent in the dimensions of Auto-donation and Auto-position*"(Laruelle, 1996, p.284)

Accordingly, we can now begin to discern a chain of equivalences whereby the Laruellean 'non-'='non-Decisional'='non-auto-positional/non-auto-donational'. Thus, the 'non-' effects a suspension of auto-Decisional

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[173]Cf. Much of Heidegger's remarkable *Contributions to Philosophy* revolve around a sustained meditation on the event of Being as *Unterschied* or 'de-scission'. Cf. Heidegger, 1999, *passim* but especially pp. 60-71 for an explicit discussion of Decision and of the link between Being's 'essential

transcendence on the basis of non-Decisional immanence. As a result, every term prefixed by the Laruellean 'non-' will bear the hallmark of that which is unconditionally or radically given in and through non-Decisional immanence, rather than according to the double articulation of position and donation through the structure of Decision. Moreover, to the extent that the sufficiency of the Decisional 'auto-' expresses the essence of ontological transcendence *per se*, the manifestation of a term in accordance with non-Decisional immanence shall effectively release that term's radically immanent *non-ontological* essence, its non-auto-Decisional Identity as *cloned*[174] or determined-in-the-last-instance by radical immanence.

Decision as Transcendental Method

It is on account of this constitutively self-positing and self-presupposing aspect, Laruelle maintains, that every philosophical Decision recapitulates the formal structure of a transcendental deduction. In his article on 'The transcendental method' in the *Universal Philosophical Encyclopaedia*[175], Laruelle, having reiterated his conviction that the transcendental method represents a methodological invariant for philosophy

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swaying' as *Ereignis* and the 'leap' or 'crossing over' enacted by an 'inceptual' (i.e. non-metaphysical) thinking between what Heidegger calls philosophy's 'first' and its 'other' beginning.

[174]The notion of non-Decisional cloning will be explained below in the third section of this Chapter, pp.245-258.

[175]Edited by A. Jacob, Paris: PUF, 1989. Cf. Laruelle, 1989c.

both before and after Kant -one the formal features of whose functioning can be described independently of any determinate set of ontological or even epistemological presuppositions- goes on to identify the three distinct structural moments which he takes to be constitutive of philosophising as such:

1. The analytical inventory of a manifold of categorial *a prioris* on the basis of the empirical reality or experience whose conditions of possibility one seeks. In Kant, this is the moment of the metaphysical exposition of space and time as *a priori* forms of intuition and of the metaphysical deduction of the categories as pure, *a priori* forms of judgment[176]. It corresponds to the moment of metaphysical distinction between conditioned and condition, empirical and *a priori*, datum and faktum.

2. The gathering together or unification of this manifold of local or regional (i.e. categorial) *a prioris* into a form of universal Unity by means of a single, unifying, transcendental *a priori*. Whereas the form of every categorial *a priori* remains a function of the *a posteriori*, of experience, that of the

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[176] Cf. Kant, 1929, B33-B116, pp. 65-119.

transcendental is no longer tied to any form of regional experience because it functions as that superior or absolute condition which makes experience itself possible. It is no longer the result of synthesis, but rather the pre-synthetic Unity that makes all *a priori* forms of synthesis themselves possible. This Unity is said to be 'transcendental' then, because it is supposed to exceed experience absolutely, rather than merely relatively, in the manner of the metaphysical or categorial *a prioris*, which are always local, multiple, and tied to a specific region or form of experience. It transcends absolutely beyond the specific generic distinctions of the relatively transcendent, categorial *a prioris* that it ultimately grounds and unifies. Kant, famously, will locate this transcendental ground of the synthetic *a priori* in the indivisible Unity of pure apperception. Crucially, Laruelle points out, it is this very absoluteness required of the transcendental *a priori* which is compromised insofar as it remains tied in varying degrees, according to the philosopher in question, to one or other form of metaphysically transcendent empirical entity (e.g. Kant: the 'I think' and the facultative apparatus; Husserl: the Ego of pure

phenomenological consciousness). Thus, the supposedly unconditional transcendence demanded of the transcendental remains fatally compromised precisely because the structure of transcendence invariably binds it to some reified, transcendent entity.

3. The third and final moment is that of the unification of these modes of categorial synthesis with this transcendental Unity, but now understood in terms of their constitutive relation to experience through the offices of the latter. It is the binding of the metaphysical *a priori* to the empirical experience that it conditions *via* the transcendental Unity conditioning the possibility of the *a priori* itself. This, of course, is the stage corresponding to Kant's transcendental Deduction of the categories[177]. It is the moment of transcendental synthesis, of reciprocal co-belonging, guaranteeing the immanence to one another of conditioning and conditioned, either in terms of the unity of possible experience (Kant), or of the *Lebenswelt* (Husserl), or of Being-in-the-World as Care (Heidegger). In

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[177] Cf. Kant, 1929, A95-A130 and B129-B169, pp.129-175.

> any case it is that for which the moment of transcendental analysis functioned only as an enabling preliminary[178].

Laruelle's account of Deduction here deliberately invokes a Heideggerean resonance: Deduction constitutes the movement whereby the transcendent metaphysical scission of analytic division *pivots back* (*Kehre*)[179] toward empirical immanence *via* the binding function of transcendental Unity and its indivisible synthesis. Through Deduction the motion from the metaphysically transcendent categorial manifold to the transcendental Unity which makes that *a priori* manifold possible is turned back toward empirical experience in the shape of a transcendental synthesis binding the *a priori* to the *a posteriori*, the logical syntax of the ideal to the contingent empirical congruences of the real. In this way, Deduction simultaneously circumscribes the empirical insofar as it is concerned with its *a priori* condition, and delimits the transcendent by folding the *a priori* back within the bounds of empirical sense and forbidding metaphysical attempts to loose it from its moorings as defined according to the limits of possible experience.

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[178]Ibid., pp.120-175. A case could be made for the schematism here as better exemplifying this unificatory function insofar as it is that which ultimately guarantees the categories' objective reality, over and above their merely formal or logical objective validity.

[179]In *The Philosophies of Difference* Laruelle will explicitly identify the Heideggerean shift from Being as ontico-ontological *Differenz* to the event of 'Enowing' as *Unter-schied* with the Decisional transition from metaphysical to transcendental difference.Cf. Laruelle, 1986, pp.48-120. On the Heideggerean notion of 'turning' –or more precisely, what Heidegger calls a 'turning-in-enowning'-,cf. for example section 255 in Heidegger 1999, pp.286-288.

Yet not only does Deduction explain the empirical reality of cognition, but also the transcendental reality of its *a priori* possibility. So Laruelle is entirely willing to concur with Kant's immediate successors in ascribing an unparalled philosophical importance to the notion of the synthetic *a priori*[180]. But only if (as Schelling and Hegel rightly saw) the function of the latter is de-subjectivised and de-objectivised, or generalised beyond its Kantian reification in pure apperception. If interpreted in the broadest sense as an abstract philosophical mechanism, then Laruelle sees in it that which is simultaneously both the means and the end of transcendental Deduction *per se*, so much so that one or other version of the synthetic *a priori* as principle of the pre-synthetic Unity of the ideal and the real, of *logos* and *phusys*, can be seen to lie at the very heart of all Decision (so long, of course, as one continues to insist, as Laruelle does, on an irrecusably transcendental dimension as constitutive of every philosophical gesture *per se*).

It is this indivisible synthesis operated through the offices of the transcendental *a priori* in Deduction, this an-objective, pre-subjective and thereby superior (which is to say, transcendental) reality proper to the Unity-in-difference of real and ideal which Laruelle will identify as the

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180 See for example Vetö, 1998, pp.61-85 and *passim*; Schelling, 1993, pp. 95-163; Hegel, 1989,

consummating moment of Decision. It constitutes the transcendental Indivision (=One) which is simultaneously intrinsic and extrinsic, immanent and transcendent to the fundamental Dyadic scission of metaphysical faktum and empirical datum, condition and conditioned: "*The telos of the transcendental is fulfilled by Deduction and this constitutes the real: not in any empirical or contingent sense, but in the superior or specifically philosophical sense which is that of the concrete synthetic Unity of the empirically real and of a priori or ideal possibility.*" (Laruelle, 1989c1, p.697)

Only now does it become possible to appreciate the full import of the Laruellean claim that Decision presumes to co-constitute the Real. For the 'reality' of the Real in question at the level of Decision is neither that of the empirically immanent *res*, nor that of the metaphysically transcendent and ideal *a priori* (Kant: reality defined as coextensive with the bounds of real possibility through the objective validity of the *a priori* conditioning possible experience), but rather that which conditions both. It is the reality peculiar to the transcendental as ubiquitous guarantor unifying, and thereby constituting, the possibilities of thought and experience at a level that remains both presubjective and anobjective, so that the principle is as valid for Nietzsche

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p.209.

and Deleuze as for Kant and Husserl. This higher Unity of Decision is not only indissociable from the Unity of experience, it yields it, so that the latter is always structurally isomorphic with the former. Through the operation of Deduction, the Decision as indivisible division or One-of-the-Dyad is always coextensive with the *a priori* categorial manifold of experience.

But this is not all. The philosopher reinscribes his/her own philosophical activity within the transcendental structure which renders the experience of that thought possible as a part of the real at a level that is simultaneously ontico-empirical and ontologico-transcendental (the Decisional hybrid or composite once again). More exactly, the syntax of Decision enacts or performs its own peculiarly transcendental reality in what effectively amounts to an operation of auto-Deduction possessing a tripartite structure: Decision is at once an empirical event of thought, some immanent being or some thing; but also a transcendent, onto-metaphysical thought of Being as Event; and finally that which transcendentally enunciates the Being of thought as Event of Being. This is the complex internal architecture proper to the Decisional '*autos*' as self-positing/self-donating circle or doublet[181].

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[181] We have already seen this Decisional structure at work in the case of Deleuze & Guattari's machinic constructivism: the philosophical Concept's counter-effectuation of intensive materiality is at once extracted from an empirical state of affairs through which the philosopher is forced to think and transcendentally productive of Being *qua* Event. Cf. *supra*, Chapter 3, pp.109-124 and 150-161. But perhaps it is best exemplified by Heidegger, who reinscribes the conditions for the genesis of the project of fundamental ontology within the structure of fundamental ontology itself. Thus, the

Two points need to be made here. First, the way in which Laruelle, in conformity with the characterisation of the non-philosophical ethos mentioned earlier, both radicalises and generalises the restricted Heideggerean/Derridean conception (and critique) of the metaphysics of presence, extending its scope beyond that of the 'presence of the present' and a narrowly circumscribed domain of metaphysical thinking defined according to what, for Laruelle, remains an *ad hoc*, empirical (i.e. Decisional) definition of metaphysics. He does this by providing a non-Decisional identification of the 'auto', one according to which it is identified with the essence of Decision as auto-positional and auto-donational sufficiency. As a result, the range of applicability for 'auto' as a philosophical notion is generalised both beyond its metaphysical definition in terms of the substantivity or presence of that which is a 'standing-alongside' or 'beside-itself'-, *and* beyond what Heidegger calls its thoughtful or essential redefinition as 'the Same', as the belonging-together of that which differs[182]. Consequently, the self-positing/self-presupposing structure of auto-Decision becomes applicable even to the thinking that tries to uncover the unpresentable conditions for

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philosophical project delineated in *Being and Time* encompasses its own conditions of possibility, as explicated in *Dasein's* shift from dispersion in average everydayness to the properly meta-physical appropriation of being-unto-death as its ownmost potentiality for being. Since it is *via* the latter that *Dasein's* own being comes into question for it, fundamental ontology as theoretical project is ultimately supervenient on the existential ur-project delineated in being-unto-death.

[182] Cf. Heidegger, 1969.

presencing or retrieve the constitutive dimension of self-withholding in every self-disclosure of Being.

Once again we witness a change of theoretical scale in moving from the philosophical to the non-philosophical level of description. The autonomy of Decision is defined purely in terms of its abstract theoretical essence independently of any set of assumptions about what can and cannot count as an instance of ontological reification, thereby becoming indifferently applicable both to presence, and to its unpresentable presencing, so that the auto-logical structure of self-position and self-presupposition pertains even at the level of *Ereignis/Enteignis* as unrepresentable disclosing-withdrawal of Being. Thus, from a non-Decisional viewpoint, there is no compelling theoretical reason to prefer Heidegger's retrieval of the unthought essence concealed within the Parmenidean *το αυτο* ('the Same')[183] as non-metaphysical co-belonging of disclosure and withholding (unrepresentable advent of presencing), to the ontotheological interpretation of the 'auto' as substantial metaphysical identity (reified presence). Both are entirely equivalent variants of a structural invariant: Decision as auto-presupposing composite of thinking and being.

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[183]For a suggestive indication of the profound link between the structure of the Parmenidean axiom ('It is the same thing to think and to be') and the Kantian problematic of transcendental deduction, cf. Heidegger, 1968, p.243. The latter seems to support Laruelle's claim that all Decision recapitulates a

The second point that needs to be made concerns philosophy's theoretical status (or lack thereof), and the precise character of what many will doubtlessly see as Laruelle's own excessive 'theoreticism'. It is on account of this auto-Deductive structure (which is to say, on account of the Principle of the Sufficiency of Decision which it serves to articulate) that philosophy itself (la *philosophie*) for Laruelle is not a theory but rather an activity whose claim to theoretical legitimacy is only ever assured by its performance; a game the rules for which are always effectively guaranteed through the very operation through which their stipulation is enacted. For Laruelle, the trouble with this constitutively performative dimension of philosophical activity, this Decisional auto-enactment in Deduction, lies not in this performativity (far from it) but in the way in which the latter invariably operates on the basis of an unstated set of constative assumptions which themselves only ever become performatively legitimated. In other words, philosophy is a hybrid of theory and practise: it is a theory whose cognitive possibilities are compromised through an extraneous set of practical exigencies, and a practise whose performative capacities are hindered by a needlessly restrictive system of theoretical presumptions[184]. The philosopher,

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process of transcendental deduction as a variant on the Unity-in-Difference of thinking and being or of ideal *logos* and real *phusys*.

[184]"*As soon as* [philosophy]*begins to be used as a material and an occasion, it loses its traditional finalities, all of which are based in a 'spontaneous philosophical faith'. The latter forms a circle: it*

in effect, never says what he/she is really doing, nor does what he/she is really saying.

It is to this hybridisation of theory and practise, of the constative and the performative, of saying and doing, to which Laruelle objects, on the grounds that it needlessly constricts both the possibilities of saying and those of doing, of thought and of experience. Moreover, simply to affirm the *différance* between theory and praxis, constative and performative, as Derrida, for instance, seems to[185], is to complacently re-affirm the philosophical Decision's constitutive, self-perpetuating embroilment in its own basically fractional, self-presupposing structure.

By way of contrast, it is radical immanence as the *already-performed*, as the Performed-without-performance[186], which furnishes us with the non-Decisional essence of performativity. By using the razor to effect the non-Decisional separation or dualysation of these auto-Decisional hybridisations

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obliges one to practise philosophy for reasons that are external to it, whether they be ethical, juridical, scientific, aesthetic,etc.;but inversely, philosophy in turn uses these finalities the better to triumph and to affirm itself, on the basis of their subordination, as the only activity which is genuinely excellent, uncircumventable or 'absolute'. All this prescriptive activity –whether it be ethical or pedagogical, etc.-,all this normative or auto-normative use of philosophy 'with a view to experience', all of spontaneous philosophy's latent or explicit teleology, must be abandoned, which is to say, treated as a mere material and practised henceforth within these limits rather than destroyed." (Laruelle, 1989, p.27)

[185] Cf. Derrida, 1982.

[186] "*It is this Performed, shorn of the fetishes of performativity and of activity and the causa sui in general, which invests thinking itself as identity (within its relatively autonomous order of thought) of science and philosophy, and more generally, of the theoretical and the pragmatic. We shall not say too hastily -confusing once again thinking with the Real- that the latter* [this identity-RB] *is performed*

of the constative and the performative, of performance and performativity, on the basis of radical immanence as performed-without-performance, we will clone the identity (without synthesis or unity), and the duality (without reciprocity or relation) of theory and praxis, or of the constative and the performative, thereby emancipating the non-Decisional essence of theory as radically performative, at the same time as we liberate the non-thetic essence of praxis as rigorously cognitive. Non-philosophy is at once a radically theoretical praxis, and a radically performative theory. Moreover, we shall see in the next section how it is precisely insofar as we are *already* operating in accordance with the immanence of the Real as 'already-performed' that we cannot help but say what we do and do as we say[187].

Finally, it is the auto-Deductive character of Decision, its self-legislating sufficiency, which explains the fundamentally *unitary* nature of all philosophical Decision. Perhaps the most important consequence of the auto-Deductive structure described above is that the transcendental isomorphy between the *a priori* conditions for thinking and for Being excludes *de jure*

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directly in-One, but that it is so only in the last instance by the One as the Performed itself." (Laruelle, 1996, p.215).

[187]We will also see later to what extent the non-materialist invalidation of the transcendent, phenomenological distinction between theory and experience, undermining as it does the quasi-sacrosanct status popularly accorded to a supposedly originary dimension of non-representational facticity or embodiment in much contemporary continental philosophy, resonates with the kind of militantly neuroscientific theoreticism espoused by philosophers like Paul Churchland. From a non-materialist perspective, with the exception of the radical hyle as Given-without-givenness, nothing, no residue of worldly, social, historical, or phenomenological experience is given without the intercession

the possibility of two Decisions (i.e. two Deductions) possessing an equally valid claim on the real. Philosophy as arena of Decision is necessarily the war of all against all. This claim seems to carry a peculiarly Levinasian resonance, but Laruelle seems less inclined to condemn war on ethical grounds as an originary evil, than to indict it on theoretical grounds simply because it presents us with an unnecessarily tedious and predictable spectacle: "*Philosophy's closure, both within itself and in its own unitary or polemological multiplicity obliges it to exploit itself as a supposedly inexhaustible but fundamentally scarce resource. There is a scarcity of decision, one which is a consequence of its unity or circularity, its self-reference or self-sufficiency: all the various philosophies –the manifold of the Dyad- parcel out Unity, indivisible in itself, among themselves as their unique booty, and this scarcity is identical with the war which they all reciprocally wage on one another.*" (Laruelle, 1989, p.106)

Thus, Laruelle insists that the root of philosophy's unitary presumption lies in this auto-Deductive syntax of Decision: there could never be, as a matter of philosophical principle, more than one way of validly effecting the transcendental synthesis of *logos* and *phusys* conditioning the possibilities of thinking and being to yield an ontologically *a priori* or

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of philosophical Decision. Cf. Laruelle, 1996, pp.212-225, and *infra*, Chapters 7 and 8, where the

philosophical experience of reality, because the formal Unity of Decision transcendentally conditions the structure of what for philosophy is equivalent to the real. All substantive ontological multiplicity articulated through the hybridisation of immanence and transcendence remains syntactically circumscribed by the transcendental synthesis of Decision. Consequently, however much multiplicity a philosophy lays claim to at the ontic, or even ontological level, the formal structure of Decision invariably necessitates that what philosophy affirms as being irreducibly multiple and singular, is always the result of a pure synthesis of transcendental Unity and *a priori* multiplicity, of ideal syntax and real experience[188].

Such synthesis invariably bears two distinct but inseparable characteristics. First, the character of indivisible synthetic Unity or the fact that transcendental synthesis must equal One. There can only ever be one way in which the ontological reality of experience is transcendentally constituted. Second, the characteristic that what is to count as ontically real multiplicity will be defined *a priori* as a function of real possibility or ontological reality at the transcendental level. Thus, what counts as singular, manifold, aleatory and heterogeneous according to the structure of Decision

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ramifications of these claims will be examined in detail.

[188] Cf. in this regard Laruelle's account of the relation between Difference as ideal metaphysical syntax and as real transcendental experience in *The Philosophies of Difference*: Laruelle, 1986, pp. 37-92.

is invariably the result of a *de jure* indiscernibility or undecidability between the possibility of real experience as *a priori* manifold at the ontic level and the reality of ideal syntax as transcendental Unity at the ontological level. And it is this hybrid or mixture of syntax and experience, of ideal unity and *a priori* multiplicity, of ontological reality and ontically real, which Decision affirms as coincidence of the indivisible immanence of the Real *qua* One and the unencompassable transcendence of the Ideal *qua* Multiple[189].

The Non-Decisional Cloning of Decision

At this stage, we must address an obvious philosophical rejoinder to the account of Decision that we have just delineated. What kind of validity are these claims concerning the auto-Deductive character of Decision supposed to have? Aren't they simply wild, reckless generalisations? Clearly, from a philosophical perspective, Laruelle's assertions strain our credulity. On what possible basis can he presume to claim that all philosophical

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[189]In Chapter 3 we saw with reference to the case of Deleuze & Guattari how this Decisional synthesis or 'sublation' of the One *qua* Real and the Multiple *qua* Ideal inevitably reinscribes untotalisable multiplicity as indivisible Unity. Cf. *supra*, pp.149-153. By way of contrast, it is by suspending the sufficiency of Decision and irreversibly dissociating the moment of transcendental indivision from that of metaphysical division, unilaterally determining the latter on the basis of the former but never vice versa, that non-materialism will hypothesize that there are in principle an infinite number of possible ways in which the ontic singularity of a phenomenon may be ontologically constituted,- a *de jure* infinite number of possible Decisions capable of conditioning *a priori* the reality of experience. This is (hyper)transcendental dispersion, the non-materialist radicalisation and generalisation of the notion of an *a priori* manifold, one which would make it impossible to reinsert the latter within any horizon of ontological differentiation. Cf. *infra*, Chapter 7, pp.361-372, for our account of the *a priori* fractalisation of Decisionally articulated instances of ontological unity.

thinking is Decisional and that every Decision invariably repeats the structure of a transcendental Deduction ?

It may be however, that such a question misconstrues the *explanatory* intent of the theoretical posture presupposed in all these descriptions of philosophical activity, and consequently fails to appreciate the way in which Laruelle's account functions as a transcendental hypothesis constructed in order to explain the possibility of that activity. We have already insisted that non-philosophy is not anti-Decisional: it is a theory and a practise *for* philosophy, an attempt to explain the autonomy of Decision heteronomously, which is to say, in non-Decisional terms. Moreover, we have already seen that the suspension of Decisional sufficiency on the basis of a non-Decisional immanence that is already given cannot be reduced to an anti-Decisional stance. Consequently, it cannot be confused with an immediately philosophical critique or denunciation of Decision. On the contrary, it is by thinking in accordance with radical immanence as utterly heterogeneous to Decision that we access the possibility of explaining Decision.

Thus, the non-philosophical description of auto-Decisional sufficiency is neither a critique nor a deconstruction: it is an explanatory hypothesis. The point is not to denounce, to delimit or to end all possibility of Decision, but to provide a heteronomous theoretical description of its functioning which

simultaneously promises to untether the possibilities of thinking from the narrow ambit of auto-Decisional sufficiency. Accordingly, the Laruellean description of auto-Decisional sufficiency in terms of a generalised process of transcendental Deduction is an explanatory hypothesis that Laruelle is prepared to adopt to see if it will yield fruitful results in the attempt to illuminate the functioning of Decision. And it is in *The Philosophies of Difference* -a text which is roughly contemporaneous with the account of Decision put forward in 'The Transcendental Method'- that Laruelle submits this particular non-philosophical hypothesis to a process of experimental verification by applying it to a widely disparate set of philosophies, thereby testing its range of applicability and explanatory coherence with reference to a heterogeneous assortment of philosophical methodologies and problematics[190].

Moreover, this non-philosophical hypothesis about the essence of philosophical thinking is transcendental. That is to say: it accepts the separation between Decisional transcendence and non-Decisional immanence as already-given the better to allow for a transcendental effectuation of that

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[190] Although we lack space for a proper examination of Laruelle's systematic adoption and testing of the auto-Deductive hypothesis for philosophy in *The Philosophies of Difference*, we feel that the ability to provide a unified, conceptually coherent explanation for what are habitually regarded as utterly disparate, not to say incommensurable, sets of philosophical data (Nietzsche, Deleuze, Heidegger, Derrida) tend, when coupled with the variety of penetrating insights and illuminating analyses which characterise the results yielded in the process of hypothetical experimentation, to validate the hypothesis' explanatory legitimacy.

separation in thought, an effectuation presupposed in its non-Decisional description of the essence of philosophy. For to theorize by means of the adoption of axioms, the construction of theorems and the experimental testing of explanatory hypotheses is already to engage in non-Decisional or non-philosophical thinking. Accordingly, the characterisation of Decision as auto-Deductive which we have just provided is already non-philosophical, and the account of philosophical thought put forward by Laruelle in 'The Transcendental Method', must, along with all of his works since *A Biography of the Ordinary Man*, be read as intrinsically and unequivocally non-philosophical in character.

That the very identification of philosophical thinking as intrinsically Decisional is already non-philosophical, which is to say, operating from a transcendental perspective *for* philosophy, is what now needs to be clarified. However, we must warn the reader that in the course of this clarification we shall be obliged to describe the workings of non-philosophical theory in some detail, thereby entering into a degree of technical intricacy[191] that he or she may find excessively convoluted, not to say tortuous. Although regrettable, that tortuousness is nevertheless unavoidable in the present circumstances.

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[191]Some –although not all- of the details of the following account –specifically those concerning the theory of cloning- are drawn largely from Laruelle, 1996, pp.34-38,162-168, 225-228; 1999, pp. 141-146; 2000a, pp.56-75, 226-238; 2000b, pp.49-53; and 2000c, pp.185-186.

The requirements of non-philosophical precision sometimes obviate the demands of philosophical clarity.

The intelligibility of the claim that the non-philosophical description of philosophy is already transcendental requires an acknowledgement that the 'perspective' of radical immanence (the vision-in-One) is already-given-without-givenness, prior to every auto-positional or auto-donational hybridisation of given and givenness, empirical and *a priori*, real and ideal. For the vision-in-One entails that the spontaneous philosophical presumption that every given presupposes an operation of givenness already be invalidated and suspended. As a result, the radical separation or unilateral duality of non-Decisional immanence as already-given and Decisional transcendence as mixture of given and givenness is itself already given-without-givenness:-it has already been performed (without the need for an act or Decision of performance). Which is to say: the real separation performed by the Laruellean razor is not between Decision and non-Decision but between the philosophical positing of the dyad 'Decision/non-Decision' and the already-given or radically unilateral duality separating dyadic Decision from non-Decisional duality.

But this means that even the absolute autonomy of Decision is nevertheless relative-in-the-last-instance to non-Decisional immanence. Thus,

the fact that the absolute sufficiency of Decision can only be posited-as-given by petitioning an immanence that is already-given renders that absolutely sufficient condition relative-in-the-last-instance to a radically necessary but non-sufficient condition. It renders the absolute, self-positing autonomy of Decision relatively autonomous *vis a vis* the radical autonomy of that which is already-given. Even the absolute autonomy of Decision remains relative to that radically autonomous last-instance which it petitions as already-given in order to effect its synthesis of ideal positing and real presupposition[192].

Accordingly, the autonomy of Decisional sufficiency is never just given as an absolute 'in-itself' in terms of the metaphysical dyad 'Decisional transcendence/non-Decisional immanence'. It is also already-given-in-One or given-without-givenness as a relative autonomy - which is to say, given as an *occasional cause* or *empirical support* for non-Decisional thinking. Crucially, this heteronomous or non-auto-donational giving of Decision as an occasional cause -the non-Decisional donation of its absolute autonomy as a merely relative autonomy-, lifts or suspends its pretension to absolute, self-positing sufficiency, thereby reducing it to the status of an indifferent empirical

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192 "*Real immanence neither absorbs nor annihilates* [Decisional] *transcendence, it is not opposed to it, but is capable of 'receiving' it and of determining it as a relative autonomy. Real immanence is so radical –rather than absolute- that it does not reduce the transcendence of the World –whether philosophically or phenomenologically-, it does not deny or limit it, but, on the contrary, gives it –albeit in accordance with its own modality: as that being-given-without-givenness of transcendence which, whilst remaining 'absolute' or auto-positional in its own register, acquires a relative autonomy with regard to the Real.*"(Laruelle, 2000b, pp.50-51)

material. Thus, the absolute autonomy of Decision –otherwise known by Laruelle as 'The Principle of Sufficient Philosophy'- is suspended once it is understood that the supposedly unconditional sufficiency of Decision has already been given-without-givenness as no more than a relatively sufficient condition, an occasional but non-determining cause for non-Decisional thinking.

Moreover, it is on the basis of Decision as empirical occasion that immanence's foreclosure to Decision can become transcendentally *effectuated* in thought. Consequently, the fact that Decision itself is already-given-without-givenness as a potential occasion or material for non-Decisional thinking -its pretension to absolute sufficiency already-suspended and reduced to a merely relative sufficiency-, explains how immanence's foreclosure to Decisional thinking may nevertheless become effectuated in thought on the basis of Decision. For with its pretension to absolute autonomy suspended, Decision as a relatively sufficient, but non-determining occasional cause becomes susceptible to determination by a radically necessary but non-sufficient cause: immanence as cause of determination-in-the-last-instance. And this determination of Decision as sufficient but non-necessary occasional cause, according to immanence as necessary but non-sufficient cause-in-the-last-instance, is performed by non-Decisional thought. This effectuation of

immanence's foreclosure to Decision in non-Decisional thought, or Decision's determination-in-the-last-instance through the non-Decisional effectuation of immanence in thought, is what Laruelle calls 'cloning'.

Here we arrive at the heart of non-Decisional thinking; that aspect of non-philosophy which is at once the most crucial but also the most difficult to understand as far as Decisional thinking is concerned. For doesn't this putative 'effectuation' by thought of an immanence which is supposed to remain radically foreclosed to thought re-institute a reciprocity –and thereby a bi-lateral determination- between immanence and thought?

In order to appreciate why this is not the case, it is important to remember that immanence's 'foreclosure' to Decision simply means that it is separate-without-separation from every Decisional dyad, such as, for instance, the one distinguishing the thinkable from the unthinkable. Thus, immanence's foreclosure to the Decisional alternative between thinkable and unthinkable does not render it 'unthinkable'. On the contrary: it is immanence's foreclosure to thought that allows it to use the Decisional hybridisation of the thinkable and the unthinkable –one which we have already seen exemplified in the work of Michel Henry[193]- as an empirical occasion from which to clone thought's transcendental Identity as determined-in-the-last-instance by

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[193] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 2, pp. 87-90.

immanence as that *non-thinkable* foreclosure which is simultaneously the *already-thought*.

Accordingly, although Real immanence is foreclosed to thought as well as Decision, the fact that it nevertheless gives or manifests the thinking which is inscribed in Decision as an empirical occasion allows immanence's foreclosure to effectuate itself *as* thought; to clone itself as a transcendental Identity *for* non-Decisional thinking –one which Laruelle will call 'the force-(of)-thought'-; but an Identity-(of)-thought which is now in its own turn foreclosed as transcendental, rather than as Real, to the Decisional distinction between thinkable and unthinkable which it uses as its material support.

