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Computers

To launch Part II, let me pause briefly and recapitulate the overall trajectory. Arguments often gain their impetus through opposition to some sort of conventional wisdom, in the hope of amending, modifying, or even reversing it. Conventional wisdom today defines the digital in terms of zeros and ones. This is not entirely false, and indeed completely true for that particular mode of digitality known as binary or base-two numerical notation. But binary mathematics is a relatively small subset of digitality in general, which has many avatars across the fields of ontology, political theory, aesthetics, and beyond. Even for binary mathematics, the zero and the one are mere tokens enacting their required roles within a more important logic, the logic of distinction, decision, difference, and division; other tokens could be swapped in and the digital system would work just as well: on and off, *A* and *B,* or you and me.

Such logic of decision provides the fuel for this book and allows us to explore the logic for its own sake. But further, decision also discloses, via silhouette, a strange science fiction universe in which such distinction no longer holds. Of all thinkers who address such questions, Laruelle is best suited for the task, because he is the one who has pursued the nondigital path most fervently and rigorously.

Although zero might elucidate the void and one the plenum—or as George Boole called them, the "Nothing" and the "Universe"—zero and one are ultimately most valuable for the two-structure they facilitate. Distinction requires an understanding of zero and one in terms of a relationship of two. Thus the most important step in the comprehension of

digitality is to shift from the former to the latter, from zero and one to one and two.

In part I we defined the digital and the analog in terms of the one dividing in two and the two integrating in one. This in turn evokes the topic of the one itself, and the one's role in philosophy not as a first cause or "absolute reality" but rather as a preventative force of static preemption bent not on furthering the essence of thought or being but virtualizing them together into a metastasis of pure immanence.

But, if the one is purely and radically immanent, the existence of the world as given requires some explanation. Thus the advent, or the synchronic and structural "event of appropriation," arrives as a digitization of the one. This is known as the "grand illusion" of actual worldly presence: things belong together, minds with bodies, entities with relations, beings with their own rationales for being.

In chapter 2 we described the various aspects of the standard model via four epithets of being: the affirmative transcendental of differential being, the negative transcendental of dialectical being, the affirmative immanence of continuous being, and the negative immanence of generic being.

Next, in order to plumb the relation between being and the one, it was necessary to show that the relation is *not* a relation, in fact, but an event. Hence a mediation on the event: first, the event as relation, in the form of data or "the things having been given"; second, the event as decision, both as willed events, but also the grand decision itself of philosophy, understood as the decision to view the world in terms of data in relation; and, third, the much more radical definition of event as prevent, or the determination of decision (and hence ultimately the determination of relation too). The spectrum of the event spans three zones, not simply relation and decision, but ultimately indecision or destiny.

To initiate the discussion of how to withdraw from the standard model, we now take a brief intermission from Laruelle and consider a very particular aspect of Deleuze. In some ways Deleuze is the single most influential philosopher of our times. So many things that have happened in society and culture over the past thirty or forty years were chronicled at length in one or more of his books. Horizontality rather than verticality; surface over depth; the breakdown of the Freudian subject; affect instead of emotion; assemblages and multiplicities; rhizomes and

distributed networks; pure immanence; affirmation and expression—these are just some of the many aspects of the Deleuzian world in which we currently live.

In 1988 Laruelle printed a five-page "Letter to Deleuze" in *The Philosophical Decision,* the journal that Laruelle published during the years 1987–89.[1] In the letter Laruelle scolds and castigates Deleuze on his treatment of Spinoza, and then proceeds to lecture him on the differences between philosophy and non-philosophy by way of a thirty-point summary of its basic terms: "By philosophical decision I mean . . . by real I mean . . . by finite I mean . . ." and so on.

Deleuze likely read the letter, or at least we know Deleuze was cognizant of Laruelle at the time because he mentioned Laruelle briefly in the 1991 Deleuze and Guattari book *What Is Philosophy?* The reference was most certainly intended as a friendly tip of the hat to Laruelle, then still an emerging figure in France and with no international reputation to speak of.

But Laruelle's 1988 letter to Deleuze was just an overture. Despite Deleuze and Guattari's friendly intentions, Laruelle considered it the lowest insult to be brought "into the fold," because in his mind Deleuze was a philosopher like any other. A more thorough "Response to Deleuze" appeared in 1995 outlining Laruelle's rather dim opinion of his brother in immanence. For how could anyone with his name on a book called *What Is Philosophy?* ever come out alive? No good deed goes unpunished, and Deleuze was likely caught off guard by the sour response he received from Laruelle.

Laruelle's squeamishness toward Deleuze aside, shall we not pose the question directly: Is Deleuze a friend to Laruelle? Is Deleuze really a philosopher, in Laruelle's terms? And, philosopher or not, can Deleuze's analysis of computers help us understand the theme of digitality in Laruelle?

There are many references to Deleuze in Laruelle's work. But is he friend or foe? Consider Deleuze the philosophical realist who so valiantly resists metaphysical logic. Consider Deleuze the thinker of immanence, a deep commitment to immanence surpassed only by Henry, and surpassed eventually and most definitively by Laruelle himself. Laruelle tends to hold Deleuze at arm's length, but such treatment of other authors is par for the course in Laruelle. In fact Laruelle and Deleuze are similar in a number of ways.

Given his importance, Deleuze has been exhaustively parsed and studied by any number of people, from artists and activists, to dot-com libertarians, to military theorists, to humanists and social scientists of all shapes and sizes. Without wishing to dispute or duplicate this literature, I focus here on a particular text, Deleuze's late "Postscript on Control Societies," and pursue a very particular goal, Deleuze's relationship to computers.

Because he is so central to contemporary debates, many assume that Deleuze has a fully formed theory of the digital, but in truth of fact he doesn't. Deleuze's theory of the digital needs to be assembled piece by piece. By the end of this interlude, we will return to Laruelle and connect Deleuze's theory of computers back to the standard model and its pervasive digitality.

Could it be? Could it be that Deleuze's most lasting legacy will consist of 2,300 words from 1990? We are all Deleuzians today; that much is clear. But the vital question is *which* Deleuze? Two basic factions have emerged. First are those who think Deleuze describes resistance and flight from power, and second those who think Deleuze describes power itself, the very structure of organization and control. The first are today's post-Web liberals, ahistorical but enlightened ("Everything is a rhizomatic system"), the second are the historical materialists, a label no less gauche for being accurate ("Let us historicize and critique these systems, because they proliferate injustice"). In short, the line-of-flighters and the society-of-controllers. The Deleuze of 1972 and the Deleuze of 1990.

Deleuze's late essay "Postscript on Control Societies" is a strange little text. It bears not the same Deleuzian voice so familiar from his other writings. Cynics will grumble it falls short of the great books of 1968–69 or the radical collaborations with Félix Guattari during the 1970s. The text claims no more than a single paragraph in François Dosse's biography of Deleuze and Guattari.[2] A different voice resonates here, a more directly political voice, and barring the Guattari collaborations a voice less commonly heard in Deleuze's writings. To be sure, Deleuze was always a political thinker and remained politically committed in various ways throughout his life. But the "Postscript" is different.

