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Nietzschean Problematics

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Theory and Criticism

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Abstract

This thesis is a commentary and exegesis on François Laruelle's 1977 text *Nietzsche contre Heidegger* with a focus on the concept of the 'Nietzschean problematic.' It explores Laruelle's use of Nietzsche by comparing his reading with that of Gilles Deleuze. This relation is explored in Deleuze and Laruelle's reading of the Nietzschean problematic through the distinction between complementarity and supplementarity to enable a reading of Laruelle's text as an extension of Deleuze's project. This extension is one that simultaneously overturns what it extends. Laruelle's aim is presented as a 'machinic materialism' infused with Derridean *différance*. Over the course of the thesis many of Laruelle's concepts from *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*—machinic and political materialism, politico-libidinal cut, chiasm, quadripartite—are explored to provide a more concise picture of the Nietzschean problematic and what this problematic can do.

Keywords

Laruelle, Deleuze, Nietzsche, Non-Philosophy, Non-Standard Philosophy, Materialism, Difference

Summary for Lay Audience

This thesis provides a commentary on François Laruelle's 1977 text *Nietzsche contre Heidegger* by exploring Laruelle's concept of the 'Nietzschean problematic.' To do this, I compare Laruelle's presentation of Nietzsche with Gilles Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche in a number of texts including *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, *Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus*. Deleuze's interpretation was influential in 20th century France and more recently in English speaking continental philosophy. To provide a rupture in this influence, the thesis explores how Laruelle expands on Deleuze's work while simultaneously subverting it. In doing so, the thesis also provides an introduction to the early period in Laruelle's work—titled *Philosophy I*—that has remained untranslated, and largely without commentary, despite Laruelle's recent popularity by way of what is called non-philosophy or non-standard philosophy.

The overall focus is on a concept called the 'Nietzschean problematic,' which I read as the central concept of the text. This concept is notable for its development of a new method of political production. Commenting on this concept, I explore both its various attributes (as machinic, materialistic, intensive, chiasm, quadripartite, etc.) and the historical lineage that precedes it (through the work of Louis Althusser and Gilles Deleuze). The first two chapters work to gather and discuss these attributes, while the third chapter explores how they function in the Nietzschean problematic through the dissemination of what Laruelle terms the three syntheses of political production. Overall, this work aims at an understanding of how any totalizing theory can be overcome by way of problems that are inherent to it.

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Abbreviations

NcH: *Nietzsche contre Heidegger* by François Laruelle

NP: *Nietzsche and Philosophy* by Gilles Deleuze

DR: *Difference and Repetition* by Gilles Deleuze

AO: *Anti-Oedipus* by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari

Introduction

“It is just that we should be grateful not only to those with whose views we may agree, but also to those who have expressed more superficial views; for these also contributed something, by developing before us the powers of thought.” Aristotle, Metaphysics, 993b.

Deleuze once stated that his method of philosophy was to take an author from behind, producing a monstrous offspring. He continues: “It was Nietzsche, who I read only later, who extricated me from all this. Because you can’t deal with him in the same sort of way. He gets up to all sorts of things behind *your* back.”¹ Where Deleuze ‘buggers’ others, Nietzsche ‘buggers’ Deleuze. As a result, Nietzsche can be seen in much of Deleuze’s oeuvre, whether implicitly or explicitly.² In a certain sense, Nietzsche insists on Deleuze as ‘problematic.’³ As Nietzsche buggers Deleuze a multiplicity of concepts, in connected rhizomatic assemblages, blossom.

Against buggery, Laruelle’s work has been read as a prophylactic: an ontological foundation against the non-foundational contingency of promiscuous buggery.⁴

Deleuze’s promiscuity can be linked to his passion for concept creation (the blossoming of *n* concepts). In his final work with Guattari, they define philosophy as a “continuous creation of concepts” that are constantly changing.⁵ Nietzsche is presented as a figure of

¹ Gilles Deleuze, “Letter to a Harsh Critic” in *Negotiations* trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 6.

² See Igor Krtolica, “Deleuze, entre Nietzsche et Marx : l’histoire universelle, le fait moderne et le devenir-révolutionnaire,” *Actuel Marx* 52, no. 2 (2012): 62, <https://doi.org/10.3917/amx.052.0062>.

³ ‘Problematic’ is a concept Althusser derives from Jacques Martin, used in his text *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: The Penguin Press, 1969). In this paper I read the ‘problematic’ as central to Laruelle’s reading of Nietzsche in *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*.

⁴ See Alexander Galloway, *Laruelle: Against the Digital* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 217, fn 17.

⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 8.

eternal becoming—the eternal becoming of new philosophical concepts.⁶ If considered in this light, the prophylactic response of Laruelle can be read as a form of abstinence. Laruelle refuses to enter the game of promiscuous creation, working instead through a Nietzsche of reduction [*réduire*] (NcH 71). Where Deleuze’s promiscuity produces new images of thought, Laruelle’s abstinent withdrawal invents a Nietzsche that says no to the image of thought.

This thesis presents a comparative analysis of these two thinkers through their use of the ‘Nietzschean problematic.’ The aim is two-fold: first to provide commentary on Laruelle’s *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*; second, to use that commentary to interrogate the Laruellean rupture of Deleuze’s project: going ‘beyond’ or ‘overcoming’ Deleuze. Deleuze institutes, through Nietzsche, a rupturing of what he terms the ‘dogmatic image of thought.’ It is in a similar manner that Laruelle introduces the Nietzschean Rebel as one who ruptures the Master or dominating force within thought. In both cases it is Nietzsche who provides the possibility of a new, political problematic that ruptures the old figure of dominance. This thesis seeks out that political formulation.⁷ Laruelle has spilt a great deal of ink differentiating himself from Deleuze.⁸ This is an effort that has continued in secondary literature.⁹ What distinguishes this thesis from these other

⁶ Ibid., 113.

⁷ As Nandita Biswas Mellamphy points out, the ‘political’ in Nietzsche “follows a peculiar materialist view of politics as the physiological activity of ‘overcoming’ within a living environment for which he coins the term known as ‘will to power’” in “Nietzsche and the Engine of Politics,” in *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, Bloomsbury Studies in Continental Philosophy (Boston: Bloomsbury, 2014), 141.

⁸ The most notable example is in François Laruelle, *Philosophies of Difference*, trans. Rocco Gangle, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013) where Laruelle critiques Deleuze, Derrida, Heidegger and Nietzsche for reifying what he calls the philosophical decision.

⁹ See Majorie Gracieuse, “Laruelle Facing Deleuze: Immanence, Resistance and Desire,” in *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*, ed. John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith, Critical Connections (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 42–59; Anthony Paul Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought*, 16–24; “Thinking from the One: Science and the Ancient Philosophical Figure of the One” in *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*, eds. John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith, Critical Connections (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012); Katerina Kolozova, *Cut of the Real* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2014). 59–64; and Erik Del Bufalo, *Deleuze et Laruelle: De La Schizo-Analyse à La Non-Philosophie*, Bibliothèque de Non-Philosophie (Paris: Éditions Kimé, 2003).

analyses is that it is placed squarely in Laruelle's early work as a commentary on *NcH*. Secondary literature on Laruelle in English has mostly stepped past the work in *Philosophy I* (consisting of *Machines textuelles*, *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*, *Le déclin de l'écriture*, and *Au-delà du principe de pouvoir*) to engage with non-standard philosophy. As a result, there is a shortage of secondary literature on *Philosophy I* and *NcH* (the texts written during this period have yet to be published in English).¹⁰ Nevertheless, as Nandita Biswas Mellamphy shows in her productive use of Laruelle's Nietzsche, there is ample room for further development in this area of scholarship. Laruelle's text provides a novel account of Nietzsche that aims to think outside the dogmatic mastery that haunts thought. When useful I have drawn on secondary literature from non-standard philosophy, though I have limited this to areas where Laruelle's conceptualization in *NcH* foreshadows his non-standard philosophical concepts (for example, the concept of critique as reduction is placed alongside the non-standard practice of radicalization in chapter 2). Furthermore, while I have drawn upon the secondary literature, primarily through the work of Biswas Mellamphy and Smith, much of this project emphasizes an exegetical reading of *NcH* as it relates to the Nietzschean problematic.¹¹

It might be objected that a focus on *NcH* is useless given the developments of Laruelle's thought. The fact that *NcH* falls within the principle of sufficient philosophy (PSP), leaves it open to attack.¹² Yet, Laruelle himself clarifies that his early project "already

¹⁰ The field is not, however, completely barren. See Nandita Biswas Mellamphy. "Nietzsche and the Engine of Politics" and "Nietzsche's Political Materialism: Diagram for a Nietzschean Politics" in *Nietzsche as Political Philosophy*, ed. Manuel Knoll (Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 77–89; Anthony Paul Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought*, 58–67; and Smith *A Non-Philosophical Theory of Nature: Ecologies of Thought* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 73–81; Rocco Gangle, *François Laruelle's Philosophies of Difference*, 16; and Alexander Galloway, *Laruelle: Against the Digital* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 187–188).

¹¹ The limited secondary literature is one of two factors that have led to the focus on *NcH* as the sole consideration from *Philosophy I*. These limits produce a burden (in terms of translation and exegesis) that is demanding for a project of this size. This is a particular issue when dealing with Laruelle given his usage of philosophical concepts without reference to their origin. Laruelle expects much of his reader, assuming a breadth of knowledge of the 20th century French milieu. As such I have limited my analysis to this text, with attempts to clarify where Laruelle is drawing concepts from and showing how he implements them in novel ways (with a particular interest in the concepts that derive from the Deleuzian oeuvre).