At this point, in order to minimize the potential for confusion, it is particularly important that we enforce a set of rigorous but non-philosophical distinctions between immanence *qua* Real foreclosure, Decision *qua* empirical occasion, and non-Decisional thought *qua* transcendental effectuation of the Real's foreclosure. Cloning allows Real immanence's foreclosure to Decision to become transcendentally effectuated *as* non-Decisional thinking on the basis of Decision as its empirical occasion, but it does so without reconstituting a philosophical dyad between 'thought' and 'Real', or between 'transcendental foreclosure' and 'Real foreclosure'. Thus, the distinction between the Real's radical foreclosure to all thought, whether

Decisional *or* non-Decisional, and non-Decisional thought's transcendental effectuation or cloning of the Real's foreclosure to Decision, is not a dyadic distinction between different, reifiable 'things'. Neither Real immanence, nor its transcendental effectuation, can count as philosophically distinguishable 'things'. There is only one 'thing': Decision as empirical occasion. 'Between' Real foreclosure and transcendental foreclosure there is neither identity nor difference but an Identity-of-the-last-instance. The Real's foreclosure clones itself as non-Decisional thinking's transcendental foreclosure to Decision on the basis of Decision as empirical occasion. Which is to say, the Real clones itself transcendentally *for* thought –as force-(of)-thought- as an identity-without-unity. Cloning describes the way in which the Real as an Identity-without-ontological consistency, an Identity foreclosed to all criteria of discrete, numerical unity, can allow for a limitless number of effectuations without numerical reduplication[194].

By the same token, it is important that we do not apply the term 'unilateral duality' when speaking of the non-dyadic distinction or Identity-of-the-last-instance between immanence *qua* Real and immanence *qua*

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[194]This is what Laruelle describes as immanence's radically *universal* (but non-unitary or non-ontological) character as the already-given: its capacity to give (without-givenness) a *de jure* limitless variety of reciprocally exclusive and therefore ontologically unitary Decisions as mere occasions for thinking in accordance with the Real's non-unitary, non-ontological and non-consistent essence as an Identity-without-unity. Cf. Chapter 7, pp.349-372; and Chapter 8, pp.415-421.

transcendental. For it is the unilateral duality between Real immanence and Decision which becomes transcendentally effectuated or cloned *as* the unilateral duality between the non-Decisional clone and its Decisional occasion. Once again, in spite of appearances, non-philosophical theory operates with only one term: philosophical Decision *qua* empirical occasion. Instead of the Decisional triad of relations between empirical, *a priori*, and transcendental, we have a unilateral duality with only one term: that Decisional triad as an indivisible, empirical occasion. Neither the Real nor its transcendental clone constitutes a relational term. Consequently, the unilateral duality 'between' Real and Decision is strictly indiscernible from –or is nothing over and above- its effectuation *as* the unilateral duality between Decision and non-Decisional clone. But its effectuation requires the occasion of Decision: the Real's foreclosure to Decision does not need to be thought –it is radically indifferent to all thinking- but *if* (and only *if*) Decision occasions it, that foreclosure is transcendentally effectuated or cloned *as* non-Decisional thought. Only on the basis of Decision as empirical occasion does the Real's radical foreclosure to Decision becomes effectuated as non-Decisional thinking in order to become transcendentally determining *vis a vis* Decision.

Thus, the Real as foreclosed or as separate-without-separation from Decision is cloned as that force-(of)-thought which is separate-without-

separation or foreclosed to the Decision that serves as its empirical support. Because the Real's foreclosure to thought simply means that it is the necessary but non-sufficient condition for all thinking, the non-Decisional thinking operating *according to* the Real's foreclosure requires for its manifestation the occasion of Decisional thought as a contingent but non-determining factor. Accordingly, the inception of non-Decisional thinking's force-(of)-thought as that which effectuates the Real's foreclosure occurs without the inauguration of a bi-lateral reciprocity, a co- determination, between the latter and the former.

This point is important enough to be worth labouring: the radical separation between immanence and Decision is not reduplicated but cloned as the unilateral duality between thought's non-Decisional Identity and the Decisional hybridisation of Real and thought which serves as its empirical support. For it is as this force-(of)-thought that the Real is able to determine Decision without Decision being able to determine the Real in return. Because Decision's non-Decisional Identity, its transcendental clone, is identical-in-the-last-instance with the Real, it functions as the determining instance, the organon, *as which* (rather than 'through which') the Real unilaterally determines Decision.

In what way then do these extraordinarily convoluted explanations serve to mitigate the charge of arbitrariness levelled against the Laruellean account of Decision? To the extent that it is predicated upon the mobilisation of this difficult but remarkably sophisticated theoretical apparatus, and on the invocation of this non-philosophical force-(of)-thought, it would be premature simply to dismiss Laruelle's non-philosophical identification of the auto-Deductive essence of philosophical Decision as a gratuitous instance of philosophical generalisation. On the contrary, that identification seems to us to constitute a rigorously transcendental, albeit non-Decisional, hypothesis for the explanation of philosophical thinking. Although contingently occasioned by the Kantian paradigm of Decision, Laruelle's account constitutes a non-Kantian universalisation of Deduction. It sees the Kantian apparatus of Deduction 'in-One'. It invokes the non-Decisional perspective upon philosophising concomitant with 'the vision-in-One' –the reduction of 'the history of philosophy' to the status of a contingent empirical material- in order to effect an authentically transcendental universalisation, rather than a metaphysical generalisation, of the Kantian paradigm as a hypothesis *for* the explanation of philosophising[195].

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[195] Compared to many of the currently available attempts to provide a universal schema which would encapsulate 'the history of philosophy' in its essence -as exemplified, for instance, by the Heideggerean 'history of metaphysics as forgetting of Being', the Levinasian alternation between ontological totalisation and ethical infinity, or even the Deleuzean contrast between sedentary State thinker and

This is the non-philosopher's force-(of)-thought, and it is as the latter that an instance of Decision, in this case Kant's, serves merely as an occasion from which a transcendental Identity is extracted, one which will assume the status of a non-thetic axiom, or axiom given according to the One (i.e. without self-givenness) on whose basis a set of transcendental theorems can be elaborated in conformity with their determination-in-the-last-instance by that transcendentally axiomatic theoretical Identity[196].

Consequently, the Laruellean procedure in dealing with philosophy can be seen as a variation on the following general non-philosophical injunction: '*Let immanence be given-without-givenness. What follows for philosophy?*' Cloning allows this injunction to be satisfied in a limitless variety of ways, depending on which instance of Decision is to assume the status of a transcendental axiom through its being-given-in-One or without-givenness. In this particular instance, Laruelle's non-philosophical hypothesis for the purposes of providing a theoretical explanation of philosophy's Identity assumes the following form: '*Let the Kantian distinction between metaphysical and transcendental deduction be given-without-givenness. What follows for philosophy?*' The result in this case is that the apparatus of

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anarchic nomad-, the Laruellean account of philosophical Decision displays a far greater degree of theoretical probity: it offers us a genuinely sophisticated, versatile and enriching explanation of philosophising.

[196] Cf. Laruelle, 1999, p.140; and 1996, pp. 83, 162-185, 240.

Deduction is radicalised and generalised beyond the context of its narrowly Kantian application, in order to serve as a universally valid hypothesis capable of generating a legitimately theoretical explanation of the phenomenon in question: the philosophical Decision.

Suspending the Parmenidean Axiom

Doubtless, the persistent repetition of the 'non-' prefix in Laruelle's work invites the suspicion that an entirely negative mode of determination, or a species of conceptual *via negativa,* has been substituted for positive characterisation. Such suspicions, although understandable, are nevertheless misguided. They fail to bear in mind the way in which Laruelle uses the 'non-' as a kind of auxiliary classifier or index for non-auto-Decisional radicality, one which always unleashes a dimension of positive characterisation already immanent in the terms and concepts to which it is applied. In this respect, its function is best understood as akin to the lifting of a speed restriction or the raising of a floodgate. Far from blanketly negating the term to which it is affixed, it actually suspends or disqualifies a precise set of conceptual strictures through which a determinate species of thinking (i.e. the auto-positional/auto-donational kind) superimposes certain systemically structured conditions onto the ineradicable simplicity of a phenomenon whose

parameters of immanent manifestation are as conceptually uncircumscribable as they are phenomenologically unencompassable.

Thus, although it *seems* to deny, like Zarathustra's No[197], Laruelle's 'non-' is ultimately a No that performs the Yes. What it suspends is the self-imposed constriction of philosophical thought's auto-Decisional sufficiency, the charmed circle of its auto-positional and auto-donational autonomy. The cancellation of that sufficiency actually dissimulates an affirmation of the radically unconditioned; that which frees Decision from its absolute self-sufficiency by conditioning Decision without being conditioned by it in return. Accordingly, non-Decisional thinking reaffirms the ineradicable immanence of the phenomenon 'itself' by suspending the hallucinatory character of its attempted phenomenologisation at the hands of Decision.

As a result, the function of Laruellean razor might be summarized in the following way: it allows for the radicalisation and generalisation of every philosophical Decision on the basis of a last instance that is Undecidable only because it is the already Decided irreversibly determining every Decision; a last instance that is Undeterminable only because it is the already Determinate irreversibly determining or cloning whatever remains philosophically

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[197]Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy,* London: Athlone, 1983, pp. 171-186.

Determinable. Thus, the razor is the *organon* for the non-Decisional determination of Decision.

Consequently, the razor provides us with that non-materialist force-(of)-thought through which we intend to clone matter's non-Decisional Identity from the Decisional hybrids of unobjectifiable immanence and objectivating transcendence. By suspending the illusion of absolute autonomy through which the materialist Decision believed itself sufficient to determine matter, we transform the materiological hybridisations of 'matter as such' and 'matter itself' into an occasion for the non-materiological cloning of the radical hyle as a non-conceptual symbol for matter's radical foreclosure to Decision, for its non-materiological Identity as separate-without-separation.

Moreover, implicit in this non-materiological use of Laruelle's razor is nothing less than a discontinuation or suspension of the Parmenidean axiom that we saw to be latent in the auto-Deductive structure of every philosophical Decision. That axiom posits the identity-in-difference, the reciprocal co-belonging or mutual pre-supposition of thinking and Being, *Logos* and *Phusys*, in the form of the Same as Decisional 'auto'. Every Decision, viewed transcendentally in terms of its pretension to absolute sufficiency as auto-Deductive synthesis of the real and the ideal, or One-of-the-Dyad, effectively recapitulates the structure of the Parmenidean axiom: it posits the reciprocal

co-determination of thinking and Being. But in lifting this axiom, a non-Parmenidean thinking subordinates all thinking to a Real which is now foreclosed *a priori* to the dyadic distinction between thinking and Being, thereby suspending the Decisional determination of the Real in favour of a determination of Decision according to the Real's foreclosure: "*Instead of supposing that thinking co-determines the Real as Being, it is the Real –but as One- which determines thinking through foreclosure (which is to say: without any reflexion whatsoever of the one in the other) rather than merely unilaterally or without reversibility. The formula for their relation is the following: 'the One and thinking, or the One and Being, are identical but only in-the-last-instance.'*" (Laruelle (ed.), 1998, pp.150-1).

By severing the bi-lateral reciprocity that allowed for the reciprocal determinability, continuous reversibility and hence the merely synthetic or unitary disjunction between thinking and Being, the Laruellean razor opens up the possibility of discovering a Real without ontological Unity, a Real definitively shorn of every vestigial residue of ontological consistency. Accordingly, it is the Real as foreclosed to those dyadic syntheses of thinking and Being which guarantee ontological consistency; the Real as an Identity foreclosed to Decisional unity, rather than as auto-Decisional synthesis of ideal unity and real multiplicity, which, through its universal giving of

Decision as a determinable occasion, indexes a genuinely unencompassable, utterly inconsistent manifold of radically indivisible divisions[198]. Thus, in Chapter 7 we shall see how this non-Decisional cloning of the Real as separate-without-separation uses the Decisional hybridisation of identity and duality, of real indivision and ideal division, in order to engender Identities-without-unity which are simultaneously dualities-without-synthesis; each radically universal without being generic, irreducibly individual without being ontologically individuated, and no longer circumscribable within the horizons of objective disclosure[199].

For the time being however, having (we hope) somewhat clarified the function of the Laruellean razor *qua* instrument for the non-Decisional cloning of Decision, let's see if we can provide further elucidation of this important but undeniably difficult idea by putting forward a concrete exemplification of it, using as our material the Decisional distinction between 'matter as such' and 'matter itself' with which we began.

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[198] Cf. *infra*, Chapter 6, pp.312-313.
[199] Cf. *infra*, Chapter 7, pp.361-372.

CHAPTER 6

THE RADICAL HYLE AS FIRST NAME OF MATTER

We are now ready to see in what way the Laruellean razor can allow us to use the Decisional distinction between 'matter as such' and 'matter itself' as the basis for their non-Decisional separation. In other words, we are going to use the Decisionally posited distinction between 'matter as such' and 'matter itself' as the occasion for a non-Decisional positing of 'matter itself' in its radically immanent Identity as already-separate or separate-without-separation.

Because it is carried out in accordance with the radicality of unobjectifiable immanence –the vision-in-One as given-without-givenness- this non-Decisional positing of 'matter itself' envelops four distinct but indissociable aspects:

1. A radically *performative*[200] aspect as the identity-(of)-utterance through which the radical hyle is posited as a non-conceptual symbol for 'matter itself'.

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[200] The performative dimension of non-philosophical thought is explicitly discussed in Laruelle, 1985, pp. 198-202; 1989, pp. 169-171; 1996, pp.204-225 & 231-235; and Laruelle (ed.)1998, pp. 155-158. However, it is important to remember that all of Laruelle's works subsequent to *Principes de la Non-*

2. A radically *subjective*[201] aspect in the Alien-subject of the non-Decisional theory through which this positing is performed.
3. A radically *axiomatic*[202] aspect in accordance with which non-materialism posits matter's non-intuitive and non-conceptual Identity.
4. Finally, a radically *phenomenal*[203] aspect in the dimension of non-intuitive or non-phenomenological phenomenality proper to the register of theorematic descriptions following from the axiomatic positing of the radical hyle.

This latter aspect is particularly important with regard to countering certain spontaneous but shortsighted philosophical objections to the non-materialist suspension of the materialist Decision, *viz*., that it represents a peculiarly sterile, inconsequential, and ultimately impotent way of operating. For it is in virtue of this dimension of non-intuitive phenomenality that the non-materialist axiomatic endows thinking with an unprecedented universal

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Philosophie, i.e. those in which he effects the non-philosophical axiomatisation of a specific philosophical material -exemplified in Laruelle, 2000a, and 2000b- are nothing but detailed and extended descriptions of this non-Decisional performativity in effect.

[201]For Laruelle's account of the non-philosophical subject as a transcendental *Stranger* (*Etranger*) for the World of philosophical Decision, cf. Laruelle, 1995, especially Chapters I and II, pp.60-169; 1996, Chapter III, pp. 95-143; 2000a, pp.249-285; 1999, pp. 146-148; and Laruelle (ed.) 1998, pp. 64-66.

[202] The theme of a transcendental axiomatisation of philosophical Decision is omnipresent throughout *Philosophie III*, but cf. in particular Laruelle, 1995, pp.138-143; 1996, pp.240-242; 1999, §2.1.6., p.140; 2000a, pp.71-98; 2000b, pp.74-78; and Laruelle (ed.), pp.33-35.

[203]Although always implicit in the premises of the non-philosophical project, the notion of a 'non-intuitive' or 'non-phenomenological' phenomenality has only recently been explicitly thematised by Laruelle. Cf. Laruelle, 1999, § 3.1.4., p.141; 2000a, pp.231-235; and 2000c, pp. 186-187.

scope. Non-materialist thinking posits the Identity of 'matter itself' as foreclosed to Decision; which is to say that it posits the Identity of matter as foreclosed to conceptual circumscription or as being intrinsically without-concept. But it is as a result of this foreclosure that non-materialist theory is able to discover and to operate within unheard-of parameters of phenomenal descriptions for 'matter itself', unconstrained by the bounds of phenomenological –which is to say, neurophysiological -possibility[204]. The non-materialist axiomatic engenders modalities of theorematic description for 'matter itself' *qua* radical hyle which are each incommensurable at the phenomenological level but phenomenally equivalent insofar as all are determined as adequate-in-the-last-instance to the radical hyle as phenomenon-without-logos. Thus, its cognitive capacities unhampered by the twin constraints of empirical physiology and human-being-in-the-world, the Alien-subject of non-materialist theory accesses a genuinely transcendental – which is to say, rigorously universal or extra-terrestrial- dimension of phenomenal 'experience'. This is non-materialist *gnosis* as that 'more secret knowing of matter' which was hinted at earlier by Laruelle himself[205].

Lastly, and before we proceed, it is important to remind the reader that, as we describe in turn each of these three aspects of the non-Decisional

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[204] Cf. *infra* Chapter 7, but especially Chapter 8, pp.415-421.

positing of 'matter itself', he or she should note the way in which, at each stage of the description, this non-Decisional procedure engenders a transparent -but obviously non phono-logocentric[206]- coincidence of saying and doing. In other words, at each stage of the description, we are doing what we describe and describing what we are doing. This is the simplest index of what we mean by a thinking *in accordance* with radical immanence.

The Radical Hyle as Non-Conceptual Symbol for the Identity of Utterance

Our non-Decisional cloning of materialist Decision involves releasing matter's non-materiological Identity as transcendentally foreclosed to the materiological hybridisation of 'matter as such' and 'matter itself'. But since matter's foreclosure to Decision also entails its foreclosure to conceptual circumscription and symbolic representation, the operation of cloning will necessitate suspending the materiological faith in the sufficiency of conceptual circumscriptions and signifying representations 'of' matter. In other words, we are about to discontinue the materiological amphiboly of utterance and statement; the amphiboly whereby the unobjectifiable

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[205] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 4, p.202; and Laruelle 1981, p.109.

[206]Because of its non-auto-positional and non-auto-donational character, this non-Decisional Identity of saying and doing -or of statement and utterance- cannot be equated with the phono-logocentric unity of signifying speech and phenomenological sense as deconstructed by Derrida *via* his reading of Husserl. Cf. Derrida, 1973.

conditions of utterance are perpetually reinscribed within the objectivating ideality of statement[207]. For by suspending the sufficiency of materialist Decision we suspend the sufficiency presumed in any and every conceptual symbolisation of matter 'as such'; which is to say, every discursive circumscription of matter 'itself' by means of signifying statements.

Accordingly, the non-Decisional cloning of materialist Decision will necessitate subordinating all those conceptual symbolisations 'of' matter which are inseparable from the putative sufficiency of matter's Decisional determination to the non-Decisional positing of an improper first-name or non-conceptual symbol *enacting* matter's foreclosure to conceptual symbolisation. Instead of matter's supposedly-sufficient determination *via* the materiological hybridisation of ontological concept and signifying symbol, in conformity with the Decisional amphiboly of linguistic description and ontological constitution, it is now matter in its foreclosure to conceptual symbolisation and linguistic signification, matter as first-name or non-conceptual symbol, that will transcendentally determine –or give-without-givenness- its own nomination and symbolisation.

Thus, it is important to bear in mind that in suspending the spontaneous philosophical faith in the sufficiency of Decision, we also

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[207] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 4, pp.194-199.

suspend the presupposition that all thinking is necessarily sustained by the complex, tripartite structure of the philosophical logos. That structure effects the transcendental synthesis of thought, word and thing: conceptually posited ideality and linguistically presupposed reality are reciprocally articulated and synthesised through the petitioning of the logos as the already-given Unity of thinking, speaking, and being; the identity-in-difference of conceptual position, linguistic presupposition, and ontological manifestation. Thus, the philosophical logos as Decisional 'autos', absolute auto-position/auto-donation, or identity-in-difference of thinking and Being, performs an ontologically disclosive function in which the linguistic sign is necessarily incorporated. It is this onto-logical unity of conceptualisation and signification that is supposed to furnish thinking with its *sine qua non*. This is the presupposition which sustains the philosopher's spontaneous confidence in the irrecusable empirical reality of the signifier as well as his trust in the co-constitutive reciprocity between language and Being.

It is this amphiboly of thought and language, concept and sign, which has been suspended along with the sufficiency of Decision. The onto-logical unity of conceptualisation and signification remains enveloped within the auto-donational/auto-positional structure of philosophical Decision that we have non-Decisionally suspended and reduced to the level of empirical

occasion for a thinking in which the amphiboly of description and constitution is no longer operative. In separating 'matter itself' from its Decisional hybridisation with 'matter as such', we effect an irrevocable separation between matter as the already-constituted determinant of description, and description as a mere determinable occasion. This separation of description and constitution involves the positing of a non-conceptual symbol *enacting* matter's foreclosure to ontological constitution. The non-conceptual symbolisation of matter reduces the amphiboly of concept and sign, the reciprocal articulation of philosophy and language, to the level of a neutral, non-constitutive *symbolic support*[208] for thought; one from which it is possible to clone a radically performative term or symbol which will enact, rather than designate or refer to, matter's foreclosure to conceptual symbolisation. Thus, the non-materiological identification of matter as already-separate-without-separation from the mixtures of name and concept, of the performative and the constative, consists in the axiomatic positing of a

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208 "*There are two paradigmatic uses of language: as* logos, *which is to say, as ether of Being and* faktum *for philosophy, as language endowed with the power of disclosure and transcendence; or as* symbolic *(which is to say, irreducible to the logico-linguistic signifier) whereby it serves as a support for pure theoretical representation, but no longer as* faktum. *The status of language shifts from that of horizon, instrumental circuit for thought, polysemic or disseminatory resource, to that of functioning as a 'mere' support, one which no longer enjoys a supposedly originary continuity with the dimension of theoreticity. The words, the statements, and even the themes of philosophy give rise to now inert, philosophically sterile symbols, but symbols that are combined or assembled according to a priori rules which are those of pure theoretical representation, of the theoreticity of all possible theory.*"(Laruelle, 1991, p.201)

first-name or non-conceptual symbol which enacts the foreclosure through which matter determines Decision in-the-last-instance[209].

The *radical hyle* is the first-name or non-conceptual symbol that we have chosen in order to designate matter's foreclosure to the materiological hybridisation of conceptual symbolisation and linguistic nomination. Moreover, it is clear that in this particular instance, our cloning of the Identity of 'matter itself' as a hyle devoid of all ontological consistency and hyletic continuity has been occasioned by our earlier descriptions of the hyletic continuum as infinite, self-positing synthesis of unobjectifiable materiality and objectivating ideality[210]. Thus, the radical hyle is our non-conceptual symbol for the unobjectifiable immanence of 'matter itself' in its foreclosure to ideal continuity and ontological consistency. And it is as a non-signifying symbol cloned from the hyletic continuum *qua* Decisional hybrid of ontological constitution and linguistic nomination that the radical hyle is non-Decisionally posited or given-without-givenness in its foreclosure to the

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209 " *A first name is not only posited-as-first in the order of thought in general, it is also -here at least- the object of an act-of-position but one that is determined-in-the-last-instance by its 'object', and hence adequate in this manner to [its object] as given-without-givenness or posited-without-position. Such first names are not ancient proper names now philosophically treated as also being first (in the manner of the philosophical 'axiomatic)'. They are identically and intrinsically proper and first, devoid of all ontico-metaphysical primacy. Here the name is only proper(to)itself but in the manner of an identity given to it only in-the-last-instance, and one which, according to this use, does not fall within the purview of a deconstruction.*"(Laruelle, 2000a, p.72)

210 Cf. *supra*, Chapter 3, pp.113-161.

idealised consistency of conceptual symbolisation as well as to the idealised continuity of ontological objectivation.

Accordingly, the radical hyle[211] is neither a symbol nor a name in the conventional philosophical senses of those terms. It does not 'stand in', *via* a relation of designation or reference, for some putatively extra-linguistic or supra-conceptual reality. Likewise, it is not a metaphysically proper name, in the sense of a sign bearing an exclusive or intrinsic proprietary relation to some absolutely present entity or transcendental signified. But neither is it an instance of the *différance* or cross-contamination between signifier and signified, word and object, thought and thing. On the contrary, the radical hyle enacts its own foreclosure to the materiological amphiboly –which includes the *différance* -between signifying transcendence and transcendental signified. Whereas *différance qua* Undecidable remains bound to the metaphysical opposition from which it absolves itself as a metaphysically indeterminable oscillation between empirical signifier and transcendental signified, the radical hyle is the non-Decidable as foreclosed to the philosophical dyad 'decidable/undecidable' whose validity *différance* continues to presuppose even in order to disrupt it. Hence, the Identity of the

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[211]Hence the fact that we refuse to distinguish –as would be customary in this very instance- between its use and its mention by adorning it with inverted commas. The reason being that this is a philosophical distinction which presupposes the validity of the signifying use of language which we have already suspended.

radical hyle as non-conceptual symbol is that of the non-Decidable as already-decided determinant for the undecidable *différance* between signifier and signified. The radical hyle is the non-Determinable as the already-determined which determines the onto-logical amphiboly of description and constitution.

Thus, the radical hyle can be understood neither as a nomination of 'matter' *qua* transcendental signified, which is to say, transcendent metaphysical reality; nor as a conceptual materialisation, in the manner for instance in which the Deleuzoguattarian Concept counter-effectuated an intensively defined materiality[212]. It is neither an empirical conceptualisation of matter nor a transcendental materialisation of the concept[213]. It is a non-conceptual symbol for 'matter itself' in its Identity as already-manifest-without-manifestation and foreclosed *a priori* to the materiological *différance* that tries to substitute an undecidable mixture of statement and utterance for the hyle's radically immanent Identity as that which is already-uttered or uttered-without-statement.

Accordingly, instead of Deciding that 'matter itself' is unconceptualisable because it is the enstatic immediation of materiality as excluding the ekstatic distinction of thought and thing -an exclusion which

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[212] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 3, pp.108-124.

[213] Although it is by operating according to the radical hyle's foreclosure to materialist Decision that we effect a transcendental materialisation of Decision *qua* empirical occasion. The point being that the

reincludes the unthinkable within thought[214]; or Deciding that it is conceptualisable but only *via* the sublation of the distinction between 'matter as such' and 'matter itself'-a sublation which renders thought and materiality co-constitutive[215]; we clone the radical hyle as a first-name for 'matter itself' now considered as already-given, already-manifest, and foreclosed to the distinction between the conceptualisable and the unconceptualisable.

This non-Decisional positing of the radical hyle as non-conceptual symbol for 'matter itself' in its Identity as already-uttered constitutes the 'first ultimation' in the inception of a non-materialist axiomatic. The radical hyle is non-Decisionally presupposed as given-without-givenness through an act of axiomatic positing; it is posited-without-presupposition as a first-name for radical immanence. Consequently, the radical hyle enacts the immanent Identity of material utterance as already-uttered, an Identity-(of)-utterance which cannot be conflated with the materiological nomination of 'matter' as a mixture of objectivated reality, objectivating ideality, and unobjectifiable immanence; a hybrid which, as we saw in Chapter 4, perpetually reincludes the unobjectifiable immanence of material utterance within the objectivating transcendence of materialist statement.

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non-philosophical materialisation of Decision constitutes a radical universalisation of the philosophical materialisation of the concept.

[214]Cf. Chapter 2, pp.87-90.

[215] Cf. Chapter 3, pp.154-161.

But this means that the act of non-Decisional positing or first ultimation described above, whereby the radical hyle is posited-without-position as the first-name of matter, is immanently determined-in-the-last-instance by the radical hyle itself. If this is so, it is important to see why this does not repeat the auto-positional and auto-donational sufficiency whereby Decisional thinking posits its own presupposition. For in this instance, the positing of the radical hyle as already-given is merely contingently occasioned by the sufficiency of the materiological Decision. Which is to say that this positing is itself determined by the radical hyle insofar as the latter has already-given Decision as an occasion for thinking and been cloned as an Identity for thought on that basis. In other words, the act of non-materiological positing –the axiomatic ultimation- described above remains non-constitutive or non-determining *vis a vis* the immanence of the hyle considered as already-given. Thus, the manner in which 'matter itself' *qua* radical hyle determines its own naming as a non-conceptual symbol on the occasional basis of its materiological nomination 'as such' must be sharply differentiated from the manner in which, for instance, the plane of immanence is presupposed as given through the self-positing of the philosophical Concept[216]. For in the latter case, the presupposition of the plane *via* the

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[216] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 3, pp.116-124.

Concept and the positing of the Concept on the basis of the plane remain co-constitutive, whilst in the former, the fact that the radical hyle is *already-foreclosed* to constitution determines its nomination as foreclosed without that nomination determining or constituting that foreclosure in return.

Accordingly, the non-materialist ultimation of the radical hyle as non-conceptual symbol discontinues the materiological auto-position through which the objectivating transcendence of materialist statement reinscribes the unobjectifiable immanence of material utterance. The materiological reversibility between nomination and constitution has been suspended and reduced to the level of an occasion. The first ultimation of non-materialist thinking is itself determined (in-the-last-instance) –i.e. non-Decisionally *cloned*- from materiological Decision by the radical hyle despite the fact that we have been speaking as if it were 'we' who were *deciding* to clone the Identity of the hyle from Decision. 'We' are, but only as the non-philosophical or Alien-subject whose 'decision' has already been determined in accordance with the hyle's foreclosure. Decisional thinking has already been given as a mere occasion and determined or cloned as a non-Decisional effectuation of the hyle's foreclosure. And the latter is non-Decisionally posited through an axiomatic ultimation determined by the radical hyle itself. Consequently, the conditions for this non-Decisional positing are immanently

determined-in-the-last-instance by the radical hyle itself. For it is the radical hyle which immanently determines the conditions for its cloning on the basis of Decision by effectuating itself as this radically subjective force-(of)-non-materialist thought.

The non-materialist's force-(of)-thought consists in enacting this performative nomination of the radical hyle as first-name for the Identity of 'utterance itself', a nomination that consists in the immanent coincidence of saying and doing. By operating in accordance with the immanence of the radical hyle as that which is already-uttered (without-statement) and already-performed (without-performance) by virtue of its foreclosure to the materiological hybridisation of utterance and statement, non-materialist thinking cannot help but say what it does and do as it says. Moreover, as we mentioned above, this performative consistency of saying and doing concomitant with the non-materialist's force-(of)-thought is radically subjective in character.

The Alien-Subject

For although the radical hyle is foreclosed to thought –whether phenomenological or materiological, Decisional or non-Decisional-, that foreclosure is transcendentally effectuated on the occasional basis of the materiological Decision as an immanent Identity *for* non-materiological

thought. It is cloned as a non-materialist force-(of)-thought. And this force-of-thought is synonymous with the radically immanent subjectivation of non-materiological thinking. Although 'the Stranger' (*l'Etranger*) is Laruelle's preferred term for designating the universal subject of non-philosophical theory, we shall mark its occasional specificity here by referring to the radically immanent subject of non-materialist thinking as 'the Alien'. The name is intended to invoke neither an empirically determinable quality of foreignness, nor visions of some phantasmatic speculative hybrid, but rather a radically transcendental and therefore rigorously unenvisageable exteriority[217]; an exteriority which is identical with the non-materialist's force-(of)-thought.

Whereas 'the Other' as paradigm of phenomenological alterity – exemplified in the work of the later Levinas[218]- is an absolute alterity of infinite transcendence simultaneously constituting and deconstituting intentional consciousness, but by that token one which is still

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[217] In order to diminish the aura of gratuity surrounding our choice of nomination, it might be apposite to recall one of Laruelle's most spontaneous, but also most suggestive, characterisations of non-thetic transcendence (the precursor to the non-auto-positional transcendence of the Stranger-subject) in one of the interviews contained in 1991's *As One* (*En Tant Qu'Un*): "*Non-thetic transcendence is 'the Alien', an absolutely faceless monster, a rigorously faceless alterity*"(p.224). The 'non-thetic transcendence' in terms of which Laruelle characterised the non-philosopher's force-(of)-thought throughout *Philosophie II* prefigures the non-auto-positional transcendence or distance in terms of which he will characterise the Stranger *qua* transcendental clone in *Philosophie III*. More recently, Laruelle has sketched the lineaments of a unified theory of philosophy and science-fiction -or *philo-fiction*- on the basis of a radically immanent Identity of alterity which he sees as science-fiction's defining affect and which he qualifies as that of the *Alien-without-alienation*. Cf. Laruelle, 2000d and *infra*, Chapters 7 and 8.