"Today, I can say that I feel completely Marxist," he admitted in a late interview published posthumously. "The article I published on the 'society of control,' for example, is completely Marxist, even though I am

writing on things that Marx knew nothing about."[3] Indeed in the article he indicts capitalism by name. He raises his wrath against corporations and television shows. Yet his frame is not just the mode of production, but also the culture at large. He talks about snakes and surfers and other features of the dawning millennium. He references Roberto Rossellini, Paul Virilio, Franz Kafka, and most important Michel Foucault. He tells us exactly what is wrong with the business sector, as well as with the prisons, schools, and hospitals. It reads almost like a manifesto, the "Manifesto on Control Societies."

Manifestos are always about two things: the desires and the details. This is what we want; and we want it here, and in this manner. When the May 1968 revolts broke out in France, Philippe Sollers, along with Julia Kristeva, Jean-Joseph Goux, Jean-Louis Baudry, and a band of other signatories, wrote "The Revolution Here and Now: Seven Points," listing their grievances point by point.[4] And—they added at the end—we shall meet on Wednesdays at nine o'clock on the rue de Rennes.

This is the crux of the *cahiers de doléances* refrain, reprised recently in the closing sections of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Multitude:* Say what you want, and be specific about it.

The year of Deleuze's death, 1995, was a good year for the manifesto. The Unabomber's "Industrial Society and the Future" advocated the complete destruction of what he called the "industrial-technological system." That same year the Dogme '95 "Vow of Chastity" signed by filmmakers Lars Von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg offered the closest thing to a manifesto seen in the cinema for some time. The Vow is as short as the Unabomber's is long, but it is detailed, detailed, detailed. Dogme filmmakers must film on location, in color, on Academy 35mm stock, and use concurrent diegetic sound.

Ten years earlier, a computer engineer named Richard Stallman wrote the "GNU Manifesto." The number of legitimate manifestos written by computer geeks can be counted on one hand—the VNS Matrix "Cyberfeminist Manifesto" and Eben Moglen's "The dotCommunist Manifesto" also come to mind. But despite its inauspicious source, Stallman's document had profound effects on the "industrial-technological system," and most all of them good.

Detailed, like the others, Stallman's manifesto calls for the creation of a free Unix-compatible software system, including a C compiler and a linker, a text editor, and a few dozen other free software applications. He

names the make and model of the computer his system will run on. He rebuts, preemptively, eleven specific objections raised by his would-be critics. (Stallman even calls for a software tax to underwrite the development of free code.) Most important, the manifesto calls for a "stay free" legal armature for copyright holders, known today as the GNU General Public License.

Such was the intellectual climate that produced the "Postscript on Control Societies." No computer-savvy intellectual was Deleuze. He likely had never heard of Stallman's manifesto, much less read it. Nevertheless, scattered across his oeuvre, and particularly in his late work, Deleuze has unwittingly made significant contributions to the contemporary discourse on computing, cybernetics, networks, and digitality. From the concepts of the rhizome and the virtual, to his occasional interjections on the digital versus the analog, and to the notion of control society from the "Postscript," there is a case to be made that Deleuze, although rarely mentioning computers directly, has dramatically influenced today's discourse on digital media. Indeed, it makes sense given how cybernetics had influenced much of French theory in the latter twentieth century.[5]

One of the most influential aspects of the "Postscript," particularly to my own thinking, is how it asserts so trenchantly that things are not getting any better. Digitality is a problem, not a panacea. Planetary neoliberalism is a boondoggle not a deliverance. The snake is even worse than the mole. For critics working in the shadow of the dot-com boom, such offerings from Deleuze furnished a welcome dose of encouragement needed to combat the naïve utopian babble of the California ideology.

Deleuze was always good at drawing lines in the sand. One of the things that makes Deleuze such a pleasure to read is his clear construal of the theater of enemies. They are excellent enemies. Not just information technologies and the life sciences, but Plato, Hegel, and Descartes—elite enemies, all of whom have committed the most egregious error. Here is one point where Laruelle and Deleuze agree, for each of these philosophical enemies has assented to the classical condition of philosophy. Each admits to an up/down distinction between idea and matter, between essence and instance, between Being and beings.

The "Postscript" does not draw the line so much in terms of metaphysics. There the complaint is articulated in terms of control, communication, and the "harshest confinement" wrought by "the new monster"

of information society (178).[6] Deleuze credits the term to William Burroughs, but the true source for "control" is no mystery.[7] Follow a thread from nineteenth-century thermodynamics and fluid dynamics through statistical mathematics, weather prediction, and nonlinear systems to terminate in 1948 with Norbert Wiener and his book *Cybernetics: Or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine*. Then, stemming from Wiener and his brethren in the military-industrial research parks, follow the thread that leads through the rest of the twentieth century by way of systems theory, cellular automata, and chaos theory.[8]

So why not call Deleuze's adversary by its true name? Like Laruelle, the real enemy is *cybernetics* in particular and *digitality* in general. The Deleuze of 1972 was influenced by cybernetics and all manner of ecological and topological thinking. By 1990 much had changed.

To describe Deleuze's "Postscript" as a manifesto is to invoke the question of philosophical genre. An author may adopt different textual strategies to achieve different ends. The interview, the seminar, the essay, the book, these all demand different things from the philosopher and command different participation by the reader. Of course, the "Postscript" is no user's manual on how to live. It is no call to action, no introduction to the non-fascist life, as Foucault said of *Anti-Oedipus*. Yet the "Postscript" furnishes the basic requirements of a manifesto, an enumeration of grievances and a sermon for how to remedy them.

The question of philosophical genre can also be approached from another point of view. For is this not a less philosophical Deleuze? The "Postscript" reveals a slightly more casual theorist. It reveals a man more willing to comment about the current state of the world and its daily goings-on. Here is a thinker who is willing to make a hard and fast historical periodization. Foucault's influence is dramatic. Indeed the "Postscript" presents the kind of thinking more often seen in the writings of sociologists, political economists, or even certain kinds of historians—modes of writing none of which are classic Deleuze. He is expanding his normal repertoire to include a very clear argument about historical periodization.

The argument is no secret: at some point during the middle to late twentieth century, *disciplinary* societies, characterized by confinement and bureaucratic hierarchy, gave way to *control* societies, characterized by "free-floating" cybernetic organization.

Make no mistake, the stakes of the "Postscript" are larger than what might be evident at first glance. In order to accept the concept of the control society, one must come to terms with a whole host of related concepts that, although not necessarily synonymous with control society, are nevertheless similar enough to demonstrate the success of the periodization of the contemporary as such. In other words, to accept control society one must accept Jean-François Lyotard's "postmodern," Hardt and Negri's "empire," Manuel Castells's "information age," Luc Boltanski and Ève Chiapello's "new spirit of capitalism," and all the other related periodization concepts.

These various historical labels do not mean the same thing, to be sure, and they do not refer precisely to the same historical periods. But the ubiquity of such periodization is evidence that something else is happening. The ubiquity of periodization proves there exists a strong desire to theorize the past few decades as dramatically different from the high water mark of modernity. But further, it suggests that periodization itself *is something that ought to be done*. People are free to squabble over this or that definition; nevertheless the "Postscript" demonstrates that periodization is something that defines today's mode of being, whether or not people can agree on the historical periods themselves or what they might mean.