¹² Laruelle defines the PSP as the "fundamental auto-position, which can also be its auto-actualization or auto-fetishization" in *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy* trans. Taylor Adkins, (Minnesota: Univocal, 2013),

sought to put certain themes to work” that would be developed in the later literature.¹³ If nothing else, a study of *Philosophy I* is useful as a bridge to the later work. Furthermore, *NcH* provides an escape of standard thought *from within* standard thought, even if that thought lacks sufficiency. Laruelle’s own trajectory can be taken as an example, insofar as it is from this project that a non-standard thought becomes possible. Despite non-standard philosophy’s use of philosophy, it remains (outside) standard philosophy in its problematization of standard philosophy by way of the signification ‘non.’ Here, (outside) is bracketed to suggest that non-standard philosophy is both ‘interior to’, but not ‘of’ standard philosophy. It is in a position of interior alterity in relation to standard philosophy. Considering this, *NcH* (and *Philosophy I* as a whole) provide a critique of standard philosophy that is not (outside) standard philosophy (in the sense of non-standard philosophy). *NcH* provides a critique of standard philosophy on the terrain of standard philosophy.

In *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, Laruelle describes *Philosophy I* as “the attempt to construct a problematic rivaling that of Marx, though mainly on Nietzschean terrain and with Nietzschean means.”¹⁴ It is this problematic that is of primary interest. His means for achieving this are described, in *Machines Textuelles*, as bringing together Deleuze and Derrida in a “Delida/Derreuze series.”¹⁵ Anthony Paul Smith suggests that Laruelle’s early period can be read as a materialist take on deconstruction: A deconstruction infringed with a machinic materialism.¹⁶ This thesis moves in a complementary direction, instead reading Laruelle through Deleuze with Derrida as a supplement: a machinic

12. The PSP is the philosophical act of positioning itself as absolute; the tendency of philosophy towards transcendence. This principle works by way of the philosophical decision (PhD) or ‘auto-position’ that a philosophy decides to render as transcendent to the Real. In a description of *Philosophy I* he suggests that “*Philosophy I* placed itself under the authority of the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy” in Francois Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 33.

¹³ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 33.

¹⁴ Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 33.

¹⁵ Francois Laruelle, *Machines Textuelles* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1976), 18.

¹⁶ Smith, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought*, 63.

materialism infringed with deconstruction. Among the texts written in this period, *NcH* with its emphasis on a Deleuzian Nietzsche, is the most pertinent to this study. While the others work within the Delida/Derreuze strain of thought, their emphasis tends towards Derrida and Freud more than with *NcH*'s explicit emphasis on Nietzsche and implicit emphasis in Deleuze. With a desire to unpack the Nietzschean problematic through Deleuze and Laruelle, I have chosen to focus on this text from Philosophy 1.

As Smith notes, Laruelle's writing during this period is part of a larger move within French philosophy to craft a political Nietzsche. Prominent voices in this discourse were Deleuze and Sarah Kofman. Deleuze's work is heavily influenced by his political reading of Nietzsche: *NP* heavily informs both *DR* and *The Logic of Sense*. He draws upon the Nietzschean concepts of the will to power and eternal return to conceptualize a material source of production that breaks from the Hegelian dialectic (NP 8). It is this reading of Nietzsche—one that leads up to the machinic materialism developed alongside Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*—that heavily informs *NcH*. In order to better ascertain the role of that development in Laruelle's thought, I have taken a broader approach to Deleuze's oeuvre, citing most heavily from three texts that appear to inform Laruelle: *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, *Difference and Repetition*, and *Anti-Oedipus*.¹⁷

I have organized this thesis with the aim of understanding the Nietzschean problematic as invented in Laruelle. The first and second chapter focus on grasping attributes of this problematic as they are raised by Laruelle. In a sense, these chapters gather material to be used in the final chapter as it institutes an understanding of the Nietzschean problematic. The order I have chosen to introduce these various attributes, when possible, follows Laruelle's own order of introduction in *NcH*.

¹⁷ Approaches to Deleuze on Nietzsche tend to fall into two camps. with some emphasizing a break from Nietzsche in the works with Guattari, and others taking a more ecumenical approach suggesting that Nietzsche pervades even the late writings. From the former see Petra Perry, "Deleuze's Nietzsche," *Boundary 2* 20, no. 1 (1993): 174–91, <https://doi.org/10.2307/303181>. For the latter see Igor Krtolica, "Deleuze, entre Nietzsche et Marx : l'histoire universelle, le fait moderne et le devenir-révolutionnaire." *Actuel Marx* 52, no. 2 (2012): 62. <https://doi.org/10.3917/amx.052.0062>.

The first chapter provides exegesis on the quadripartite/chiasm, a-signification, and duplicity/supplementarity. It begins by positioning the 4 terms of the quadripartite — Rebel, Resistance, Master, Fascism — as the central struggle of the Nietzschean problematic. A large part of this chapter takes up Mastery as an extension of what Deleuze calls the dogmatic image of thought. After locating Deleuze’s concept in *NP* and *DR*, the chapter explores the role of the Rebel in overthrowing this form of Mastery. The second half interrogates how Laruelle distinguishes himself from the Deleuze through the use of duplicity. The Derridean use of supplementarity is instituted as supplement to the Deleuzian schema, contrasted with what Laruelle terms Deleuze’s complementarity. This chapter closes with an exposition of how this quadripartite works in a duplicitous manner that allows Laruelle to claim that the “Nazis are Nietzschean, but Nietzsche is not a Nazi” (NcH 51).¹⁸

The second chapter continues the work of gathering concepts with a focus on the continent of politics, machinic materialism, and intensity. It begins by situating Laruelle’s notion of a Nietzschean continent of politics in relation to Althusser’s conception of a Marxist continent of History. This enables a discussion of Laruelle’s positioning of a machinic materialism and a political materialism that displace the Marxist notions of historical materialism and dialectical materialism, respectively. This flows into a discussion of *machinic* and *machinic materialism* more generally by exploring Laruelle’s three theses on machinic materialism. The second part of this chapter explores Laruelle’s conceptualization of critique as reduction by distinguishing Foucauldian ‘statements’ and Nietzschean ‘propositions.’ The concept of reduction is explored in relation to Laruelle’s later discussion of radicalization. The final part of this section expands more rigorously on the concept of machinic materialism through its attribute of intensity.

With these concepts developed in the earlier chapters, the final chapter dives into the Nietzschean problematic as a political invention or politico-libidinal cut. The first section explores the Althusserian problematic in more depth in order to distinguish Althusser’s

¹⁸ When citing from NcH directly, I have chosen to include the original French in the footnote: « ...les nazis sont nietzschéens, mais Nietzsche n’est pas nazi » (NcH 51).

notion of ‘break’ from Deleuze and Laruelle’s problematic as a ‘rupture.’ The second section provides an in-depth analysis of Deleuze’s conceptualization of the problematic through the mathematical work of Georges Bouligand and Albert Lautman in the conceptualization of singular points through the development of Poincaré curves and the *mathesis universalis*. From there, the remainder of the chapter institutes Laruelle’s rupture/reduction of the Deleuzian problematic in a supplementary fashion. This chapter closes with a discussion of the implementation of this problematic in light of the claim, made by Laruelle, that Nietzsche makes himself a fascist to better overcome fascism.

A few points of housekeeping are in order. Given the title of Laruelle’s text as *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*, the eliding of Heidegger from the discussion might seem suspect. The focus of my commentary is on the first two parts of *NcH*. The first two sections of Laruelle’s text unpack the concept of the Nietzschean problematic, while the third chapter takes up Heidegger as a case study in misreading Nietzsche through signification. Because my project to explore Laruelle’s Nietzsche as an overcoming of Deleuze’s Nietzsche I found it useful to elide the Heideggerian case study, instead focusing on the development of the Nietzschean problematic and comparing that with what is given by Deleuze.

Second, it is apparent that the Nietzschean text is largely missing from this analysis. I seldom cite any of Nietzsche’s works. The reason for this will become clearer through the first chapter but it is worth mentioning here. Laruelle’s invention of a Nietzsche problematic is one that is a-signifying rather than textual or signifying. Biswas Mellamphy points out that Laruelle breaks with the ‘post-structuralist’ reading of Nietzsche, seen in Foucault, that focuses on the signifying tendency. Deleuze gets closer to the a-signifying tendencies, but his notion of ‘force’ leans too strongly on the individuating or signifying tendency.¹⁹ As I discuss in chapter 1, Laruelle explicitly suggests that citing Nietzsche doesn’t prove anything, insofar as the focus on signification allows one to make Nietzsche say anything. For this reason, the various contradictory readings of Nietzsche do not provide an account of Nietzsche. Instead they

¹⁹ Biswas Mellamphy, “Nietzsche as Political Philosopher,” 80-81.

are symptomatic of the Nietzschean problematic. Following Laruelle, I have largely refrained from citing Nietzsche directly.

Finally, it is worth noting that, as a commentary on *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*, I have quoted heavily from that text. As I have relied on my personal translation of that text, I have provided the original French quotations as footnotes.

Chapter 1

1 The Quadripartite as A-signifying Duplicity

This chapter interrogates Laruelle's conception of the quadripartite, its four terms (Master, Fascist, Rebel, Revolutionary), and their relation of duplicity along two poles. It begins by investigating the four terms and exploring the positions of domination and dominated. Drawing upon Gilles Deleuze's consideration of the 'image of thought,' it positions domination and Mastery alongside representation and signification to which Laruelle contrasts rebellion as a-signification. To build on this theme, Deleuze's development of the relationships between active/reactive and affirmation/negation are used as a starting point to explore the relation of signification to a-signification. Deleuze's use of complementarity then contrasted with Laruelle's use of Derridean supplementarity as a basis for presenting a-signification in a position of duplicity, sovereignty, and unilaterality to Mastery.

1.1 Mastery and the dogmatic image of thought

The second thesis of *Nietzsche contre Heidegger* announces the four terms of the quadripartite. Laruelle names Nietzsche both a fascist thinker and the thinker who subverts fascism, writing, "Nietzsche is, in a double sense, the thinker of fascism: he is, *in a certain manner*, a fascist thinker, but he is *first* the thinker of the subversion of fascism" (NcH 9).²⁰ This is possible insofar as Nietzsche is described as a process or operation: "Nietzsche-thought is a complex political process of two 'contradictory' poles (but without mediation), the relation of subordination of a secondary fascist pole (Mastery) to a principal revolutionary pole (Rebellion). Nietzsche *makes himself* fascist for better defeating fascism" (NcH 9).²¹ The four terms — Master, Rebel, Fascist,

²⁰ « Nietzsche est, en un double sens, le penseur du fascisme: il est, *d'une certaine manière*, un penseur fasciste, mais il est *d'abord* le penseur de la subversion du fascisme » (NcH 9).