[218] Cf. for instance, Levinas, 1990.

phenomenologically posited and presupposed as given through the offices of Decision, the unobjectifiable transcendence of the Alien-subject constitutes a non-phenomenologisable exteriority, one which is given-without-givenness because it is the transcendental effectuation or cloning of the radical hyle's foreclosure to the apophantic logos. Thus, the Alien-subject is foreclosed to the phenomenological delimitation of absolute alterity as infinitely other relative to intentional consciousness because it is foreclosed not only to all intentional apprehension but also to all Decisional dyads of the sort conscious/unconscious, objectifiable/unobjectifiable. The latter serve merely as its occasion or empirical support.

Consequently, rather than merely constituting an alterity-*to*-consciousness, the Alien-subject constitutes a radically unobjectifiable exteriority *for* the World of auto-Decisional sufficiency in its entirety. Where Levinas's phenomenological paradigm of alterity centres around the absolute transcendence of the infinitely Other as epiphenomenal trace and ethical enigma –an absolute transcendence which, for reasons with which the reader is now beginning to become familiar[219], remains relative to the immanence of the intentional consciousness from which it absolves itself-, the Alien-subject

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[219]Recall the critique of the notion of the 'absolute' as intrinsically relational in our discussions of Henry's as well as Deleuze & Guattari's versions of immanence (cf. *supra* Chapter 2, pp.85-87 and Chapter 3, pp.176-177), as well as the account of Decision as absolute-auto-position (*supra* Chapter 5, pp.218-245).

effectuates a radical transcendence not 'to' but *for* the phenomenological realm in its entirety which serves as its occasional support, and this precisely insofar as it remains rooted in-the-last-instance in the immanence of the hyle. That is to say: the Alien's non-Decisional transcendence is given-without-givenness or cloned in accordance with immanence and on the occasional basis of Decisional transcendence but as a radically subjective force-of-thought which is now Alien *for* the World of Decisional transcendence;- Alien *for* the Decisional realm wherein phenomenological ideality and materiological reality are ultimately coextensive. It is a non-auto-positional and non-auto-donational transcendence rooted in the non-Decisional immanence that determines it, but occasioned by the Decisional transcendence that merely overdetermines it.

Thus, the Alien as subject of non-materialist theory remains irreducible to every variety of Worldly alterity, be it phenomenologically or materiologically defined. At the same time however, we shall see how it functions as the rigorously transcendental prototype –or more precisely, *xenotype*- for those somewhat clumsily delineated versions of unenvisageable alterity groped after but misprised in the more adventurous varieties of speculative science-fiction;- misprised precisely insofar as they continue to rely on incongruous juxtapositions of empirically heterogeneous predicates

which remain 'figurable' through the empirical imagination and therefore ultimately envisageable by consciousness[220]. Not only does the Alien-subject remain unenvisageable as an ethical enigma for phenomenological consciousness; it remains 'unfigurable' even as a monstrous, trans-categorial hybridisation of terrestrial predicates. The Alien-subject's force-(of)-thought constitutes an immanently transcendental, but non-phenomenological transcendence; a transcendence which is foreclosed *a priori* to the parameters of human being-in-the-world and to the ambit of terrestrial experience. Operating in accordance with the radical hyle's foreclosure to the materiological mixtures of objectivating phenomenality and unobjectifiable materiality, it uses those mixtures as an occasional basis and the hyle as its Unknown but determining cause, in order to clone un-intuitable axioms for the phenomenal description of 'matter itself' from the realm of phenomenological empiricity.

However, before proceeding with instances of the aforementioned descriptions, deduced by the Alien-subject from the radical hyle's non-phenomenological foreclosure, it is important to specify in what way the cloning of the Alien-subject remains irreducible to the phenomenological

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[220]In Chapter 7 we shall discuss the example of the 'non-rabbit' as instance of an entity-without-unity cloned from the World of thetic-auto-position. The 'non-rabbit' provides the rigorously cognitive 'xenotype' for a recurrent trope in Lovecraftian fantasy:- that of the unnameable, unenvisageable 'Thing'.

presupposition of subjectivity. For whereas phenomenological subjectivity is merely supposed-as-given *via* a mixture of *a priori* positing and empirical presupposition, the Alien-subject is given in a stringently transcendental fashion, in accordance with the radical hyle's foreclosure to all phenomenological givenness, as the subject of its own theory. That is to say: it performs its own cloning in accordance with the positing of the radical hyle as its non-Decisional cause and on the basis of materiological Decision as its empirical occasion. Accordingly, the Alien-subject enacts its own theoretical explanation. For it is nothing but the immanent description of its non-sufficient or hetero-deduction as an instance of thinking necessarily determined by the radical hyle but contingently occasioned by Decision's empirical existence.

Thus, there is nothing either irrecusable or even necessary about this instance of thought's transcendental subjectivation, as opposed to the manner in which phenomenology requires some residue of transcendental subjectivation, some minimal degree of ipseity (supposedly non-Cartesian or post-metaphysical in nature) as an uncircumventable prerequisite for the possibility of phenomenality[221]. Although occasioned by phenomenological

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[221]Typically, much post-Heideggerean phenomenology denounces 'metaphysical subjectivism' (supposedly running from Descartes to Nietzsche), the better to render the phenomenon of individuated sentience ever more irreducible to the vulgar prejudices of egological substantialism, which is to say, ever more unobjectifiable and divorced as a matter of principle from the possibility of

Decision as the transcendental effectuation of the hyle's determination of Decision, the Alien-subject remains foreclosed to the ambit of the phenomenologisable precisely insofar as the latter remains encompassed within the Decisional structure which serves as its empirical support. As the transcendental determinant for the phenomenologically circumscribed experience that serves as its occasion, the Alien-subject cannot be confused with some putatively necessary structural feature intrinsically conditioning the possibility of that empirical experience. On the contrary, the radical exteriority through which the Alien-subject determines Decision remains extrinsic to the relatively autonomous reality and consistency of Decision, and to the domain of phenomenological experience encompassed within it. Thus, the Alien-subject is a radically extrinsic determinant for the phenomenological domain, rather than some absolutely intrinsic feature of it. That domain, and the Decision through which it is articulated, continues to enjoy a relative autonomy as an empirically determinable occasion[222]. For although the Alien-subject transcendentally effectuates the hyle's

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integration into the body of the natural sciences. Most recently for instance, Jean-Luc Marion has sought to effect a bold and ambitious crystallisation of what he sees as the central phenomenological problematic running from Husserl and Heidegger through to Henry and Levinas -that of the phenomenon's phenomenality or givenness- by attempting to emancipate ipseity's originary, pre-subjective givenness in its passivity as 'the devotee of donation' [*l'adonné de la donation*] from the constrictive grip of the Cartesian *cogito*, the Kantian 'I think', the Husserlian 'Ego', and even Heideggerean 'mineness' [*Jemeinigkeit*]]. Cf. Marion, 1997, esp. Book V, pp.343-373.

determination of phenomenological Decision, this is an entirely contingent effectuation, occasioned by the fact that materiological Decision has already been given-without-givenness as a mere support for non-phenomenological thinking.

Moreover, this non-sufficiency of the Alien-subject, concomitant with the non-phenomenological donation of empirical contingency as an occasional but non-determining cause for thinking, is irreducible to the phenomenological presupposition of facticity. For the phenomenological subject, facticity is a transcendentally constitutive factor, whereas for the non-phenomenological subject, occasion is a determinable empirical material. And whereas the phenomenological subject remains a subject of 'experience', that is to say, encompassed within the ambit of Decision; the Alien-subject is exclusively the subject of transcendental theory, that is to say, the heterogeneous determinant of Decision and of phenomenological experience as circumscribed within the ambit of Decision. Thus, with the radical hyle as its determining cause and phenomenological Decision as its occasion, the non-sufficiency proper to the Alien-subject guarantees that its transcendental effectuation is at one with its explanation.

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[222]Cloning guarantees the radical autonomy of the Real in its foreclosure to Decision, the relative autonomy of Decision *qua* empirical occasion, and the relatively radical autonomy of the transcendental as that which effectuates the Real's foreclosure *for* Decision.

Accordingly, there is a sense in which, although not *causa sui*, the Alien-subject is self-explanatory. As we mentioned above, it 'exists' or is effectuated as the radically immanent performance of its own theory. It is constituted as the non-Decisional separation, the performative dualysation, of 'matter itself' and 'matter as such' that we have just described and enacted. Once again, however, non-philosophical precision demands that we complicate this schema. For in fact, rather than simply separating 'matter itself' from 'matter as such', the structure of the Alien-subject enacts the non-Decisional separation between the radical hyle as non-conceptual Identity of 'matter itself', and the materiological mixture or hybridisation of 'matter itself' and 'matter as such' –which is to say, the hyletic continuum described in Chapters 3 and 4 of Part I- ; a hybridisation now reconfigured as a strictly unilateral Duality between the hyletic continuum as empirically determinable occasion, and the Alien-subject as transcendental determinant *for* that occasion. As a result, the structure of the Alien-subject spans the Identity of the radical hyle –but an Identity which is now shorn of the presupposition of ontological unity-, and the unilateral Duality of the Alien-subject and its occasional cause - a duality which no longer constitutes a dyadic distinction because the Alien-subject transcendentally determines the hyletic continuum in accordance with the radical hyle without the continuum either determining

or constituting it in return. It is as this coincidence of an Identity-without-synthesis (or 'unidentity') and a Duality-without-distinction (or 'unilaterality') that the Alien-subject's foreclosure to its occasioning cause – the hyletic continuum- transcendentally effectuates the radical hyle's foreclosure to ontological Decision.

In light of its unusual difficulty, it is worth pausing a while longer to recapitulate once more the complex structure of the Alien-subject, in the hope that reiteration might provide a modicum of clarification. This is crucial to our entire enterprise, since it is in the name of the Alien-subject that everything described so far has also been performed.

The Alien-subject's non-ontological 'existence', its effectuation as the separation of radical hyle and Decision, amounts to a cloning of matter's foreclosure to Decision as the unilateral duality between the Alien-subject's own positing of the radical hyle, and the hyletic continuum –the materiological Decision- as that which has occasioned that positing. Remember that 'matter itself' is no longer some ineffable, transcendent philosophical 'thing' for us, and that the radical hyle is no longer an attempt to conceptualise the ineffable but merely a non-conceptual symbol for matter's foreclosure to Decision, a foreclosure which is now effectuated in non-materialist thinking through the Alien-subject's positing of the non-

conceptual symbol *enacting* that foreclosure. Accordingly, the Alien-subject is nothing but the unilateral duality between that symbol's foreclosure to conceptualisation, and the conceptual symbolisations that have occasioned the non-Decisional positing of that foreclosure. Or again: it is at once the non-Decisional positing of the radical hyle's non-conceptual Identity, and the Duality between that non-Decisional Identity and the Decision which has occasioned it.

Thus, with its pretension to absolute, self-positing autonomy suspended, the hyletic continuum enjoys a merely relative autonomy as the indifferent material support for the Alien-subject's effectuation of the hyle's foreclosure to ontological continuity and conceptual consistency. In other words, the materiological idealisation of 'matter itself' has become materialised through the Alien-subject's effectuation of matter's foreclosure to idealisation. Which is to say that materialism's transcendental determination of 'matter itself' has itself become transcendentally determined –materialised-, but now as a mere occasion for describing matter in accordance with matter's foreclosure to determination. Even more significantly, this transcendental materialisation of materialist Decision occurs or 'exists' in the form of a radically subjective separation between the immanence of matter's non-ontological reality and the transcendence of

materialism's ontological ideality. For it is the structure of the Alien-subject which articulates this unilateral separation between radical hyle and hyletic continuum. Accordingly, where the hyletic continuum incorporated philosophical subjectivity within materiality, but only at the cost of reincorporating materiality within the ambit of philosophical subjectivity[223], it is by separating the radical hyle from the hyletic continuum *qua* self-presupposing structure of philosophical subjectivity that the Alien-subject materialises the latter. Materialism subjectivates matter philosophically by repressing subjectivity; non-materialism materialises subjectivity by rendering philosophical subjectivation empirical. In other words, where philosophical materialism surreptiously phenomenologises matter by inscribing it in Decision *qua* hybrid of objectivating transcendence and unobjectifiable immanence, non-philosophical materialism materialises phenomenology by separating or *dualysing* that hybrid through the structure of the Alien-subject, thereby reducing the phenomenologising Decision to the level of an empirically determinable occasion. Thus, in non-philosophical materialism, the materialising instance is radically subjective.

Ultimately, if the Alien-subject remains incommensurable with every phenomenologically grounded paradigm of subjectivity –whether it go by the

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[223] Cf. *supra,* Chapter 3, pp.154-161.

name of '*Dasein*', 'Life' or '*adonné*' – it is on account of this radically *materialising* function as that which separates 'matter itself' in its foreclosure to phenomenologisation from the materiological hybrids of unobjectifiable materiality and objectivating phenomenality. Significantly, the radical hyle's foreclosure to materiological conceptualisation is mirrored -or better *cloned*- in terms of the Alien-subject's foreclosure to, or radical exteriority for, the phenomenological World. It is by virtue of this radical exteriority that the Alien-subject is able to describe the radical hyle according to its foreclosure to materiological conceptualisation in ways that fall outside the phenomenological parameters of human-being-in-the-world. Thus, the Alien-subject functions as the performative locus for a radically counter-intuitive or non-phenomenological axiomatisation of 'matter itself', an axiomatisation that generates a radically immanent but intrinsically abstract or *theoretically determined* phenomenalisation of 'matter itself'.

The Non-Materialist Axiomatic

In Chapter 4[224], we cited three versions of the distinction between 'materialism' and 'idealism' –and by implication, three varieties of definition for the concept of 'matter'-, and argued that all three were insufficient because they relied on intuitive or semi-intuitive idealisations of matter 'as

such'; idealisations that led to a basic indiscernibility between the theoretical postures of materialism and idealism. Implicit in this argument was the suggestion that every intuitive or semi-intuitive conceptualisation of matter 'as such' should be abandoned in favour of a stringently theoretical and therefore non-intuitive definition of 'matter itself'; one carried out on the basis of a rigorously transcendental separation between the theoretical postures proper to materialism and idealism respectively.

Let's quickly remind ourselves of the way in which these intuitive or semi-intuitive idealisations of matter operate. The first two straightforwardly conflate 'matter itself' with 'matter as such' by way of a spontaneous hybridisation of concept and empirical intuition, whilst the third, and more sophisticated, proposes an absolutely idealising sublation of concept and intuition, or of matter 'as such' and matter 'itself', by identifying 'materiality' with its differentially produced determination within an ideal continuum of signifying relations.

Thus, 'matter itself' cannot be characterised in terms of:

1. A *supposedly given* objectivity such as techno-economic production.

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[224] Cf. *supra*, pp.188-190.

2. A *supposedly given* conceptual signification whereby the concept of 'matter' combines general features of 'materiality' abstracted from nature with empirical characteristics drawn from sense perception.

3. A *supposedly produced* rather than immediately given 'discursive category'. 'Matter' remains devoid of immediate conceptual signification, but is endowed with a determinate theoretico-discursive potency on the basis of the 'differentially' produced signifying force that it comes to acquire through the complex interplay of various theoretical and political positions. The meaning of 'materialism' as discursive category is produced *via* the differential combination and determination of these positions relative to one another.

It is by way of contrast to these variedly proportioned materiological hybrids of empirical intuition, conceptual symbolisation, and signifying ideality that we intend to use our non-Decisional postulation of the radical hyle in its immanent Identity as non-conceptual symbol as the first ultimation in a rigorously non-intuitive materialist axiomatic. Thus, having carried out our first ultimation of the radical hyle through the auspices of the Alien-

subject, we are now in a position to begin formulating axiomatic definitions and deducing transcendental theorems which have likewise been posited-without-presupposition by the Alien-subject in accordance with the radical hyle's foreclosure to conceptual symbolisation and phenomenological intuition. Consequently, rather than being *supposedly sufficient* conceptual determinations, or *supposedly sufficient* phenomenological intuitions of 'matter itself', both axioms and theorems will be determined as adequate-in-the-last-instance by the radical hyle as that which enacts matter's foreclosure to all determination or intuition. That is to say, rather than conceptually corresponding to the radical hyle, or phenomenologically apprehending it, these definitions and descriptions are now simultaneously non-conceptual adequations and non-phenomenological manifestations, determined by the radical hyle as adequate to it but only in-the-last-instance[225].

In *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy* Laruelle provides us with a matrix of ten characterisations of radical immanence selected from what he reminds us must remain by rights a strictly limitless variety of possible definitions[226]. We will appropriate eight of them here, modifying them slightly for our own purposes, as the founding axioms for our non-materialist theory of 'matter

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[225]With the suspension of the Principle of Sufficient Determination –the belief that Decision is sufficient to determine the Real- the bi-lateral correspondence between thought and Real is replaced by an Identity-of-the-last-instance only, and transcendental truth becomes adequation-without-correspondence. Cf. Laruelle, 2000a, pp.239-241; and 2000b, pp.89-92.

itself'. All eight are instances of axiomatic position –rather than conceptual constitution- performed by the Alien-subject and determined-in-the-last-instance by the radical hyle itself:

1. *The radical hyle is the phenomenon-in-itself as Already-Given, the phenomenon-without-phenomenality, rather than the supposedly-given immediacy of phenomenon and phenomenality.*
2. *The radical hyle is the Already-Imprinted prior to every supposedly original imprint.*
3. *The radical hyle is that in and through which we have been Already-Grasped rather than any originary faktum or datum by which we suppose ourselves to be grasped.*
4. *The radical hyle is the Already-Acquired prior to all cognitive or intuitive acquisition, rather than that which is merely supposed-as-acquired through a priori forms of cognition or intuition.*
5. *The radical hyle is the Already-Inherent before all the substantialist forcings of inherence, conditioning all those*

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[226] Cf. Laruelle, 1989, pp.41-45.

supposedly-inherent models of Identity, be they analytic, synthetic, or differential.

6. *The radical hyle is the Already-Undivided rather than the transcendent Unity which is supposed-as-undivided by philosophers.*

7. *The radical hyle is the Already-Full anorganic body within which we see and assemble all of the universal figures and a priori dimensions through which every figure or body in the world is assembled, constructed, and supposed-as-full.*

8. *The radical hyle is the postural Identity of thought as Already-Achieved rather than a conceptual unity supposed-as-given through synthetic position. It is that real, postural Identity through which thinking is already free of the posited, ideal norms of transcendent exteriority, of the rules of speculative figuration and imagination, of the constraints of the World and the codes of philosophy.*

According to this axiomatisation, both the phenomenological and the materiological idealisation of 'matter itself' are immediately discounted. With axiom 1, we see that the radical hyle cannot be conflated with the phenomenologically presupposed immediation of phenomenon and

phenomenality (Henry), while with axiom 7, we see that it cannot be confused with the materiologically presupposed anorganic body-without-organs of intensive materiality (Deleuze & Guattari). 'Matter itself' has been radicalised and generalised *qua* radical hyle in a manner that is simultaneously irreducible to the norms of phenomenological intuition and to the codes of materiological conceptualisation. With the suspension of materiological sufficiency it is now 'matter itself' *qua* radical hyle which determines-in-the-last-instance the syntactical *a prioris* and transcendental codes governing philosophical conceptuality, as well as the modalities of phenomenological intuition and the parameters of phenomenal manifestation. Thus, the non-materialist axiomatic engenders an immanently transcendental dimension of non-intuitive phenomenality according to the radical hyle's twofold character as a phenomenon-without-logos and a matter-without-concept. We shall call this dimension of non-intuitive or non-phenomenological phenomenality axiomatically determined according to the radical hyle, the non-thetic universe. And in order to explore some of the ramifications of axioms 1, 7 and 8 for non-materialist thought, we will consider the way in which thinking-in-accordance-with the radical hyle's determination of Decision engenders a non-thetic universe within which the distinction between theory and experience is inoperative.

Non-Intuitive Phenomenality

1. Theory and experience

Phenomenology reconfigures Kant's transcendental difference between phenomenon and thing-in-itself in terms of the distinction between phenomenon and phenomenality. Thus, phenomenology abandons Kant's *critical* hypothesis of the thing-in-itself as that which delimits the parameters of human cognition by being transcendentally separated from the bounds of phenomenal immanence. Ironically, it does so on the grounds that the postulate of the thing-in-itself represents a residual form of metaphysical dogmatism. But without the implicitly sceptical hypothesis of the 'in-itself', the radical, corrosive kernel of the critical philosophy is lost, leaving only the reactionary complacency of its idealist husk. Transcendentalism degenerates into a pious apologia for the pre-established harmony whereby human consciousness enjoys unconditional access to 'the things themselves', now identified solely with intentional phenomena[227]. The critical asymmetry between phenomenon and 'in-itself' is replaced by the transcendental parallelism between phenomenon and phenomenality. Thus, for phenomenology, phenomenon and phenomenality are intuitively given

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[227]"*An object existing in itself is never one with which consciousness or the Ego pertaining to consciousness has nothing to do*"; "*If there are any worlds, any real physical things whatever, then*

together in the immanent indivisibility of an intrinsically pre-theoretical immediacy.

Non-materialism, however, dualyses the phenomenological parallelism between the immanence of the phenomenon and the transcendence of phenomenality into a non-phenomenological separation between the immanence of the radical hyle as 'the phenomenon-in-itself', or the phenomenon-without-phenomenality; and the transcendence of phenomenological Decision as the phenomenality which the latter now determines-in-the-last-instance. Moreover, by effecting this non-phenomenological dualysis of phenomenon and phenomenality, the Alien-subject destratifies the latent structural hierarchy through which the phenomenological Decision implicitly subordinated the ontic phenomenon to its ontological phenomenality. Since it is this subordination, ratified through the hierarchical parallelism constitutive of Decision as empirico-transcendental doublet, which also serves to enshrine the distinction between the pre-theoretical immediacy of phenomenological experience, and theoretically mediated philosophical experience, the dualysation of the former implies the dualysation of the latter. For since the indivisible parallelism of phenomenon and phenomenality constitutes the pre-theoretical immediacy

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the experienced motivations constituting them must be able to extend into my experience and into that

proper to 'experience' as characterised by phenomenology, whilst their distinction is a function of philosophically mediated 'theory', then the phenomenological presupposition of an indivisible parallelism between ontic phenomenon and ontological phenomenality also enshrines a hybridisation of phenomenological experience and philosophical theory.

Thus, in a complex gesture that should be familiar to us in light of our earlier analysis of philosophical Decision[228], phenomenology posits the *a priori* distinction of phenomenon and phenomenality, whilst presupposing their empirical immediation. That is to say: it posits their indivisible pre-theoretical immediacy through a gesture of theoretical mediation, and presupposes that their theoretical distinction is already articulated in experience. Accordingly, by dualysing the phenomenological hybridisation of phenomenon and phenomenality, which is to say, the presupposition of their intuitively given, indivisible immediacy, the Alien-subject also dualyses the amphiboly of phenomenological experience *qua* pre-theoretical immediacy and philosophical theory *qua* conceptual mediation. The Alien-subject now articulates the unilateral duality between the radical hyle as the phenomenon-in-itself, a phenomenon which is foreclosed to theory, rather than pre-theoretical, and phenomenological Decision as dimension of theoretically

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of each Ego[...]"(Husserl, 1982, pp.106 and 109 respectively).

determinable phenomenality. Thus, the Alien-subject enjoys a non-phenomenological existence as the transcendental theoretical determination of empirical phenomenality according to the phenomenon's foreclosure to theory. As a result, the Alien-subject's transcendental exteriority, its non-phenomenological transcendence as the determinant for phenomenological Decision, constitutes a cloning, a determination-in-the-last-instance of phenomenological Decision in terms of a theoretically determined or non-intuitive phenomenality. The Alien-subject exists as the (practico-)theoretical effectuation of the hyle's determination of phenomenality; an effectuation occasioned by phenomenology but one for which the transcendent distinction between the pre-theoretical immediacy of phenomenological experience and the mediation of philosophical theory is no longer operative or pertinent. That distinction has been reduced to the level of an indifferent empirical support.

However, the Alien-subject is not merely the subject 'of' non-philosophical theory, in the sense of being a subjective agent distinct or separable from theory *qua* objective instrument. Its non-phenomenological existence is essentially and irrecusably theoretical by virtue of being determined or cloned according to the radical hyle as an effectuation of non-intuitive phenomenality. Thus, the Alien-subject 'lives' or 'experiences' this

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[228] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 5, pp.218-230.

non-intuitive or non-thetic mode of phenomenality as incommensurable, unintuitable and unintelligible for the phenomenologically articulated parameters of human-being-in-the-world. The Alien-subject 'of' non-materialist theory experiences a phenomenality-without-phenomenology, a phenomenality which is more rigorously fundamental or archi-originary, but also more genuinely universal than every species of phenomenological experience. Where the lived experience attributed to the phenomenological subject is at once immanently lived and transcendently surveyed at one remove by the philosopher whose experience of pre-theoretical immediacy is simultaneously posited as immediate through Decision, the 'lived experience' of the Alien-subject remains unconditionally performative, non-reflexive, and non-thetic, precisely insofar as it is theoretically constituted, rather than a spontaneously presupposed hybrid of theory and experience.

Accordingly, for the Alien-subject of non-materialist theory, the phenomenological hybridisation of experience and theory, which is to say, the reciprocal presupposition and co-positing of empirical immediacy and transcendental mediation (empirical experience of immediacy posited in and through theory, theoretical mediation presupposed in and through empirical experience) as articulated in the empirico-transcendental parallelism which binds phenomenon and phenomenality, becomes the basis for a radically

immanent or non-thetic *theoretical* experience (rather than an experience 'of' theory); one which is equally and simultaneously a radically *experiential* theory (rather than a theory 'of' experience).

2. The six-dimensions of Decision

Moreover, as far as the internal structure of phenomenological Decision is concerned, the empirico-transcendental parallelism binding phenomenon and phenomenality remains inseparable from the abstract structural isomorphy between the phenomenological dimensions of experience and the six transcendental *a prioris* that Laruelle identifies as the invariants of all Decision[229]. That structural isomorphy yokes together three distinct pairs of doubly articulated or reciprocally presupposing *a prioris* for position and donation. Thus, the positional dimension of Decision comprises three structural moments:

1. The *Transcendence* or scission between condition and conditioned, *a priori* faktum and *a posteriori* datum.
2. The *Plane* or latent horizonal frame within the parameters of which the division is carried out.

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[229]Laruelle sets out his transcendental analytic of Decision in Chapter VI of *The Principles of Non-Philosophy*. In light of its extraordinary technical complexity, and for the purposes of coherence, we have considerably simplified and schematised that analysis here, focussing only on the dimensional *a prioris* and ignoring the other, equally fundamental components of Decision. Cf. Laruelle, 1996, pp.281-346, but especially pp. 285-288

3. Finally, the moment of *Unity* as indivisible contraction of the dyad of Transcendence and Plane, the Unity through which a determinate entity or thing is crystallized as objective noematic correlate of position. This last is the moment whereby position posits itself.

The donational dimension in turn comprises three corresponding moments:

1. *Affection* as the donation of an empirico-regional datum, the putatively real transcendence of the initial, extra-philosophical given.
2. The *Reception* of the formal codes of the philosophical as such in its specificity *vis a vis* all other forms of experience or as regulative or normative ideal given for thinking, paradigmatic horizon for the cognitive processing of experiential data.
3. Finally, *Intuition* as unity of the dyad of Affection and Reception, synthesis of the regional, extra-philosophical given and of the universal philosophical form as paradigm for the reception of experience. This is the moment through which donation donates or gives itself.

These three reciprocally paired moments of position and donation are the invariant structural hinges through which every Decision framing the phenomenological parameters of experience is articulated. Thus, an extra-philosophical Affection is posited through meta-physical Transcendence, while meta-physical Transcendence is given as extra-philosophical Affection; pre-philosophical Reception is posited through an ontological Plane, while this ontological Plane is given as a pre-philosophical Reception; and philosophical Intuition is posited through a transcendental Unity while transcendental Unity is given as philosophical Intuition.

The Alien-subject exists as the de-hybridisation or dualysation of these six reciprocally presupposing dimensions of Decisional auto-position and auto-donation. It suspends the circular loop of bi-lateral determination through which the positional *a prioris* are constituted as a function of a corresponding *a priori* donation, and the donational ones constituted as a function of a corresponding *a priori* position. The Alien-subject simplifies or irons out these multifarious foldings and doublings whereby the cardinal hinges of phenomenological position and donation remain reciprocally enfolded and doubled up within one another. It effects a radically heteronomous or *unilateralising* determination of this bi-lateral Decisional autonomy, extracting or cloning the non-auto-positional/non-auto-donational

essence from each of these auto-positional/auto-donational *a prioris*. It separates Affection from Transcendence, Reception from Plane, and Intuition from Unity, cloning these bi-lateral dyads as unilateral dualities. Thus, it determines or articulates them non-phenomenologically as Identities-without-unity and Dualities-without-distinction.

As a result, the sedimented structural hierarchy whereby Decision superimposes a phenomenologising frame for every phenomenon, an ontologising horizon for every entity, and objectivating conditions for every object, is unstacked, desedimented and steamrollered out into an immanent continuum of non-intuitive or theoretically determined phenomenality wherein thought operates independently of the conditions of consciousness, words function independently of the conditions of language, and experience is given independently of the conditions of perception. Through their unilateralisation or dualysing separation within the elemental immanence of the Alien-subject, the meta-physical Transcendence of extra-philosophical Affection, the ontological Plane of pre-philosophical Reception, and the transcendental Unity of philosophical Intuition attain their non-auto-Decisional –which is to say, non-phenomenological- Identity as unilateral dualities, as the simultaneity of identity-without-synthesis and duality-without-distinction. They are lived-in-One by the Alien-subject and

experienced non-phenomenologically through its unilateralising structure as a Transcendence free of its constrictive relational residue of meta-physical scission or ekstasis; as a Plane devoid of the counterpoises of ontological ground and horizonal enclosure; and as Unity without synthesis or objectivity, as the transcendental Entity = x, the immanent noumenon or thing-in-itself, definitively shorn of the ontological apparatus of categorial determination.

3. The transcendental prosthetic

The Alien-subject's immanent medium of phenomenal manifestation is that of this non-intuitive phenomenality determined in accordance with the radical hyle. It exists as Alien for the phenomenological realm insofar as it is determined in accordance with the non-phenomenological essence of phenomenality. Thus, the effectuation of the Alien-subject as dualysation of phenomenon and phenomenality frees non-materialist thinking from the parameters of phenomenological intuition as well as from the codes of materiological conceptuality. Moreover, by dualysing the auto-positional and auto-donational structure of phenomenological Decision and articulating this non-intuitive dimension of phenomenality, the Alien-subject functions as a theoretical vehicle providing unprecedented opportunities for cognitive experimentation. In fact, it furnishes the non-materialist axiomatic with a theoretical organon whose function might be likened to that of a

transcendental prosthetic. As organon for the non-materialist axiomatic, the Alien-subject *uses* phenomenological Decision as its occasional material in order to construct theorematic descriptions of 'matter itself' determined-in-the-last-instance by the radical hyle;- thus, it uses phenomenological Decision in a way which precludes the possibility that the parameters of phenomenological intuition become constitutive or determining for a transcendental theory 'of' matter. In effect, the Alien-subject amplifies cognitive capacities by intervening directly at what is, from a philosophical perspective at least, the 'metatranscendental' level of the phenomenological syntheses conditioning the possibilities of experience.