Deleuze evokes many specific things in the "Postscript" that are notable, a few of which may be itemized briefly before expanding on one particular salient detail. A series of memorable images jump out to the reader: "the ultrarapid forms of apparently free-floating control" *(les formes ultra-rapides de contrôle à l'air libre)* (178); the sieve "whose mesh varies from one point to another" (179); big business described as "a soul, a gas" (179); the fact that "*surfing* has taken over from all the old *sports*" (180); "the passive danger of entropy and the active danger of sabotage" (180); the "mushrooming shantytowns and ghettos" (181); and the dynamic between the "mole's burrow" and the "snake's coils" (182).[9] Likewise the "Postscript" is one of the few places where Deleuze mentions his intriguing concept of the "dividual," a new kind of subject that emerges after the death of the individual.

But the crux of the "Postscript" is something else entirely. The crux of this short text has to do with technology. Here is one of those rare moments

in which Deleuze comments on actually existing contemporary technology, specifically computers. Control societies, he writes, "function with a third generation of machines, with information technology and computers" (180). Admittedly Deleuze does not delve too deeply into the specificities of computing. But he does say a few brief words about the pairing that most interests us here, the analog and the digital.

Not as broadly integrated into Deleuze's overall project as, say, the concept of the virtual, the analog and the digital still figure importantly in the essay. Consider first the relevant sentences, which Deleuze uses to launch section 2 of the essay under the heading "Logic" (*Logique,* a cognate with the French word for software, *logiciel*):[10]

> The various placements or sites of confinement through which individuals pass are independent variables: we're supposed to start over each time at zero, and although all these sites have a common language, it's *analogical*. The different forms of control, on the other hand, are inseparable variations, forming a system of varying geometry whose language is *digital* (though not necessarily binary). (178, translation modified)

Only a passing reference, it is true, but still an important return to two terms that had appeared in Deleuze's philosophy for several years already.

By way of background, consider a text from his aesthetic period, the slim and elegant *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation,* which first appeared in 1981.[11] The book on Francis Bacon is of course not about the digital, nor is it about control society per se. Nevertheless Deleuze finds time in the monograph to pause for a moment and offer a few remarks on the digital and the analog.[12]

Deleuze's first instinct is to connect the digital to the universe of computation and code. "Digital synthesizers," he writes—qualifying them as *audio* synthesizers, but his observations may be extrapolated to include video synthesizers as well—". . . are 'integral': their operation passes through a codification, through a homogenization and binarization of the data."[13] The "integral," integration, these are important concepts in Deleuze's work. Drawing on the use of the term in both mathematics and Freudian psychoanalysis, Deleuze uses *integration* to mean the actualization of the virtual.

"Four terms are synonymous," he wrote a decade earlier in *Difference and Repetition,* "actualise, differenciate, integrate and solve."[14] To integrate a mathematical function means to find the "area under the curve." For example one might integrate from *a* to *b* on the function *f(x),* meaning that, given the curve plotted of the function *f(x),* one sums the area under the curve bounded by $x = a$ to $x = b$. At the same time, the appeal for Deleuze is, I suspect, not so much the mathematical sources of the term *integration* but the curvilinear sources, shall we say the baroque sources. Curves are complex. Given the complexity of a curve, to "solve" a curve mathematically is something of a miracle. In fact such a feat eluded the ancients; it took the baroque mathematicians G. W. Leibniz and Isaac Newton to do it.

As readers of Deleuze will already know, his ontology is one that posits an infinite plane of heterogenous elements, and on this plane the heterogenous elements come to integrate themselves into more or less homogenous regularities of aggregation, comportment, and association (Figure 5). Hence *integration* is a synonym for *coordination* or *organization* in Deleuze. Integration is the miracle of givenness and the subsequent management of those given beings. Integration produces things like species, compositions, and societies. And, lest we forget, the countervailing force exists as well, homogenous regularities that "deterritorialize" into the virtual, thereby suspending their specificity in favor of adjacent "possibility spaces."

In the previously cited quotation from *Francis Bacon,* Deleuze more or less equates five terms: *digitization, integration, codification, homogenization,* and *binarization*. Binarization, the grouping of things into twos, is the same as digitization, the separating or making distinct of atoms, is the same as integration, the solving of complex function curves, is the same as codification, the representation within a symbolic system, is the same as homogenization, the making uniform of dissimilar ingredients.

Needless to say the comparison of these five terms raises a number of questions, not all of which are resolvable here. What is important, for Deleuze and for us, is that the digital is a transformative process (which is to say "additive," or in Kantian vocabulary "synthetic") in which a universe grounded in the univocity of an identity of the same becomes a universe grounded in discrete distinctions between elements,

elements that, although divided, are brought together and held in relation, suspended opposite each other like cliffs over the banks of a great river.

In the very same passage from *Francis Bacon,* Deleuze also says a few words, precious few, about the analogical. Not so much a question of code, the analogical is a question of diagram or motif. What this means is that the analogical operates in the realms of shape and relation, refrains and styles, not symbol or language in the classical sense. Or if a language, one lacking in the typical elements of alphabet, letter, and word: "Analogical language would be a language of relations, which consists of expressive movements, paralinguistic signs, breaths and screams. . . ."[15] The analogical is a "language," then, but a language of breaths and screams, a non-language of phatic commands that enacts expression by virtue of the frisson struck between gestures of different types.

"Analogical synthesizers are 'modular,'" Deleuze continued, contrasting them with digital synthesizers. "They establish an immediate connection between heterogenous elements."[16] So although digital synthesizers are integral, slicing up the world into masses of homogenous code atoms, analogical synthesizers work through modularity. What this means is that different elements, remaining relatively whole and heterogenous to one another, are nevertheless able to interoperate immediately. They can touch each other directly, despite their differences. (One can begin to see why the fields of post-structuralism, deconstruction, hermeneutics, and semiotics are so inherently digital; as a rule they prohibit immediacy.)

Whereas the digital requires and enlists an underlying homogeneity, the analogical requires an underlying heterogeneity. In the analog paradigm, the stuff of the world remains unaligned, idiosyncratic, singular. These modules are not modules in the sense of standardized, recombinable parts, like modular housing that relies on prefabricated, repeatable materials. Rather, as modules they remain messy globs of dissimilar things. They only happen to interoperate because they have managed, by virtue of what Deleuze would call "mutual deterritorialization," to grow the necessary sockets that fit into each other.

Deleuze's famous example is the wasp and the orchid, two creatures, alike in almost no sense, that nevertheless couple up analogically. Although they are two, at the point of coupling the wasp and the orchid merge into one.