²¹ « La pensée-nietzsche est un processus politique complexe à deux pôles « contradictoires » (mais sans médiation), le rapport de subordination d'un pôle fascisant secondaire (Maîtrise) à un pôle révolutionnaire principal (Rébellion). Nietzsche *s'est fait* fasciste pour mieux vaincre le fascisme, il a assumé les pires formes de la Maîtrise pour en devenir le Rebelle » (NcH 9).

Revolutionary — operate on two poles of domination and dominated.²² Laruelle's subsequent theses expands on the relationship between these poles, naming it a 'contradiction without mediation,' and signaling that Nietzsche operates not in a duality or dualism, but in a new sort of relation called a 'duplicity.' Laruelle stresses that these terms "no longer have... their expected meaning" (NcH 10).²³ Early on, the Rebel and Revolutionary are related to the characteristics of affirmation and "active resistance to all dominant power" in *Mastery and Fascism* (NcH 11).²⁴ Readers of Nietzsche may remark that Laruelle's use of *Mastery* does not fit Nietzsche's own: following *On the Genealogy of Morality*, one might be inclined to think Master alongside the 'noble' or 'lord' who are torn down by the *ressentiment* of the 'slave revolt in morality.'²⁵ Laruelle acknowledges this reading, clarifying that Nietzsche's usage is different than the contemporary usage: in Laruelle it is the noble who are Rebels and the weak who are Masters (NcH 44).

The term 'Rebel' does not contain a fixed meaning. Instead, it invents new meanings: "The Rebel's point of view allows an understanding of Master, and it is more than an inversion of traditional theory... the sovereignty of this Rebel's point of view implies a new definition of Master and Rebel" (NcH 53).²⁶ In *Rebellion*, a name no longer signifies the expected meaning. Laruelle clarifies that the names, themselves, matter less than the syntax: a syntax that is a-signifying. Nietzsche contains a novel possibility that can be unpacked. Laruelle writes that all politics prior to Nietzsche are the politics of *Mastery*:

²² Biswas Mellamphy points out that this chiasm—of four terms rather than two—undoes binary logic for a 'syntactical machine' whose 'double-crossing lines' produce an ambiguity of signification: four terms that undo the prioritization of dualism. See "Nietzsche and the Engine of Politics," 154-155.

²³ «...les catégories de Fascisme et de Révolution, de Maîtrise et de Rébellion, qui n'ont plus, on s'en doute, leur sens attendu » (NcH 10).

²⁴ «...de résistance *active* à tous les pouvoirs dominants » (NcH 11).

²⁵ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, in *Beyond Good and Evil / On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Adrian Del Caro, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Vol. 8 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 228-231.

²⁶ «C'est le point de vue du Rebelle qui permet de comprendre celui du Maître, et c'est plus qu'une inversion de la théorie traditionnelle... la souveraineté du point de vue du Rebelle impliquent une nouvelle définition de la Maîtrise et de la Rébellion » (NcH 53).

All politics before Nietzsche...Greek, Bourgeoisie, Marxist, and now the Freudians, presuppose diversity by means of theoretical and practical opposition. But these always reconcile a unique and fundamentally double limitation: always politics by delegation and derivation, and always a politics by and for the Master... (NcH 54)²⁷

Politics operates on a double movement of Rebellion and Resistance. First, Rebellion overthrows the dominant position of Mastery, but in a second move the Rebel re-inscribes the 'auto-position' of Mastery onto itself: Rebel is reversed onto the position of Master in the act of overthrowing the Master. Working towards a new definition of both Rebel and Master, the Nietzschean Rebel is an attempt at that "which does not contain the genetic definition of any identity or presence, [those principles comprising a] *matrix of all dominant relations*, as one finds in bourgeois representation..." (NcH 56).²⁸

The issue with representation can be unpacked through Deleuze's conceptualization of a 'dogmatic image of thought.'²⁹ In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, Deleuze introduces the concept via three principles: 1. A thinker wants truth, that thought contains truth, and that it is sufficient to think truly to think truth; 2. Forces foreign to thought produce falsehoods in thought (i.e. errors); and 3. Thinking is a method and one can ward off error by practicing it (NP 103). That which forces thought to think is not considered in this schema because truth is presupposed as an abstract universal that dogmatically institutes a relationship between philosophy and the outside of philosophy: philosophy "assigns, a

²⁷ « De la politique avant Nietzsche, il y en avait beaucoup, de la grecque, de la bourgeoise, de la marxiste, et maintenant de la freudienne, avec des présupposés très divers, des moyens théoriques et pratiques opposés. Mais toujours réconciliée sur une unique et double limitation fondamentale : toujours une politique par délégation et dérivation, et toujours une politique par et pour le Maître... » (NcH 54).

²⁸ « Il produit un concept du Rebelle qui ne contient dans sa définition génétique aucune identité ou présence, *matrice de tout rapport dominant*, comme on la trouve encore dans la représentation bourgeoise... » (NcH 56).

²⁹ Much has been written on this concept. In the Preface to the English edition of the text Deleuze calls it the most necessary part of *Difference and Repetition* (xvii). It is a concept that Deleuze explores in both *Nietzsche and Philosophy* and *Proust and Signs*. Gregg Lambert has written a monograph exploring this concept as central to Deleuze's oeuvre. See Gregg Lambert, *In Search of a New Image of Thought*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

priori, a form to the outside.”³⁰ Deleuze expands on this in the third chapter of *DR*, providing 8 postulates of this dogmatic image of thought. The first four of these postulates are sufficient for the investigation at hand insofar as they provide an account of identity and representation.

The first postulate is similar to what is raised in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*: a principle of *Cogitatio nature universalis* (roughly translated as ‘thought of universal nature’). Thought is not only natural and good, but everyone has a desire to know the truth: “thought has an affinity with the true, it formally possesses the true and materially wants the true” (DR 131). According to Deleuze, this postulate is central for philosophical investigation because philosophy presupposes a desire for the truth. Tied to this first postulate is a second: the postulate of the Ideal or common sense. The second postulate extends the first postulate to a universal condition. Common sense presupposes everyone agrees about “what it means to think” (DR 131) with everyone agreeing to the first postulate. Together the first two postulates of the image of thought produce a universal thought derived from common sense. This universal operates dogmatically as *a priori* condition that doesn’t need investigation.

The third postulate — the recognition of good sense — develops out of these first two. Defined as “the harmonious exercise of all faculties upon a supposed same object,” recognition allows one to identify an object by way of one’s distributed faculties (DR 133). Working together, the faculties operate on the same object or ‘form of the Same’ (DR 134). This is the determination of the faculties working in harmony to develop an understanding of a thing that exists outside of thought; one that is subsequently recognized by thought as a form of representation or identity. In other words, if something looks like an apple, smells like an apple, feels like an apple and tastes like an apple—with these various sensory faculties aligning on that object—then the object is recognized as a thing represented by the signifier ‘apple,’ a signifier that exists prior to the apple as an abstract universal. Deleuze suggests that this model is used in

³⁰ Francois Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: A Philosophy of the Event: Together with The Vocabulary of Deleuze*, ed. Gregg Lambert and Daniel W. Smith, trans. Kieran Aarons, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 45.

philosophical investigation from Plato through Kant (DR 134). The fourth postulate, representation, develops out of this recognition, as the signifying *a priori* that applies itself to the object at hand. The object is never simply the object, but always a secondary “representation in relation to a [primary] conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition, or a perceived similitude” (DR 138). Rather than allowing the object to determine its own identity, the relationship is reversed insofar as the identity, ‘apple,’ is said to determine the object that has been signified as apple. This is because the first postulate holds truth to be an abstract universal independent of real experience. Thus, abstract universal truth, here a representation, determines the real for philosophy. In *NP*, Deleuze uses the inflation of error in philosophy as evidence of this: “the concept of error would therefore express, by right, the worst that can happen to thought, that is to say the state of thought separated from truth” (NP 105). An abstract, universal truth, in the form of a presupposed, *a priori* representation, becomes the only thing that this image of thought seeks; error becomes its nemesis.

In his text on Proust, Deleuze suggests that the dream of each philosopher is “to set up an image of thought that no longer depends on the goodwill of the thing and on a premeditated decision.”³¹ This is the task that Nietzsche succeeds in: producing a ‘new image of thought’ that is active and critical, providing the philosopher with freedom from representation in the dogmatic image of thought (NP 108). This is not a ‘pre-philosophical image’ but the criteria for new forms of thought to emerge in the interaction with the world. Deleuze suggests that Nietzsche provides these criteria for a new kind of philosophy, one that works *from* the world rather than through pre-given methods or schema (operating with a presupposed, universal representation).

Deleuze’s dogmatic image of thought is a kind of Mastery. In the Laruellean sense, the image of thought is dominated by a representational image. Textuality and signification also come under this determinate and representational Mastery insofar as it limits thought’s ability to think actively and critically. In-the-last-instance, textuality and signification overdetermine what they signify, producing a representation that determines

³¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Continuum, 2008), 64.

what it represents (the Idea of ‘apple’ determines the object as an apple, rather than the object determining the idea). Mastery is a form of signification that dominates. For example, one could take tyranny as an example of a representation (or signification) in the political field that dominates in a certain time and place. Against this Master, a Rebel attempts to overthrow the tyrant in an act of Revolution. Nevertheless, as Laruelle suggests, this Rebellious act of overthrow is accompanied by a subsequent re-inscription of the Rebel as a new signification or textuality (a new representation) that itself comes to dominate (feudalism replaces tyranny, capitalism replaces feudalism, etc.). The Rebel, in putting forward a new politics, inscribes that politics as a new domination or Mastery: a new signification.

Here, one can see the operation of the two poles and four terms at play. The Master-Fascist pole perpetuates a dogmatic image of thought in a representation or signification of the ‘Same.’ This Sameness dominates thought to keep the subversive Rebel-Revolutionary at bay. Where the Master dominates, the Fascist is the hatred of the Other. The Fascist aim is the complete destruction of the Rebel. The Fascist wants to stop the perpetual play of Master and Rebel, where the revolutionary side comes to itself signify and dominate against as Mastery (NcH 64).³² Nevertheless, what these terms signify is less important than the operation of the four terms in a chiasm or quadripartite. The terms are weak names, insofar as the chiasma is a-signifying. Attempting to signify the terms, independently, is a fool’s errand.