However, it is this transcendent distinction between 'experience' and 'theory' in their phenomenological acceptation that becomes inoperative when viewed from the radically external, 'utopian' perspective of the Alien-subject. Such a distinction was only tenable so long as it was possible to hold on to a division between some putatively pre-theoretical (i.e. pre-Decisional) realm of experiential immediacy and a theoretically articulated dimension specifying the ontological pre-conditions for the experience of immediacy (i.e. a Decision). But it is the very possibility of such a distinction that becomes untenable once the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy has been suspended and the rigorously transcendental stance of the Alien-subject

effectuated. There can be no such thing as 'experience-in-itself' before the advent of phenomenological Decision, just as there can be no such thing as Decision-in-itself, given independently of the radical hyle, unless it be by virtue of philosophical illusion. Experience defined in terms of pre-theoretical, intuitive phenomenological immediacy, of Consciousness or Subjectivity, remains, like Perception, Language, or History, an auto-positional, auto-donational ontological construct, the product of a Decision.

Thus, it is possible to provide a non-materialist generalisation of Kant: the Alien-subject as organon for a transcendental determination that is real-in-the-last-instance but non-phenomenological reduces all phenomenological ontology to the level of empirical Idealism. Phenomenological ontology itself now becomes a contingent item of empirical data for non-materialist theory. That is to say: whereas for Kant, the ideal conditions for the possibility for experience were also the ideal conditions for the possibility of the objects of experience[230], for non-materialism the real, non-phenomenological conditions for the reality of a theory of experience (i.e. for the determination of phenomenological Decision in accordance with the radical hyle) now determine the phenomenological conditions of empirical experience (i.e. of consciousness, perception, etc., insofar as these are all encompassed as a

function of Decision). 'Consciousness', 'perception', 'language', 'history', and all those other Decisionally circumscribed generalities supposedly intrinsic to the possibility of what we think, see, feel, and hear, are empirical idealisations, convenient speculative fictions gratuitously erected and maintained on the basis of philosophical Decision (the latter being a rigorously universal structure which, as we shall see later, ultimately encompasses capital and the apparatuses of socio-economic production[231]). But through the Alien-subject these generalities, along with the Decisions by means of which they are sustained as hybrids of empirical presupposition and ideal positing, can be dualysed and reconfigured as unilateral Identities.

4. The non-thetic universe

Accordingly, every phenomenological Decision reconfigured in terms of the non-thetic *a prioris* of donation and position unleashes a dimension of unconditional possibility, a transcendental continuum of radically immanent virtuality now definitively untethered from the philosophical moorings that tied it to empirical actuality. Non-materialism refuses the ontological constraints that obliged Deleuze to postulate a merely relative asymmetrical parallelism between virtual and actual, one whereby every actual

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[230]"*We then assert that the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are likewise conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience, and that for this reason they have objective validity in a synthetic a priori judgement*" (Kant, 1929, p.194, A158/B197)

[231]Cf. our Conclusion, *infra*, pp.422-430.

differen*c*iation of the virtual immediately implies a virtual differen*t*iation of the actual, and hence the initiation of a positive feedback loop from virtual to actual and back to the virtual again, according to an autocatalytic process of ontological genesis[232]. By reducing every Decision, and thus the entire realm of phenomenological experience concomitant with it, to the level of a neutral and indifferent symbolic support for the Alien-subject, the non-materialist axiomatic installs a strictly irreversible and aparallel asymmetry between the empirical dimension of phenomenological experience and the non-intuitive *xenotype* which the Alien-subject clones or effectuates using Decision.

Accordingly, the dimension of non-intuitive phenomenality effectuated by the Alien-subject constitutes a rigorously transcendental dimension of virtuality; one wherein possibility is no longer a function of empirical actuality. The Alien-subject's transcendental exteriority *vis a vis* the empirical realm which serves as its occasional support precludes its reincorporation within the ambit of empirical possibility. In *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy* Laruelle calls the dimension of radical virtuality concomitant with the Alien-subject's non-intuitive phenomenality 'the non-thetic universe'. The latter is "*is lived before the advent of a horizon or project, in the form of a manifold of singular points of transcendence, a manifold of*

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[232] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 3, pp.129-131.

affects of universality, now apprehended as the phenomenal content of that which science calls 'objectivity' [...] it constitutes a manifold of real, primitive transcendence, shorn of all external Unity and of all finality[...] a manifold of radical or individual possibles. These possibles are well and truly universals, but devoid of position, devoid of space even if it be 'pure', and devoid even of intensity. The hybrid of the particular and the universal is broken, science [i.e. non-philosophical thought-RB] *finally accedes to a universal liberated from its limitation in the particular, and even from its limitation in the 'individual'. Precisely because the universal now derives from the individual in the rigorous sense and no longer co-determines it, it is beyond its restricted and transcendent forms. This is the most universal experience of the universal or the possible: when the latter is no longer condemned to go by way of its own self-representation or hybrid states.*" (Laruelle, 1989, p.200)

The non-thetic universe is the transcendental dimension of non-intuitive phenomenality effectuated through the existence of the Alien-subject. In its simplest, most invariant form, it comprises the Affect of Transcendence without horizonal enclosure, the Reception of a Plane without ontological ground and the Intuition of a Unity without objective determination. It is by virtue of its effectuation of the non-thetic universe that

the Alien-subject functions like a transcendental prosthetic amplifying the possibilities of thought and allowing for a non-phenomenological universalisation of materialism; a universalisation whereby materialism is allowed to access matter's non-phenomenological exteriority as thing-in-itself, as Entity finally released from the parameters of phenomenological intuition and the codes of materiological conceptualisation. Thus, if the non-thetic universe can be said to correspond to the Alien-subject's *noetic* dimension of transcendence as unilateralising duality, then the strictly unobjectifiable exteriority of the Entity is its *noematic* correlate, that which the Alien-subject experiences as the non-intentional correlate or *unilate* for the foreclosure of the radical hyle. The non-materiological Entity is the transcendental xenotype for matter's unobjectifiable exteriority, but a radically *phenomenal* exteriority cloned from the phenomenological hybridisation of objectivating phenomenality and objective phenomenon. This is the rigorously cognitive prototype for the non-phenomenological exteriority hinted at or evoked, but only ever caricatured, in the hyperbolic constructs of Lovecraftian fantasy and science fiction[233].

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[233]Cf. for instance the short-story -favoured by Deleuze & Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*- 'Through

5. Non-materialism and gnosis

The non-materialist axiomatic represents a variant of what Laruelle calls 'the vision-in-One'. The latter, Laruelle insists, is a third kind of knowledge that is almost the opposite of Malebranche's vision-in-God: it remains radically singular, finite, and non-paradigmatic[234]. Non-materialism reduces or suspends what Laruelle refers to as the 'Greco-unitary' epistemological paradigm and ascribes to it the status of an occasional material or empirical support for an *an-archic* or *gnostic* model of cognition[235]. Gnosis can never become epistemically normative or paradigmatic precisely because it remains radically singular and ontologically unencompassable in each and every instance. Laruelle's 'One' –i.e. radical immanence- never reconstitutes an 'All', and the radical hyle which non-materialist thinking clones from the hyletic continuum as philosophical hybridisation of singularity and multiplicity is not merely another version of the body-without-organs. Similarly, the non-thetic universe cloned in accordance with matter's foreclosure to ontological unification is not simply another version of the plane of immanence. Since what Laruelle refers to as

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the Gates of the Silver Key' in *H.P.Lovecraft Omnibus I: At the Mountains of Madness*, London: HarperCollins, 1993, pp.505-552.

[234] Cf.Laruelle, 1991, p.19.

[235] In his brief but poetic rumination on gnosticism, Jacques Lacarrière constantly highlights its militantly an-archic, anti-authoritarian aspect. Cf. Laccarrière, 1989. Jonas's (1991) classic study, for

'the One-without-Being' (*l'Un-sans-l'Etre*) never under any circumstances constitutes an instance of ontological unity or totality, there can never be one One but only an indenumerable plurality of Ones, an unencompassable non-ontological manifold of 'indivi-dualities': Identities-without-unity which are simultaneously Dualities-without-distinction. The non-Decisional separation of radically indivisible immanence and radically transcendent division releases their unilateral duality: *unobjectifiable indivision is now the condition that causes or engenders unencompassable division*. Immanence's uni-laterality brings forth a radically dispersive manifold of utterly discontinuous *universes*. This unilateral duality of indivision and division cannot be synthesised through Decision. Identity and Duality cannot be reintegrated into the Decisional synthesis of the One and the Multiple. Their unilateral separation as Identity-without-unity and Duality-without-difference precludes the bilateral ontological reciprocity between Unity and Difference, a reciprocity perpetuated through the unitary structure of philosophical Decision and one which invariably leads to the ontological reinscription of multiplicity as unity[236].

Thus, the manifestation of a non-thetic universe of theorematic description for the radical hyle engenders a unilateral duality of 'matter itself'

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its part, underlines gnosticism's profoundly anti-anthropocentric character as religion of an alien god,

and materialist Decision; a duality that forecloses the possibility of reinscribing matter within Decision. Nevertheless, and despite philosophical appearances, the hypo-thetical positing of matter's foreclosure to Decision remains perfectly compatible with the scientific-materialist assignation of a univocal ontological consistency to matter. It is not an ontological thesis about the constitution of matter but a transcendental hypothesis enforcing the distinction between matter's description and its constitution, specifically one which seeks to discontinue the philosophical amphiboly of phenomenological description and ontological constitution. The guiding hypothesis for non-materialist thinking is simply that matter's univocal ontological consistency – about which non-materialism has nothing to say- cannot be decided on the basis of phenomenological evidence since it is multiply instantiable in a manifold of phenomenologically incommensurable registers of phenomenal description. In this sense, non-materialism is a *critical* hypothesis that seeks to purge transcendental materialism of its residual phenomenological empiricism.

That this critical hypothesis also constitutes a gnosis of matter is something that can be appreciated only once one has understood that gnosis represents a species of practico-theoretical description rather than of ethico-

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while Filoramo (1992) provides a more prosaic but nevertheless indispensable scholarly synopsis.

ontological dogma. Non-materialist gnosis is *an-archic* insofar as it dualyses every unitary ontological *arche* or principle according to the rigorously unilateral and irreversible order of the non-materialist axiomatic. As performed by the Alien-subject, the gnosis of 'matter itself' consists in the articulation of a non-intuitive universe for the theorematic description and phenomenalisation of the radical hyle; a universe of theorematic description whose conceptual codes and phenomenological dimensions –as circumscribed through the Affect of Transcendence, the Reception of the Plane and the Intuition of Unity- are simplified, which is to say, *unidentified* and *unilateralised*-, thereby engendering an an-archic, paraphenomenological chaos wherein thought is loosed from the conditions of intentional consciousness, words are freed from the strictures of linguistic signification, and entities liberated from the armature of ontological coordination.

Gnosis allows ontologically extraterritorial individuals –Alien-subjects- to proceed in an orderly but irreversible manner from the fixed phenomenological organisation of empirical ideality to a transcendental *chaos*[237] of unencompassable cognitive possibility. And by reducing

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[236] Cf. in particular Chapter 3, pp.154-161; and Chapter 5, pp.243-245.

[237]Non-philosophical 'chaos' is neither mere disorder nor something which falls within the purview of non-linear dynamics. Whilst the former remains encompassed within the unitary philosophical dyad 'order/disorder', the latter, for all their unpredictable complexity, are mathematically well regulated systems of phenomena produced through the recursive reiteration of homothetic invariants (cf. Gleick, 1998). For Laruelle, by way of contrast, the term 'chaos' designates that unencompassable or dispersive

phenomenological Decision to the status of idealised empirical fiction. non-materialism invites individuals to submit transcendent ontological generalities to a set of precise, systematic (but non-systemic), yet utterly heterogeneous variations, thereby extracting from the latter an immanently transcendental and radically universal dimension of phenomenality which remains strictly incommensurable with the phenomenological realm which supports it.

More interestingly perhaps, through the non-materialist axiomatic, the Alien-subject operates directly at what a philosopher would call the 'metatranscendental' level at which the phenomenological parameters and cognitive architecture of all cultural software remains determinable, thereby suspending the contingent epistemic armature which an aleatory evolutionary history, allied to a random set of sociocultural practises, have grafted onto the intrinsic plasticity of our neurophysiological apparatus[238]. Perceptual intuition, whether empirical and *a posteriori*, or phenomenological and *a priori*, is now entirely incorporated within the Decisional ambit that serves merely as the occasion for the Alien-subject's descriptions of the radical hyle.

Accordingly, this non-intuitive generalisation of matter coincides with materialism's non-Decisional *universalisation* beyond the bounds of the

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manifold of unilateral dualities manifested in accordance with immanence's radically inconsistent Identity. Cf. *infra*, Chapter 7, pp.361-372; Chapter 8, pp.419-421; and also Laruelle, 1992, *passim*.

[238]Cf. Chapter 8 where the theme of neurophysiological plasticity will be explored *via* the work of Paul Churchland.

anthropocognitive. For the charmed circle of philosophical auto-position perpetuated a reciprocity between the empirical and the transcendental whereby matter and thought remained either co-constitutive or co-extensive. The price for the spontaneous sufficiency of philosophical materialism was a circumscription of 'matter itself' within the restricted ambit of conceptual position and phenomenological donation as delineated according to the arbitrary empirical vagaries of the philosopher's speculative imagination. Thus, implicit in materiological Decisionism is an uncritical faith in the sufficiency of the philosophical imagination, one that seems to disregard the latter's entirely arbitrary character. Yet if the history of philosophy teaches us anything, it is that the philosopher's speculative imagination is always empirically limited. In other words, implicit in the speculative materialist's confidence in the sufficiency of Decision is the quasi-idealist assumption that an arbitrarily selected epistemic apparatus is sufficient to grasp matter 'itself', irrespective of the biologically delimited parameters of human sapience. By our lights, natural science gives us every reason to doubt this[239].

Consequently, there is a sense in which, philosophical appearances notwithstanding, the *asceticism* of non-materialist theory and practise accords more readily with natural science than do the speculative indulgences of

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[239]Cf. our brief comments concerning the philosophical ramifications of string theory in our

philosophical materialism. For it is in accordance with its refusal to subordinate science to philosophy that non-materialist thinking, on the basis of matter's radical autonomy, now recognises science's claim to a *relatively* absolute autonomy which is the equal of philosophy's, and that it attempts to reconfigure the apparatus of materialist theory in such a way as to grant the latter a measure of transcendental independence *vis a vis* the limits which an empirically overdetermined set of cognitive faculties impose upon the speculative imagination.

That science stands on an equal footing with philosophy, that philosophy –like mathematics or logic- is merely part of the abstract wing of the empirical sciences, is a central tenet of philosophical naturalism, and specifically of the 'naturalised epistemology' formulated by W.V.O. Quine and championed by Paul Churchland. The next two chapters will try to recapitulate and to clarify the fundamental components of the non-materialist stance by comparing and contrasting them with certain of the central philosophical doctrines which characterise the vigorously naturalistic brand of materialism exemplified in the work of Quine and Churchland.

Our aim is to show how two apparently irreconcilable, not to say contradictory theoretical trajectories leading out of the Kantian problematic –

Introduction, *supra*, p.21.

Quinean naturalism and Laruellean hypertranscendentalism- display an unexpected degree of theoretical convergence by virtue of their shared antipathy to phenomenology. Thus, Quine's is an anti-phenomenological naturalism, while Laruelle's is an anti-phenomenological transcendentalism. In the following chapter, we will see how the hypertranscendental register of non-materialist theory not only accords with Quine's anti-transcendental and anti-phenomenological naturalism, but also how it radicalises and generalises certain of its theses –specifically those of the inscrutability of reference, of ontological relativity, and of the indeterminacy of translation.

CHAPTER 7

BEHOLD THE NON-RABBIT

This chapter will discuss the relation between individuation, theory, and experience, and will examine the way in which these concepts are intertwined in the work of Kant, Quine, and Laruelle. More precisely, we will be foregrounding the theme of individuation but only in order to use it as a lens through which to focus on the way in which the relation between theory and experience is understood by these three thinkers.

By 'individuation' we mean the problem which can be summarized in the question: how is it that *something* comes to be counted as 'one' ? In this regard, Leibniz's famous claim according to which "That which is not *one* being is not a *being*" encapsulates an entire ontological tradition. But is it possible to think 'something' without having thereby immediately counted it as 'one' thing ? Taking this question as a starting point, our aim in considering the issue of individuation here is twofold. First, to look at one way to which this traditional (but largely unstated) conceptual equivalence between 'being' and 'being-one', or between entity and unity, has figured as an uncircumventable precondition for ontology. Second, to suggest some of the ways in which the assumption of that precondition might be challenged or

undermined. In order to do this we will chart a trajectory through three distinct theoretical stances concerning individuation. We will begin with the Kantian account, according to which an invariable transcendental paradigm for objective individuation is available. Then we'll move on to consider the more sceptical, Quinean stance, whereby far from being universal and paradigmatic, individuation is actually a matter of linguistic convention, hence epistemically relative, and ultimately ontologically indeterminate. Finally, we will conclude by trying to elucidate the Laruellean suggestion that only a strictly transcendental determination of the singular can sever the link between entity and unity, thereby guaranteeing the de-objectification and de-phenomenologisation of the singular.

We would also like to suggest that the first and second of these theses concerning individuation can be roughly correlated with certain more or less generic philosophical postures, in order to give some inkling of the peculiar way in which Laruelle's own non-philosophical stance constitutes neither a negation nor a synthesis of the Kantian and Quinean postures, but something like their radicalisation and generalisation.

Thus, in the first section of the paper, we will see how Kant, the idealist, mobilizes an invariant transcendental criterion guaranteeing the objective unity of individuation. In the second, we shall examine the way in

which Quine, the materialist, undermines the assumption that any such transcendental *guarantor* for individuation exists. In the third and final section, however, we hope to show how Laruelle -circumventing both the idealist and the materialist schemas- effectively generalises Quine's materialist subversion of objective unity by radicalising Kant's transcendental method. Accordingly, it is by way of a concurrent radicalisation of transcendental determination and generalisation of empirical under-determination that the Laruelle-inspired or non-philosophical materialism we are attempting to articulate here proposes to sever the presumed link between entity and unity.

Consequently, the 'non-rabbit' mentioned in the title of this chapter is not an 'anti-rabbit' or a 'not-rabbit' but an entity without unity. We have already seen how the prefix 'non-' -whether in 'non-rabbit' or 'non-philosophy'- is not to be understood negatively or privatively[240]. It has a very specific technical sense as an abbreviation for 'non-Decisional', which, as we saw earlier, is in turn shorthand for 'non-auto-positional' and 'non-auto-donational'. Thankfully, for present purposes, these somewhat cumbersome locutions can be usefully compressed into the far more economical 'non-thetic': it will be a 'non-thetic rabbit' that is in question here. Thus, one of the

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[240] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 5, pp.213-230 and 259-260.

key claims we would like to make in this chapter is that although a 'non-thetic rabbit' is effectively unobjectifiable, it is neither ineffable nor inconceivable. We now know that neither objectification nor phenomenologisation can presume to exhaust the entire available spectrum of immanent phenomenal manifestation. So not only does a 'non-thetic rabbit' remain entirely immanent, precisely articulated within the bounds of conceptual thought, it also remains available to perception;- albeit only with the crucial proviso that the empirical parameters of the human sensory apparatus become theoretically reconfigured in accordance with certain transcendental strictures (we will return to this latter point in the final section of this chapter).

Hence the use of the word 'behold' in the title of this chapter: the non-rabbit is entirely immanent, entirely manifest, in spite of the fact that is neither a unitary nor an intentional phenomenon. In this regard, the overarching aim of this exercise in comparative analysis is to clarify and to elucidate the crucial but difficult notion of a 'non-phenomenological phenomenality'. To sum up very briefly: in Husserl's case, the phenomenological definition of phenomenality designates a mode of manifestation defined in terms of its immanence to intentional consciousness[241], while in (the early) Heidegger's case, it designates an

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[241]Cf. for instance Husserl, 1982.

apophantic mode of manifestation defined in terms of an ekstatic structure of ontological transcendence articulated through Dasein's being-in-the-world[242]. The non-phenomenological definition, however, refers to a non-intentional, non-apophantic, and non-worldly mode of phenomenal manifestation defined exclusively in terms of its immanence 'in' theory. It refers to a constitutively *theoretical* mode of phenomenality. So because it is an intrinsically theoretical phenomenon - one, moreover, entirely devoid of apophantic intelligibility, intentional unity or worldly horizonality by virtue of its constitutively theoretical status - the non-rabbit will only become manifest according to the strictures of a non-empirical, non-intuitive, or theoretically determined phenomenality, as opposed to those of consciousness, sensibility, or being-in-the-world.

Kant

In all three of the thinkers under consideration here, there's a complex interrelation between individuation, theory and experience. But perhaps most significantly, all three are concerned with undermining the basically Cartesian notion that there exists some kind of essentially pre-theoretical immediacy through which 'consciousness' -supposing there to be such a thing- enjoys privileged access to phenomena or 'things themselves'. If they have anything

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[242]Cf. Heidegger, 1962.

at all in common, it's this basic refusal to have any truck with the homely phenomenological faith in the pre-theoretical experiential immediacy of 'the things themselves'.

Kant, for instance, denies the fanciful notion that we have privileged introspective access to the contents of our own heads. As far as the investigation into the conditions of possibility for experience is concerned, introspection provides no more of a solid basis than wand dowsing. The transcendental difference between phenomenon and in-itself cuts all the way into the subject: empirical consciousness is just as conditioned, just as determined, as every other kind of objective phenomenon. Moreover, as the ultimate ground for the possibility of transcendental synthesis, pure apperception maintains a formal, impersonal and objective status which precludes its identification with the personal subject of empirical consciousness; although transcendentally immanent *to* experience it is never given *in* experience, it remains external to inner sense: "*The transcendental unity of apperception [...] is therefore entitled objective, and must be distinguished from the subjective unity of consciousness, which is a determination of inner sense*" (Kant, 1929, B139, p.157). Consequently, the experience into whose conditions of possibility Kant is investigating is neither the 'lived' experience of phenomenological consciousness, nor the putatively

private realm of subjective qualia, but the universal *cognitive* experience whose structures are mapped out in the theories of Euclid and Newton. Kant is laying out transcendental conditions for the possibility of a single, universal but ultimately *impersonal* objective experience as theoretically articulated by Euclid and Newton, rather than as phenomenologically apprehended or 'lived' by a conscious subject:

"*There is one single experience in which all perceptions are represented as in thoroughgoing and orderly connection, just as there is only one space and one time in which all modes of appearance and all relations of being or not-being occur. When we speak of different experiences, we can refer only to the various perceptions, all of which, as such, belong to one and the same general experience. This thoroughgoing synthetic unity of perceptions is indeed the form of experience; it is nothing else than the synthetic unity of appearances in accordance with concepts.*" (Kant, 1929, A111, p.138).

For Kant, this 'synthetic unity of appearances in accordance with concepts' provides the transcendental basis for the universal cognitive experience whose invariant features are delineated in Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics. These invariants constitute the universal laws in conformity with which all possible appearances are woven together into one

unified, cohesive whole. Moreover, Kant claims that "*The unity of apperception is thus the transcendental ground of the necessary conformity to law of all appearances in one experience*"(Ibid., A127, p.148). If this is so, it follows that pure apperception, the indivisible integer of categorial judgement and transcendental synthesis, is the formal principle grounding the synthetic unity of appearances, and ultimately the universal, impersonal, and objective principle in which the nomological consistency of all appearances finds its basis. Which is to say that pure apperception is in fact the subject of Euclidean and Newtonian theory: it is the transcendental guarantor for the possibility of the nomological consistency of appearances as set out in geometry and physics. Thus, Kant is attempting to define conditions of possibility for experience in accordance with a specific set of theoretical strictures which carve out certain necessary and law like invariances through which that experience is structured. Pure apperception, the wellspring of the synthetic a priori, is the cardinal hinge bridging the divide between the empty logical necessity of the analytical *a priori* and the contentful empirical contingency of the synthetic *a posteriori*. In doing so it ensures the transcendental isomorphy of theory and experience. But how then does pure apperception serve to articulate the link between theory, experience, and individuation?

To answer this question, it is imperative we bear in mind Kant's crucial distinction between combination or *Verbindung* as function of the transcendental imagination, and unity or *Einheit* as rooted in the pure understanding. Thus, Kant writes: "*Combination is representation of the synthetic unity of the manifold. The representation of this unity cannot, therefore, arise out of the combination. On the contrary, it is what, by adding itself to the representation of the manifold, first makes possible the concept of the combination*"(Ibid., B131, p.152)[243]. The synthesizing function Kant ascribes to the transcendental imagination would not be possible, he argues, unless that combinatory activity was rooted in an essentially pre-synthetic or indivisible integer of transcendental unity proper to the pure understanding. This unity, of course, is provided by transcendental apperception. And it is precisely insofar as it first makes possible the *a priori* combination of the manifold in pure intuition that apperception provides the transcendental ground binding together subjective individuation and individuated objectivity. This is why, as Kant famously maintains: "*the conditions of the possibility of experience in general are likewise conditions of the possibility of the objects of experience*"(Ibid., A 158/B 197, p.194). Because apperception is indissociably correlated with the pure and empty form of objectivity in

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[243]For a brilliantly innovative reading of Kant exploring the ramifications of this fundamental

general - the transcendental object = x -, it yields the isomorphic reciprocity between representing subject and represented object which grounds the possibility of empirical experience. It is thereby the universal synthetic principle out of which both subjective and objective individuation are crystallized. For although 'unity' is one of the categories of quantity and hence one of the twelve determinate modalities of objective synthesis, it is finally apperception which furnishes the *qualitative* unity from which objective synthesis originarily arises as a mode of categorial judgement. In this regard, pure apperception is the ultimate determining instance for individuation, and the schematism and the principles of the pure understanding merely provide supplementary details concerning the *a priori* structures of spatio-temporal combination into which appearances which have already been individuated through apperception become woven in order to produce an intra-consistent network for cognitive representation.

It comes as no surprise then to find that Kant's account of individuation is basically hylomorphic. Pure apperception is the indivisible paradigm of formal unity stamping an essentially amorphous manifold of spatio-temporal presentation with its individuating seal. It would be a mistake, however, to regard that unity as merely subjective in character, for as

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distinction between *Verbindung* and *Einheit*, cf. Alain Badiou, 'L'ontologie soustractive de Kant' in his

Kant repeatedly insists, it is from the indivisibility of pure apperception that the representing subject and the represented object both derive. Thus, Kant's account of individuation necessitates a transcendental isomorphy between subjective and objective unity. In fact, subjectivation, objectivation, and individuation all become virtually indistinguishable processes inasmuch as apperceptive synthesis exhausts the possibilities of phenomenal manifestation. As far as Kant is concerned, to be something is to be an object of possible experience, and pure apperception is the ultimate transcendental determinant for all possible experience. Consequently, although Kant's transcendentalism critically undermines the idea that consciousness is the domain of a privileged pre-theoretical immediacy - for that idea conflates conscious experience of phenomena with experience of 'things-in-themselves' - , not only does Kant fail to critically examine the link between entity and unity, he reinforces it by identifying the notions of phenomenon and object, thereby subordinating both to the indivisible transcendental bond between subjective and objective unity. In short, the Kantian rabbit-entity is one with which we are all perfectly familiar: it is an objectively individuated, three dimensional physical phenomenon persisting in time and locatable by reference to an entirely-determinate system of spatio-temporal coordinates, its

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Court Traité d'Ontologie Transitoire: Badiou, 1998, pp.153-165.

objective contours fixed through a stable set of spatial boundaries and a homogeneous segment of temporal continuity.

What then can we conclude about the relation between individuation, theory and experience in Kant ? We have already mentioned how, because of its universal, impersonal and objective character, the unified experience correlated with pure apperception is that whose invariant, law like features are jointly delineated by the theories of Euclid and Newton. Clearly then, Kant's entire transcendental project is intimately bound to the presupposition of an immanent, already constituted system of scientific theory. The substantive character of the synthetic *a priori* judgements whose formal possibility Kant is trying to uncover is, to all intents and purposes, defined by Newton and Euclid. The empirical immanence of an experience whose universally necessary features are jointly described in Euclidean geometry and Newtonian physics defines the parameters of possible experience for which Kant seeks to provide a transcendental ground. Borrowing a useful schema from Deleuze and Guattari, we might say that the transcendental and the synthetic *a priori*, critical philosophy and science, are wedded together and doubly articulated in a relation of reciprocal presupposition. Thus, Kant's Critical project presupposes an empirically immanent scientific theory of experience, for

which he then tries to provide an *a priori* but nevertheless transcendentally immanent epistemological footing.

However, as subsequent scientific developments have all too clearly shown, this relation of presupposition remains fatally one-sided. It is Kant's transcendental philosophy which presupposes the empirical immanence of scientific theory and a scientific delineation of the synthetic *a priori* in the shape of an already extant system of apodictic mathematical and scientific truths; not, as Kant mistakenly believed, empirical science which presupposes a transcendental basis. This one-sidedness is a consequence of the unmistakeably *transcendent* character of Kant's transcendental *a priori*. And given the extent to which the internal coherence of the critical project as a whole hinges on the 1st Critique's crucial distinction between the transcendental and the transcendent[244], this is deeply problematic for Kant. More than one commentator[245] has remarked how, by simply *tracing* transcendental conditions from the empirically conditioned, and superimposing the presumed unity of pure apperception onto the synthetic combinations of the empirical manifold, Kant merely constructs a redundant,

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[244] Cf. Kant, op. cit., A295-6/B352-3,pp.298-299.

[245]Dufrenne, Deleuze and Foucault have made this particular criticism almost ubiquitous in recent years, but Miklos Vetö reveals the extent to which it had already been more or less explicitly formulated by many of Kant's contemporaries and immediate successors: e.g. Haaman, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel. Cf. Vetö, 1998. In view of the now elephantine proportions of secondary literature on Kant, many more names could doubtless be added to this list.

2nd order abstraction which, far from explaining them, simply reproduces the formal features of empirical generality at a higher level. Consequently, the supposedly transcendental reciprocity between critical philosophy and the scientific mapping of experience is only operative from the perspective of the former.

The trouble with Kant's transcendentalism can be summarized in the following way: in principle, the empirically immanent bounds of possible experience, its universal, law like features as laid out in the theories of Euclid and Newton, are supposed to be transcendentally girded, necessarily rooted in the constitutive structures of cognition by those forms of *a priori* synthesis grounded in the immanence of pure apperception. But in fact they are not, as the discoveries of Lobatchevski, Riemann and Einstein (among others) showed only too clearly, revealing to what extent Kant's transcendental girding was flimsy, makeshift, and expedient, its foundations far too shallowly excavated. Kant's critical project remains trapped within the ambit of the empirico-transcendental doublet as circumscribed through the structure of philosophical Decision. It is only by *presupposing* science as empirically given that Kant is able to *posit* the *a priori* conditions through which the empirical comes to be constituted as given. Because of this Decisional structure, Kant's transcendental *a priori* ends up floundering in extraneous metaphysical

transcendence: neither rigorously transcendental, nor authentically immanent *vis a vis* the empirical domain of possible experience mapped out in scientific theory.