Let us return briefly to the mathematical theme. Although Deleuze does not say it explicitly, neither in the "Postscript" nor in the book on Francis Bacon and painting, it is possible to infer that the digital means integration and the analogical means differentiation. Thus, while integration means area under a curve, differentiation or "taking the derivative" means instantaneous slope of the tangent line. Instead of summing the area under the curve defined by $f(x)$, one extrapolates a secondary function derived from the first function, a secondary function consisting of a straight line tangential to any position $x = a$ on the curve. The logic is slightly counterintuitive; do not be fooled by the curves of integration, for it is still a question of *solving* via a multiplicity of regular slices, and hence it is digital. Likewise, do not be fooled by the semantic similarity between the words *differentiation* and *difference*. Differentiation is an analogical event because it brings together the immediacy of two modular and heterogenous spaces: (1) the space of the function curve and (2) the adjacent virtual space of all the tangent lines that can be derived from the curve.

Heterogeneity has long been an attractive theoretical category, for Deleuze but also for twentieth-century continental philosophy and Anglo American cultural theory in general. And as we have just seen, the analog brings together heterogenous elements into identity (an identity that, again, has nothing to do with homogeneity). There is a strong case to be made that Deleuze was and remained a philosopher of the analog paradigm alone, and that the paradigm of the digital was only vaguely sketched out by him during his lifetime, except in its most visible form, metaphysics. The reasons for this are complex, because they concern the history of philosophy and Deleuze's antagonistic relationship toward it, but as a kind of shorthand we might posit the following: those who work in the tradition of metaphysics will tend to offer a digital philosophy; those who work in the tradition of immanence, as Deleuze did, will tend to offer an analog philosophy. Indeed in many ways Deleuze is the analogical philosopher par excellence. Just as he described painting, "the analogical art par excellence."[17]

The aim of this brief excursion into Deleuze's theory of digitality is to show that the late Deleuze contains an original set of arguments about society and politics at the turn of the new millennium. Deleuze understood the

world in 1968—the anabasis of desire, affective revolution, new schizophrenic subjects, molecular organization, dispersive and rhizomatic structures, spatiality and topology instead of history, Leibniz instead of Hegel, Riemann instead of Einstein—but the question remains whether he understood the world at the dawn of the new millennium. (This question has not been adequately explored thus far, although the work of someone like Bernard Stiegler is a notable exception.)

Much has been said about Foucault's late turn to millennial politics, via his concepts of biopower and biopolitics, or Giorgio Agamben's theorization of today's state power, but too little credit has been given to Deleuze as a forecaster of the future world system. Part of the problem is that, barring the "Postscript" itself, there is no single book or text that stands out as a ready exemplar for Deleuze's analysis of millennial capitalism, as *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* provided a vision of middle twentieth-century capitalism.

Such an exemplar needs to be reconstructed from fragments. Four texts form the backbone of his analysis: the two pieces from 1990 bundled in *Negotiations,* "Postscript on Control Societies" and the interview with Negri titled "Control and Becoming"; paragraphs from an odd little piece called "Having an Idea in Cinema"; and three or four pages from Deleuze's 1986 book *Foucault*.[18]

Some of the relevant sections from the "Postscript" have already been outlined, so consider now the ending of the Negri interview, in which Deleuze's phrasing overlaps greatly with the text of the "Postscript." The penultimate question and answer are the most relevant:

> [Foucault] was actually one of the first to say that we're moving away from disciplinary societies, we've already left them behind. We're moving toward control societies that no longer operate by confining people but through continuous control and instant communication. . . . Compared with the approaching forms of ceaseless control in open sites, we may come to see the harshest confinement as part of a wonderful happy past. The quest for "universals of communication" ought to make us shudder. . . . Computer piracy and viruses, for example, will replace strikes and what the nineteenth century called "sabotage" ("clogging" the machinery). . . . The key thing may be to create vacuoles of noncommunication, circuit breakers, so we can elude control.[19]

Add now the passages from "Having an Idea in Cinema," a text that derives from a lecture titled "Qu'est-ce que l'acte de création?" given by Deleuze at La Fémis (Fondation européenne des métiers de l'image et du son) on May 17, 1987, but published in 1990 the same year of the "Postscript." Some of the relevant passages simply duplicate the same phrasing and language about Foucault that made it into the "Postscript," so they need not be repeated here. But "Having an Idea in Cinema" also includes an important, offhand remark that adds another dimension to Deleuze's views on control society: "A control is not a discipline. In making freeways, for example, you don't enclose people but instead multiply the means of control. I am not saying that this is the freeway's exclusive purpose, but that people can drive infinitely and 'freely' without being at all confined yet while still being perfectly controlled. This is our future."[20]

In an alternate transcription of the same lecture Deleuze included a few extemporaneous lines, and even mentions Minitel, the French teletext network that predates the Web. "This can be done completely differently too," he said about the regrouping of people around arrangements of ubiquitous control. "It can be done through Minitel after all. Everything that you want—what's astounding would be the forms of control."[21]

Recall that the French *contrôle* carries stresses in meaning that are slightly different from the English *control*. *Contrôle* means control as in the power to influence people and things, but it also refers to the actual administration of control via particular monitoring apparatuses such as train turnstiles, border crossings, and checkpoints. The notion, in English, of having to pass through "passport control" gets at the deeper meaning of the word. So when Deleuze talks about *les sociétés de contrôle* he means those kinds of societies, or alternately those localized places within the social totality, where mobility is fostered inside certain strictures of motion, where openings appear rather than disappear, where subjects (or for that matter objects) are liberated as long as they adhere to a variety of prescribed comportments.

In addition to this text and the two in *Negotiations,* a fourth text expands Deleuze's discussions of computer-based control, exploding them into an enigmatic tapestry of prognostications. I refer to those notorious pages 92–93 and 131–32 of Deleuze's late book on Foucault, in which he meditates on something called "life resistance" and a new mysterious

construct called the "superfold," an alluring designation to which he unfortunately never returns.[22]

Consider the sections in which Deleuze proposes, but does not fully develop, a vision of life as living resistance:

> When power . . . takes life as its aim or object, then resistance to power already puts itself on the side of life, and turns life against power. . . . Life becomes resistance to power when power takes life as its object. . . . When power becomes bio-power resistance becomes the power of life, a vital-power that cannot be confined within species, environment or the paths of a particular diagram. . . . Is not life this capacity to resist force?[23]

Then later, in the final paragraphs of the book's appendix, Deleuze broaches the question of genetics and the so called third-generation machines (that is, computers and bioinformatics) that would figure prominently in the "Postscript" four years later. He wonders aloud about the "death of man," as it was described in Foucault and Nietzsche: "The question that continually returns is therefore the following: if the forces within man compose a form only by entering into a relation with forms from the outside, with what new forms do they now risk entering into a relation, and what new form will emerge that is neither God nor Man? This is the correct place for the problem which Nietzsche called 'the superman.'"[24] In other words, what is the new configuration of man after the death of man (or, if you like, the subject after the death of the subject), and what had to happen in order to create such a new condition of life? Deleuze's answer:

> Biology had to take a leap into molecular biology, or dispersed life regroup in the genetic code. Dispersed work had to regroup in third-generation machines, cybernetics and information technology. What would be the forces in play, with which the forces within man would then enter into a relation? It would no longer involve raising to infinity or finitude but an unlimited finity, thereby evoking every situation of force in which a finite number of components yields a practically unlimited diversity of combinations. It would be neither the fold or the unfold that would constitute the active mechanism, but something like the *Superfold,* as borne out by the foldings proper to the chains of the genetic code, and the potential of

> silicon in third-generation machines. . . . The forces within man enter into a relation with forces from the outside, those of silicon which supersedes carbon, or genetic components which supersede the organism. . . . In each case we must study the operations of the superfold, of which the "double helix" is the best-known example.[25]

Scattered across the "Postscript" and these other citations is a new image of society and the self that can not simply be reduced to Deleuze's previous tropes like the body without organs, the rhizome, or even the virtual. Such a new image involves, nay requires, the recognition of the computer as its central mitigating factor. Just as the fold was Deleuze's diagram for the modern subject of the baroque period, the superfold is the new "active mechanism" for life within computerized control society. The dividual and the superfold, in other words, have a special relationship with each other.