Within this quadripartite of four terms, the Nietzschean overcoming of fascism can take place. Moving past the dogmatic image of thought with a new form of Rebel—one that is not determinate of a new signification—Laruelle’s Nietzschean problematic moves beyond the matrix of dominant relations. This Rebel is both the subversion of identity, signification, and representation critiqued by Deleuze as the image of thought, as well as the domination of presence critiqued in Derrida’s work. Much as Deleuze marks the history of philosophy as giving precedence to a dogmatic image of thought, Derrida

³² This process is elaborated further in chapter 3.

explores that history of philosophy, prior to Heidegger, as privileging presence. In “Ousia and Grammē: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*” he writes:

From Parmenides to Husserl, the privilege of the present has never come into question. It could not have been. It is what is self-evident itself, and no thought seems possible outside its element. Nonpresence is always thought in the form of presence (it would suffice to say simply in the *form*), or as moralization of presence. The past and the future are always determined as past presents or as future presents.³³

Presence is a notable foil in Derrida’s thought as it impacts his understanding of the trace, *différance*, supplementarity, etc. (all of which are explored in relation to presence). His essay looks at a footnote in Heidegger’s *Being and Time* to determine whether Heidegger escapes the Aristotelean notion of “time on the basis of *ousia* as *parousia*, on the basis of the now, the point, etc.,” or whether Heidegger, too, repeats the history of presence.³⁴

This leads Derrida to think “a difference more unthought than the difference between Being and beings... Beyond Being and beings, this difference, ceaselessly differing from and deferring (itself), would trace (itself) (by itself) – this *différance* would be the first or last trace if one could still speak, here, of origin and end.”³⁵ *Différance* can be said without presence or absence: a usage that Laruelle adopts in his use of supplementarity.

Laruelle’s Rebel is a Rebel who is not reversed in Master; one that is ‘non-symbolic,’ ‘a-signifying’ [*non-symbolique, a-signifiante*]; a Rebel without identity, representation or presence (NcH 56). As a-signifying, Nietzsche moves beyond a ‘classic image of Nietzsche,’ i.e. a textual, signified Nietzsche who can be understood through citation (NcH 154). Biswas Mellamphy notes that Laruelle recognizes “Nietzsche to be a theoretical object with material effects, rather than as a historical subject or interpreter

³³ Jacques Derrida “Ousia and Grammē: Note on a Note from *Being and Time*” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 29-69: 34.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 61.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

expressing his thoughts.”³⁶ Nietzsche is not an identity in Laruelle; Nietzsche is a syntax. Biswas Mellamphy describes this syntax as genetic and a-signifying: “the syntax underlying Nietzsche’s kind of physiological thinking is a-signifying, but nonetheless ‘genetic,’ or ‘generative’/‘productive’ of difference...It is a syntax that is ‘genetic’ in that it has a ‘form-shaping’ function.”³⁷ Nietzsche is not a signified identity, but instead an a-signifying operation that cannot be justified by turning him into a figure of signification. This relates to textual support: Laruelle claims “[a] citation has never proven anything, principally in the case of Nietzsche” because a citation of Nietzsche turns him into a figure of signification and Mastery (NcH 140).³⁸ A-signifying, the Nietzschean Rebel is not itself signified but is a genetic element that produces signification (as will be explored below). If ‘Rebel’ names anything, it is a weak naming, a name without Sameness or stable signification. In part, this is why the Fascist reading of Nietzsche comes easy, for it requires turning him into a figure of signification. Laruelle continues, “[a] citation of Nietzsche provides little as it is always possible to make him serve opposing theses or politically divergent tendencies” (NcH 141).³⁹ Within these opposing theses there is a central agreement: both turn Nietzsche into a figure of signification.

1.2 A-signification and duplicity

Laruelle’s quadripartite is initially similar to the of the four characteristics of Nietzschean thought that Deleuze interrogates in *NP*. The Master-Fascist pole is similar to what Deleuze terms Reaction and Negation, while Rebel-Revolution can be placed alongside Deleuze’s Active and Affirmation. *NcH*’s use of Deleuze’s terms alludes to some relationship these concepts and the Nietzschean problematic:

³⁶ Biswas Mellamphy, “Nietzsche’s Political Materialism,” 78.

³⁷ Biswas Mellamphy, “Nietzsche and the Engine of Politics,” 147.

³⁸ « Une citation n’a jamais rien prouvé, surtout dans le cas de Nietzsche » (NcH 140).

³⁹ « Une citation de Nietzsche prouve si peu qu’il est toujours possible de lui faire servir deux thèses opposées, ou deux tendances politiques divergentes » (NcH 141).

...it must fill this with the four functions which characterize force and will to power: activity and reactivity (as qualities of the partial organs of power), affirmation and negation (as qualities of the will to power). This criterion of power is of a libidinal matter as determinant [*déterminante*] and Power Relations as determined [*déterminés*] is explained in a quadruple form: four terms coupled in pairs, and in various relationships of affinity or repulsion. We have called them *différentials* and they constitute the minimal content of the problematic of Political Materialism and Machinic Materialism (NcH 96).⁴⁰

Laruelle's designation of 'four functions' (activity, reactivity, affirmation and negation) as related to the 'partial organs of power' and the 'will to power' comes directly from Deleuze. The latter writes, "active and reactive designate the original qualities of force but affirmative and negative designate the primordial qualities of the will to power. Affirming and denying, appreciating and depreciating, express the will to power just as active and reactive express force" (NP 53). In Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche, force (here partial organs of power) has qualities of action and reaction, while the will to power has the qualities of affirmation and negation.

For Deleuze, these four qualities interact and combine in four manners: active-affirmation, active-negation, reactive-affirmation, and reactive-negation. Of these, the reactive combinations are related to the stages of nihilism that, in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morality*, are termed *ressentiment*, bad conscience, and the ascetic ideal.⁴¹ *Ressentiment* is a reactive outgrowth that develops from pain and suffering. The 'weak' react to their weakness by lashing out against the noble because the weak blame the noble

⁴⁰ « ...il faut remplir cette problématique des quatre fonctions qui caractérisent force et volonté de puissance : activité et réactivité (comme qualités des organes partiels de pouvoir), affirmation et négation (comme qualités de la volonté de puissance). Ce critère de la puissance soit de la matière libidinale comme déterminante et des Rapports de pouvoir comme déterminés, s'explique ainsi dans une forme quadruple : quatre termes couplés deux à deux, et en rapports divers d'affinité ou de répulsion. Nous les avons appelés des *différentiaux* (substitués des anciennes catégories ontologiques et des existentiels heideggeriens) et c'est eux qui constituent le contenu minimal de la problématique du M.P/M.M. » (NcH 96).

⁴¹ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, in *Beyond Good and Evil / On the Genealogy of Morality*, ed. Adrian Del Caro, The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche, Vol. 8 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014) 207-352. The first treatise deals with *ressentiment*, the second with bad conscience, the third with the ascetic ideal.

for their suffering. Here, *ressentiment* complements reactivity and negativity. Reaction is not, however, tied to negativity. Reaction can become affirmational when it is introduced to the priest. The priest leads the weak to see the strong as evil. This justifies *ressentiment* towards the strong by adding moral criteria. Strength is signified as evil; weakness is signified as good. The ‘weak’ move beyond a “brute state of [negative] *ressentiment*” (NP 126) to affirm themselves against the strong in their weakness (an affirmative *ressentiment*). There is a transition from a desire for revenge (reactive-negative) to an actualization of revenge (reactive-affirmative). The ‘weak’ no longer wish to be noble but proclaim their nobility in weakness. From this reactive-affirmation, the active functions (both affirmative and negative) are blocked.

The move from negative to affirmative reaction is repeated with the notion of bad conscience. Here, the weak no longer blame the strong for their suffering. Instead, the weak blame themselves (i.e. I must be responsible for my pain). The priest intervenes again, this time producing the concept of sin. One is now morally responsible for one’s own sin. This produces an internalization of guilt that is crystalized in a cycle of sin to the degree that one thinks of oneself as evil (because one cannot stop sinning one is inherently evil; because one is inherently evil, one cannot stop sinning). For Nietzsche, this comes out in Christianity where one is necessarily responsible for one’s sin. Ergo, one is necessarily evil. As evil, one is perpetually guilty for a debt (due to sin) that cannot be repaid. For Deleuze, bad conscience repeats *ressentiment* in moving from blaming oneself for suffering (reactive-negation) to seeing oneself as evil (reactive-affirmation). The ascetic ideal is, for Deleuze, the move from the reactive-negativity to a moralization of guilt in reactive-positivity in both instances.

Deleuze describes the reactive affirmations as ‘false affirmation.’ This is explored through the figure of the ass or donkey from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.⁴² The donkey takes on the burden of established values, saying ‘Hee-yaw’ (yes) to everything that comes in

⁴² See J. Adams, “The Speeds of Ambiguity: An interview with Paul Virilio,” 168.

its way.⁴³ Deleuze writes, “it might be thought that the ass, the animal which says ‘Ye-a’, was the Dionysian animal par excellence,” but this ass is not Dionysian because its yes is false (NP 178). In saying yes to everything, the ass takes upon itself the nihilism of the world, saying yes even to *ressentiment* (and saying yes to all representation of the same). This yes is false because it cannot say no (NP 178-182). In saying yes to all that is, the ass is incapable of bringing about new thought. It only affirms the same and reactionary.