Quine

Interestingly enough, this relation of double articulation and reciprocal presupposition between philosophy and science is also one of the most striking features of Quine's work, albeit reconfigured in a vigorously naturalistic, anti-transcendental fashion. Quine's demolition of the analytic-synthetic distinction[246] invalidates the Kantian conception of the transcendental and liquidates the very notion of the synthetic *a priori*. For Quine, truth is immanent and disquotational[247], while reference remains a strictly intra-theoretical relation; thus, there is no difference in kind between truths of logic and truths of fact, only a difference of degree measured in terms of their susceptibility to empirical refutation. Consequently, there is no gap to bridge between essence and existence, logic and fact, judgement and experience; and no justification whatsoever for positing a transcendental isomorphy between representing and represented through the good offices of

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[246] Cf. Quine, 1961, pp. 20-46.

[247] "*Where it makes sense to apply 'true' is to a sentence couched in terms of a given theory and seen from within that theory, complete with its posited reality...To say that the statement 'Brutus killed Caesar' is true, or that 'The atomic weight of sodium is 23' is true, is in effect simply to say that Brutus killed Caesar or that the atomic weight of sodium is 23.*" (Quine, 1960, p.24).

a synthetic *a priori*. Quine's dissolution of the analytic/synthetic distinction necessitates abandoning the idea that the possibilities of empirical experience can be delimited through certain *a priori* epistemic structures possessing an inviolable formal necessity. As far as Quine is concerned, there simply are no purely *a priori* formal structures constraining the bounds of possible experience. Which is to say that the possibilities of scientific theory are continuously being reconfigured in accordance with real occurrences in the world, rather than eternally fixed according to ideal structures in the subject.

Thus, although Quine's empiricism operates on the basis of a presupposition of immanence defined in terms of an already extant body of scientific theory, in a manner initially analogous to Kant's, he refuses the Kantian dissociation of philosophical epistemology from science in the shift to a transcendental epistemological register. This is Quine's thesis of the reciprocal containment of epistemology and ontology[248]. With the denial of analytic/synthetic distinction and the dissolution of the synthetic *a priori* goes the idea that there can be a first philosophy providing transcendental grounds for scientific theory. Not only does philosophical epistemology presupposes scientific ontology -ultimately the ontology of microphysical states provided by physics; the epistemological investigation into the genesis of scientific

ontology must be carried out within the conceptual framework provided by that fundamental physical ontology. There can be no transcendental bracketing or suspension of the natural scientific attitude. Thus, the fundamental methodological presupposition underlying Quine's empiricism is the espousal of an uncompromisingly physicalist ontology. And the physicalist holds that there can be no difference in the world that would not ultimately prove reducible to some physical difference explainable in terms of the distribution of elementary particles. As a physicalist Quine insists that "*nothing happens in the world, not the flutter of an eyelid, not the flicker of a thought, without some redistribution of microphysical states.*" (Quine, 1981, p.98) Consequently, although epistemology can investigate the process of scientific theory formation, it must do so from a vantage point included *within* that scientific theory. The ontological framework provided by the physical sciences provides the basis for epistemology even as the latter investigates the genesis of the former. Thus, for Quine, science's empirical immanence functions like a kind of transcendental presupposition for epistemology. Where Kant sought to ground scientific ontology in transcendental epistemology, Quine grounds a naturalized epistemology in the transcendentally immanent ontology provided by physics: "*my position is a*

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[248]For an account of this thesis' fundamental importance in Quine's thought, and for an exemplary

naturalistic one; I see philosophy not as an a priori propaedeutic or groundwork for science, but as continuous with science. I see philosophy and science as in the same boat - a boat which, to revert to Neurath's figure as I so often do, we can rebuild only at sea while staying afloat in it. There is no external vantage point, no first philosophy."(Quine, 1969, pp.126-127)

It is this idea that the boat of empirical science functions as an inalienable presupposition for philosophy -in other words, that it functions as a real, rather than ideal, condition of possibility- which permits us to qualify it with the otherwise resolutely un-Quinean epithet of 'transcendental'. But note that what we are calling 'transcendental' here, in the context of Quine's allusion to Neurath's boat, is neither the wood from which the ship's planks have been hewn, nor any specific feature concerning the shape and structure of those planks: this was Kant's mistake. It is simply the fact that philosophy begins as 'always already' inscribed within a complex global network of intricately interrelated conceptual presuppositions. There is always some fundamental theory of the world keeping the possibility of philosophical investigation afloat. Without it, philosophy could not even begin to operate.

Moreover that global web of belief, that intricate network of conceptual presupposition, is irreducible to the perspective of first-person

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exposition and defence of Quine's philosophy in its systematic consistency, see Roger Gibson's,

subjectivity. For although the fabric and tissue of the web are woven -*via* intricate micrological processes of probably unimaginable complexity- in the course a vast and ongoing collective cultural enterprise, it is scientific praxis that constructs and articulates its interconnecting nodes. Scientific theory furnishes the abstract logical filters, syntactical connectives, and conceptual joints which ensure the cohesive articulation of the whole. And science, as an impersonal theoretical praxis intrinsically embedded within a collective socio-cultural enterprise, is too variegated, heterogeneous and complex a phenomenon to be ascribed a unique and invariable essence. The structure of scientific praxis remains irreducible to the sum of individual scientific subjectivities that compose its parts. Thus, science as abstract, impersonal socio-historical structure cannot be phenomenologically encompassed. To attempt to bracket or reduce science, to try to ground our global theory of the world, painstakingly accumulated through millennia of collective cultural evolution, in individuated subjectivity is not only to try reduce the whole to the sum of its parts; it is to believe that one can *generate* the whole, along with its inconceivably intricate structural articulation, on the basis of one of its microscopic parts. From a Quinean perspective, to try to ground science in

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Enlightened Empiricism. Cf. Gibson, 1988.

subjectivity is not just to indulge in asinine philosophical solipsism; it is to commit a rudimentary category mistake.

Accordingly, for Quine, it is science that functions as an irreducible *sine qua non* for philosophical subjectivity, and not the reverse. In this regard, it may be that Quine's doctrine of disquotational truth, his intra-theoretical account of word-world correspondence, and his commitment to the methodological primacy of a physicalist ontology, although all resolutely anti-Kantian in inspiration, amount to something like a reconfiguration of the notion of transcendental immanence, rather than its simple obliteration. What is certain is that it is Quine's radical empiricism and his physicalism that underlie two of his most provocative doctrines: indeterminacy of translation and ontological relativity. One frequently sees both doctrines dismissed out of hand, largely by those failing to appreciate the way in which they are underwritten by the quasi-transcendental methodological primacy Quine ascribes to his presupposition of an unequivocally physicalist ontology. Nevertheless, it is this methodological presupposition that provides the theoretical basis for Quine's epistemological behaviourism. According to the latter, a scientific theory is primarily a structurally intraconsistent system of sentences, and the appropriate focus of epistemic analysis as far the empiricist philosopher is concerned is linguistic utterance as instance of publicly

observable behaviour. Consequently, a rigorously naturalistic epistemology will, as a matter of principle, forgo all references to subjectivity, whether it be in the shape of appeals to phenomenological introspection or latent mental processes, in order to recast epistemology in a explicitly behaviourist mode. It will then be seen to consist for the most part in a study of the relation between patterns of sensory stimulation and dispositions to overt verbal behaviour as observable in a particularly sophisticated species of biological organism - i.e. *homo sapiens*. More precisely, it will seek to establish a correlation between the various modalities of sensory input and the various patterns of linguistic output exhibited by those organisms. In the context of a behaviourist epistemology, the cognitive subject is merely the functional black box relaying input and output, and the precise nature of the mechanisms mediating between sensory input and linguistic output, or between stimulus and science, remains a matter for neurophysiological investigation rather than phenomenological speculation.

The startling and far-reaching consequences of Quine's epistemological behaviourism become apparent in the test case of radical translation. The radical translator has to decipher what is presumably an instance of ostensive definition in the case of an entirely alien language. Thus, the alien utters the phrase '*Gavagai!*' while ostensively indicating a passing

rabbit. But as far as behavioural evidence is concerned, the translator is no more empirically justified in concluding that the alien is indicating an individual rabbit, than he would be in concluding that the native was actually pointing to an undetached rabbit-part, or a temporal segment in the history of a rabbit, or the instantiation of rabbithood, and so on. The alien's behavioural disposition to utter the phrase '*Gavagai!*' and point a tentacle whenever a rabbit hops by will be the same whether he 'means' to indicate a rabbit, a rabbit-segment, or an undetached rabbit-part. Consequently, Quine argues, there is nothing in principle to prevent a pair of rival translators from constructing two mutually conflicting manuals of translation for the alien tongue, both of which would be completely compatible with the totality of the alien's speech-dispositions, providing a smooth sentence to sentence mapping between English and alien sentences, yet both entirely incompatible with one another, inasmuch as one translates '*Gavagai!*' with '*Lo, a rabbit!*', while the other translates it with '*Lo, an undetached rabbit-part!*'.

Now the point, Quine argues, is not that radical translation is epistemologically underdetermined and that we lack enough evidence to discover what the alien 'really' means. It is that translation is ontologically indeterminate and that there is nothing to discover about meaning, no fact of the matter about what the alien 'means' for the translator to be right or wrong

about: "*The discontinuity of radical translation tries our meanings: really sets them over against their verbal embodiments, or, more typically, finds nothing there.*"(Quine, 1960, p.76)

If '*Gavagai!*' doesn't mean anything, Quine insists, it's because '*Lo, a rabbit!*' doesn't mean anything either. There simply are no such things as 'meanings'. For the truth is that indeterminacy of translation begins at home. Thus, Quine's epistemological behaviourism and his principled disqualification of the 'first person point of view' applies even in the case of our own native language: we could suspend our habitual practise of homophonic translation when conversing with other English speakers and, by systematically reinterpreting words and sentential constructions, construe utterances such as '*there's a rabbit*' as being 'about' rabbithood or undetached rabbit parts while still respecting all the available empirical facts about behavioural predispositions.

Moreover, this holds even in the case of the individual speaker: I could systematically reconstrue even my own utterances and conclude that the word 'rabbit' as I use it is actually true of rabbit parts or rabbit stages. Or, and perhaps even more interestingly, that the word 'I' as 'I' use it actually refers to some other entity. Quine's hostility to the phenomenological superstitions enshrined in 'the first person point of view' is utterly uncompromising: not

even my own utterances can have any determinate meaning for me. The assumption that speakers enjoy privileged access to their own phenomenological states is no more than a widespread but scientifically unwarranted cultural prejudice. Since truth is disquotational and the reference scheme governing a language's ontological commitments remains relative to a translation manual, the ontological commitments of my own assertions remain inscrutable even to myself.

This is Quine's doctrine of the inscrutability of reference, which shades off indiscernibly into that of ontological relativity. The latter provides the basic theoretical underpinning for the thesis of translational indeterminacy. It states that ontologies are not fixed and absolute but aleatory and relative: different theories will have different ontological commitments insofar as the range of bound variables over which the sentences of a theory must quantify will vary according to the kind of entities required to stand in as values of those variables in order for the sentences of the theory to be true. Rabbits and undetached rabbit parts are alike, Quine suggests, insofar as the question of their existence or non-existence only makes sense within the context of the relevant world-theory. But it is important to stress that as far as Quine is concerned, there can be no fact of the matter concerning 'what there really is' independently of any and all theory. The criterion according to

which rabbits afford greater epistemological convenience as theoretical posits in the context of our own particular world-system remains an instrumental one: it so happens that we, as biological organisms striving to organize the raw flux of sensory input, have so far found it simpler and more profitable to formulate our accounts of those sensory stimulations and successfully predict their future occurrence by explaining them in terms of rabbits rather than undetached rabbit-parts. Beyond this purely instrumental criteria and the immanence of the world-theory we happen to inhabit, there is no higher court of ontological appeal, and ultimately no answer to questions about whether the world 'really' consists of rabbits or rabbit-stages since "*it makes no sense to say what the objects of a theory are, beyond saying how to interpret or reinterpret that theory in another.*"(Quine, 1969, p.50) Accordingly, there is no right or wrong way in which to carve up the world independently of the best available theory, and what counts as the 'best' theory for an organism is simply a function of adaptational efficiency.

Moreover, given that Quine believes that the best ontology is that of the best unified science, and that he also believes that physics offers the widest-ranging avenue for the projected unification of the natural sciences, it follows that, as far as Quine is concerned, physics should be afforded pride of place at the heart of our scientific system of the world. By systematically

reconstruing and reinterpreting quantificational predicates, apparent divergences in the ontologies of the various sub-systems of science can be eliminated, thereby maximizing the potential convergence of those discrete scientific regions with a view to a seamlessly unified, universal physical theory. Whenever possible, Quine maintains, we should strive for physical reduction, or at least re-identification:- substituting a frugal ontology of microphysical objects for our luxurious ontology of bodies and substances, eliminating these microphysical objects in favour of regions of pure space-time, and ultimately abandoning the latter in order to replace them with corresponding classes of quadruple numbers as specified within the bounds of arbitrarily adopted coordinate systems, thereby arriving at the austerely minimalist ontology of pure set theory.

Given that our own scientific system of the world already exhibits this high degree of functional plasticity, it would be churlish to impose fixed ontological parameters onto the process of radical translation. When confronted with an alien it may be more convenient to assume that its ostensive practises more or less coincide with our own, and that it individuates things in the world very much like we do. Quine's point is that although such assumptions are pragmatically warranted, they will always remain ontologically indeterminable insofar as they exceed all possible

epistemological, which is to say behavioural, evidence;- the only empirically legitimate evidence as far as Quine is concerned:

"*Such is the quandary over 'gavagai': where one gavagai leaves off and another begins. The only difference between rabbits, undetached rabbit parts and rabbit stages is in their individuation. If you take the total scattered portion of the spatiotemporal world that is made up of rabbits, and that which is made up of undetached rabbit parts, and that which is made up of rabbit stages, you come out with the same scattered portion of the world each of the three times. The only difference is in how you slice it. And how to slice it is what ostension or simple conditioning, however persistently repeated, cannot teach.*"(Quine, ibid. pp.31-32)

Thus, what the indeterminacy of translation really boils down to is an indeterminacy of individuation. Although the total scattered portion of the spatiotemporal world comprising rabbits, rabbit parts and rabbit stages, is ultimately 'one and the same'[249], the fact remains that at the local level, there will always be a greater number of undetached rabbit-parts present than single rabbits, an even greater number of temporal segments in the history of a

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[249]Although, strictly speaking, from a Quinean perspective, to say that it remains 'one and the same' is problematic insofar as it erroneously suggests we might have some means of accessing this scattered portion of the spatiotemporal world independently of our habitual practises of ostensive individuation as nested within the overarching world-theory we happen to inhabit. As we'll see shortly, it's this possibility of gaining theoretical access to a pre-individuated ontological realm which becomes feasible in the context of Laruelle's work, in spite of the fact that it remains a strictly incoherent notion for Quine.

rabbit than undetached rabbit parts present, but conversely, only a single rabbithood present whenever a multiplicity of rabbits, rabbit stages or rabbit parts are present. The truth is that this incommensurability at the global level of *that which* ostension counts as one remains inscrutable at the local level of behavioural equivalence for ostensive indication, in other words, inscrutable at the level of *the way in which* ostension count something as one. This is because, for Quine, there is no 'thing-in-itself', nothing left over once you've subtracted the *how* of ostensive individuation from the *what* which is supposedly being pointed to. There simply are no facts of the matter - i.e. no behavioural, and ultimately no physical facts - about what we 'intend' to single out when uttering '*Lo, a rabbit !*' and pointing, or to tell us whether we are indicating rabbits, rabbit stages, or rabbithood.

Individuation is indeterminate, and the reference of our singular terms inscrutable, argues Quine, because there are no entities there for us to scrute in the absence of a global theory fixing the conventions for ostension and specifying determinate criteria for the individuation of entities. Unless it's determined in the context of an overarching background theory, reference is indeterminate and being inscrutable. Hence the famous Quinean formula: '*to be is to be the value of a variable*'. Reference as a basic ontological relation between word and world cannot be construed in a transcendent and extra-

theoretical fashion, because only the presupposition of physics as the most fundamental and all-encompassing available system of global ontology can provide the immanent, empirically legitimate condition of possibility for defining that relation. And herein lies the potent anti-phenomenological thrust of Quine's radical empiricism: if practises of ostension and criteria for individuation are relative to theory, so are all those perceptual or phenomenological 'experiences' subsequently attributed to the epistemological subject as a function of those theoretically grounded conventions and criteria. Change the translation manual and the customary rules of homophonic equivalence whereby your utterances are habitually mapped onto the familiar lexicon of standard English, their reference fixed in conformity with the conventional criteria of ordinary usage, and you effectively reconfigure the phenomenological furnishings of your own being-in-the-world. Rabbit-stage qualia will be substituted for rabbit qualia.

Accordingly, Quine's epistemological behaviourism and his sceptical stance toward the conventions of propositional attitude ascription and the ontological trappings of folk psychological discourse, as crystallised in the indeterminacy of translation[250], provide us with as an explicitly materialist

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[250]Of course, there are many who view the indeterminacy of translation as a *reductio* of Quine's epistemological behaviourism, protesting that such a profoundly counter-intuitive doctrine could not possibly be correct. Appeals to the incontrovertible obviousness of first-person phenomenology invariably figure largely in protests of this sort. An altogether more interesting and less-question

variant on what was most valuable in Kant: the transcendental critique of the supposition that we possess unmediated access to our own first-person phenomenological awareness as though it were something immediate and 'in-itself', and the latent implication that there simply is no 'experience in-itself' since experience is conceptually defined and 'always already' theoretically articulated. It is this idea of a transcendental suspension or bracketing of the realm of phenomenologically defined immediacy in its entirety, coupled with the possibility of a subsequent theoretical reconfiguration of what counts as experience, which links Laruelle's work to that of Kant and Quine.

Laruelle

Laruelle is interested in clarifying the notion of a transcendental presupposition for philosophical thought. In other words, he's interested in clarifying the notion of transcendental immanence that, we suggested, was already operative in the thought of Kant and Quine. But unlike Kant, Laruelle is trying to define this notion of transcendental immanence in terms of a *real* rather merely ideal presupposition for experience. And unlike Quine, he refuses to identify this real presupposition with an already extant body of empirical science. This is because he thinks that both Kant's synthetic *a*

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begging critique comes from Donald Davidson, a philosopher much influenced by Quine. In 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme' Davidson criticizes Quine for holding on to a 'third dogma' of

priori, as rooted in pure apperception, and Quine's epistemological behaviourism, as rooted in his physicalism, are ultimately equivalent gestures of transcendence, that is to say, philosophical Decisions about what should count as an inevitable presupposition for philosophy. Thus, what Laruelle is after is a precondition for philosophy that is real without being empirically determinate and capable of assuming a transcendental function without becoming ideally transcendent. The question then is: can we discover this real but non-empirical presupposition, this unconditional immanence that is always already presupposed by philosophy, without having to make a philosophical Decision about its character? For by immediately characterizing its own precondition philosophically, Decision institutes a vicious circularity whereby philosophy's minimal precondition or *sine qua non* always turns out to be already philosophical. But is there some ultimate presupposition for philosophical thought that would not turn out to be *posited as presupposed* through Decision?

We know that Laruelle believes he has discovered this non-Decisional precondition for philosophising, and that defining it as the authentically ineliminable *sine qua non* for all philosophical thought is a matter of purifying the notion of immanence of every residue of ideal transcendence

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empiricism; the dualism of conceptual scheme and sensory content which he sees as mirroring the

and empirical determination. For the philosophical presupposition of transcendental immanence, whether as ideal (Kant) or as real (Quine), invariably renders it immanent *to* something. Thus, for Kant, the transcendental *qua* ideal synthetic *a priori* is immanent to possible experience, while for Quine the transcendental *qua* real physical theory of the world is immanent to empirical science. Accordingly, in order to safeguard immanence's autonomy and prevent its contamination through transcendent ideality and empirical reality, Laruelle must achieve a seemingly impossible feat: he has to separate immanence *qua* immanence from immanence *qua* transcendental without differentiating them as two distinct 'things'. Immanence must be capable of fulfilling a transcendental function without becoming transcendental. The function of the transcendental entails a *relation* of determination (whether this be one of conditioning (Kant), constitution (Husserl) or production (Deleuze)), a relation that would compromise the radical autonomy of the immanence Laruelle seeks. Accordingly, in order not to render immanence relative to that which it transcendentally determines, Laruelle will carefully distinguish immanence as a *necessary* but negative condition, as *sine qua non* for the relation of determination, from its effectuation as transcendentally determining condition insofar as this is

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Kantian dualism of concept and intuition. Cf. Davidson, 1984.

contingently occasioned by the empirical instance that it necessarily determines. Immanence is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for the determination of philosophy because it requires the supplement of philosophical thought as a contingent occasion in order to fulfil its necessary determining function *vis a vis* philosophy. Consequently, whereas transcendental immanence is merely posited-as-presupposed through philosophical Decision, Laruelle will separate or dualyse the two moments of Decision, so that non-Decisional immanence is first presupposed -without being posited- in its radical autonomy as immanence, which is to say, as foreclosed to Decision, the better to be occasionally posited -without being presupposed- as a transcendentally foreclosed but nevertheless determining condition for philosophical Decision.

Accordingly, unlike Kant and Quine, Laruelle separates the gesture of presupposition from that of position at the same time as he separates immanence from its transcendental effectuation. First, immanence is presupposed (without-position) in its foreclosure to Decision as utterly empty and transparent, void of any and every form of predicative content, whether it be empirical or ideal. It is presupposed as the minimally necessary precondition for thought, as a negative or empty condition, rather than a positive, ontologically sufficient or substantive state of affairs. Which is to

say that it is presupposed as foreclosed to the advent of ontological Decision concerning that which is or the way in which what is (i.e. foreclosed to the possibility of articulating the distinction between essence and existence). Second, and only by virtue of being presupposed as this necessary but non-sufficient condition, immanence is posited (without-presupposition) on the occasional basis of Decision, as transcendentally necessary for Decision. Only on the occasional basis of philosophical Decision can immanence be posited as transcendental and thereby become positively effectuated as a necessary condition for Decisional thought.

What are the consequences of this delicate procedure? The most important for our present purposes is that whereas the Decisional mixture of presupposition and position invariably hybridises immanence's conceptual definition with its ontological constitution, Laruelle manages to characterise it as foreclosed to definition as well as constitution. Immanence 'itself' is a radically autonomous instance that simply has no need for definition or constitution. Immanence 'itself' remains foreclosed to conceptual symbolisation and ontological predication, and therefore independent of the Decisional mixture of description and constitution.

We might almost be tempted to say that in invoking immanence 'itself', Laruelle is defining it substantively, were it not for the fact that once

immanence is thought in and by itself, it can no longer even be characterised as substantively immanent *to* itself. This is what separates Laruelle from Deleuze and Henry[251]: the conviction that once immanence has been purged of every residue of transcendence, it is no longer possible to say of it, as Deleuze and Henry do in their very different ways, that it's immanent *to* itself, because that 'to' still maintains a modicum of reflexive folding, a doubling up, a residual intentionality[252]. If immanence is to be unconditional it must remain non-thetic: neither immanence 'in' itself nor immanent 'to' itself, but rather non-thetic-immanence 'itself'.

Moreover, it is through this intransitive 'bracketing' or suspension of intentional relationality and reflexive doubling, that the non-thetic suspends the premise of unitary ontological consistency. Because the Laruellean invocation of immanence is no longer defined as an identity 'to' something, not even to itself, it becomes the immanence of an Identity without consistency and without unity. Laruellean immanence is *the radical* or the One-in-One, the One-without-Being (*l'Un-sans-l'Être*), rather than *the absolute* as transcendence or One-beyond-Being (*l'au-dela de l'Être* or the *epekeina tes ousias*). Accordingly, the non-thetic immanence of what Laruelle

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[251]Cf. *supra*, Chapters 2 and 3. Whereas both Deleuze and Henry define immanence philosophically (Decisionally) as an absolute, Laruelle defines immanence non-philosophically (non-Decisionally) as *the radical*.

[252] Cf. Laruelle 1995a, and *supra*, Chapter 3, pp.136-141.

calls 'the One' or 'the Real' becomes an index of radically singular but non-consistent Identity, an identity shorn of the presumption of ontological unity. And it is this suspension of thetic positing, of intentional correlation and transitivity, which the 'non' in 'non-thetic immanence' imparts to thought insofar as it begins to think, as Laruelle puts it, *according to*, or *on the basis* of radical immanence as its real, yet non-ontological, presupposition. This has four very important consequences as far as our consideration of the relation between individuation, theory, and experience is concerned; consequences which we shall now proceed to elaborate on in turn.

First consequence: immanence –which is to say, the radical hyle-, through its foreclosure to Decision, *causes*[253] the phenomenological World to distinguish itself as absolutely transcendent in relation to it, while it remains without relation to that World's unilaterally thetic transcendence. However, the latter provides the empirical *occasion* for a transcendental clone that articulates or exists *as* the unilateral duality between the hyle's non-thetic immanence and the thetic transcendence of the phenomenological realm. This transcendental clone is a non-thetic *model* of thetic transcendence. In other words, non-thetic immanence has as its (non-intentional) correlate (or uni-late, as Laruelle says) not the World of phenomenological transcendence but

the radical, non-phenomenological exteriority of the Alien-subject: an unencompassable exteriority which exists as a fathomless well or abyss of non-thetic transcendence into which absolutely everything drops: subjectivity, objectivity, and all extant horizons of phenomenological disclosure. Yet we know it is this dimension of non-thetic transcendence, the exteriority of the Alien-subject as effectuation of the radical hyle's foreclosure to phenomenological Decision, which provides the vehicle for non-materialist thought. Thus, Alien-subjectivity is articulated as a unilateral duality separating the radical hyle *qua* phenomenon-in-itself from the phenomenological distinction between phenomenon and phenomenality. Of particular importance for us here is the way in which the hyle's transcendental modelling or cloning as *sine qua non* for thought -a modelling contingently occasioned by the World's transcendence- engenders a (*practico-)theoretical* -rather than phenomenological- instance of immanent subjectivation. Thus, in being transcendentally effectuated or cloned as Alien-subject, the radical hyle becomes the subject of transcendental theory according to its foreclosure to phenomenological consciousness and without becoming immanent 'to' subjectivity or consciousness.

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253 "Causes-only-in-the-last-instance"; i.e. according to a novel, non-metaphysical characterisation of the notion of cause as neither formal nor final, neither efficient nor material.

Consequently, from a Laruellean perspective, the radical exteriority through which the Alien-subject of non-phenomenological theory comes to be constituted is neither an empirical fact given 'in' experience, nor a necessary precondition for the givenness 'of' experience: it is a radically transcendental and therefore exclusively theoretical organon *for* the determination of phenomenological experience; an organon devoid of every residue of phenomenological determination or intra-worldly experience. This last point is particularly crucial: the non-phenomenological subject does not 'do' theory as if it were already a pre-existing agency pragmatically engaged 'in the world' prior to and independently of being a theoretical instance *for* the world; its 'being' is exclusively that of theory, its articulation is exhaustively theoretical, and it is nothing apart from that theoretical effectuation[254]. The only authentically immanent articulation of the Subject for Laruelle is effectuated in the structure of the transcendental clone suspending, modelling, and ultimately reconfiguring the World's thetic transcendence. It is the World as structure of phenomenological transcendence *in toto* that is now reduced to the status of theoretical 'object':- a merely occasional support or material for theory.

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[254] Cf. Laruelle, 1999, pp.146-147.

Second consequence: through this dimension of radical exteriority or non-thetic transcendence which constitutes the structure of theoretical subjectivity, Laruelle effects a transcendental dilation of the empirical realm; one which, like Quine but for very different reasons, discontinues the possibility of presupposing a phenomenological distinction between experience and judgement, fact and essence, *a posteriori* and *a priori*. In emancipating the pure and empty form of the transcendental, Laruelle extends the bounds of empiricity beyond the phenomenological parameters of what it's possible to define as empirical relative to a subject. Which is to say that everything becomes indifferently empirical:- not just rabbits and rabbit-parts, but the *a priori* criteria of individuation for rabbits and rabbit-parts. Once the rigorously transcendental viewpoint of the Alien-subject has been effectuated, then according to the latter's radically *universalising* perspective *qua* 'vision-in-One', all phenomenologically rooted distinctions between proprietary proximity and expropriatory distance, or between a (so-called) concrete subjective immanence and a (so-called) abstract objective transcendence become completely invalidated. Everything is at once univocally concrete or equivalently *phenomenal* in its non-thetic immanence and indifferently abstract or utterly *excarnate* in its non-thetic transcendence. Which is to say that according to the Alien-subject's radically non-worldly theoretical

perspective, there's no distinction in phenomenal or perceptual status between being hit by a brick and constructing a proof for Cantor's continuum hypothesis. Envisaged according to radical immanence, or 'seen-in-One', a bunny-rabbit has exactly the same phenomenal status as an axiom of set theory, and a particle accelerator has exactly the same phenomenal status as a toothache.

Third consequence: a thinking operating on the basis of non-thetic immanence isn't *about* anything:– it's non-intentional, intransitive. It is (as Beckett famously remarked *apropos* of *Finnegan's Wake*) that 'something' itself. Because transcendental theory is Subject without being dependent on any empirically given instance of subjectivity, non-materialist thinking is neither grounded in a conscious subject nor dependent on an intentional object. Like Kant, Laruelle includes the subject of consciousness within the realm of empirically determinable objectivity. So Laruelle's non-philosophical version of transcendental theory does not depend on a subject of consciousness because it remains rooted in the foreclosure of radical immanence as the non-conscious *cause* that determines that theory-in-the-last-instance. Moreover, and by the same token, it has no intentional object either because it constitutes itself on the occasional basis of those *a priori* theories of objectivation –i.e. philosophical Decisions- which function as its

empirical material[255], rather than relative to an already objectivated or empirically determinate phenomenological field. This is why it operates in an exclusively transcendental as opposed to phenomenological register: it relates to theories of objects rather than to objects themselves, the point being that from the viewpoint of radical immanence, the possibility of establishing a phenomenological distinction between 'objects' and 'theories of objects' becomes completely invalidated. That distinction is now supplanted by a transcendental Identity of phenomenological-object and objectivating-theory that is itself radically phenomenal (non-phenomenological) or non-thetically immanent in-the-last-instance.

In this respect, Laruelle can be seen to be radicalising the combined Kantian and Quinean critiques of the idea that our experience is of things-in-themselves, defined independently of theoretical mediation. There are no pre-theoretical experiences of rabbits-in-themselves, only an experience constructed through theories of rabbithood. But in another respect, Laruelle vigorously reinstates the thing-in-itself: for this is exactly what non-thetic immanence is. We have already seen how, once it ceases being defined privatively as a limiting concept, it becomes possible to redefine the thing-in-itself positively as an unconditionally immanent phenomenon, or as *the*

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[255] Cf. Laruelle, 1996, pp. 32-34.

phenomenon-in-itself = *x* [256]. It is this philosophically oxymoronic definition of the Real that serves as the impetus for the Laruellean shift to a non-philosophical register;- that is to say, one which takes conceptual accounts of objectivation themselves, rather than objects, as its empirical material. And it is radical immanence's unconditionally positive phenomenal transparency as *the phenomenon-in-itself* (which Laruelle also calls '*the* One' or '*the* Real'), rather than the kind of negatively defined noumenal opacity characteristically ascribed to the in-itself by philosophers, which makes of it the unknown but determining cause in accordance with which the Real *qua* phenomenon-without-phenomenality can be limitlessly redescribed using philosophical theories of phenomenality as a merely occasional index. This process of redescription is the business of non-philosophical theory.