"A fold is always folded within a fold, like a cavern in a cavern," wrote Deleuze of the ontology depicted in Leibniz, in an effort to demonstrate how Leibniz's was not an atomism. "The unit of matter, the smallest element of the labyrinth, is the fold, not the point which is never a part, but a simple extremity of the line."[26] Although Deleuze does not specify things further, one can extrapolate that the superfold, being "proper to the chains of the genetic code" and the progeny of an "unlimited diversity of combinations," would follow a diagrammatic logic of dispersive and distributive relations within networks, of iterative regress via computational recursion.

Instead of the human coming into a relationship with itself, as Deleuze characterized the baroque, the human comes into a relation with "forces from the outside" such as the silicon of the computer chip or exogenous factors from genetic engineering. The dividual therefore does not so much carry pleats in its soul, as Deleuze said of the baroque subject, but a tessellated, recombinant soul—if *soul* is still the proper word—forming and reforming across the metastable skein of the bioinformatic ecosystem.

Yet Deleuze's argument is not an exotic one. In France, figures like André Leroi-Gourhan and Bertrand Gille had already demonstrated how human beings coevolve with their exogenous technologies and

techniques. And in North America figures like Lewis Mumford and Marshall McLuhan had made similar claims. (Indeed the final paragraph of Deleuze's *Foucault* reads very much like Donna Haraway's now famous "Cyborg Manifesto," which while predating the book by one year was likely unknown to Deleuze at the time.) Instead what might be exotic about Deleuze's argument, or at least what makes it novel, is his mobilization of the concept in terms of a diagram. He describes it as a "super" fold, a double helix, a fractal topography, not simply a folded one.[27]

But the ultimate lesson to be learned from the "Postscript" is not so much a lesson about the subject or society. The ultimate lesson is one about periodization. For what Deleuze wishes to do in the essay, following Lyotard, Foucault, and all the rest, is to assert the historical break. He wants to show how everything has changed, indeed that the world of 1990 has changed so dramatically from the 1972 world as to be practically indistinguishable. "The key thing," he says, "is that we're at the beginning of something new" (182).

It is not particularly important whether one agrees or disagrees with the Deleuzian-Foucauldian tripartite periodization from sovereign society through disciplinary society and then to control society. The periodization itself is the important thing. And how deliciously ironic that in recent years periodization seems to be appearing with increased frequency, an increased periodicity of periodization. Indeed all this talk of the superfold is, by that very same measure, a kind of superperiodization without end. Each new fold is a new historical break. First the fold, then the double fold, the triple, on up to the multiplicative folds of the superfold.

Thus the task of historical thinking itself is implicated in Deleuze's "Postscript" and as such has metastasized and reduplicated into a super state of recursive channels. The ultimate significance of control society is not so much the continuous encroachment of the border checkpoint or the passport control, not so much data mining or facial recognition algorithms, but that it has eviscerated history, not by banning dissent but by accelerating the opportunities and channels for critical thought to infinity and therefore making it impossible to think historically in the first place. Thus the central challenge within control society will be not simply to resist the various new nefarious control apparatuses, but to rescue history from its own consummation.

Thesis IX. Being is a computational mode; it is coterminous with the computational decision. So which is it in the end, ubiquitous desire or ubiquitous control? The Deleuze of 1972 or the Deleuze of 1990?

Laruelle's response is to deny both while reaffirming their non-standard core. The point is not so much to select one Deleuze over the other but instead to radicalize Deleuze and subject him to the generic finitude of the one. Only by universalizing and unilateralizing history can we pass from Deleuze's philosophy of control to what Laruelle calls artificial or "fiction" philosophy. Only by thinking history as the generic totality can we see control in terms of determination or destiny.

Chapter 4 discussed how an event is also a decision, how being is also digital. Being is posterior to the event of appropriation (Heidegger) that actualizes it, and as such is an evental mode. In its baseline digitality being also provides the conditions for the transcendental. We have seen that the transcendental can be minimized or otherwise overcome in the subtractive mode of generic being or the accumulative mode of continuous being, or it can be accentuated and fostered in the contradictory-negational mode of dialectical being or the affirmative mode of differential being.

Now it is time to take the principle of sufficient reason very literally. A common but unfortunate way of understanding the principle is to turn it into an explanatory narrative for how things were made or where they came from. "For any entity, there is a narrative that will explain why it exists and why it exists in this manner."

Such an interpretation confuses the principle of sufficient reason and limits its utility. It reduces facticity to causality. It reduces givenness to a lurid narrative of origins. It shackles appearance to logic.

To avoid such an interpretation, the principle should be taken literally, that is, in terms of the co-presence of being and thought. "No actual entity, then no reason" (Whitehead). Being in the world requires thought in the world. Being-given requires thought-given. An entity requires a reason. To be with means to think with. Thus to follow the path of being also means to follow the path of co-thought, or *com-putation*.

To combine the event and the transcendental is to produce computation. Recall the definition of Turing's universal machine: it is a machine that can perform the work of any other machine, provided it can be described logically. Or to rephrase using the vocabulary employed thus

far: *the computer is a machine that can actuate events, provided they are formulated in terms of the transcendental.*

Given that being is both evental and transcendental, it is no surprise that computation takes place within being. In fact, it is inevitable; it is visible across the most diverse instances, RNA as computational strands, markets as societies of computation, stomachs as processors for foodstuffs, or what have you.

It is now possible to revisit the final paragraphs of the introduction and flesh out a related set of concepts, the *computational decision* and the *principle of sufficient computation*.[28] The principle states that, within the standard model, anything co-thinkable is also computable. The mere existence of something is sufficient grounds for its being computable (co-thinkable). The computational decision is the event that inaugurates such a distinction.

But it goes further as well, because presence itself is subject to a computational condition. Computation is not an "option" available to presence but a precondition of it. It is not simply that computers, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and the like are predicated on computational decisionism. It is not simply that such and such mundane detail will be rendered computationally, that weather patterns will be modeled on a supercomputer, that stock markets will be migrated over to electronic trading, that we will "go digital." These are all common, pragmatic repercussions of a much more pervasive computational decision that permeates the standard model from end to end. The advent of digital being—which is to say the only sort of being directly available to us—shows that presence itself is a computational condition.