On the other side, Deleuze suggests there is an affirmation tied to intensity and overcoming. In contrast with the false, reactionary affirmation, this is a Dionysian affirmation: a Dionysian yes (NP 185). Here “affirmation does not mean shouldering a burden... Zarathustra knows that affirmation means unburdening life, making it light, dancing and creating.”⁴⁴ This affirmation is *prior* to the negative and can use the negative to its purposes (an active-negative relationship). Where the ass is the caricature of affirmation, the Dionysian yes is one that “knows how to say no: it is pure affirmation, it has conquered nihilism and divested negation of all autonomous power. But it has done this because it has placed the negative at the service of the powers of affirming. To affirm is to create, not to bear, put up with or accept” (NP 185). In taking up the active-affirmative and the active-negative, this active force produces a joyful destruction bringing the affirmative into relationship with the eternal return.⁴⁵ Both the active-affirmative and active-negative work together in their activity to be affirmation. When the active quality teams with the negative it is a selective negativity that works for the power of affirmation. Through the four functions, Deleuze presents a syntax of four terms and four combination. Yet, what is produced is not a chiasm or quadripartite, but a

⁴³ See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, ed. Adrian Del Caro, trans. Robert Pippin, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 254-255.

⁴⁴ Gilles Deleuze, “Conclusions on the Will to Power and the Eternal Return,” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1973*, trans. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), 117-128: 121.

⁴⁵ “Why should affirmation be better than negation? We will see that the solution can only be given by the test of the eternal return: what is better and better absolutely is that which returns, that which can bear returning, that which wills its return. The test of the eternal return will not let reactive forces subsist any more than it will let the power of denying subsist. The eternal return transmutes the negative [...] negation in this new form has become critique: destruction becomes active, aggression profoundly linked to affirmation” *NP*, 86-87.

duality between active and reactive. The affirmative and negative have no power outside of their relation to the dominant functions reactive and active. This reproduces a system of good and bad where active is signified as good and reactive is signified as bad (even if the negative is no longer married to the reactive). Only the active is Dionysian, the reactive is always Apollonian. The negative and the affirmative can only follow from these functions.

Laruelle suggests that Deleuze implements a relation of complementarity (NcH 97). In quantum physics, complementarity is developed by Niels Bohr as a way of dealing with incompatible information derived from a single object.⁴⁶ Bohr writes this incompatible information “can clearly not be brought into connection with each other in the usual way, but may, as equally essential for an exhaustive account of all experience, be regarded as ‘complementary’ to each other.”⁴⁷ Complementarity is an inclusive disjunction where two or more contradictory things are, nevertheless, brought together in a complementary relation. If one allows for a bit of anachronism, a better understanding of inclusive disjunction can be gained from *Anti-Oedipus*. Deleuze and Guattari define inclusive disjunction as “a distinction that remains disjunctive, and that still affirms the disjointed terms, that affirms them throughout their entire distance, without restricting one by the other or excluding the other from the one” (AO 76). Inclusive disjunction in *Anti-Oedipus* brings together two contradictory terms in an enveloped relationship where the terms subsist as distinct and contrary individuals.⁴⁸ The aspect of complementarity allows these disjunct terms (active & negative, for instance) to complement each other despite their contradiction to the degree that they remain simultaneously distinct and enveloped.

⁴⁶ The use of quantum physics here may seem unnecessary. Nevertheless, given Laruelle’s later use of the quantum, it is worth mentioning, if only in passing. On Laruelle and quantum physics, see Anne-Françoise Schmid, “The Science-Thought of Laruelle and its Effects on Epistemology” in John Mullarkey and Anthony Paul Smith, eds., *Laruelle and Non-Philosophy*, Critical Connections (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 122-142.

⁴⁷ Niels Bohr, “Causality and Complementarity,” *Philosophy of Science* 4, no. 3 (1937): 291.

⁴⁸ They introduce the schizophrenic through inclusive disjunction, stating, “the Schizophrenic is not man and woman. It is man or woman, but [they belong] precisely on both sides, man on the side of men, woman on the side of women...*everything divides, but into itself*,” Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 76.

For Laruelle, the Deleuzian practice is ripe full of complementarity in this fashion (as will be seen in the third chapter through the eliding of Being⁴⁹ and becoming).

Deleuze's inclusive disjunction is distinct from Laruelle's duplicity. The latter is a different kind of inclusive disjunction. It is a 'contradiction without mediation' that Laruelle puts forward regarding the quadripartite. This is evident from the beginning of the book where Laruelle differentiates duplicity from both monism (as Master or Rebel) and dualism (a mediation of Master and Rebel) because Deleuze's inclusion (monism=pluralism) leans heavily towards the latter (NcH 9). For Laruelle, Master and Rebel are in a relation of duplicity rather than a dualism. This inclusive disjunction is not described as complementarity, but as supplementarity (NcH 97).

Here the impact of Derrida—who puts forward the notion of the supplement in *Of Grammatology*—is evident.⁵⁰ Derrida explores the supplement in relation to presence and absence in Rousseau's *Confessions*. To protect presence of the spoken word, a written signifier is added to a word as an image of representation. Rousseau suggests that writing forms a dangerous supplement to speech where speech appears present in its absence.⁵¹ Signs function as supplements (driven by techné) over nature. The issue for Rousseau is that these supplements come to take the place of nature: the sign remains supplement to the thing itself, something outside the thing that supplements and supersedes the natural thing. In this suppression of nature, the supplement is dangerous. Derrida is able to show, through Rousseau's own work on speech, that the gesture always operates as a sign-system alongside speech: "Gesture is here an adjunct of speech, but this adjunct is not a supplementing by artifice, it is a re-course to a more natural, more

⁴⁹ I have chosen to capitalize the term Being for reasons that will become clearer in the third chapter. Briefly, the capitalized Being signals an equivalent usage to Laruelle's use of the term *Être*, which I have translated as 'Being,' in distinction with his usage of the term *étant*, translated as 'being.' It should be noted, that, in *DR*, Deleuze does not capitalize the term. Nevertheless, in order to avoid confusion between Laruelle's usage and Deleuze, I have chosen to capitalize Being

⁵⁰ See Robert Bernasconi, "Supplement," in *Derrida Key Concept*, ed. Claire Colebrook (London: Routledge, 2014), 19-22.

⁵¹ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 144.

expressive, more immediate sign.”⁵² Derrida thus suggests that speech is itself a substitute to the sign system of gesture. Writing, as supplement to speech, is simultaneously the anterior to speech that is interior to the production of speech. In this way, for Derrida, the ‘logic of supplementarity’ goes against the “logic of identity and to the principle of classical ontology” insofar as it produces a sort of paradoxical supplement.⁵³ This is a supplement “which would have it that the outside by inside, that the other and the lack come to add themselves as a plus that replaces a minus, that what adds itself to something takes the place of a default in the thing, that the default, as the outside of the inside, should be already within the inside, etc.”⁵⁴ The dangerous supplement, an adjunction from the outside, is paradoxically internal to the generation of what it supplements. As commentator Robert Bernasconi points out, this leads to interesting ends in Derrida’s “Structure, Sign, and Play,” insofar as it opens up play in a ‘movement of supplementarity,’ where “One cannot determine the centre and exhaust totalization because the sign which replaces the centre, which supplements it, taking the centre’s place is an absence—this sign is added, occurs as a surplus, as a supplement.”⁵⁵ This supplement adds something that is neither interior nor anterior, but simultaneously (and paradoxically) both, an absence or *différance* that cannot be spoken but only signified.

When Laruelle makes the distinction between Deleuze’s reading of the Nietzschean problematic as complementarity to his own reading of it as supplementarity, he operates with a new inclusive disjunction or ‘contradiction without mediation’ that he terms duplicity. This duplicity is, furthermore, positioned in a position of sovereignty. For Deleuze, the inclusive disjunction is a connection between two poles that operate inclusively in a connected, mediated relationship. In each case, one aspect of the pole

⁵² Ibid., 235.

⁵³ Ibid., 215.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 215.

⁵⁵ Jacques Derrida, “Structure, Sign and Play” in *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 278-294: 289.

mediates with another: active-affirmation, active-negation, reactive-affirmation, reactive-negation. Force and will to power are an inclusive disjunction where the two sides complement each other in various mediated relationships in a principle of non-contradiction. Signaling his own reading of the Nietzschean apparatus as supplementarity, Laruelle suggests a unilateral relation between the two poles: one where the rebellious supplement (rather than the complement) serves as the adjunct and absent centre of Mastery.⁵⁶

In discussing this supplementarity of the quadripartite, Laruelle distinguishes ‘of interiority’ [*d’intériorité*] from ‘in interiority’ [*en intériorité*] with the latter operating as supplementarity (NcH 73-74). This is an operation of Rebel in relation to Master where Rebel is not ‘of the’ Master but is, nevertheless, interior to Mastery as a dangerous supplement. He defines his own supplementarity as follows: “Supplementarity is this: for the relation of these phrases, which are stupid even in Nietzsche’s text, the machinic operations are always too rare, rare rather than absent, partial rather than rare, never accumulating in a Body, a system or a text, irreducible partial and mismatched” (NcH 74).⁵⁷ This supplementarity, now a machinic and materialist supplementarity, is a partial or rare supplement to the text (system or Body) that is never itself a text (system or Body) but only partial. Against the signifying textuality of the Body, it is possible to return to the a-signifying rupture of the syntax: a syntax which is not individuated but individuates (it is not a body, but that which determines the body).

Nietzschean propositions are understood, insofar as they can be understood (they are, for Laruelle, a-signifying), as rebellious and partial supplement to the Master’s statement (a signifying textuality). Returning to the four characteristics of force and will to power, Laruelle suggests that these relations are not ontological categories, nor Heideggerian

⁵⁶ It would be a mistake to suggest that this defines Deleuze’s work as a whole. As Kolozova points out, the notion of unilaterality comes out of Deleuze (as discussed in the Deleuzian problematic: see chapter 3).

⁵⁷ « Supplémentarité veut dire ceci : par rapport à ses phrases, qui sont la bêtise même du texte de Nietzsche, les propositions machiniques sont toujours trop rares, rares plutôt qu’absentes, partielles plutôt que rares, jamais accumulables dans un Corpus, un système ou un texte, irréductiblement partielle et dépareillées » (NcH 74).

existentials, but what he terms *différentials* [différentiaux], written with an ‘a’ as in Derridean *différance* (NcH 96).⁵⁸ Rebellion is the *différential* or supplement of Mastery, functioning as internal motor never subsumed within Mastery—just as the gesture is never subsumed in the speech act. In this case, it must perpetuate itself as a-signifying, never signified, so as to not return to or be appropriated by Mastery. This sovereignty—a “sovereignty of Rebel over Master” (NcH 53)⁵⁹—is a supplement in Mastery, produced by the Rebel as *différance* and insistence of the Other. Laruelle names the sovereignty of this power as a sovereignty of Rebel over Master.⁶⁰ Rebel as dangerous supplement insists upon Mastery as an intensive *différance*. Sovereignty is distinct, here, from origin or primacy, insofar as it retains a position of supplementarity. This is to suggest that it is determinate and generative, but in-the-last-instance, rather than as *a priori*.