Fourth consequence: the redescription at issue involves thinking the Identity –but an identity-without-unity- and Duality –but a duality-without-distinction- of the Real *qua* phenomenon-in-itself or immanent cause of thought, and of the Ideal *qua* phenomenological objectivation or individuating schema for the scattered portion of the spatio-temporal world indexed by the

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[256] Cf. our earlier definition of the radical hyle as phenomenon-without-phenomenality, *supra*, Chapter 6, p.293 and pp.296-301. Laruelle himself makes this point explicitly in *Prinçipes de la Non-Philosophie*: "*The Real is rather like Kant's 'thing-in-itself': unknowable and even unthinkable, but with this difference: it is constituted by a foreclosed immanence rather than by transcendence (it is the One rather than the Other), and consists in an experience or cognition of the third kind; - the vision-in-One.*" (Laruelle, ibid., p. 271).

'*Gavagai!*' or '*Rabbit!*' occasioning occurrence. In other words, the non-phenomenological redescription of phenomenologically articulated cognition strives to construct a theoretical clone of the "*Gavagai!*" occasioning occurrence by producing the concurrent Identity (without-synthesis) and Duality (without-difference) of the latter's indeterminable reality as a pre-individual 'thing' or phenomenon-in-itself, and its phenomenologically determinable ideality as individuated entity. Thus, the non-phenomenological redescription of phenomenologically articulated rabbithood will strive to liberate the rabbity-occurrence's pre-individual or non-ontological[257] character, which is to say, its non-thetic essence, in terms of the radically immanent Identity (without-unity) and radically transcendent Duality (without-difference) proper to the rabbity-occurrence as simultaneity of a determinate but unobjectifiable reality and a phenomenologically determinable or objectivated ideality. In other words, it is a question of dualysing the phenomenological hybridisation of individuating phenomenality and individuated phenomenon in terms of a unilateral duality whereby an individual-without-individuation now determines the hylomorphic dyad of individuating form and individuated matter as the unidentity and unilaterality of a matter-without-form, or individual-without-

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[257] 'Non-ontological' insofar as phenomenology tends to identify 'being' *qua* 'essence of

individuation, and a form-without-matter, or individuation-without-individual.

It is Gilbert Simondon who, in his seminal work[258], originally identified the fundamental circularity in all hylomorphic accounts of individuation. That circularity derives from their retroactive imposition of the characteristics of constituted individual unity back onto the pre-individual conditions of ontological individuation. Pre-individual being will never be conceptually conceived, Simondon argued, so long as the only available theoretical schema is that of the basically Kantian model according to which the unity of the concept is mirrored in the object and that of the object in the concept, thereby presupposing the isomorphy of thought and thing at the level of individuation. However, Simondon not only diagnosed the problem, he also suggested an alternative:

"*The individuation of the real external to the subject is grasped by the subject thanks to the analogical individuation of cognition in the subject; but it is through the individuation of cognition rather than through cognition alone that the individuation of those beings which are not subjects is grasped. Beings can be known through the cognition of the subject, but the*

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manifestation' with transcendental phenomenality. Cf. *supra*, Chapter 2.

[258] Cf. Simondon, 1995.

individuation of beings can be grasped only through the individuation of the subject's cognition" (Simondon, 1995, p.34)

Thus, the only to way to grasp pre-individual singularity, Simondon suggests, is through the pre-individual singularisation of thought. Simondon's philosophical quest to articulate the conditions for a thought of pre-individual being provides us with a useful (albeit tangential as far as Laruelle himself is concerned) way of delineating some of the novel conceptual possibilities opened up by non-phenomenological thought. The latter furnishes us with the relevant methodological apparatus required in order to effect the transfiguration of transcendental cognition demanded for the successful realization of the former. What the theoretical grasp of individuation as pre-individual ontological process demands is a suspension of phenomenological intuition, a dissolution of intentional correlation, and a dualysis of the hylomorphic synthesis of individual phenomenon and individuating phenomenality (insofar as it is the *temporalising* function of phenomenality which singularises or individuates the temporal phenomenon). The Laruellean apparatus effects the relevant transformation by discontinuing all vestiges of merely analogical equivalence or representational isomorphy between individuated cognition and individuated being, as well as all phenomenological correlation between individuated consciousness and

individuated phenomenon. This severance is to be effected through the medium of non-phenomenological cognition as articulation of unilateral duality rather than unitary synthesis between individuation and individuated. Thus, by way of contrast to the unitary intentional consistency of phenomenological adumbrations (*Abschattung*), this duality is effectuated in thought according to the radical inconsistency of the phenomenon 'itself' as an individual-without-individuation. And instead of phenomenologically presupposing the intuition or 'perception' of the individuated phenomenon as encompassed within a unitary horizon of intentional adumbration, it is the phenomenological phenomenon as hylomorphic synthesis of individuated phenomenon and individuating phenomenality which is dualysed as a phenomenologically unencompassable unilateral duality, a dispersive singularity, in accordance with the phenomenon 'itself' as individual-without-individuation. Thus, the inconsistent transparency of the phenomenon 'itself' *qua* individual-without-individuation determines or dualyses individuated phenomena as identities-without-synthesis and dualities-without-difference.

In this regard, let's consider once more the case of radical translation. In order to grasp the '*Gavagai!*' occasioning occurrence without presupposing that the alien shares in our own familiar ostensive practises or

that it subscribes to our conventional criteria for individuation, we would have to become capable of accessing the '*Gavagai!*' prompting event in its pre-individuated ontological heterogeneity. This would entail achieving some kind of cognitive access to the rabbity -occurrence without presupposing a determinate individuating schema; in other words, accessing it as equally and simultaneously comprising rabbithood, rabbit-parts, rabbit-segments, and so on. Such a feat of cognitive redescription requires the effectuation of a non-intentional or non-unitary syntax –a unilateralising syntax or *uni-tax-* at the level of the non-phenomenological theory which takes the phenomenological hybridisation of individual and individuation as its empirical material, the better to extract from the latter the rabbity -occurrence's unilateralised or dispersive identity, its unidentity and unilaterality as phenomenon-in-itself: neither rabbit-object nor rabbit-segment nor rabbit-part, but the transcendental determinant, the non-individuated precondition, for these and all other rabbit-individuating schemas. Thus, the indivi-dualisation of non-phenomenological cognition in accordance with its cause (the individual-without-individuation) results in the de-individuation or dualysation of its empirical support (the rabbit-individuating schema) as unilateral duality of individuated phenomenon and individuating phenomenality. Non-phenomenological – which is to say, non-materialist- theory grasps the rabbity -occurrence in

its non-thetic universality according to a mode of non-intuitive, or theoretically determined phenomenality, a phenomenality determined independently of any and every empirically determinate modality of perceptual intuition or phenomenological manifestation.

Moreover, if the putatively invariant or pseudo-transcendental parameters of phenomenological individuation remain entirely arbitrary and contingent, and if there are as many possible modalities of immanent phenomenalisation as there are possible transcendental redescriptions of individuation, it is because the indivisible immanence of the phenomenon 'itself' –the radical hyle- remains commensurate with a radically heterogeneous and phenomenologically unencompassable manifold of potential modes of individuation. That is to say, any given schema for individuation, any given phenomenological hybrid of individuated phenomenon and individuating phenomenality, can be dualysed in accordance with the Identity of the phenomenon 'itself' *qua* individual-without-individuation in a limitless variety of mutually incommensurable ways, leading to an unencompassable manifold of alternative modes of

individuation –which is to say, of entification and phenomenalisation- each of them identical-in-the-last-instance with the individual 'itself'[259].

To understand this notion of a transcendental manifold of registers of phenomenalisation entails making sense of Laruelle's conception of an immanent but theoretically malleable manifold of basically in-consistent space-times. Unfortunately, however suggestive, Laruelle's indications in this regard are frustratingly sketchy[260]. Nevertheless, in light of the foregoing account, there are a few positive claims we can make concerning the nature of this malleable, inconsistent space-time within which the non-thetic or pre-individuated rabbit gaily capers and gambols. Given the immanence of the phenomenon 'itself', which is its cause-in-the-last-instance, and given the various phenomenological schemas of rabbit-individuation, which are its empirical support, a non-phenomenological modelling of 'rabbithood' will strive to extract or clone a non-thetic *xenotype* from the thetic schematisations of the individuated rabbit-phenomenon which serve as its empirical support. The complex structure of this xenotype as transcendental clone spans its unidentity as radically immanent indivision and unilaterality as radically

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[259]Cf. *supra*, Chapter 6, pp.312-314. It would be interesting to ask whether the status of this transcendental manifold of modalities of phenomenalisation is to be regarded as potentially or actually infinite. To the best of our knowledge, Laruelle himself leaves the issue unresolved. In this regard, some kind of dialogue between Laruellean non-philosophy and Cantorian set-theory seems necessary. The latter would prove a fascinating albeit profoundly difficult enterprise.

[260] See for instance the tantalising but inconclusive remarks in Laruelle, 1992, pp. 210-214.

transcendent division. Which is to say that the non-thetic or non-phenomenological essence of the rabbit 'itself' spans its radical immanence as individual-without-individuation and its radical transcendence as individuation-without-individual. Thus, the rabbit xenotype comprises the pre-individuated or non-consistent essence of the rabbit's immanent phenomenal identity as simultaneously rabbit-part, rabbit-segment, rabbithood, and so on. As a result, the rabbity -occurrence's non-thetic xenotype indexes its singular but pre-individuated nature as inconsistent Entity=x; a theoretically immanent but unobjectifiable phenomenal entity which has been subtracted from the retentional and protentional syntheses of temporal presentation, as well as from all intuitive forms of spatial presence. It is as coincidence of an identity-without-unity and a duality-without-difference, of a singular indivision and a universal division, that the rabbity -occurrence constitutes a *dispersive* singularity, neither homogeneous in space nor continuous through time.

In *Theory of Identities*[261], Laruelle characterises this theoretical reconfiguration of Decisionally circumscribed spatio-temporal phenomena in terms of a process of *a priori fractalisation*. The latter is to be understood in terms of the proliferation of inconsistent, discontinuous and mutually

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[261] Cf. Laruelle, 1992, Part II, pp.133-232

incommensurable phenomenalisations of the 'same' occasional phenomenon: its reiterated 'irregularisation' as determined by a transcendentally homothetic invariant rupturing the spatio-temporal consistency in accordance with which intentional consciousness continuously reinscribes phenomena within the horizon of a potential phenomenological unity[262]. Yet paradoxically, it is the phenomenon 'itself' through its invariant but inconsistent non-phenomenological transparency, which conditions this fractalisation. Accordingly, insofar as the severing of the bond between entity and unity is inseparable from the theoretical effectuation of the phenomenon's inconsistency as fractalising *a priori*, it is the latter's non-phenomenological inconsistency which guarantees the transcendental equivalence or universal translatability[263] of all these mutually incommensurable instances of spatio-temporal phenomenalisation. Thus, it is as a direct consequence of the dimension of universality proper to non-intuitive phenomenality insofar as it effectuates immanence's radically inconsistent univocity, that all Decisionally

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[262] Cf. Laruelle, ibid, pp. 153- 232.

[263] The idea of non-philosophy as universal medium for the translation of all philosophical languages into one another is a recurrent theme in *Philosophie III*. In *Prinçipes de la Non-Philosophie*, for instance, Laruelle writes: "*It is thus through this theoretical usage, through this transcendental theory of private philosophical languages (these being at once general and total), and on the basis of this non-linguistic identity of language, that the problem of philosophical translation can be posed in terms of a translation of philosophical languages 'into' one another, which is to say, 'into-the-One-in-the-last-instance', rather than in terms of a translation between philosophies carried out under the ultimate authority of philosophy. Non-philosophy* is *this translation of Kant 'into' Descartes, of Descartes 'into' Marx, of Marx 'into'Husserl, etc.; which is to say, under the condition of the vision-in-One as un-translatable Real.*"(1996, p.273) More recently, the topic of the non-philosophical

circumscribed spatio-temporal phenomena can be subjected to a process of theoretical fractalisation rendering them at once stringently individual and universally translatable.

Consequently, and as we suggested earlier[264], non-phenomenological theory could be said to function like a kind of transcendental prosthetic for conceptual cognition, emancipating it from the functional specificities of the human sensory apparatus and the constraints of empirical sensibility, the better to provide it with a rigorously theoretical mode of cognitive access to the authentically universal realm of pre-individual phenomena. Moreover, in providing this non-phenomenological amplification of cognition, a non-materialist axiomatic determined according to the radical hyle as Identity of the phenomenon 'itself' might be said to operate somewhat like a universal organon for radical translation, allowing creatures with otherwise utterly disparate sensory modalities and incommensurate individuation criteria to communicate *via* a cognitive vocabulary shorn of all contamination by empirically overdetermined conceptual schemes. Thus, the non-phenomenological 'indivi-dualisation' of phenomenality through transcendental theory liberates the phenomenal target of cognition (e.g. the

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translation of philosophy has provided the theme for an unpublished conference paper entitled 'Translated From the Philosophical'. Cf. Laruelle, 2001.

[264] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 6, pp.305-308.

rabbity

-occurrence) from its circumscription within the empirical ambit of a determinate set of basically anthropocognitive perceptual modalities.

What then is a 'non-rabbit'?

It is the transcendental coincidence of an individual phenomenon that no longer presupposes an individuating logos, and an individuating matter that is no longer posited on the basis of an individuated concept. More precisely, it is the unilateral duality of an unobjectifiably immanent phenomenon, one that has not been posited by means of an individuating phenomenality, and a unobjectifiably transcendent phenomenality, one that has not been presupposed through an individuated phenomenon[265]. It is a xenotype: an unenvisageable, unfigurable yet radically immanent theoretical phenomenon.

But what then is non-materialism that it is able to reconfigure the parameters of perception in so drastic a fashion as to allow for the apprehension of such phenomena?

A transcendental adrenochrome[266].

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[265]Thus, non-philosophy dualyses the phenomenological amphiboly of unobjectifiable immanence and unobjectifiable transcendence identified earlier. Cf. *supra*, Chapter 2, pp.89-92.

[266]'Adrenochrome': mythical hallucinogen, of reputedly terrifying potency, supposedly synthesized from the living body's pituitary gland. The aftermath of an adrenochrome binge is described in Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (London: Paladin, 1972): "*The room looked like the site of some disastrous zoological experiment involving whiskey and gorillas. The ten-foot mirror was shattered, but still hanging together -bad evidence of that afternoon when my attorney ran amok with the coconut hammer, smashing the mirror and all the lightbulbs [...]The bathroom floor was about six-inches deep with soap bars, vomit, and grapefruit rinds [...]crude pornographic photos, ripped out of*

In the next Chapter, we will use Paul Churchland's eliminative materialism as the basis for further exploration of the hallucinatory ramifications of non-materialist thought; specifically, the way in which the philosophically unprecedented degree of phenomenological plasticity it allows ultimately engenders a transcendental chaos of epistemic possibility.

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magazines like Whores of Sweden *and* Orgies in the Casbah*[...] were plastered on the broken mirror with smears of mustard that had dried to a hard yellow crust...and all these signs of violence, these strange red and blue bulbs and shards of broken glass embedded in the wall plaster...No; these were not the hoofprints of your average god-fearing junkie. It was too savage, too aggressive. There was evidence in this room of excessive consumption of almost every type of drug known to civilized man since A.D.1544. It could only be explained as a montage, a sort of exaggerated medical exhibit, put together very carefully to show what might happen if twenty-two serious drug felons –each with a different addiction- were penned up together in the same room for five days and nights without relief.*"(pp. 167-172).

CHAPTER 8

PHENOMENOLOGICAL PLASTICITY AND EPISTEMIC CHAOS

"*Our epistemic situation I assert, is one in which even the humblest judgement or assertion is always a speculative leap, not just in its assertion over its denial, but also in the background conceptual framework in which that judgement is constituted, in preference to the infinity of other conceptual frameworks that one might have used instead.*" (Churchland,1989, p.278)

The claim that there is no difference in kind between perceptual judgements and theoretical judgements plays a crucial role in Paul Churchland's eliminativist program. Bluntly put, Churchland's argument runs as follows: if one accepts the rigorously naturalistic conception of human beings as a particularly sophisticated species of information processing system[267], and if there exists a univocal continuity, rather than a categorial divide, between so-called concrete perceptual immediacy and supposedly abstract conceptual mediation, then nothing precludes in principle the possibility that our basic perceptual capacities can be revised or transformed

[267]Among the precursors for Churchland's unrepentantly naturalistic approach to human sapience are figures such as Quine (1960), Smart (1963), Wiener (1967) and Sayre (1976). For a summary of the Quinean approach, cf. *supra*, Chapter 7, pp.334-349.

simply by reconfiguring the conceptual frameworks within which they are nested. In other words, there is nothing intrinsically natural or necessary about the world we perceive or the way in which we perceive it. Both are ultimately theoretical constructs.

The critique of perceptual immediacy (or sense-certainty, as Hegel called it) is certainly nothing new in philosophy. Where Churchland differs from philosophers like Hegel, Wittgenstein, or even Quine (by whom he has certainly been influenced), is in rooting the mechanism of theoretical mediation firmly in the physical structure of the brain, rather than in self-consciousness or sets of discursive practises. According to Churchland's neurocomputational physicalism, it is the brain, not the mind, which represents the world. And insofar as the brain is just one part of the physical world representing another, there are no differences in kind between the neurological representer, the neurocomputational representation and the electrochemical input which is represented: all three are merely different moments in a homogeneous physical continuum of informational transfer. It is because of this uninterrupted material continuity that, for Churchland, the brain itself comes to figure as an abstract theoretical mediator, an essentially plastic locus of informational processing. But before examining Churchland's

arguments in favour of phenomenological plasticity in greater detail, we need to recapitulate the basic premises of the eliminativist program.

Eliminativism and Folk Psychology

Eliminativism is routinely dismissed as a particularly virulent, wildly implausible brand of rabidly neurocentric reductionism. But contrary to popular prejudice, Churchland's reductionism does not entail the claim that cognitive structures are neurologically hard-wired. The driving idea behind Churchland's eliminativism is quite the reverse: almost all of the brain's cognitive capacities are *learnt*, and next to none of them are hard-wired. However, Churchland's is not a Humean 'blank-slate' epistemological empiricism, for he readily acknowledges the existence of certain high-level epistemic invariants or neurocomputational metastructures ('ampliative coding layers' as he calls them) conditioning the information processing function; metastructural invariants whose functioning could be characterised as *a priori* relative to the low-level input data they serve to structure and synthesize[268]. Such high-level neurocomputational *a prioris* remain a prerequisite for sophisticated cognition.

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[268]"*For many reason then, this* [Churchland's 'Parallel Distributed Processing' or 'connectionist' model of cognition-RB]*is not a Humean concept empiricism. According to Humean empiricism, we are forever tied to immediately given peripheral sensory simples. According to connectionism, by contrast, the whole point of a hierarchy of ampliative coding layers is precisely to transcend the limitations of our peripheral sensory coding. It is to try to 'look past' the teeming noise and perspectival idiosyncrasy of one's peripheral sensory input representations to the more stable and more predictive*

Nevertheless, although so deeply embedded within the brain's neurological configuration as to count as nominal invariants, even these neurocomputational *a prioris* are acquired rather than innate. Which is to say that they have been gradually inculcated during the formative stages of the organism's development by virtue of its continuous immersion in a vast sociolinguisitic habitus; a conceptual habitus which has in turn been shaped over long stretches of socio-cultural evolution. Like Quine then[269]. Churchland maintains that there is merely a difference in degree rather than in kind between *a priori* and *a posteriori*, or between the abstract, metastructural invariants that condition the structures of information processing, and the structured or processed data themselves. And as a result, for Churchland, even those epistemic structures that seem most neurologically ingrained are the result of a complex process of exogenous conditioning exercised by a bewildering variety of factors and influences extending well beyond narrowly neurophysiological limits. These factors include fluctuating environmental

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'forms' that lie beyond the mercurial sensory surface, stable forms that are always only partially and imperfectly reflected within that sensory surface, universal forms that might be differently but quite successfully reflected in a variety of alternative sensory manifolds[...]I agree with Plato that seeing past the ephemeral is the first goal of learning, and I agree further that it is precisely the 'abstract forms' that allow us to make any sense of the relentless flux of the ephemeral. The principal difference between me and Plato concerns the location of those forms (they are inside the head) and their genesis within us: they are gradually sculpted de novo, *by a deeply* sub*linguistic process, in the course of extended interactions with the environment.*"(P.M.Churchland, 1996, pp. 281-282)

[269]Cf. *supra*, Chapter 7, pp.334-339.

conditions, changing socio-historical custom, and accelerating technological evolution.

Accordingly, if the brain is a neurocomputer, Churchland maintains, then it is a flexible, massively parallel distributed processor, rather than the kind of chronically inflexible serial processor privileged by classical AI. The model of the brain favoured by Churchland is that of a complex, non-linear system; a neurological network capable of spontaneous self-regulation by tuning into new patterns of sophisticated cognitive discrimination without the benefit of prior programming; radically reconfiguring its own cognitive parameters in order to adapt to new input and unexpected circumstances. It is this capacity for spontaneous readjustment in the face of the unanticipated and the unforeseen which endows the human brain with its high degree of functional plasticity. Moreover, Churchland suggests, the brain's remarkable capacity for cognitive plasticity tends to be overlooked by philosophers who mistake neurocomputational expediency for neurological necessity, thereby severely underestimating the extent to which many of what are assumed to be basic features of consciousness are in fact a function of determinate varieties of neurocomputational processing; processes which –once again- have themselves been learnt. Thus, if consciousness is a neurocomputational phenomenon, then what philosophers take to be its necessary conditions,

constitutive features, or invariable characteristics, may in fact be entirely contingent properties, representing little more than a tiny fraction of the range of cognitive possibilities available to the human brain.

Accordingly, if there are no invariable phenomenological facts about the world, Churchland continues, it's because underlying all such facts are just varying neurocomputational encodings of electrochemical information. This is the point at which Churchland most emphatically rejects the notion that natural language possesses any kind of uncircumventable epistemological status. Not only are linguistic structures *not* hard-wired in the brain[270], language itself is neither a constitutive nor even a basic feature of human cognition. Language as a medium for social intercourse has engendered a *theory* in terms of which humans understand themselves and the world around them. That theory is *folk psychology*[271]. As a theory, folk psychology operates by quantifying over[272] propositional attitudes such as beliefs, desires, intentions, fears, hopes, wishes, etc. Moreover, Churchland argues, following Sellars[273], not only did the theory's longstanding practical success as a social instrument for publicly predicting and explaining communal human behaviour precede its adoption in subjective self-description, thereby

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[270] *Pace* Chomsky and the Chomskyan brand of cognitivism championed by Fodor, Lepore, and others.

[271] For a canonical expression of Churchland's view of folk-psychology cf. 'Folk Psychology' in P.M.Churchland & P.S.Churchland, 1998, pp. 3-15.

[272] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 7, p.343.

conditioning its now automatic use in first-person introspection; it is this universal adoption of folk psychological discourse in subjective reports which, more than any other factor, has subsequently and illegitimately endowed it with a quasi-sacrosanct status, lending it an aura of incorrigible authenticity which obscures its theoretical status and entirely conventional origin: "*a spontaneous introspective judgement is just an instance of an acquired habit of conceptual response to one's own internal states, and the integrity of any particular response is always contingent on the integrity of the acquired conceptual framework (theory) in which the response is framed. Accordingly, one's own* introspective *certainty that one's mind is the seat of beliefs and desires may be as badly misplaced as was the classical man's* visual *certainty that the star-flecked sphere of the heavens turns daily.*" (Churchland, 1989, p.3)

As a result of folk psychology's socio-cultural institutionalisation, the panoply of beliefs, desires, intentions, fears, hopes, wishes, etc., laid claim to in introspective judgement, have -along with all the other phenomenological entities mobilized in folk psychological discourse- taken on an inviolable aura of subjective and objective reality, in a manner similar to that once claimed on behalf of the flatness of the earth. Nevertheless, Churchland suggests, it

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[273] Cf. Sellars, 1997.

may be that conscious beings are the least well placed to understand consciousness, that they have least access to information about the theoretically structured processes underlying perceptual immediacy; much in the same way in which, prior to the invention of the telescope, inhabitants of the earth's surface were the least well placed to appreciate either the true character of the earth's shape or the reality of astronomical motions. Consequently, Churchland argues, there are perfectly good scientific grounds for insisting that, just as the earth is not flat, denizens of folk psychological discourse such as beliefs, desires, intentions, etc., may not actually exist, and that as a result, folk psychology is an entirely false theory, and hence ripe for elimination.[274]

A crucial nuance in Churchland's eliminativist argument needs to be underlined here. Churchland does not deny privileged introspective access *per se*; he does not deny that our minds *seem* to be the seat of beliefs, desires, and intentions, or the authenticity of our phenomenological experience when we lay claim to experiencing fears, hopes, wishes, etc. Churchland is emphatically *not* a philosophical behaviourist in the way in which perhaps

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[274]Churchland cites three basic reasons for the elimination of folk-psychology: 1. the significant number of phenomena for which folk psychological theory is incapable of providing either a coherent explanation or successful prediction (brain damage, mental illness, scientific discovery, artistic creativity); 2. its theoretical stagnation, its failure to evolve, develop, or change in accordance with the rapidly accelerating rate of cultural evolution; 3. its increasingly isolated and anomalous character *vis a vis* the corpus of the natural sciences, its conceptual irreducibility to the emerging discourse of cognitive neuroscience.

Quine is. What he does deny however is the putatively pre-theoretical immediacy attributed to such phenomenological experiences and to the introspective judgements associated with them. In other words, it is not phenomenological *seeming* which he questions, but the reliability of that seeming as an evidential guide for gauging the actual cognitive processes through which that seeming is *produced*. Consequently, Churchland wishes to drive a critical wedge between the legitimate incorrigibility of phenomenological experience *qua* authentic seeming, and the pseudo-incorrigibility of the folk psychological trappings used in the theoretical articulation and description of those processes through which that phenomenological seeming is produced. The eliminativist's contention is that folk psychology's cultural enshrinement, its unrivalled social investiture as the privileged descriptive medium used for accounts of human sapience has resulted in mistaking an artificial theoretical construct for an intrinsically necessary feature of all possible phenomenological experience. By explicitly underlining the theoretical character of folk psychological discourse as a socially enforced construct, eliminativism seeks to undermine both the assumption that the linguistic infrastructure of folk psychological theory has a proprietary entitlement to characterisations of consciousness; and that it is the only possible medium for phenomenological description: "*Our self-*

understanding, I continue to maintain, is no different in character from our understanding of any other empirical domain. It is speculative, systematic, corrigible, and in principle replaceable. It is just not so specifically linguistic as we have chronically assumed."(Churchland, ibid., p.112)

Neurocomputational Plasticity

Thus, Churchland proposes to replace the dominant folk psychological theory of sapience, according to which consciousness is seen as an intrinsically linguistic medium structured through the 'sentential dance' of propositional attitudes, with a new theoretical model drawing on the resources of connectionist neuroscience, in which cognition is understood in terms of resolutely non-linguistic patterns of neuronal vector activation[275]. According to this new paradigm, the internal *kinematics* of cognition find expression in activation patterns across populations of neurons, rather than in sententially articulated propositional attitudes, while the *dynamics* of cognition reside in vector-to-vector transformations driven by learned configurations of synaptic connection, rather than in deductive inferences governed by relations of logical entailment from one sentential structure to another. So while the brain's basic *unit* of representation is the activation

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[275]For a useful *précis* of the vector activation paradigm in neuroscience cf. particularly pp. 41-42 in Paul Churchland's, 'Activation Vectors vs. Propositional Attitudes: How the brain represents reality' in P.M.Churchland & P.S.Churchland, 1998, pp.39-44,

vector, its fundamental computational *operation* is the vector-to-vector transformation, as performed on those configurations of neuronal activation.

Crucially, according to this paradigm, a 'theory' is no longer to be understood as a linguaformal system of propositional attitudes connected to one another by relations of logical entailment. It is no longer a linguistically encoded structure of beliefs *that* 'such and such is the case' or judgements *that* 'if x then y' articulated within the sentential parameters of propositional attitude ascription. A 'theory' is now a network or brain's specific neurocomputational configuration in vector activation space. More precisely, it is a determinate partitioning of a brain's vector activation space into a manifold of *prototypical* divisions and sub-divisions relative to typically reiterated inputs. Interestingly, according to this neurocomputational reduction of theoretical cognition, the presumption that there exists a significant difference in kind between an individual concept and a theory must be abandoned: both are just prototypical partitions of vector space endowed with a greater (theory) or lesser (concept) degree of substructural complexity[276].

Consequently, Churchland continues, the sheer quantity of distinct concepts/theories that the human brain is capable of embodying according to

this neurocomputational paradigm will be gargantuan: "*If we assume that the human brain is a multilayered network of interconnected units, we can uniquely specify its current position in conceptual space by specifying the individual strengths or weights of its myriad synaptic connections[...]That configuration of weights can be directly represented by a specific point in a multidimensional space, a space with a distinct axis in each of the brain's 10^{14} synaptic connections[...]For a human brain, therefore, this 'weight space', as it is called, will have fully 10^{14} dimensions with at least 10 possible positions along each. Its volume is almost unimaginably vast -at least $10^{10^{14}}$ functionally distinct positions* [i.e. 10 to the power of 100,000,000,000,000 distinct concepts/theories–RB]" (Churchland, ibid.,1989, pp. 231-232)[277]

However, it is important not to conflate weight space with vector space. While the weight configuration uniquely determines the partitioning of

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[276]"*This account does put single concepts and entire theories on the same footing: a theory is just a highly structured prototype*"(P.M. Churchland, 1998, p.283)

[277]Interestingly, this suggestion is made purely on the basis of empirical fact. For the 'unimaginably vast' space of conceptual possibility referred to above is defined by Churchland in conformity with the physical structure of the brain and on the basis of the range of individually specifiable synaptic configurations -i.e. distinct patterns of neuronal vector activation or individual representations- available within the finite parameters of human neurophysiology. So while it is certainly true that there may be some fundamental physical constraints delimiting the range of possible perceptual experience for humans, nevertheless, Churchland insists, even within the bounds of those physical limitations constraining the manner in which the human organism is able to process information (e.g. the ear's limited auditory range, the eye's limited capacity for registering electromagnetic radiation, etc.), that vast space of as yet unexplored conceptual possibility obtains. Moreover, further augmenting this already huge space of possibility is the fact that human sensory modalities have and will continue to undergo profound physical modification and amplification as a result of technological intervention. Thus, even those basic constraints which organic structure imposes upon our processing of physical information are neither definitive nor irrevocable.

vector space, only the latter, Churchland reminds us, is to be identified with the theory or conceptual scheme in terms of which the brain represents the world: "*People react to the world in similar ways not because their underlying weight configurations are closely similar on a synapse-by-synapse comparison, but because their activation spaces are similarly partitioned. Like trees similar in their gross physical profile, brains can be similar in their gross functional profiles while being highly idiosyncratic in the myriad details of their fine grained arborisation*"(Churchland, 1989, p.234). Thus, it is by acquiring a determinate configuration in synaptic weight space that a brain comes to achieve a specific prototypical partitioning of its vector activation space. And it is this partitioning of vector space, rather than that configuration of synaptic weights, which is the neurocomputational index for the theory in terms of which the brain represents the physical world.

Moreover, since, for Churchland, a theory simply is a specific partitioning of vector activation space, and since all incoming sensory stimuli are afferently processed through a specific configuration of vector coding, there can be no difference in kind between the *perceptual* processing of sensory information going on at the physical boundaries of the organism *via* the nervous system's afferent nerve endings, and the *conceptual* processing of symbolically encoded information going on in the depths of the cerebral

cortex *via* the same nervous system's 'higher' cognitive functions. *Per*ception and *con*ception are neurocomputationally continuous; which is to say that they run seamlessly into one another, conjoined through the univocal informational continuum linking electro-chemical stimuli to neurocomputational processing[278].