A final step awaits, for Laruelle takes the computational decision as raw material and through it discovers an alternate mode of non-computation or non-computer, just as he has done with non-photography, or indeed with non-philosophy as a whole. He considers the "computational posture" and software execution as an instance of identity and cloning. He considers computation in terms of an auto-execution, or an auto-processing.

Ultimately Laruelle arrives at a purely immanent conception of computation (as co-thinking). This is a form of computation entirely subtracted from any kind of conscious will or causality, from any kind of metaphysical representation or manifestation, from the typical distinction between

hardware and software, from the classic debate in Artificial Intelligence about whether or not computers can think like humans.

> It's always so predictable and wearisome this back and forth debate between the proponents of Artificial Intelligence and those advocating Conscious. . . . We could say that non-philosophy is an attempt to give a (non-Kantian) solution to this conflict, to show a "way out" of it, or more precisely to demonstrate exactly how and under what conditions thought would never need to enter it.[29]

Such a purely immanent conception of computation would appear therefore, axiomatically and primordially, as *process*. Non-computation is simply the condition of the event that is *in-process,* that operates "according to" process.

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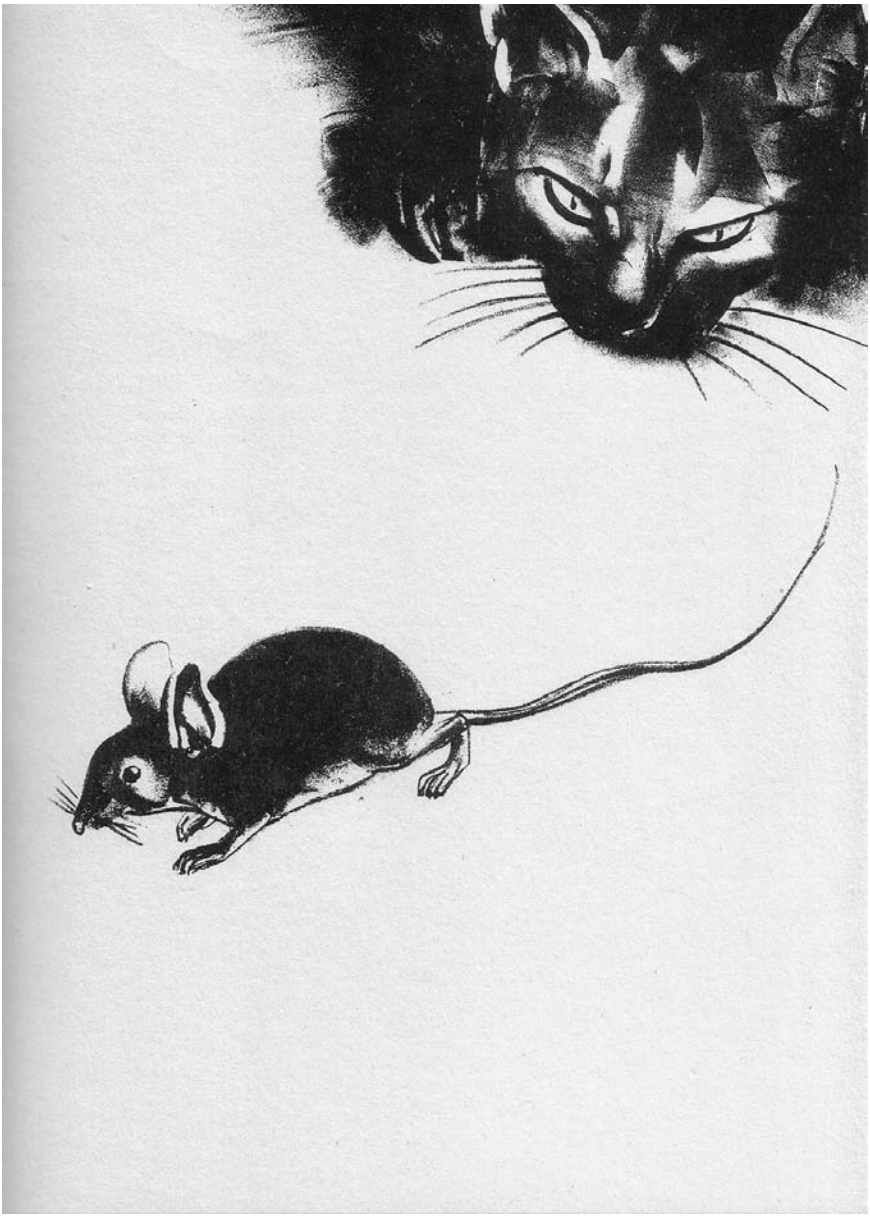

Hugo Gellert, "Cat and Mouse," *Comrade Gulliver* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1935), 27.

six

Capitalism

Don't look at Part I, put it aside. Or so goes Althusser's warning to first-time readers of Marx's *Capital*. It is important to skip Part I of the treatise, Althusser advised, at least on the first couple of reads. Only when the truth of *Capital* is fully internalized, its scientific intervention into the "new continent" of history, one may "begin to read Part I (Commodities and Money) with infinite caution, knowing that it will always be extremely difficult to understand, even after several readings of the other Parts, without the help of a certain number of deeper explanations."[1]

After all, Althusser argued, the same political division between social classes was mirrored within the text as an epistemological division. Part I contains something close to philosophical idealism, followed by the scientific materialism of the rest of the book. Althusser's advice was thus both practical and political: Part I is not only difficult reading for the young and the uninitiated—Althusser admitted that members of the proletariat would have no problem reading the book because their "class instinct" was already attuned to the quotidian experience of capitalist exploitation—it also risks derailing the reader into dangerously Hegelian and philosophical diversions. "This advice is more than advice," he whispered. It is "an *imperative*."[2]

Did he know it? Did Althusser see the colossus issuing forth in the wake of such advice, advice written in March 1969 at such a profound historical conjuncture in France and indeed the world? Was he aware that this would solidify the agenda for the next few decades of Marxian or otherwise progressive philosophy and theory? *The colossus of exchange*.

By focusing on surplus-value instead of, say, the commodity, by insisting that *Capital* and *Capital* alone be the text by which Marx is judged, therefore sidelining the crypto-Hegelian "young Marx" of species-being and alienation, Althusser placed the emphasis squarely on the scientific structures of exchange: the spheres of production and circulation, the factory floor and the marketplace, the passage from small-scale industry to imperialism. Such an emphasis would continue to dominate theory for decades, both in France and through the adoption of French theory in the English-speaking world. Stemming from his reinterpretation in the 1960s and '70s, Marx would be rethought primarily as a theorist of exchange. Mating Marx with Freud, theorists like Jean-Joseph Goux would begin to speak in terms of "symbolic economies" evident across all spheres of life, whether psychoanalytic, numismatic, or semiotic. Indeed, life would be understood exclusively in terms of relations of exchange.

Even deviations from capitalist exchange, as in the many meditations on "the gift," or even, in a very different way, Deleuze and Guattari's writings on desiring machines, would conserve exchange as the ultimate medium of relation. The gift economies of the Haida or Salish potlatch might not be capitalist, but they remain economies nonetheless. Desiring machines might find fuel for their aleatory vectors from beyond the factory walls, but they remain beholden to the swapping of energies, the pathways of flight lines, and the interrelation of forces of intensification and dissipation.