The notion of ‘in-the-last-instance’ is raised early in the text, with Laruelle suggesting that the unilateral movement of the syntax determines signification in-the-last-instance. The concept of ‘determination-in-the-last-instance’ (DLI) is important to much of Laruelle’s later work, and it is helpful to look to commentary on that work to aid in the usage here (even if the usage does shift). In non-standard philosophy the One/Real is said to determine philosophy in-the-last-instance. Laruelle suggests that “The DLI is not simply an immanent causality but radical immanence itself—which distinguishes it from every ‘Spinozistic’ immanence, or every immanence derived from Spinozism.”⁶¹ This is an immanence that is immanent to thought itself—just as a-signification is radically immanent to signification. He furthermore suggests that DLI is a ‘unilateral’ movement

⁵⁸ As investigated in more depth in the second and third chapter, *différance* here can be understood as a synthesis of Deleuzian difference and Derridean *différance*.

⁵⁹ « la souveraineté du Rebelle sur le Maître... » (NcH 53).

⁶⁰ “As for the ontico-ontological primacy (sovereignty) of the power [puissance] in this operation, it is explained by the power or libido as Determination in the last instance, is held in relationship with the partial organs of power [*pouvoir*]. As elements in relation of supplementarity (and not of complementarity as in Deleuze) to the relations of power that determine, produce, reproduce and critique, it is this materialist criteria that we seek.” Laruelle, *NCH*, 97.

⁶¹ François Laruelle, *Dictionary of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins, Univocal (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), 10. The relation to Spinozism is dealt with in more depth in chapters 2 and 3.

of the One/Real, as it determines philosophy. The most helpful discussion I've found on this topic comes from Nick Srnicek, who writes,

The DLI therefore names the unilateral determination of philosophy by the One. But since this is a unilateral relation, the One determines a philosophy, without the philosophy in any way determining it. The DLI therefore forms the non-ontological transcendental condition for philosophy.⁶²

The Real determines philosophy, but this is a position of sovereignty rather than primacy, insofar as this determination is not ontological. Thus, it is a condition, but a condition in-the-last-instance, rather than an *a priori* condition or an ontological condition. In other words, it is a determination that is immanent (but not primordial) to philosophy, which nevertheless determines from that position of immanence.

Here, sovereignty is in a unilateral position. It is again helpful to look to non-standard philosophy, as Laruelle's unilaterality is discussed by Katerina Kolozova in *Cut of the Real*. Without at this time going too far in depth into the role of radicalization in non-standard philosophy,⁶³ going through Kolozova's understanding of unilaterality is beneficial to understanding its usage in *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*. Kolozova writes "one can resort to and actively operate in his or her theorizing with the concept of 'unilaterality' one finds in Deleuze, but one can do it without having to 'become a Deleuzian'."⁶⁴ Using the non-standard philosophical practice of 'radicalization,' Kolozova attempts to determine (in-the-last-instance) the radical concept of the unilateral, withdrawn from the Deleuzian oeuvre. This can be understood as an attempt to take Deleuze's concept, rip it from Deleuze, and explore its ramification without having

⁶² Nick Srnicek, "François Laruelle and the Non-Philosophical Tradition," presented at *Symposium on Non-Philosophy*, The University of Warwick, Coventry, UK (March 3, 2010). Retrieved from <https://speculativeheresy.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/srnicek-nick-laruelle-and-the-non-philosophical-tradition.pdf>.

⁶³ The concept of radicalization will be discussed alongside the concept of reduction in the second chapter, page 39.

⁶⁴ Kolozova, *The Cut of the Real*, 4.

to adopt Deleuze's system. The term is radical because it gets to the root of the concept without having to adopt the system as a whole. Thus, Kolozova can take Deleuze's concept and allow it to say something it cannot say within Deleuze's own system. This allows her to suggest that, within non-standard philosophy: "thought correlates unilaterally with the (indifferent) real but does not posit it; or thought is affected by the real or by immanence, but the real does not take the form of meaning that is inscribed upon it."⁶⁵ Without getting into the technicalities of the relation (or lack thereof) between the Real, One, force-(of)-thought, etc., within the non-philosophical 'system,' what is useful here is the way that thought is said to operate unilaterally. What Kolozova does is present Deleuzian unilaterality as the affirmation of the perpetual unfolding of aporias.⁶⁶ Her analysis presents a similar critique to that given in Laruelle's *Philosophies of Difference*, wherein he denounces the 'philosophies of difference' for mixing the aporia under a single term (i.e. for Deleuze, difference is in a unilateral position to Being, mixing Being and becoming). What Kolozova suggests is the unilateral move is the action of singularity that is non-relational. Non-relational, here, meaning that there is no reciprocity between the two parts in the relation insofar as the act only cuts one way: only the singularity cuts the field of identities, the identities cannot cut the singularity. This process of unilaterization can give a more solid foundation for the duplicity of the Nietzsche cut that operates through a sovereign, unilateral non-relation with the Master.

The unilateral relation of Rebel, as sovereign supplement interior *in* (but not of) Mastery, is termed duplicity. Duplicity is neither monism (either...or) nor dualism (both..and), but a *différential*, supplementary relation (or non-relation). Laruelle designates duplicity as "a type of universal selection formulated as inclusive disjunction (contradiction without mediation): the Master assimilates the Rebel [...] but the active Rebel distinguishes herself from the Master, refuses to be recognized as defeated or to posit an image of herself" (NcH 19).⁶⁷ The relationship of Master and Rebel is not mediated, for any

⁶⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 59-64.

⁶⁷ « Duplicité désigne alors un type de rapport universel formulable comme *disjonction inclusive* (contradiction sans médiation) : le Maître s'assimile le Rebelle, se l'approprie ou l'inclut par la loi et la

mediation would return the Rebel to Mastery (as the mediation would form an inscription). Instead, Master attempts to mediate and inscribe the Rebel under a form of Mastery as signification while the Rebel remains indistinct and a-signifying: absent to the Master's presence. But, this indistinction goes further than this relationship: Rebel is indistinct even to the Rebel because the Rebel resists all signification through a-signification. This is a withdrawal from identity because the Rebel exists in a capacity without identity as *différential*. Duplicity operates two poles and four characteristics within this a-signifying chiasm. Laruelle states this problematic "does not contain any term, any essence, but only the networks of duplicity and chiasm" (NcH 33).⁶⁸ Rejecting Mastery, this duplicity is contrary to any and all totalization. Affirmed in the affirmation of duplicity is not an affirmation of a totality, but an affirmation of the a-signifying that is indeterminate from the perspective of Mastery and totality: duplicity is without presence; it is only ever partial (NcH 127).

Considering the above, it is useful to turn to the third thesis of *NcH*, where Laruelle suggests, "Nietzsche puts the Master and Rebel in a relation of duplicity rather than duality. He liquidates the opposition of monism (philosophy of Master or Rebel) and of dualism (contradictory mediation of Master and Rebel)" (NcH 9).⁶⁹ What occurs in the duplicitous movement of this intensive *différance* is thus twofold. Not only is there a duplicity of Master and Rebel, but a duplicity that extends between monism and dualism. Here, Laruelle does not make Nietzsche a thinker of 'either..or' nor 'both...and,' but instead suggests that Nietzsche's duplicity is the a-signifying production of the decision between monism, dualism, and any other possibility. Duplicity is not a connection of both terms into a single term, nor a selection between the two terms. Duplicity is, rather, a withdrawing from the dualism to the internal generation: a supplement of the dualism. It

grâce réunies, mais le Rebelle actif se distingue, lui, du Maître, refuse de se reconnaître comme vaincu ou de poser une image de lui-même » (NcH 19).

⁶⁸ « La Coupure nietzschéenne ne contient aucun terme, aucune essence, mais seulement des rapports de duplicité et de chiasme » (NcH 33).

⁶⁹ « Nietzsche met le Maître et le Rebelle dans un rapport de duplicité plutôt que de dualité. Il liquide l'opposition du monisme (philosophie du Maître *ou* du Rebelle) et du dualisme (contradiction médiatisée du Maître et du Rebelle) » (NcH 9).

would be to suggest that if this is a ‘new image of thought’ it is so in the sense that it is an image that projects nothing beyond partial objects: not quite absence and not quite presence, but a supplement that is neither...nor, a subtraction or reduction from these ideas.

It is now possible to turn to briefly turn to Laruelle’s claim that “Nazis are Nietzschean, but Nietzsche is not a Nazi,” (NcH 51)⁷⁰ with an understanding of Nietzsche’s weak identity as a-signifying Rebel. This is to suggest that the Nazi reading of Nietzsche is the product of signification that is produced by the a-signifying chiasm of Nietzsche. The Nazi reading of Nietzsche is produced by Nietzsche insofar as Nietzsche is the a-signifying, immanent operator of production. The Nazis take up Nietzsche as a figure of signification—producing a textual reading of Nietzsche that brings Nietzsche into their fold. For Laruelle, one can use a citation from Nietzsche to prove whatever one wants, insofar as it emphasizes the role of signification. This is true even of the Nazi reading.

Yet, for Laruelle, Nietzsche remains without identity (there is no Nietzsche-in-itself). Thus, the Nazi reading of Nietzsche, while Nietzschean in a textual or signifying sense, fails to produce Nietzsche in totality, insofar as it places Nietzsche on the side of Master and Fascism by attempting to make it a totality. Thus, the Nazi Nietzsche is a false totality. This is not merely an issue for the vulgar fascistic reading of Nietzsche but extends to those ‘defenders’ of Nietzsche against the Nazi interpretation. Those attempts to defend Nietzsche against the Nazis also fall into the realm of signification, with the attempt to produce a Nietzschean totality through textual interpretation. Rather than signify Nietzsche in a new totality or a new Mastery, Laruelle proclaims that “it is better to re-affirm in Nietzsche what can be said, the position of a politics directed against all Mastery” (NcH 141-142).⁷¹ The quadripartite’s role in this Nietzschean problematic is the power of a-signification, duplicity, supplementarity, and unilaterality against all

⁷⁰ « les nazis sont nietzschéens, mais Nietzsche n’est pas nazi » (NcH 51).