But if sensory perception is on a par with theoretical conception, it follows that the parameters of perceptual sensitivity will be supervenient on the discriminatory prowesses of our neurologically embodied theoretical frameworks[279]. Consequently, not only is all observation theory-laden; it is constitutively theoretical; so much so that a change of neurocomputational theory transfigures the parameters of our perceptual capacities along with those of our cognitive frameworks. Thus, Churchland maintains, we can change what we perceive by changing the theoretical framework –i.e. the prototypical partitioning of our vector activation space- that determines the manner in which our nervous systems process perceptual information; such as, for instance, whether it individuates on the basis of rabbits or undetached

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[278]"*The only place in the network where the weights need play no role is at the absolute sensory periphery of the system, where the external stimulus is transduced into a coded input vector for subsequent delivery to the transforming layers of weights. However, at the first occasion on which these preconceptual states have any effect at all on the downstream cognitive system, it is through a changeable configuration of synaptic weights, a configuration that produces one set of partitions on the activation-vector space of the relevant layers of neurons, one set out of millions of alternative possible sets. In other words, the very first thing that happens to the input signal is that it gets conceptualised in one of many different possible ways.*" (Churchland, 1989, p.189).

rabbit-parts[280]. In other words, as far as Churchland is concerned. phenomenology is a function of neurophysiology.

Accordingly, concomitant with the brain's almost inconceivable neurocomputational density is an extreme phenomenological plasticity. Just as the domain of cognitive possibility is no longer coextensive with the narrowly linguaformal ambit of sentential structure and propositional form, the realm of phenomenological possibility is no longer necessarily fixed once and for all in conformity with the morphological specificities of the organism. Thus, *contra* Fodor, Churchland insists that perceptual processing is not physiologically encapsulated, which is to say, immutably specified and insulated from theoretical penetration[281]. Apparently incommensurable perceptual modalities can be made to function as an analogue of the other: the physiological modalities of perception are neurocomputationally continuous; that is, fluid and endlessly transformable: "*In recent centuries most humans have learnt to perceive speech not just auditorally but visually: we have learned to read. And some have learned to perceive speech by touch: they read Braille. And some of us have learned not just to hear music, but to see it: we have learned to sight read musical notation. Now, neither the eyes nor the*

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[279]Specifically, on the range and degree of fine-grained perceptual discrimination that the brain is capable of effecting in conformity with the prototypical partitioning of its vector activation space.

[280] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 7, pp.340-348.

[281] Cf. Churchland, 1989, pp.255-279.

fingers were evolved for the instantaneous perception of those complex structures and organizations originally found in auditory phenomena, but their acquired mastery here illustrates the highly sophisticated and decidedly supernormal capacities that learning can produce in them. And if these capacities, why not others?"(Ibid, p.265)[282]

Accordingly, not only does the neurocomputational perspective lead to an appreciation of the constitutively theoretical character of perceptual immediacy and insight into those neurocomputational processes through which phenomenological 'seeming' is produced. It also describes the ways in which perceptual 'seeming' can be theoretically manipulated through neurocomputational intervention, and thus how, by amplifying the human organism's perceptual capacities *via* technological prostheses, the parameters of our phenomenological seeming can be reconfigured so that we become phenomenological mutants or perceptual aliens: "*we begin to become such mutants or aliens [...] when we change our sensory modalities by augmenting them with unusual instruments, such as phase-contrast microscopes, deep-sky telescopes, long-baseline stereoscopes, infrared scopes, and so forth. And the*

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[282] Churchland's thesis of 'diachronic interpenetration' between perceptual modalities could be seen as an empirical analogue for what Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* called the 'transcendental' or 'discordant' use of the faculties: "*The transcendental operation of the faculties is a properly paradoxical operation, opposed to their exercise under the rule of a common sense. In consequence, the harmony between the faculties can appear only in the form of a* discordant harmony, *since each communicates to the other only the violence which confronts it with its own difference and its*

metamorphosis is complete when, after years of professional practise, we learn to see the world appropriately and efficiently with these new senses. This learning requires both that we suppress certain habits of processing 'natural' to the naked eye and to the familiar world of middle-sized material objects, and that we learn to process the retinal data in novel ways, ways that are appropriate to the unfamiliar features one perceives by these novel means (e.g. interference patterns, diffraction rings, dark nebulae, fusion planes, temperature gradients, etc.)."(Ibid., p.259)

Vector Coding: From Superempirical Virtue to Transcendental A Priori

Nevertheless, in spite of appearances, a transcendental dimension is also operative in Churchland's seemingly wholly empirical or naturalistic *modus operandi*. To understand how this is the case, it is necessary to appreciate the two-tiered relation between Churchland's vector activation paradigm and the linguaformal or folk psychological accounts it is intended to displace. On the one hand, Churchland explicitly or empirically posits the explanatory excellence of the vector activation model on the grounds of what he calls its 'superempirical virtues' (conceptual simplicity, explanatory unity,

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divergence from the others[...]There is therefore something which is communicated from one faculty to the other but it is metamorphosed and does not form a common sense."(Deleuze, 1994, pp.145-146).

theoretical cohesiveness). On the other, that excellence is implicitly or metaphysically presupposed as though its function were that of a transcendental *a priori*.

Thus, although Churchland's PDP (parallel distributed processing) model of cognition remains explicitly representational -with propositional attitudes being supplanted by activation vectors- it is one wherein representation no longer operates under the normative aegis of truth-as-correspondence. In lieu of truth, Churchland proposes to discriminate between theories on the basis of what he calls the 'super-empirical' virtues of ontological simplicity, conceptual coherence, and explanatory power: "*As I see it then, values such as ontological simplicity, coherence and explanatory power are among the brain's most basic criteria for recognizing information, for distinguishing information from noise*"(Ibid., p.147)[283]. But as a result, Churchland is obliged to ascribe degrees of neurocomputational adequation between representation and represented without reintroducing a substantive difference between true and false *kinds* of representation. For by Churchland's own lights, there are no substantive, which is to say,

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283 "Ceteris paribus, *an activated prototype* [i.e. an explanation] *is better if it is part of the most unified conceptual configuration[...]networks that have formed the simplest or most unified partitions across their activation space are networks that do much better at generalising their knowledge to novel cases. Very briefly, they do better at recognising novel situations for what they are because they have generated a relevantly unified similarity gradient that will catch novel cases in the same subvolume that catches the training case.*"(P.M. Churchland, 1998, p.286)

ontological, differences between theories: all theories, including folk psychology, consist in a specific partitioning of a brain's vector activation space[284]. Yet there is a noticeable tension between Churchland's insistence that theories are to be discriminated between solely on the basis of differences in degree of superempirical virtue, rather than in representational kind, and his conviction that the PDP paradigm which reveals this underlying neurocomputational univocity common to all representations exhibits such an elevated degree of superiority *vis a vis* folk psychology in the realm of superempirical virtue as to necessitate the latter's elimination. As a result, the case for eliminativism oscillates between the claim that it is entirely a matter of empirical expediency[285], and the argument that seem to point to the *a priori* necessity of eliminating folk psychology by invoking the PDP paradigm's intrinsically metaphysical superiority. It is this tension between eliminativism's avowals of empirical humility and its unavowable metaphysical presumptions, which we now propose to examine in greater detail.

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284 "*FP* [folk-psychology], *like any other theory, is a family of learned vectorial prototypes, prototypes that sustain recognition of current reality, anticipation of future reality, and manipulation of ongoing reality*" (P.M. Churchland, 1998, p.15)

285 "*Whether FP* [folk-psychology]*is false and whether it will fail to reduce are empirical issues whose decisive settlement must flow from experimental research and theoretical development, not from any arguments a priori*" (P.M.Churchland, 1998, p.10)

Thus, on the one hand, since such 'folk-semantical' notions as those of 'truth' and 'reference'[286] no longer function as guarantors of adequation between 'representation' and 'reality', as they did in the predominantly folk psychological or linguaformal acceptation of theoretical adequation -which sees the latter as consisting in a set of word-world correspondences-, there is an important sense in which all theoretical paradigms are neurocomputationally *equal*. They are equal insofar as there is nothing in a configuration of synaptic weights or a partitioning of vector space *per se* which could serve to explain why one theory is 'better' than another. All are to be gauged exclusively in terms of what Churchland calls their superempirical virtues; *viz*. according to the greater or lesser degree of efficiency with which they enable the organism to adapt successfully to its environment.

In other words, if all 'theories' are instances of vector activation, and if the vector activation paradigm -to which all other theoretical paradigms reduce according to Churchland- dispenses with the notion of theoretical 'truth', then we are obliged to stipulate that theories be judged

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286 "[...]*the folk-semantical notion of 'reference' is without any real integrity. Reference is uniquely fixed neither by networks of belief, nor by causal relations, nor by anything else, because there is no single uniform relation that connects each descriptive term to the world in anything like the fashion that common sense supposes*" (Churchland, 1989, pp.276-277)

pragmatically[287] in terms of the greater or lesser degree of adaptational efficiency with which they enable the organism to flourish. Thus, Churchland is perfectly explicit in explaining why he considers the vector activation paradigm of cognition to be 'better' than its folk psychological rivals, and his neurocomputational pragmatism proposes a perfectly precise formula for gauging theoretical excellence. Global excellence of theory is measured by straightforwardly pragmatic virtues: maximal explanatory cohesiveness *vis a vis* maximal empirical heterogeneity purchased with minimal conceptual expenditure. One theory is 'better' than another when it affords greater theoretical cohesiveness along with greater explanatory unity whilst using fewer conceptual means to synthesize a wider assortment of data.

But the trouble for Churchland is that it remains deeply unclear in precisely what way the extent of an organism's adaptational efficiency, as revealed by the degree to which its representation of the world exhibits the superempirical virtues of simplicity, unity, and coherence, could ever be 'read off' its brain's neurocomputational microstructure. In what sense precisely are theoretical virtues such as simplicity, unity, and coherence necessarily

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287"*[...]if we are to reconsider truth as the aim or product of cognitive activity, I think we must reconsider its applicability right across the board[...]That is, if we are to move away from the more naïve formulations of scientific realism, we should move in the direction of* pragmatism *rather than positivistic instrumentalism[...]it is far from obvious that truth is either the primary or the principal product of* [cognitive]*activity. Rather, its function would appear to be the ever more finely tuned administration of the organism's behaviour.*" (Ibid., p.149-150).

concomitant at the neurological level with an organism's reproductively advantageous behaviour? Churchland simply states that the aforementioned virtues are already a constitutive feature of the brain's functional architecture without offering anything in the way of argument regarding how and why it is that a neural network's learned configuration in synaptic weight space is constrained as a matter of neurocomputational necessity by the imperatives of unity, cohesion and simplicity[288]. Perhaps Churchland's reticence in this regard is a matter of caution. For in order to make a case for the neurocomputational necessity of superempirical virtue, Churchland would need to demonstrate that the latter are indeed strictly information theoretic constraints intrinsic to the vector coding process, as opposed to extrinsic regulatory considerations contingently imposed on the network in the course of its ongoing interaction with the environment. However, in pursuing this particular line of argument, Churchland immediately finds himself confronted with a choice between two peculiarly unappealing alternatives.

The first alternative follows inescapably from the fact that, by Churchland's own admission, the process of informational transduction *via* which the brain processes incoming stimuli is physically demarcated by the

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[288]Indeed, Churchland frequently adduces empirical data that would seem to imply the opposite: *viz.* his discussion of the ways in which a network can stop learning by becoming trapped within a merely local minimum in its global error gradient. Cf. Churchland, 1989, pp.192-194

boundaries of the organism[289]. Beyond those boundaries lies 'information-in-itself'. Thus, if Churchland tries to integrate the superempirical virtues into the neurocomputational process by pushing the brain's vector coding activity out beyond the physical boundaries of the organism so that they become constitutive features of the world, he is forced into the uncomfortable position of having to claim that the physical world is neurocomputationally constituted. The result is a neurocomputational transcendentalism: the brain represents the world but cannot be conditioned by the world in return because the latter will 'always already' have been neurocomputationally represented. We end up with a thoroughgoing neurocomputational idealism whereby the brain constitutes the physical world without it being possible to explain either how the brain comes to be part of the world, or even indeed how the world could have originally produced the brain.

Alternatively, instead of trying to achieve a neurocomputational reduction of the superempirical virtues by projecting the brain's vector coding activity out onto the environing world, Churchland can abjure the notion of an absolute physical boundary between information-in-itself and as already coded by the brain's prototypical vector partitions in order to allow the physical world to reach 'into' the brain, thereby allowing a pre-constituted

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[289] Cf. *supra*, footnote 278, p.387.

physical reality to play an intrinsic role in neurological activity. But in widening the focus of his epistemological vision in this way, Churchland will be obliged to abandon the representationalist dualism of brain and world and to forsake his deliberately neurocentric perspective in order to adopt a more global or meta-neurological -which is to say, meta-physical- vision of materialism; one in which 'materiality' is endowed with a far greater degree of abstract, substrate independent functional univocity. Clearly however, with the shift to a non-representationalist materialism and the abstract, functional definition of 'matter' as that which is capable of encompassing a heterogeneous variety of incommensurable physical processes, the categorical distinction between processor and processed, network and world, becomes entirely redundant. Since this is the very distinction that lies at the heart of Churchland's commitment to neurological reductionism, and the one that underwrites all his arguments for eliminativism, we cannot expect Churchland to find this second alternative any more appealing than the first.

Thus, Churchland cannot effect a neurocomputational reduction of superempirical virtue without engendering a neurological idealism, and he cannot reintegrate the neurocomputational brain into the wider realm of superempirical virtue without abandoning eliminativism altogether. Nevertheless, let us, for the sake of argument, put the former of these two

difficulties aside for the moment and suppose that Churchland were to manage a successful but non-idealising neurocomputational reduction of superempirical virtue. The trouble then is that in arguing that simplicity, unity and coherence are constitutive functional features of the brain's neuroanatomy, Churchland is but one slippery step away from claiming that brains represent the world correctly as a matter of evolutionary necessity; i.e. that they necessarily have 'true' representations. Unfortunately, this is precisely the sort of claim that Churchland had sworn to abjure: "*Natural selection does not care whether a brain has or tends towards true beliefs, so long as the organism reliably exhibits reproductively advantageous behaviour*"(Churchland, 1989, p.150)

Consequently, everything hinges on whether the superempirical virtues are a precondition or a by-product of the organism's reproductively advantageous behaviour. Churchland implies the former, on the basis of what appears to be a latent brand of neurocomputational idealism, whereas all available empirical (i.e. evolutionary) evidence[290] seems to point to the latter, and hence towards a less neurocentric, less stridently representationalist version of materialism. From the perspective of the latter, that successful networks do indeed tend to exhibit these superempirical characteristics as a

matter of empirical fact is uncontroversial; but it is a fact about cognitive ethology, which is to say, a fact which makes sense only within the macrophysical purview of evolutionary biology and in the context of the relation between organism and environment; rather than a fact obtaining within the microphysical or purely information theoretic ambit of the brain's neurocomputational anatomy. That the macrophysical fact has a microphysical analogue, that the ethological imperative is neurologically encoded, is precisely what we might expect having suspended the premise of an absolute representational cleavage between the micro- and macro-physical dimensions, and accepted the extent to which these must remain not only physically conterminous, but bound together by reciprocal presupposition.

Thus, considered by itself, the neurocomputational encoding of superempirical virtue is not enough to vindicate Churchland. For Churchland's account is predicated on the idealist premise that neurocomputational representation is the necessary precondition for adaptational success, that neurocomputational function determines-in-the-last-instance evolutionary ethology, whereas it seems to be adaptation which grounds representational efficacy. Consequently, and in the absence of some non question-begging account as to how macrophysical facts pertaining to

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[290]Monod, 1974; Kauffman, 1993, 1995; and Dennett, 1995, all provide instances of such supporting

evolutionary ethology are ultimately supervenient on microphysical facts about the brain's functional neuroanatomy, it seems that the superempirical virtues Churchland invokes in order to discriminate between theories must remain extra-neurological characteristics; characteristics which reveal themselves only in the course of an ethological analysis of the organism's cognitive behaviour within the world, rather than *via* a neurological analysis of the brain's microstructure.

Accordingly, the tension between eliminativism's avowals of empirical humility and its latent metaphysical pretensions reveals itself when it becomes apparent that the pragmatic or superempirical virtues in terms of which Churchland proposes to discriminate between theories cannot be accounted for exclusively in neurocomputational terms. They seem to exceed the neurocentric remit of the neurocomputational economy. And it is in trying to accommodate them that Churchland begins unwittingly to drift away from the rigidly empirical premises that provide the naturalistic rationale for eliminativism towards a metaphysical stance wherein the vector coding paradigm begins to take on all the characteristics of a transcendental *a priori*. As a result, the tenor of the argument for the elimination of folk psychology shifts from that of empirical assessment to that of metaphysical imperative.

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evidence. On the whole, we take the claim that adaptation grounds representational efficacy, and not

For presumably, were Churchland correct in maintaining that the superempirical virtues of ontological simplicity, conceptual coherence, and explanatory power are, as he puts it, "*among the brain's most basic criteria for recognizing information, for distinguishing information from noise*", then a conceptual framework as baroque, as incoherent and as obfuscatory as folk psychology is supposed to be would have been eliminated as a matter of evolutionary routine, and Churchland would be spared the trouble of militating so brilliantly for its displacement. If superempirical virtues were already endogenously specified and intrinsic to the brain's neurocomputational microstructure, then it would presumably be a matter of neurophysiological impossibility for an organism to embody any theory wholly lacking in these virtues. Paradoxically, it is the eliminativist's supposition that the former are intrinsically encoded in the brain's cognitive microstructure that ends up considerably narrowing the extent for the degree of superempirical distinction between theories and ultimately undermining the strength of the case against folk psychology. Thus, although Churchland's trenchant critique of philosophies which insist on transcendentalising folk psychology as an epistemological *sine qua non* strikes us as entirely admirable, we fear that, whatever else is wrong with it, folk psychology

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the reverse, to be reasonably uncontroversial.

cannot be as chronically deficient in the superempirical virtues as Churchland requires in order to render the argument for its elimination incontrovertible; certainly not deficient enough to explain why eliminativism insists on ascribing such a dramatic degree of superempirical superiority to the vector activation paradigm.

Thus, even as it continues to insist that all theories are neurocomputationally equal inasmuch as all display greater or lesser degrees of superempirical distinction, eliminativism insinuates that the vector coding paradigm is nevertheless *more equal*, more pragmatic, *more superempirically virtuous* than all previous folk psychological paradigms of cognition. What underlies this claim to radical superiority? Given that Churchland seems to accept Quine's thesis that theories are underdetermined by empirical evidence[291], the superiority of the vector activation paradigm cannot be held to reside in any precisely quantifiable increase in the efficiency with which it enables the human organism to process information. For according to Churchland, there can be no absolute -which is to say, theory neutral- measure of superiority when we compare the degree of adaptational efficiency bestowed upon organisms by the theories they incorporate. By transforming the data it purports to explain, every theory moves the empirical goalposts as

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[291]Cf. for example Churchland, 1989, pp.139-151.

far as adaptational efficiency is concerned[292]. Thus, it is perfectly possible to envisage the possibility of 'subtler', or more 'refined' versions of folk psychological theory endowing organisms with all the additional discriminatory capacities, conceptual enhancements and explanatory advantages of the PDP paradigm favoured by Churchland[293].

But if this is this case, it suggests that, for Churchland, the putative superiority of the vector activation paradigm is 'meta-empirical' in a sense which is more than pragmatic and quite irreducible to those super-empirical virtues in terms of which Churchland discerns theoretical excellence: a sense which is transcendentally *a priori* and meta-physical rather than merely super-empirical. Which is to say that Churchland holds the PDP paradigm as irrecusably superior to all available linguaformal alternatives simply because he implicitly supposes that it alone is capable of furnishing a genuinely *universal* explanation of cognition, one which metaphysically encompasses all others. Thus, all theories are equally instances of vector activation; but the

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[292]Thus, Churchland invokes Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity to underline the extent to which "*new theories often* bring with them *a novel and proprietary vocabulary for describing the observable world, a vocabulary that can augment or even displace the old observational vocabulary*" (P.M.Churchland, 1998, p.18)

[293]Churchland himself frequently uses the argument that Ptolemaic astronomy could have happily continued 'explaining' and accommodating recalcitrant astronomical data by piling virtual epicycle upon virtual epicycle. Cf. for instance, Churchland, 1999, p.767.

vector activation theory of vector activation is *more equal* because it is revealed as the properly transcendental precondition for all the others[294].

Accordingly, the PDP paradigm is at once the latest in a historically embedded empirical sequence; and the latent precondition for a rigorously *a priori* explanatory account of the veritable character of the succession of paradigms encompassed in that sequence. The vector activation paradigm is the universal prototype of which all other models of cognition are merely instantiations. In Hegelese, we might say that the latter are instances of vector coding *in themselves*, but not yet *in and for themselves*. For Churchland explicitly claims that he has found the veritable material instantiation of what Kuhn called a 'paradigm'[295]: this is precisely what a network's prototypical partitioning of vector activation space *is*. And we should also bear in mind that a paradigm in Kuhn's sense –just as in Churchland's meta-physically transformed sense- is more than just an empirical datum; it is a quasi-transcendental faktum[296]. Thus, a network's prototypical vector configuration is at once an empirical fact, and the precondition for anything's coming to count as an empirical fact, for it is that which defines *a priori* the parameters

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[294]Perhaps the properly transcendental potency of the neurocomputational paradigm is additionally compromised by the fact that it continues to be loosely clothed in natural language rather than stringently encoded in vector algebraic dress.

[295]Cf. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962, and Churchland, 1989, p.191.

for all perceptual judgement. In other words, Churchland's neurocomputational paradigm of cognition operates like an empirico-transcendental doublet: it is at once given empirically as an intra-historical datum; but also, and in the very same gesture, posited as an *a priori*, supra-historical faktum which furnishes us with the genuinely universal explanatory precondition for our ability to recognise and explain that historical sequence of paradigm shifts for what they were: changing configurations in synaptic weight-space. Which is to say that, in spite of its considerable intra-philosophical radicality, eliminativism is ultimately an instance of philosophical Decision like any other.

Epistemic Engines and the Transcendental Function

We have seen that there is an entirely positive or constructive dimension to Churchland's eliminativist program, one that describes how 'phenomenological mutation' can be effected technologically, through the use of empirical prostheses at the level of the individual organism. What we wish to focus on now is the possibility of radicalising and generalising this particular aspect of eliminativism by way of non-materialist theory. What if it were possible to effect a more rigorously universal instance of phenomenological mutation than that envisaged by Churchland at the level of

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[296]For an account of the faktum/datum dyad as intrinsic to the structure of philosophical Decision, cf.

the individual brain? A global as opposed to empirico-regional phenomenological mutation would have to be effectuated by intervening directly at the transcendental level of the philosophical Decision *via* which Churchland chooses to subordinate folk psychology to his own neurocomputational perspective. Where the eliminativist Decision empirically presupposes and metaphysically posits the informational continuum whereby neurocomputational conception determines phenomenological perception, non-materialism proposes to radicalise and generalise eliminativism by cloning a transcendental, which is to say, radically discontinuous and non-neurocomputational determinant for phenomenology at the global or transindividual level using Churchland's neurophenomenological hybrid as its occasion. That determinant will be we what we shall call *the transcendental function*.

Thus, what we wish to propose is a non-materialist *universalisation* of the materialist paradigm that views the phenomenon of sapience primarily in terms of information processing. To do this we will focus on the final chapter of Churchland's 1979 work *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind*, wherein Churchland sets out the rudiments for what is supposed to be a universal -which is to say, non-neurocentric or substrate-independent-

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supra, Chapter 5, pp.218-223.

definition of cognitive activity. By examining Churchland's naturalised version of epistemic universality, we hope to effect a non-materialist radicalisation/generalisation of the information-processing paradigm in terms of which materialism proposes to define cognition.

1. The natural science of epistemic engines

The challenge for a rigorously naturalistic materialism lies in articulating a universally valid model of epistemic activity free of anthropomorphic parochialism. But 'universally valid' is just a euphemism for 'normative', and philosophical orthodoxy stipulates that it is precisely the normative (universally necessary) characteristics of cognitive activity that cannot be accounted for naturalistically. Accordingly, the idea of a normative yet rigorously naturalistic epistemology would seem to be oxymoronic. How then is the claim to universal epistemic validity to be accommodated within a purely naturalistic framework?

In *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind*, Churchland offers as a provocative response the suggestion that science itself is capable of providing philosophy with the necessary resources for constructing a notion of epistemic normativity. Thus, like other naturalistically minded philosophers before him[297], Churchland approaches cognition *via* the

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[297]We have already named figures such as Quine, Smart, Wiener, Sayre and Dennett.

mobilisation of a conceptual vocabulary drawn from information theory because he believes the latter provides the resources for a rigorously naturalistic yet universally valid or normative paradigm of sapience[298]. That vocabulary is attractive because it operates at a level of abstraction which manages to circumvent anthropocentric prejudices about supposedly necessary and sufficient conditions for sapience;- conditions usually based on folk psychology and/or the assumption of entrenched categorial divisions between organic and inorganic, animate and inanimate. Thus, in the closing pages of *Scientific Realism and the Plasticity of Mind*, Churchland sketches

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[298]At this juncture an important heuristic point needs to made. As Kenneth Sayre points out in his useful entry on the subject in Routledge's recent *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, many philosophical appropriations of information theory remain fraught with confusion and misunderstanding. In its most obvious manifestation, the confusion consists in recklessly assimilating Shannon's strictly mathematical or *quantitative* definition of 'information' to its semantic or *qualitative* counterpart as used in everyday discourse. Cf. Sayre, 'Information Theory' in Volume 4 of *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, general editor E.Craig, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 782-786. But while acknowledging the extent to which philosophical mobilisations of information theory remain problematic, we believe it is important to distinguish between the illegitimacy of the wholesale misappropriation of a theory, and the legitimacy of a merely tactical or localised deployment of portions of its vocabulary. Accordingly, we do not believe Churchland's mobilisation of a vocabulary drawn from information theory amounts to a misappropriation. Terms such as 'information processing', 'transmitter', 'receiver' and 'noise', are deployed with considerable skill and economy in order to illuminate a philosophical argument. The fact that in appropriating those terms for philosophical purposes, Churchland employs them in a loose and more or less metaphorical fashion relative to the degree of literal precision with which they are applied within the ambit of scientific theory does not automatically invalidate his use of that vocabulary. Since he never pretends to be providing a stringent application of information theory, his philosophical use of its vocabulary cannot and should not be judged by the austere standards of rigorous scientific exactitude. Consequently, and since we see no real justification for embroiling ourselves in issues of often overwhelming mathematical difficulty, we will forgo a systematic analysis concerning the technical pertinence of Churchland's chosen vocabulary. Perhaps this is regrettable, for uniquely among philosophers of mind, Churchland can lay claim to having the requisite conceptual apparatus which would permit of a rigorous or non-metaphorical application of information theory. Unlike the folk psychological model of cognition, the neurocomputational paradigm seems (*prima facie* at least) perfectly consonant with Shannon's strictly mathematical/quantitative definition of information. A configuration in synaptic weight-space is radically unlike a propositional attitude in that it admits of an entirely literal, rather than metaphorical,

the rudiments of a thoroughly naturalised version of normative epistemology by alighting on the notion of 'informational reservoir' as a way of characterising entities in terms of their susceptibility for registering information regardless of their standing *vis a vis* the categories of animate and inanimate, or organic and inorganic. All entities, Churchland suggests, irrespective of the details of their physical constitution, can be considered as informational reservoirs and situated within a universal informational continuum in terms of the degree of efficiency with which they absorb information. 'Information sponges' are those that score highest within this continuum: "*One need only suppose the overt behaviour of such informational sponges to be a systematic function of their information-bearing states to have outlined a conception of the internal activities of natural fauna that owes nothing to our usual cognitive concepts, and which places us on a continuum with animals, trees, and ultimately even beaches.*"(Churchland, 1979, p.143)

Accordingly, the naturalisation of epistemic normativity may be brought about by identifying the entirely abstract, substrate independent realm of computational algorithms corresponding to those processes *via* which sponges are able not only to absorb information from their environment but

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physical quantification. Cf. J.R. Pierce (1965) for an extremely clear but also technically precise

also to modify behaviour according to the information registered. These algorithms are 'epistemic engines': abstract functional mechanisms mediating between informational input and behavioural output in such a way as to allow entities to *learn* from their environment. The naturalisation of epistemic normativity, Churchland continues, will be achieved in the form of a 'natural science of epistemic engines', and will proceed by cataloguing the variety of algorithmic mechanism through which 'information sponges' become able to spontaneously modify behavioural output by successfully extracting a surplus value of information from registered input. All that is required for this, Churchland insists, is a certain plasticity in the functional relations between sensory input and motor output[299]. Those functional relations must be able to change as a 'more or less' determinate function of certain sensory consequences engendered by their prior occurrence. Thus, a specific kind of motor response will be made either more or less likely to recur when prompted by an identical input as a function of the positively or negatively reinforcing inputs that the initial response elicited: "*What this will*

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layman's introduction to information theory.

[299]This reference to motor output does not indicate that Churchland has already presupposed those locomotive capacities which are characteristic of organisms. The algorithmic function will correlate environmental input and behavioural output even in the absence of all recognisable sensory and/or motor capacities. Even thermostats and beaches instantiate epistemic algorithms; the former by registering differences in ambient temperature; the later by registering climactic conditions (shifting sand, bird footprints, etc.) In the case of a beach, the registering of informational input remains insufficient to engender a significant behavioural output. Nevertheless, the beach still instantiates an algorithm; albeit one whose epistemic content would be formulated in natural language as: "Stay here".

produce is a sequence of functional relations betwixt input and output, a sequence wherein the modifications from element to element are themselves the output of a second-order function, a function whose inputs are actualised stimulus response pairs from the first function, plus whatever 'reinforcing' states their actualisation elicits."(Ibid., p.143)

Epistemic engines 'learn' *via* a process of blind mechanical recursion which takes hardwired pairs of stimulus-response function plus their positive or negative reinforcement as the first-order input for a second-order function, whose output in turn provides the input for a third-order function, and so on. Accordingly, Churchland's natural science of epistemic engines is an attempt to delineate the iterative algorithmic mechanisms whereby entities are able to construct models of their environment -'internal' representations of the world- and distil information from input signals without the benefit of putatively 'higher' cognitive powers and in the absence of all appeals to consciousness, intentional states, propositional attitudes, etc. For what this nested sequence of functional relations engenders is a self-correcting measuring instrument which *calibrates* the precise degree of cognitive discrepancy between environmental input and behavioural output. That discrepancy is distilled as the output of the second-order function that has for its input actualised stimulus-response relations paired with their positive or negatively

reinforcing states. A more fine-grained calibration of the discrepancy and an additional extraction of information are achieved when that second-order output in turn results in a motor response coupled with a reinforcing state that provides the input for a third-order function. The process is reiterated until the system finally achieves consistently positive reinforcements of its behavioural responses to environmental stimuli; which is to say, until it has achieved the optimum degree of representational adequacy *vis a vis* its environment.

As a result, for Churchland, epistemic engines provide a universally valid exemplar -a normative paradigm- for the process through which cognitive information is filtered from environmental noise. By winnowing out the information latent in all background noise, epistemic engines provide an example of the way in which "*information can emerge from the background 'noise' in which it is buried once the more prominent regularities in that 'noise' have been discriminated and subtracted from the incoming signal.*"(Ibid., p.149) Moreover, Churchland continues, the pertinence of this recursive algorithmic process need not be restricted to epistemic evolution in individuals; its normative force derives from its genuinely universal salience as a substrate independent characterisation of epistemological development. Accordingly, Churchland insists, the science of epistemic engines promises to provide a rigorously naturalistic account for "*the phenomenon of paradigm*

articulation, and of cumulative tradition, and even the possibility of intellectual revolution"(Ibid.)