Althusser had merely identified a general paradigm, *that systems of relation exist, and that they are prime constituting factors for all the other elements of the world, from objects to societies*. As a general philosophical paradigm it would thus forge common currency with other existing schools, chief among them phenomenology, which must assent to a fundamental relation between self and world, or even the tradition of metaphysics in general, which assumes a baseline expressive model from Being to being, from essence to instance, or from God to man. For Marxists, the fundamental relation is always one of antagonism, hierarchy, inequality, or predation (see Hugo Gellert, "Cat and Mouse," the frontispiece of this chapter).

All of this is contained in what Fredric Jameson has called the *second* fundamental riddle in *Capital*, the riddle contained in the equation *M—M'* (from money to "money prime" or money with a surplus added). Such is the riddle of exchange: How does money of one value transform

into money of a greater value? To answer the question, Marx had to "descend into the hidden abode of production," revealing the intricacies of the labor process and the working day, in order ultimately to show the origins of surplus value, what Althusser (and indeed Marx himself) considered the "illuminating heart" of *Capital*.

But exchange is still just the second riddle in Marx. *Capital* is propelled by another riddle, one that finds its voice in the elusive Part I, the part that Althusser warned his readers to avoid. "The mystery of an equivalence between two radically different qualitative things"—this is the first riddle, according to Jameson. "How can one object be the equivalent of another one?"[3] In other words, the riddle is the riddle of $A = B$. The real things constituting A and B themselves, as, for example, twenty yards of linen (as A) and one coat (as B), contribute nothing to the riddle. Rather the mystery derives from the unexplainable, and indeed violent, possibility of inserting an equals sign between different things. The riddle is the riddle of the equation; the violence of capital is the violence of the equality of inequality. Or as Jameson puts it, "It seems possible to read all of Part One [of *Capital*] as an immense critique of the equation as such."[4]

Thesis X. The multidecade legacy of Althusser, who put the final period at the end of the sentence of exchange, has come to an end with Laruelle. Everything that has thus far been described under the banner of exchange is not simply *a* philosophical paradigm for Laruelle, but *the* philosophical paradigm. There is no philosophy that is not too a philosophy of exchange. There is no metaphysical arrangement that is not too a concourse of convertibility. There is no structure of thought that is not too a structure of relation. There is no phenomenology that is not too an orientation within a world.

Against all these things stands Laruelle, not a philosopher but still a Marxist, who aims to describe not so much Marx's "rational kernel in the mystical shell" but rather something like an immanent kernel itself for Marx (and capitalism too). Such a real kernel would be devoid of all rationality, all shells, all mystifications, and all chance to interrelate kernels and shells in the first place.[5]

Such is the irony of Laruelle. He deploys Althusserian Marxist language ("determination-in-the-last-instance" [DLI]), he deploys Althusserian Marxist methodology (that science should deviate from philosophy and

exist "in" or "on" it), yet nevertheless he rejects, in spirit at least, much of what comes after Part I of *Capital* and indeed much of the very pillars of Marxism itself.[6] Although, as I hope to show, these pillars are pillars of *Capital* and thus subtend the structure of capitalism, not the Marxian critique levied against it or even perhaps Marx himself. Thus, in Laruelle's profound deviation from the Marxian tradition, he ironically remains a Marxist, and in so doing produces one of the most profound critiques of capitalism hitherto known.

My proposal here is therefore a simple one, that we must understand Laruelle as both a post-Althusserian Marxist and as someone who brashly ignores Althusser's advice. In the end Laruelle produces an unexpected version of Marx, unexpected not because it supplements Marx in new ways or propels Marx into the future—endeavors impugned by non-philosophy—but because Laruelle ends up endorsing all the old dunderheaded ideas, long ago purged from so-called serious Marxist theory: vulgar determinism, the qualitative purity of use-value, and the irrelevance of ideology and "epistemological breaks."

Published in 2000, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the failure of many actually existing Marxist states, Laruelle's book *Introduction to Non-Marxism* is one of the more provocative entries in the decades-long discourses of Marxist theory and constitutes Laruelle's most extended engagement with Marx, although not necessarily with the political as such.[7] True to form, Laruelle refuses to report whether Marxism did or did not fail. He refuses to try to amend or deconstruct Marxism in any way, as that would simply constitute further philosophy.[8] Instead he seeks to "philosophically impoverish" Marxism, with the goal of "universalizing" it through a "scientific mode of universalization."[9] (Was not Althusser's project, thirty years prior, nearly the same?)

Although Laruelle does not often affect an overtly anticapitalist stance in his work, I want to show here that Laruelle's *ontology,* if not so much his political theory, provides a foundation for one of the most aggressively anticapitalist critiques since Marx himself, since the Frankfurt School, and since the "scientific Marxism" of Althusser and post–World War II France or the autonomist movements in 1970s Italy.

Laruelle accomplishes this by militantly denying *exchange,* one of the essential preconditions of any kind of commerce. Unlike Keynesian economists, or Third-Way liberals, Laruelle does not advocate a mollification

of exchange; he does not allow for something like "capitalism with a friendly face." Unlike post-structuralists, Laruelle does not acknowledge a system of mutual co-construction between self and other. Instead, Laruelle develops an ontological platform that, while leaving room for certain kinds of causality and relation, radically denies exchange in any form whatsoever.

Deviating too from so-called process philosophers, who must necessarily endorse exchange at some level, Laruelle advocates a mode of expression that is irreversible. He does this through a number of interconnected concepts, the most important of which is determination-in-the-last-instance. Having kidnapped the term from its Althusserian Marxist origins, Laruelle uses DLI to show how there can exist causality that is not reciprocal, how "relation" can exist that is not at the same time a "relation of exchange," indeed how a universe might look if it were not already forged implicitly from the mold of a market economy.

Herein lies Laruelle's rigorous anticapitalism, an anticapitalism rooted not in the critique of social relations at the level of politics, but in the prohibition of exchange at the level of ontology.[10]

In order to demonstrate this aspect of Laruelle's thinking, consider four interlocking concepts and claims: science, the infrastructure, the irreversibility of expression, and incommensurability.

The first topic, *science,* is central to Laruelle's conception of non-philosophy as a whole, and central too for Althusser, who viewed science as the only proper response to philosophy. For Althusser, science often bears the moniker of practical philosophy, Marxist philosophy, or indeed simply Marxist science. For Laruelle, science is synonymous with non-philosophy. Or, to be more correct, "primary" science, what he also calls "unified theory," would unify and subtend the common philosophies and the common sciences of the world.[11] As Laruelle puts it, non-philosophical science would be "primary" vis-à-vis science and philosophy, but would also carry a "primacy-without-priority" and thus not issue forth or synthesize itself through science and philosophy, in an attempt to act as their guiding spirit. One must disperse the various encyclopedias of scientific and philosophical knowledge into "a chaos of identities" in order to unify such knowledge into a "democracy" of thought, not by virtue of a common set of axioms or dogmatic truths but by virtue of the generic identity of unified thinking.