⁷¹ « Les défenseurs de Nietzsche sont parfois si profondément compris par ses adversaires qu’il vaut mieux abandonner les uns avec les autres—et ré-affirmer dans Nietzsche ce qui *peut* l’être, soit les positions d’une politique dirigée contre toute Maîtrise » (NcH 141-142).

forces of Mastery and all works of signification that attempt to dominate thought. It is from this 'position,' as a partial, a-signifying organ of power, that Nietzsche becomes a fascist thinker for better defeating fascism: not simply a particular vulgar fascism, but the fascism of dogmatic thought itself. The goal is, thus, freeing thought from domination without subsequently dominating thought, allowing thought to think, producing a non-standard thought.

Chapter 2

2 Laruelle's Intensive Machinic Materialism

Building on the previous chapter's consideration of the problematic as an a-signifying chiasm or quadripartite, this chapter explores the machinic, materialist, and intensive attributes of the problematic. It begins by exploring the generation of a machinic materialism via a continent of politics: A continent involving a political materialism (duplicitous supplementarity) and a machinic materialism (intensive and libidinal operation). To do this, Laruelle's work on the continent of politics is put in conversation with Louis Althusser's continent of history. This is followed by a discussion on the use of the machinic unconscious as it is developed by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* before examining how Laruelle adopts and alters this concept. This conversation situates the *machinic* in contrast to both *techné* and *physis*. This leads to the distinction between Foucault's work on the statement [*énoncés*] and Laruelle's discussion of Nietzschean propositions on the basis of a materialist critique. Finally, a discussion on the intensive aspects of this machinic unconscious, including the development of *différentials* (from the first chapter) are put forward as not merely Derridean *différance*, but as a supplementary synthesis of Deleuze's materialist and intensive difference (as outlined in *Difference and Repetition*), with this *différance*. Through this, the chapter continues to develop the machinic materialism of the Nietzschean problematic as the operator or determination of identity/signification/textuality.

2.1 The continent of politics and three theses of machinic materialism

Laruelle suggests that the Nietzschean Rebel submits to "a whole other *Spaltung*, non-symbolic, a-signifying, that is to say intensive and *machinic*"(NcH 56).⁷² What is meant by machinic and intensive? Laruelle is constantly referring to the problematic syntax as machinic and propositional, with the machinic element being central to the generation of

⁷² « à une tout autre *Spaltung*, non-symbolique, a-signifiante, c'est-à-dire intensive et machinique. » (NcH 56). *Spaltung* is German for 'cleave' or 'split.'

identity and signification that occurs from the a-signifying syntax.⁷³ Recall from earlier, Nietzsche is a problem or problematic of signification: he is not an identity, but the immanent generator of identity.

While the first chapter of *Nietzsche contre Heidegger* introduces theses on the chiasm or quadripartite, the second chapter opens with theses on the continent of politics. The term ‘continent’ is a play on Louis Althusser’s conception of a ‘continent of history’ in the essay “Philosophy as Revolutionary Weapon.”⁷⁴ In this essay, Althusser envisions the history of thought as developing through the opening of continents: first Plato with a continent of mathematics, then Descartes’ continent of physics, followed by Marx’s continent of history. Each opens up a revolution in thought due to an epistemic break in the production of knowledge. According to Althusser: “like the other breaks which opened up the other two continents that we know, this break inaugurates a history which will never come to an end.”⁷⁵ Furthermore, the influence of Althusser can be seen in the development of a Nietzschean problematic in relation to his Marxist problematic (which is discussed in chapter 3). Althusser’s continent of History is said to be enveloped in the Marxist problematic that is put forward in *For Marx*. It should be noted that the terms problematic and epistemological break are not Althusser’s own, but are borrowed from Jacques Martin and Gaston Bachelard respectively. Via Martin, the problematic is used to,

...designate the particular unity of a theoretical formation and hence the location to be assigned to this specific difference, [while] the concept of an ‘epistemological break’ from Gaston Bachelard [is used] to designate the

⁷³ One example: “Subject to further determinations, this reading must be characterized as ‘machinic’ and materialist as of the matrix of practical politics in Nietzsche-thought,” (NcH 85)

⁷⁴ Louis Althusser, “Philosophy as Revolutionary Weapon” (1968) in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1971) 13-26: 16-18.

⁷⁵ Louis Althusser, “Lenin and Philosophy,” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays* (1971), pp. 23-71: 41.

mutation in the theoretical problematic contemporary with the foundation of a scientific discourse.⁷⁶

Within the Althusserian schema, this break occurs squarely within signification insofar as it is a break from one signified epistemology to another within history. The Nietzschean problematic, implemented by Deleuze and Laruelle, is a political rupture rather than a historical break: it is not bound to history or signification, but constitutes an a-signifying rupture that is a-historical.⁷⁷

In suggesting that Nietzsche opens a continent of Politics, Laruelle signals an epistemic rupture. This allows for the possibility of producing new thought in the political realm, just as Althusser signals a new historical continent in Marx. According to the fourth thesis of *NcH*, “Marx discovers the continent of history, but Nietzsche invents the continent of politics... it implies a new definition of the political” (*NcH* 21).⁷⁸ The clever eliding of ‘discovery’ for ‘invention’ fits in the consideration of Nietzsche as a process rather than individual: Nietzsche is the process who makes possible this new political: a operative politics that is a-signifying, machinic, and intensive.⁷⁹

Just as the continent of history operates through dialectical materialism and historical materialism, the Nietzschean continent of politics contains its own internal process of development. These processes are introduced by Laruelle in the 3rd chapter as political materialism and machinic materialism. Laruelle writes: “Nietzsche invents in a latent manner, a new discipline that is called ‘political materialism,’ destined to occupy and

⁷⁶ Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: The Penguin Press, 1969), 32.

⁷⁷ The distinction between rupture and break is an important one that will be discussed in more depth in the 3rd chapter. On the distinction see Mark G.E. Kelly, “Problematizing the Problematic: Foucault and Althusser” *Angelaki* 23:2 (March 4, 2018): 155-169, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0969725X.2018.1451528>: 156.

⁷⁸ « Marx découvre le Continent Histoire, mais Nietzsche invente le Continent Politique, une Coupure distincte de la marxiste parce qu’elle est spécifiquement politique à la fois par son objet et ses conditions, et qu’elle implique une nouvelle définition de la politique » (*NcH* 21).

⁷⁹ In “Nietzsche and the Engine of Politics,” Biswas Mellamphy suggests that Nietzsche’s is a physiological politics, rather than “a discourse analyzing or criticizing institutions, norms or ideologies: for this sense of politics we would find more cohesive resources in thinkers such as Kant, Marx and Hegel” (141).

replace the position of ‘historical materialism.’... It provides a material determination in the last instance: the libido. It provides its ‘laws,’ syntaxes or articulations: it is not dialectic, and supposes a new concept of contradiction. One called ‘machinic’” (NcH 31).⁸⁰ Political materialism is expanded upon with the introduction of a ‘machinic materialism’ that builds upon dialectic materialism as a discipline ‘correlative and complementary to’ political materialism. It is defined as follows: "it examines in its generality the problems relative to complex relations of power, of the libido, of their modes of articulation: of material and its ‘laws’” (NcH 31).⁸¹ Together, political and machinic materialism designate the continent of politics in the Nietzschean problematic, where the supplementarity (political materialism) of the libidinal forces and complex relations of power (machinic materialism) displace history and the economy in Marx’s formulation (NcH 32). Anthony Paul Smith’s commentary suggests that Laruelle, “reads Nietzsche as a machinic materialist by thinking him *with* Marx, with a dialectical materialism and historical materialism *becoming* political materialism and machinic materialism.”⁸² Following Smith’s analysis, it is notable that Laruelle’s designation is not *contra* Marx in any traditional sense. This is put forward quite clearly in a collision of Nietzsche and Mao that is presented in the seventh chapter:

The political critique of Nietzsche consists in making ‘work’ the Eternal Return of the Same [ERS] and Will to Power [WP] and their syntax in the most diverse fields: for example effectuating the ERS/WP in investigating the problems of theory and play in economic or military strategy; or within the theory of generative grammar. Or operating as a *fusion* (a *différential* fusion) of the ERS/WP with the phenomenology of Marxism. Nietzsche and Mao: one against

⁸⁰ « Nietzsche invente de manière latent une nouvelle discipline, qu’on appellera « Matérialisme politique », destinée à occuper et déplacer les positions du « Matérialisme historique »... Il lui donne sa cause matérielle déterminant en dernière instance : la libido. Il lui donne ses « lois », syntaxes ou articulations : elles ne sont pas dialectiques, et supposent un nouveau concept de la contradiction. On les appellera « machiniques » » (NcH 31).

⁸¹ « ...elle examine dans leur généralité les problèmes relatifs aux rapports complexes du pouvoir, de la libido, de leurs modes d’articulations : de la matière et de ses « lois » » (NcH 31).