However, whereas the myopic parochialism endemic to folk psychological formulations of epistemic normativity encourages their exclusionary imperialism *vis a vis* alternative cognitive possibilities, the substrate independent character of naturalised normativity encompasses incommensurabilities at the level of individually incorporated epistemic regimes. Thus, once naturalised and grounded in the rigorously universal algorithmic machinery of epistemic engines, epistemological normativity becomes perfectly compatible with cognitive discontinuity: "*Within the framework of a well chosen first regime the iterative process of winnowing out ever more subtle information can continue for indefinite lengths of time. On the other hand, the primary regime that receives the strongest initial reinforcement may turn out in the long run* not *to be the most revelatory of the subtlest regularities. It may turn out that the residual deviations from reality start to get larger and more chaotic again [...] and it may be that no regime of which* [the creature] *is capable will find sufficient reinforcement to stick. Faced with chronic anomalies along these lines* [what one] *needs is a hardwired system for reacting to such crises, where the reaction consists in dismantling whatever hierarchy [...] is already in place. The creature can*

then begin from scratch with a new basic regime[...]that may allow it to penetrate reality more deeply than did the basic regime it has just overthrown."(Ibid.,p.150)

In subsequent work, Churchland will identify the 'hardwired' apparatus whereby a fruitless or inefficient epistemic function can be dismantled with a reconfiguration of synaptic weights. Thus, although this sketch for a natural science of epistemic engines predates Churchland's espousal of the PDP paradigm by some years, there is an important sense in which it remains perfectly consonant with it: epistemic engines can be seen as the forerunners of prototype vectors[300]. Moreover, if, for Churchland, epistemic engines are precursors to prototype vector partitionings, then they, like the latter, must be seen as the ultimate determinants for epistemological discontinuity and phenomenological mutation within a fully naturalised epistemology. Yet at the same time, it seems that in embracing the PDP paradigm, Churchland has partially abjured the aspiration to the dimension of substrate independent universality that seemed intrinsic to the notion of an

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[300]Significantly, in discussing the relation between the perspective adopted in *Scientific Realism* and his later neurocomputational stance, Churchland points out that the book was deliberately conceived and written around the final chapter 'Sentential epistemologies and the natural science of epistemic engines'. Cf. Churchland 1998a, pp.900-903. However, at the same time Churchland puzzlingly undercuts the universality ascribed to epistemic engines in that chapter by stating that the latter calls for a "*naturalized,* brain based, *sub-sentential epistemology*" (our emphasis, op. cit.,p.900), whereas there seems to be no suggestion whatsoever that epistemic engines need be brain based in that chapter. Indeed, from our point of view, the peculiar interest of the epistemological program delineated in the

epistemic engine. For although the space of phenomenological possibility concomitant with neurocomputational plasticity is enormous, it remains entirely neurocentric, which is to say, empirically overdetermined. Consequently, from our point of view, it is precisely insofar as the algorithmic machinery of epistemic engines allows for an entirely abstract or meta-empirical dimension of phenomenological plasticity, that the shift from a natural science of epistemic engines to a neurocomputational perspective signals Churchland's retreat from the quasi-transcendental, substrate independent domain of epistemological universality to the empirically constricted realm of neurocentric provincialism.

2. From epistemic algorithms to the transcendental function

Our non-materialist radicalisation of epistemic normativity will proceed by dualysing the philosophical dyads that constrain Churchland's search for a universal epistemology in order to uncover a rigorously transcendental, and thereby genuinely substrate independent universal algorithm for cognition. From a non-philosophical perspective, two dyadic structures circumscribe Churchland's attempted universalisation of epistemic function: that of registered information and information-in-itself or noise on the one hand; and that of stimulatory input and behavioural output on the

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chapter in question derives primarily from its aspiration to a substrate independent, non neurocentric

other. We shall dualyse both and separate the identity of 'noise itself' from its epistemological hybridisation with information, as well as that of 'input itself' from its behaviourist hybridisation with output. Instead of positing noise as given *a priori* in and through the empirical presupposition of registered information, we presuppose it as already given-without-givenness, or as 'noise itself' using Churchland's epistemological hybridisation of information and noise as our occasion. Likewise, instead of empirically presupposing stimulatory input through the *a priori* positing of behavioural output, we presuppose an invariant input as already-given-without-givenness or as a radical constant on the basis of Churchland's behaviouristic hybridisation of input and output. On the basis of these two dualysations we can posit two additional axioms in addition to those eight in terms of which we characterised the radical hyle earlier[301]:

9. *The radical hyle is Noise-without-information, noise itself in its foreclosure to the epistemological calibration of the discrepancy between information and noise.*
10. *The radical hyle is the Unknown as unvarying input, the Unknown as the radical invariant engendering limitless*

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perspective.

[301]Cf. *supra*, Chapter 6, pp.293-294.

transcendental variation in its cognitive output on the occasional basis of an empirically variable epistemic function.

Thus, by way of these two axioms, non-materialism posits-without-presupposing the radical hyle as that last-instance which is also the transcendental determinant for Churchland's sought-after universal epistemic function[302]. It is in accordance with the radical hyle as that invariant which is 'noise itself', that we can clone a rigorously transcendental and thereby genuinely universal function for materialist epistemology using the algorithmic machinery of the epistemic engine as our empirical variable. Where the epistemic algorithm calibrates the cognitive discrepancy between sensory input and motor output by filtering information from environmental noise, we clone a non-epistemic function, which is to say, a transcendental algorithm for the determination of that epistemic algorithm, by separating-without-separation noise 'itself' in its Identity as radical invariant determining-in-the-last-instance all empirically variable calibrations of informational output in its distinction from noise-laden input. That transcendental algorithm now constitutes an authentically universal, non-epistemological function wherein noise 'itself' becomes the ultimate determinant for all epistemically calibrated information.

In other words, instead of using epistemic enginery to constantly re-extract an informational surplus value from environmental noise, we use the former as the empirical occasion from which we clone a transcendental function wherein noise 'itself' in its foreclosure to information determines every conceivable epistemological *ratiocination* of information and noise. The empirical discrepancy between information and noise as calibrated by the epistemic algorithm has been radicalised -i.e. dualysed- as a unilateral or non-epistemological separation between noise 'itself' *qua* determinant for a rigorously universal or non-epistemic transcendental function, and noise 'as such' in its epistemological ratiocination *vis a vis* information. This radical separation is effectuated as a universal but non-epistemological algorithm whereby Noise *qua* radically unknowable constant=x is cloned on the basis of epistemic enginery *qua* empirical variable or occasional data in the form of a transcendental function. The transcendental function effectuates the unknowable constant on the occasional basis of the epistemic variable. It is the determination of empirical cognition in accordance with noise's foreclosure to all epistemic ratiocination. Whereas the epistemic function calibrates the difference between information and noise, known and unknown; the non-epistemic function effectuates the identity of the unknown as that

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[302]For Laruelle's account of non-philosophical cloning as effectuation of a transcendental function, cf.

which determines the known. Thus, the transcendental function is the varying effectuation of cognition under the unvarying condition of the unknown.

Moreover, whereas the epistemic algorithm is at least co-constituted by the empirically determinate pairings of input-output function through which it is instantiated, and hence at least co-determined by its empirical substrate, this non-epistemic or transcendental algorithm *unilateralises* its epistemological substrate as a merely occasional cause; it unilaterally determines it as an entirely neutral or indifferent material support. As a result, the transcendental function is effectuated as the non-hylomorphic duality of an uninstantiable form and an uninformable material; it 'exists' as the strictly unilateral duality of transcendental determinant and empirically determinable material. It is the identity-without-synthesis and duality-without-distinction of noise 'itself' in its epistemological foreclosure and noise as epistemically calibrated through its empirical admixture with information. Accordingly, it is as an effectuation of Noise's radical autonomy that the transcendental function enjoys a relatively radical autonomy or independence *vis a vis* the absolutely relative dependence of the epistemic function that serves as its empirical occasion.

Laruelle, 2000a, pp.275-280; 2000b, p. 76; 2000c, pp.184-185.

Thus, where the natural science of epistemic engines encompassed cognitive discontinuity at the empirical level, the transcendental science of non-epistemic functions gives rise to an unencompassable manifold of cognitive discontinuity at the universal level. A non-materialist epistemology uses the epistemic algorithms furnished by a fully naturalised epistemology in order to clone a series of radically universal, non-epistemological functions and engender universes of unintuitable cognitive variation; universes wherein the frequencies of information, the codes of cognition, and the parameters of phenomenality are reconfigured in accordance with Noise as unknown, or as phenomenon-in-itself, in order to be reconstituted independently of the bounds of perception and beyond the remit of stimulus-response functions. For the transcendental function is lived-in-One: it is articulated as an Alien-subject. The transcendental function manifests an alien Universe of cognition; one that is determined by an unknown constant on the basis of an epistemic variable. The result is a phenomenological plasticity which is no longer neurocomputationally calculable; a cognitive mutability whose variability exceeds even the vast space of neurocomputational possibility because it is now rooted in Noise as radically inconsistent yet invariable phenomenon, and manifested as a transcendental chaos[303] of unencompassable epistemic

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[303]Cf. *supra*, footnote 237, p.315.

variation. In the final analysis, the transition from the epistemic discontinuity embraced in Churchland's philosophical naturalism, to the epistemic inconsistency defined by non-philosophical materialism, is the move from empirical anarchy into universal chaos.

CONCLUSION

PHILOSOPHY, CAPITALISM, NON-MATERIALISM

Philosophy is the World

What is non-materialism good for? What does it change or manifest that a spontaneously practised materialist Decision could not change or manifest far more efficiently? What effectiveness does the effectuation of non-materialist thinking have? In the final analysis, isn't the non-materialist theory we have been labouring to formulate a sterile, fruitless, and ultimately pointless intellectual indulgence?

These are perfectly valid philosophical objections; and ones against which non-philosophy is defenceless. Nevertheless, if non-philosophy is defenceless against such philosophical objections, it is because it does not need to defend itself against them, having already suspended their pertinence and validity. To understand non-philosophy is to understand why it does not need to justify itself philosophically, in terms of its 'effectiveness', or lack thereof, as defined in accordance with the criteria of philosophical efficiency. Thus, although all the foregoing criticisms are in some regards undeniable,

there is also an overriding sense in which they are strictly worthless. Non-philosophy is rigorously pointless, sterile, useless, and everything else which philosophical teleology deems reprehensible. Non-philosophy is a-teleological, which is to say, intrinsically ineffectual, so long as 'effectivity' continues to be measured philosophically in terms of thought's effectiveness *vis a vis* the putatively extra-philosophical reality of the world.

Yet this is the very standard of 'effectiveness' which non-philosophy refuses. For in suspending the Parmenidean axiom, non-philosophical thinking suspends the philosophical conflation of reality 'as such' with the Real 'itself' and thereby the postulate of dyadic reciprocity between thought and the Real (which Laruelle calls 'the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy'). It suspends the idea that philosophical Decision constitutes an immediate intervention *vis a vis* the Real and that Decision is at once constituted by, and constitutive of, the Real 'itself'. More precisely, by suspending the conflation of reality 'as such' with the Real 'itself', non-philosophy suspends the supposition that there is no Real 'itself' independent of reality 'as such', or as defined through philosophical Decision[304]. For even in those cases where it pretends to be perfectly 'realist' and claims to acknowledge the autonomy of an extra-philosophical 'reality' -whatever that may be-, it is still by way of

Decision that philosophy decides that reality exists independently of Decision. Extra-philosophical 'reality' is always philosophically characterised. Consequently, whether 'realist' or 'idealist' in tenor, philosophical thinking begins by identifying extra-philosophical reality with the Real 'itself', in order to secure the premise that the Real -which is to say, reality- is always already *philosophisable*.

Accordingly, non-philosophical thinking can be characterised in terms of two indissociable operations: the acknowledgement that immanence *qua* Real 'itself' is already separate (without-separation) from the extra-philosophical reality posited and presupposed through Decision; and the suspension of the unitary presumption that everything is always already at least potentially philosophisable[305]. There is something that remains foreclosed for philosophy; which is to say, there is a non-philosophisable instance which philosophy presupposes but remains incapable of acknowledging. This is what we, along with Laruelle, have been calling 'the Real' or 'immanence' *qua* Given-without-givenness.

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[304]As instanced, for example, by Henry's conflation of immanence 'as such' *qua* absolutely unthinkable with immanence 'itself' *qua* radically foreclosed for thought. Cf. *supra*, Chapter 2, pp.89-92.

[305]"*Not everything is philosophisable, that is my good news. The first two things which are not are man and science, which are one and the same thing. This is what allows for the delineation of a science of philosophy. A supremely paradoxical project perhaps, but one which is the only way of knowing what one is doing when one decides to philosophise.*" (Laruelle, 1991, p.246)

Thus, instead of immediately presupposing that thought and reality, philosophy and world are necessarily bound together in a unitary philosophical dyad, instead of presupposing the identity-in-difference of thinking and being, non-philosophy suspends that presupposed immediacy on the basis of the unilateral duality whereby the Real in its foreclosure to philosophy is already separated (without-separation) from philosophical Decision as dyadic hybrid or unitary synthesis of thinking and being, philosophy and world, ideality and reality[306]. By acknowledging that there is a radically autonomous, non-philosophisable Real that is already separate from extra-philosophical reality, this unilateral duality suspends the auto-positional and auto-donational sufficiency whereby Decision presumes to reinscribe the Real within the World's philosophically circumscribed reality.

Yet it is through that suspension that Decision 'itself' *qua* reciprocal hybridisation of thinking and being is finally manifested in its radically immanent, which is to say, intrinsically non-Decisional Identity. For in acknowledging the Real 'itself' as radically separate from extra-philosophical reality 'as such', and recognising that, unlike the latter, the former remains foreclosed to Decision (to constitution, to determination), the non-philosophical suspension of philosophical sufficiency simultaneously

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306 Cf. *supra*, Chapter 5, pp.230-245.

neutralises and legitimates Decision. Thus, it is *via* the transcendental suspension of philosophy's conflation of reality with the Real that the philosophical postulate of a bi-lateral reciprocity between philosophy and extra-philosophical reality becomes transcendentally ratified. Consequently, non-philosophy 'brings forth' or manifests Decision's immanent, non-Decisional Identity as dyadic synthesis or identity-in-difference of the philosophical and the extra-philosophical. And in so doing, it acknowledges the relative autonomy of philosophy's auto-Decisional sufficiency as absolute, self-positing Transcendence; which is to say, as World. Non-philosophy identifies philosophy with Decision, and Decision with the World. Accordingly, for non-philosophy, philosophy *is* the World. Far from suppressing or shackling philosophy, the non-philosophical suspension of Decision's self-positing/self-presupposing sufficiency finally *makes manifest* philosophy's radically immanent Identity as that which is 'at one' with the World. It provides a rigorously transcendental deduction of the philosophical Decision's objective validity *vis a vis* extra-philosophical reality[307]. Thus, by suspending the premise that the Real is philosophisable, non-philosophy acknowledges rather than denies the philosophical presumption that the World's extra-philosophical reality is philosophisable. As a result, it is by

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[307]Cf. *supra*, Chapter 5, pp.234-237.

withdrawing the Real from the ambit of philosophy that non-philosophy grants philosophy everything; which is to say, reality or the World.

The World is Capitalism

The consequences of this non-philosophical identification of philosophy with the World are far-reaching: "*It is no longer possible to posit 'history', or 'society', or 'the economy', or 'capitalism' in a straightforward and abstract fashion as though they were objects devoid of a* superior ideological *representation, which is to say, objects devoid of their* possible philosophisable meaning."(Laruelle, 2000b, p.142) Accordingly, amongst other things, non-philosophy utterly reconfigures the relation between philosophy and capital. 'Capital' can no longer be naively posited or immediately presupposed as though given independently of its Decisional mediation. So long as it continues to be posited and presupposed in and through the auspices of philosophical Decision, 'capital', along with all other instances of putatively independent or 'concrete' extra-philosophical reality, will always already have been subjected to a superior, meta-empirical ideological gloss; an *a priori*, ideological investiture. Thus, instead of positing and presupposing capital as an already idealised, extra-philosophical reality, non-philosophy manifests or gives philosophy and capital together, independently of their auto-Decisional givenness, according to their double

articulation or reciprocal presupposition as an identity-in-difference, an indivisible unitary dyad.

As a result, in universalising philosophy *qua* Decision, non-philosophy universalises capital *qua* object of philosophy. More exactly, by dualysing Decision *qua* self-presupposing hybrid of philosophical ideality and extra-philosophical reality, ontological fundament and ontic region, and thereby releasing their identity-without-synthesis and duality-without-distinction -their unidentity and unilaterality-, non-philosophy constructs a *unified* but non-unitary theory for the relation between the philosophical and the extra-philosophical; which is to say, for the relation between philosophy and capital. Where Marxism proposed a philosophically restricted -which is to say, intra-Decisional- universalisation of capital in the form of Capitalism, the non-philosophical universalisation of philosophy *qua* World proposes to radicalise and generalise that philosophical universalisation of capital in the form of a unified theory of philosophy *qua* World and capital *qua* Capitalism. The result is the transcendental universalisation of that empirical universalisation; which is to say, the non-philosophical *uni(-)versalisation* of Capitalism *qua* World. Accordingly, capital's genuinely transcendental, non-philosophical identity is not merely as Capitalism; it is as unidentity and unilaterality of philosophy and capitalism, or as World-Capitalism:

"*Just as philosophy is not merely one form of thought among others but rather one that lays claim to a foundational position and a legislative authority over all other thought, and thereby one for which a specific status* must *be set aside –even if only with respect to that claim's entirely symptomatic reality-, we* must *(it is not just a historico-factual acknowledgement)* posit *capital as a hypothesis which is universal because uni-versal; as* a self-encompassing which is simultaneously an encompassing of every economico-socio[308] phenomenon. Capital *–a phenomenon said to be 'economic' and/or social, historical, etc.- gives rise to* capitalism *when, in all rigour, it is no longer considered factually and empirically within society and history, and becomes a uni(-)versal hypothesis as is, for its part, the philosophical Decision[...]Just as the philosophy form was that according to which 'every thought or knowledge is philosophisable', similarly, 'every economico-socio-historical phenomenon is a phenomenon of capitalism.*"(Ibid. pp.146-147)

Thus, just as philosophy's transcendental identity, delineated *via* its hypo-thetical (non-Decisional) universalisation as encompassing all cognitive phenomena and manifested in the form of the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy, is not itself philosophical, capitalism's transcendental identity,

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[308]Laruelle deliberately writes '*économico-social*' rather than the customary '*socio-économique*' in

delineated *via* its hypo-thetical universalisation as encompassing all socio-economic phenomena and manifested in the form of the Principle of Sufficient Economy, is not that of capital. By suspending its spontaneously philosophical, auto-Decisional position/presupposition, non-philosophy manifests or 'brings forth' capital's radically universal, non-Decisional identity as Principle of Sufficient Economy. But this universalisation of capital *qua* Capitalism is strictly inseparable from that of philosophy *qua* Decision, so that the uni(-)versalisation of capital occurs in the form of a 'unidentification' of philosophy and capital, or as the 'fusion' of the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy and the Principle Sufficient Economy in the form of a World-Capitalism.

Gnostic Scepticism versus Epistemic Realism

As a result of this uni(-)versalisation of philosophy, in 'acting' upon philosophical Decision, non-philosophy 'acts' upon the World. More specifically, in bringing forth this uni(-)versalised fusion of philosophy and capital, non-philosophy 'acts' upon World-Capitalism;- albeit with a crucial non-philosophical nuance which amounts to a transformation of the sense of the word 'act'. Thus, if non-philosophical thinking 'acts' upon World-Capitalism it is according to the new, intrinsically non-Decisional -which is to

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order to mark this constitutive dominance of the economic over the social; a dominance concomitant

say, non-empirical or non-spontaneous- paradigm of agency articulated in the operation of cloning. Non-philosophical practise is not an empirical intervention in the World effected by way of Decision; it is a transcendental effectuation of that which is foreign to the World by way of cloning[309]. And since this is an effectuation that suspends World-Capitalism's self-legitimating authority and all-encompassing potency, the better to reconfigure the bounds of cognitive possibility in accordance with the unknown, it is the manifestation of a radically *sceptical* force-(of)-thought. Cloning is an instance of transcendental scepticism.

Thus, where philosophical materialism oscillates between the stances of complacent quietism and agnostic cynicism as far as the superstitions of phenomenological realism are concerned, the rigorously an-archic sceptical charge ferried through the 'act' of cloning is uncompromisingly anti-phenomenological -which is to say, resolutely anti-idealist. Just as the 'reality' of the World is no longer identified by way of a gratuitous, spontaneously idealising phenomenological empiricism, that of World-Capitalism is no longer identified by way of an immediately apprehended, but also objectively codified, socio-economic 'materiality'. Paradoxically, it is by unilateralising the World's idealised material reality that non-

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with the hypo-thetical universalisation of capital.

materialism emancipates matter's Real -and phenomenologically foreclosed- Identity. That radically inconsistent Identity provides the fulcrum for a transcendental scepticism *vis a vis* the bounds of epistemic normativity, and the basis for a cognitive practise which encourages the proliferation of a universal epistemic chaos[310].

Thus, non-materialism does not seek an indubitable phenomenological foundation for cognition by transcendentally reducing the world of the natural attitude, as Husserl sought to; on the contrary, it undermines the latter's 'principle of all principles'[311] along with the realm of phenomenological indubitability in its entirety simply by acknowledging the fact that the World *qua* phenomenological Decision has 'always already' been suspended, which is to say, unilateralised, in accordance with the radical hyle's foreclosure, and hence given as an occasion for the non-phenomenological reconfiguration of cognitive experience. Consequently, if

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[309]This 'foreignness' being the non-thetic Universe, which the Alien-subject clones as a transcendental function or effectuation of the World.

[310] Cf. *supra*, Chapter 8, pp.420-421.

[311] "*[...]seeing essences is an originary presentive act and, as a presentive act, is the analogue of sensuous perceiving and not of imagining [...] No conceivable theory can make us err with respect to the principle of all principles: that every originary presentive intuition is a legitimising source of cognition, that everything originally (so to speak, in its 'personal' actuality) offered to us in 'intuition' is to be accepted simply as what it is presented as being, but also only within the limits in which it is presented there.*"(Husserl, 1982, p.44) Common-sense intuition can rarely if ever have received such an elaborately high-flown apologia as the one furnished for it by Husserl with his modestly titled 'principle of all principles'. Bluntly formulated, the non-materialist credo is simply the denial of everything Husserl appeals to here: there are no originary 'presentive acts'; all sensuous perceiving is already a theoretically mediated construct; 'originary presentive intuitions' legitimate nothing since

non-materialism constitutes an instance of transcendental scepticism, it is primarily *vis a vis* the realm of phenomenological immediacy and the subsequent objectivation of 'material reality'. The intra-philosophical positing and presupposing of an extra-philosophical 'material' reality by way of Decision is merely the most insidiously rarefied instance of phenomenological idealism. Transcendental scepticism discontinues materialism's crypto-phenomenological idealisation of the Real *qua* matter 'itself' in terms of the reality of matter 'as such'.

Thus, if non-materialism can be qualified as 'sceptical', it is in the strictly active or pragmatic sense concomitant with cloning insofar as it constitutes a rigorously cognitive but non-epistemological practise. For peculiar to this non-philosophical 'scepticism' is an entirely positive cognitive dimension which falls outside the purview of the epistemological distinction between 'dubitable' and 'indubitable', 'doubt' and 'certainty'. The 'non-epistemological' scepticism exemplified by non-materialism accords with a paradigm of knowing which suspends the authority of epistemological Decision and *uses* the known in order to proceed in a rigorously cognitive fashion from the unknown (the radical hyle) towards the unknown (the non-

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they do not exist; nothing 'immediately presented' to us by 'intuition' should ever under any circumstances be accepted simply as what it is presented as being.

thetic Universe)[312]. Epistemic Decision, by way of contrast, 'progresses' under the aegis of an epistemological *arche* or foundation from the known toward the known by constantly striving to minimize the distinction between the known and the unknown. This suspension of the authority of the known and determination of cognition in accordance with the sovereignty of the unknown constitutes a rigorously an-archic or non-epistemic model of cognition; one which is entirely consonant with the most radical unknowing. In other words, it is a gnostic, rather than epistemic, paradigm of cognition. And as that knowing which accords with the most radical unknowing, gnosis is transcendental scepticism.

Thus, scepticism as we construe it does not consist in doubting the known on the basis of a presupposition that one can discriminate between knowing and unknowing; which is to say, know that one does not know. Gnosis, or transcendental scepticism, does not attempt to distinguish between knowing and unknowing; it acknowledges the unilateral duality separating the Identity of the unknown from the epistemo-logical difference between knowing and unknowing. It is knowing according to the unknown; or the determination of the known in accordance with the unknown's *a priori* foreclosure. Moreover, gnosis constitutes a rigorously an-archic instance of

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[312] Cf. *supra,* Chapter 8, pp.418-419.

cognitive experience insofar as the Alien-subject of this transcendental scepticism[313] simultaneously unilateralises the absolute authority of the World and the all-encompassing dominion of Capitalism.

Capitalism, Information and Universal Noise

At this juncture, a non-philosophical materialism must confront an apparently insuperable objection: to wit, that for all its putative 'radicality', non-materialism amounts to nothing more than an impotent contemplative mysticism; a reactionary and terminally self-indulgent theoreticism. In order to circumvent the charge that non-materialism is merely another form of solipsistic quietism, it is necessary to explain why, philosophical appearances notwithstanding, transcendental scepticism constitutes a form of cognitive activity which may prove to be more virulently corrosive *vis a vis* the absolute authority of World-Capitalism than those spontaneously philosophical instances of supposedly revolutionary intellectual agency.

While it is certainly true that gnostic scepticism would be an exceedingly poor substitute for militant political intervention at the empirical

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[313]The Greek *skeptikos* or 'sceptic' derives from *skeptomai*, meaning "I examine". Thus, the sceptic is one who suspends judgement -or Decision- in order to examine, rather than one who simply 'doubts'. Interestingly, given that the Greek *hairesis* simply means 'choice' or 'decision' (from *hairein*:'to choose' or 'to decide'), one could say that, although non-Decisional scepticism is 'a-heretical' in the auto-Decisional sense, it is radically heretical in the non-auto-Decisional sense. Thus, the dualysing or cloning of Decision constitutes an instance of radical or non-auto-Decisional *hairesis*, and the non-Decisional positing of 'matter itself' is radically heretical in character. Cf. Laruelle, 1998b. There is a sense in which non-materialism discovers the transcendental identity of the sceptic and the heretic.

or intra-Decisional level which targets the effectiveness of global capital, it might provide the latter with that indispensable transcendental complement which it requires in order to postpone its inevitable reintegration within the seamless, all-encompassing informational circuit of World-Capitalism. Non-materialism is the transcendental encryption of materialist Decision in such a way as to render the latter undecipherable according to the epistemic codes furnished by World-Capitalism. Whereas the empirical universalisation of capital as global capitalism perpetuates a distinction between material power and informational force, the transcendental uni(-)versalisation of capital as World-Capitalism identifies production and cognition, material power and informational force, by suspending the intra-empirical or philosophical distinction between the physical and the psychical, or between material power and cognitive force. Moreover, by suspending the phenomenological distinction between the conditions of material production and the conditions of cognitive discourse; by discontinuing the epistemic distinction between material power and informational force, the uni(-)versalisation of capital as World-Capitalism, along with the chaotic scrambling of informational codes effectuated through the transcendental scepticism of the Alien-subject, may serve to provide materialism with a necessary complement of phenomenologically undecipherable, hermeneutically undecodable noise.

Accordingly, transcendental scepticism is the unleashing of universal noise in an attempt to puncture the politically enforced bounds of epistemic meaning and to wash away the socially manufactured horizons of phenomenological sense. Thus, for instance, since phenomenology is a function of neurophysiology and neurophysiology is now subject to biotechnological regulation, there is a perfectly valid empirical sense in which phenomenology *qua* system of socioculturally constructed, politically enforced *Ur-doxas* is determined more or less directly *via* the abstract apparatuses of mass consumer capitalism in accordance with the logic of what Deleuze & Guattari have called a 'generalised machinic enslavement'[314]. The populace is epistemically conditioned *via* a staple diet of manufactured information disseminated through magazines and newspapers, opinion-polls and market-research; but also phenomenologically enslaved *via* a process of continual immersion in advertisements, film and television, video, computer games, etc. Epistemic information is politically encoded; phenomenological experience is sociologically conditioned. The 'revolutionary' left's continuing inability to recognize the extent to which World-Capitalism directly regulates

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314"*[...]it is as though human alienation through surplus labor were replaced by a generalised 'machinic enslavement' such that one may furnish surplus-value without doing any work (children, the retired, the unemployed, television viewers, etc.)[...]capitalism operates less on a quantity of labor than by a complex qualitative process bringing into play modes of transportation, urban models, the media, the entertainment industries, ways of perceiving and feeling –every semiotic system.*" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988, p.492)

the basic parameters of all phenomenological 'experience', along with the epistemic codification of all physical information, by means of biotechnological intervention at the level of the human organism and socioeconomic intervention at the level of consumer consensus, is not only an instance of empiricist myopia; it is ultimately a constitutively political failure.

Yet it is a failure which transcendental scepticism may yet help circumvent through the Alien-subject's unilateralising force-(of)-thought; an intrinsically sceptical force which constitutes an instance of *a priori* cognitive resistance to those epistemic norms and informational codes *via* which a triumphant World-Capitalism maintains the structural isomorphy between material power and informational force, thereby ensuring its quasi-transcendental dominion over all cognitive experience. A transcendental scepticism agrees with eliminative naturalism: human beings are simply carbon-based information processing machines. But it also recognises the necessity of cross-pollinating that assessment born of evolutionary reductionism with transcendental insight; an insight which consists in radicalising and generalising Marx's identification of the material infrastructure as the ultimate determinant for the ideological superstructure[315]: World-Capitalism is now the global megamachine determining *a priori* the

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315 This, in a nutshell, is the aim of Laruelle's *Introduction to Non-Marxism*. Cf. Laruelle, 2000b.

cognitive parameters within which the phenomenological micromachinery of organically individuated sapience operates. By acknowledging the fact that political intervention can no longer afford to ignore this insight; by recognising that empirical agency alone is incapable of circumventing capital's all-encompassing universality as World-Capitalism, transcendental scepticism constitutes an instance of *a priori* political resistance.

By way of conclusion, we will characterise this *a priori* form of cognitive *and thereby political* resistance in terms of three immediately pragmatic consequences:

1. The construction of rigorously meaningless, epistemically uninterpretable utterances, the better to unfold the Decisional circle whereby utterance's unobjectifiable material force is perpetually reinscribed within statement's objectivating horizons of significance[316].
2. The short-circuiting of the informational relay between material power and cognitive force.
3. Finally, the engendering of a mode of cognition that simultaneously constitutes an instance of universal noise as far the commodification of knowledge is concerned.

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316 Cf. *supra*, Chapter 4, pp.194-199.

This threefold emancipation of thought from artificially manufactured horizons of phenomenological meaning, as well as contingently synthesised codes of cognition, may prove to be a small, but by no means inconsequential step toward political liberation.

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