So perhaps Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, which Althusser held up as the most emblematic moment of Marx's intervention into philosophy, is also a fine description for Laruelle's project. The eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, Marx's famous maxim that philosophers ought to change the world, not simply interpret it, indicates, in the most general sense, that the correct response to interpretation (philosophy) is not *more* interpretation (not more philosophy).

In other words, the correct response, if one follows Althusser's gloss of Marx, is to replace philosophical interpretation with a new kind of science, a Marxian science. Such is the elemental discovery of Marx, a discovery that Althusser suggests was best revealed after the fact by way of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-criticism*. But is this not also Laruelle's most essential claim, that the best response to philosophy is not more philosophy? That the best response to philosophy is to cease doing it? Is it not possible to telescope all Laruelle within Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach? *Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to articulate a rigorous and immanently scientific non-philosophy of it.*

Like Althusser, Laruelle shuns the lingering abstractions that permeate Marx, particularly the young Marx. Yet Laruelle reminds us that "Marxism remains abstract through a lack of universality, a lack of reality, of radicality, not through being poorly adapted to the various avatars of societies and the becomings of history. It is not made abstract by a bad philosophy that would remove it from history, but by an excess of philosophy that plunges it into history."[12] The problem is thus not a bad philosophy—in this case the bad Hegel, a philosophy pleading to be corrected or "put back on its feet"—but an excess of philosophy.

All this prompts Laruelle to unify philosophy and capitalism together as a single term, "Thought-World." Just as philosophy follows a principle of sufficient philosophy, Laruelle writes that capitalism marches to the same tune, via a principle of sufficient economy. The principle of sufficient economy means that anything whatsoever is available for reproduction and exchange, that capitalism is sufficient to "englobe," in Laruelle's language, the entire world.

So the principle of sufficient economy is a "universal capitalism," not simply the imperialist extension of capitalism into all corners of the globe, but a perversion of both thinking and being that renders all fixity

as permeable and reversible exchange.[13] As Laruelle puts it, even capitalism is incontinent to itself: "The essence of capitalism is *and/or* is not, in a way that is ultimately reversible, capital."[14] This is the key to understanding today's trend toward *mondialisation* (literally "world-ization," but typically translated as "globalization"). Only by fusing together philosophy, as principle of sufficient philosophy, and capitalism, as principle of sufficient economy, is it possible to see a single object or a process of "englobing." Laruelle means this in quite direct terms: the worlds that populate phenomenology are a question of "globalization" as the self englobes its world via orientation and solicitation of attention; but so too the world, or globe, of capitalist globalization is quite literally the planet itself, the ultimate terrain of the real.

This is why Laruelle is so quick to make philosophy and capitalism coterminous; the two are, quite simply, the same thing for him. Both philosophy and capitalism subject the world to the intercourse of reversibility and exchange, both express things in terms of their opposites, and both destroy (or at least ignore to their own detriment) the ultimate immanence of nature, which for Laruelle is the one and for Marx the real base. So just as science was Marx's response to capitalism, so too science is Laruelle's response to philosophy.

On this last point Althusser would not disagree, because in his estimation Marx's indictment of capitalism was always already an indictment of philosophy. The difference lies more in the composition of the indictment. Laruelle's indictment is on the grounds of a venomous reversible convertibility. Althusser's indictment is on the ground of an odious bourgeois idealism.

This brings us to the second question, that of *infrastructure*. Laruelle finds inspiration not simply in Marx's intuitive understanding of the relation between science and philosophy, but also in what Laruelle views as the immovable, transhistorical, and, yes, fully immanent material base. Matter or materialism is not simply the topic of Marxism, nor either simply its conceptual core. Matter is quite literally the material of Marxism. In other words, Marxism is matter itself; dialects breaks bricks (or so it seems).

What Laruelle means by this is that Marxism alone posits a pure immanent material base, one that is determinate, immovable, and immanent to itself unsupplemented by any idealist scaffold. As he puts it,

non-Marxism's goal is "to universalize matter in an immanent way, without pretending to amend or correct it with any kind of philosophy."[15] In this respect the mere existence of Marxism is evidence of an irresistible one, the material base. This is why Marxism is a politics (and not simply an "interpretation"), because it saddles itself over the vector of determinacy constructed between infrastructure and superstructure, this vector being nothing but the determinacy of the one itself. In short, Marxism does not simply describe a relation (between worker and boss or between base and superstructure), it directly embodies this relation and thus, following the Laruellean ontology, must be synonymous with real matter itself.

The non-philosophical term Laruelle assigns to such a situation is "given-without-givenness," but the Marxian term is "infrastructure."[16] The relationship between infrastructure and superstructure, which for many subsequent critics betrayed in Marx a pernicious and somewhat naïve determinism, is for Laruelle absolutely crucial, even beneficial. The more naïve the better; the more determinist the better.

In *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,* Marx described the "material conditions of existence, [or the] two different kinds of property," that made up the Party of Order, formed from the alliance of two factions of the ruling class, the Legitimists, the large land owners who were a legacy of the 1814–30 Bourbon restoration period, and the Orleanists, the financiers and large-scale industrialists who were a legacy of the July Monarchy of 1830–48: "Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, rises an entire superstructure of distinct and peculiarly formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life. The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations."[17] Later, in an 1859 text that would become a prototype for *Capital,* the "Preface (to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*)," Marx also addressed the superstructure and its "real foundation."

> In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises

> a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness.[18]

These passages have been discussed extensively within Marxist discourse, particularly after the Cultural Turn of the mid-twentieth century. Yet the use that Laruelle makes of them is unique.

His intervention turns on the conceptual shift from "relate" to "arise." Laruelle, who admittedly treats relation with scorn and skepticism, acknowledges the existence of "definite relations" within the material base of society. These relations constitute the world and thus the world as it is constructed via capitalism and indeed via philosophy.

Yet "in" or "on" these relations arises a secondary thing, the superstructure. It does not matter so much the nature of this superstructure, its qualities and affordances, or even its ability to reciprocate back in a mutually determining way toward the base (these being some of the concerns of the cultural Marxists). Rather what interests Laruelle is the pure and rigorous radicality of such a unilateral and unidirectional causality.

To underscore the force of this causal determinacy, let us continue the previous Marx quote where it left off, revealing one of the most frequently cited passages in Marx's entire body of work: "The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."[19]

For Laruelle the words *conditions* and *determines* are not sources of anxiety, as they were for many of the postwar Marxist theorists from Althusser to Raymond Williams and beyond. For Laruelle these words are not sources of anxiety but rather must be taken very literally, even accentuated and made more rigorous, more radical. The infrastructure of the material base is a given-without-givenness because and only because of its ability to condition and determine—unidirectionally, irreversibly, and "in the last instance"—whatever it might condition and determine, in this case the superstructure. Thus the infrastructure stands as "given" while still never partaking in "givenness," neither as a thing having appeared as a result of a previous givenness, nor a present givenness engendering the offspring of subsequent givens.

Again, any mollification of Marx's determinism would not simply miss the point for Laruelle, it would undo the entire Marxist project. If