⁸² Smith, *Laruelle, A Stranger Thought*, 66. [emphasis mine]

the other, one with the other... the contradictory *différential* fusion of Nietzsche thought with historical materialism as a (theoretical and practical) discursive formation. (NcH 82)⁸³

The *différential* fusion produces a contradiction without mediation between Mao and Marx. The contradiction is not a negation nor a mediation of the two sides, but instead a relation of duplicity. In this relation of duplicity, the Nietzschean problematic element, as *différential* supplement, operates unilaterally upon Maoist thought, producing a more reflexive or ‘plastic’ political formulation.⁸⁴

Considering the above, it is integral to consider the concept of machinic. Laruelle borrows this term from *Anti-Oedipus*, claiming “if [this term] had not be introduced in *Anti-Oedipus*, [it] would need to have been invented for strategic reasons” (NcH 105).⁸⁵ It is helpful to draw upon that text in unpacking this element. *Anti-Oedipus* opens with a discussion on what Deleuze and Guattari term ‘desiring machines.’⁸⁶ Positing machines

⁸³ « La critique politique de Nietzsche consiste à faire « travailler » l’E.R.M./V.P et leur syntaxes dans les champs empiriques les plus divers, apparemment les plus étrangers : par exemple effectuer l’E.R.M./V.P. ou l’investir dans les problèmes de la théorie de la grammaire générative. Ou opérer *la fusion mais différentiale*, de L’E.R.M./V.P. avec phénoménologie, ou le marxisme. Nietzsche et Mao : l’un contre l’autre, l’un avec l’autre... La fusion contradictoire (différentiale) de la pensée-nietzsche avec le Matérialisme historique comme formation discursive (théorique et pratique) » (NcH 82).

⁸⁴ The use of plasticity should not be mistaken for Catherine Malabou’s conception of plasticity, which has to do with neuro-divergency (see Catherine Malabou, *The Ontology of the Accident: An Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, trans. Carolyn Shread, 1 edition (Cambridge: Polity, 2012)). It is instead a sort of political plasticity which allows a political formulation to change shape in order to deal with the Real conditions that operate upon it.

⁸⁵ « Enfin ce terme de machinique, s’il n’avait été introduit par « L’Anti-Œdipe », il aurait fallu de toute façon l’inventer pour des raisons stratégiques » (NcH 105).

⁸⁶ “It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at time, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said the id. Everywhere it is machines—real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections. An organ-machine is plugged into an energy-source machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts. The breast is a machine that produces milks, and the mouth is a machine coupled to it. The mouth of the anorexic wavers between several functions: its possessor is uncertain as to whether it is an eating-machine, an anal machine, a talking-machine, or a breathing machine (asthma attacks). Hence, we are all handymen: each with his little machines. For every organ-machine, an energy-machine: all the time, flows and interruptions. Judge Schreber has sunbeams in his ass. A solar anus. And rest assured that it works: Judge Schreber feels something, produces something

as ‘desiring’ provides an entry into the discussion of machinic materialism as libidinal. Deleuze and Guattari reject a Lacanian understanding of desire as lack. In his commentary on *Anti-Oedipus*, Eugene Holland writes, “Deleuze and Guattari draw inspiration from Nietzschean affirmation: desire, they insist does not lack anything... On the contrary, desire is first and foremost productive force, and what it produces is simply the real world.”⁸⁷ Holland’s insertion of Nietzsche is notable, insofar as Nietzsche largely takes a back seat in Deleuze’s work with Guattari. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari go even so far as to call Nietzsche a thinker of arborescence.⁸⁸ Nevertheless, there is reason for Holland’s connection (one that Laruelle makes as well, given his insistence on the relationship between Nietzsche and the machinic). Evidence for this connection can be gathered from a number of texts written between *Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus*. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze defines the will to power as a ‘Dionysian machine,’ suggesting some relationship between the machinic and Nietzsche.⁸⁹ Furthermore, in the proceedings for the conference *Nietzsche aujourd’hui*, which Deleuze convened in 1972 (the same year as the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*), he describes Nietzsche in terms of an ‘absolute encoding’ that is nevertheless ‘not encodable.’⁹⁰ At this point Nietzsche remains an affirmative operation that both decodes and encodes. The usage of Nietzsche in these later writings is similar to the conception of the machinic unconscious raised in *Anti-Oedipus*. It follows that the affirmative

and is capable of explaining the process theoretically. Something is produced: the effects of a machine, not mere metaphors.” (AO 1-2)

⁸⁷ Eugene Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis*, (New York: Routledge, 1999), 22.

⁸⁸ “Nietzsche’s aphorisms shatter the linear unity of knowledge, only to invoke the cyclic unity of the eternal return, present as the nonknown in thought. This is as much as to say that the fascicular system does not really break with dualism, with the complementarity between a subject and an object, a natural reality and a spiritual reality: unity is consistently thwarted and obstructed in the object, while a new type of unity triumphs in the subject” in Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 6.

⁸⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 263.

⁹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, “Nomadic Thought” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974*, trans. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2004), 252-261: 254.

properties in Nietzsche are reproduced in the affirmative properties of the machinic unconscious. Desiring is a real, affirmative process of machines which, through this desire, produce. Desire is not anterior to the 'machinic' but is the very process of the machine: "Desire and its object are one and the same thing: the machine, as a machine of a machine. Desire is a machine and the object of desire is another machine connected to it" (AO 26). To be machinic is to desire and to produce. Machinic materialism is, for Deleuze and Guattari, and act of desiring production: a connective affirmative desire.

Like Deleuze and Guattari, Laruelle understands this process as affirmative, but he again draws upon the concept of the supplement, placing this affirmation not in an inclusive contradiction to negativity, but in a relation of supplementarity to negativity *and* positivity. Laruelle suggests that there are three affirmations of the machinic process, introduced as the three theses of machinic materialism. Each thesis assumes the others, and they must be taken together. The first thesis, titled "Materialist or Libidinal Thesis," introduces machinic materialism as libidinal and materialist. For Deleuze and Guattari, the "libido is the connective 'labor' of desiring production" (AO 13). It is without need of mediation or sublimation, libido is "only desire and the social, and nothing else" (AO 38). The libido is the energy of production. Holland suggests that Deleuze and Guattari connect the Freudian libido with Marxist labor power through the use of desiring machines: bringing together what they term social production (labor power) and desiring production (libidinal power).⁹¹ Desiring production (a libidinal production) is an unconscious operation of the molecular, which, through the syntheses of connection, disjunction and conjunction, produces or actualizes the molar.⁹² This desiring production is a transcendental force that operates unilaterally upon the molar.

The libido retains this position as unconscious process: "the libido, *as machinic*, operates below/beyond [*en-deçà/au-delà*] all natural or technical energy, there is not a scientific

⁹¹ Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus Introduction to Schizoanalysis*, 23.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 25.

concept ideologically transposed on a philosophical category” (NcH 123).⁹³ This again uses the notion of supplement, insofar as he places the libidinal production (of the will to power) in a position that is outside both natural and technical. Earlier in the text, he makes explicit that will to power is in a position of alterity to *physis* and *techne*, suggesting it is anti-Nietzschean to signify the will to power as either: “The anti-Nietzschean critique confounds ‘will to power’ with a natural energy, again with an energy mastered technically [...] It dodges the opposition of nature and law relating to that which constitutes a supplementarity and a process of production...” (NcH 45).⁹⁴ As Biswas Mellamphy points out in her own discussion, this is not a prioritization of *logos* to *physis* either. The libido is a supplement anterior to *logos*, *physis*, and *techne*.⁹⁵ Laruelle presents this as a critique of both Heidegger and Deleuze insofar as Heidegger reduces will to power to the technical process and Deleuze and Guattari reduce it to a natural energy.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, the libidinal position is retained as supplement to the natural and the technical. It is as an unconscious operation below or beyond; operating unilaterally as a transcendental force.

⁹³ « Puisque la libido *comme machinique* fonctionne en-deçà/au-delà de toute énergétique naturelle ou technique, il n’y a pas ici de concept scientifique transposé en catégorie philosophique » (NcH 123).

⁹⁴ « La critique anti-nietzschéenne confond la « Volonté de puissance » avec une énergie naturelle, donc aussi avec une énergie maîtrisée techniquement [...] Elle esquivé l’opposition de la nature et de la loi par rapport à laquelle elle constitue une supplémentarité et un procès de production... » (NcH 45).

⁹⁵ “Although Nietzsche uses the term *physio-logy*, he does not privilege *logos* (speech, human reason) over *physis* (growth, will to power), nor signifying forces over a-signifying ones; quite the opposite, in fact: privilege is given in his *physio-logy* to the force of *physis*, the a-signifying form-giving process” Biswas Mellamphy, “Nietzsche: The Engine of Politics,” 149. For Biswas Mellamphy, the lack of prioritization is crucial given her reading of Nietzschean *physio-logy*. Her consideration of *physis* as privileged to *logos* should be as a genetic sovereignty, rather than a primacy.

⁹⁶ My own take is Laruelle is not completely justified in this claim that Deleuze and Guattari reduce will to power to a natural energy. I maintain that Deleuze and Guattari’s desiring machines are not, as Laruelle claims a naturalism. Deleuze goes through pains in Nietzsche and Philosophy to distinguish mechanistic from machinic, with the latter operating beyond the mere mechanistic properties and being endowed with the will to power as a generative force that is problematic to naturalism. Even if Deleuze and Guattari refrain from distinguishing man and nature, suggesting a *Homo natura*, this is not an eliding of the machinic with a naturalism, but to suggest that both man and nature are driven by same processes of desiring machines: This is most clearly indicated through the body without organs as a “body without an image” or ‘antiproduction,’ and in this sense an identity without an image (or identity without identity). (AO 4-5)

A second thesis, on the “Syntactic or Machinic in the narrow sense,” understands this libidinal process as a syntax. This thesis works to introduce Derridean *différance* as a supplement to the unconscious forces of desiring production. Laruelle writes,

The ERS/WP problematic contains a thesis relating to the syntax, machinic thesis or *différential*, which introduces a new concept of production, reproduction and consumption. It poses the ‘primacy’ of an active-affirmative *différance* over the contradiction by the differential *form* (Althusser) or by negativity which remains, both from representation. (NcH 125)⁹⁷

With the Deleuze-Guattarian rupture of desire as lack, negativity no longer holds the power of production: desiring-production strips negativity of its productive power. Nevertheless, the affirmation posited by Laruelle is not a contradiction of or in opposition to negativity. Rather, as expressed above, negativity is the opposite of positivity. Affirmation, in Laruelle, is the supplement that is anterior to both positivity and negativity.⁹⁸ For Laruelle, *différance* comes to take the vacant position left by negativity in the move from dialectical materialism to political materialism. Thus, where negativity was the force of production in dialectical materialism, political materialism grants that position to an affirmative *différance*. Political materialism places the libidinal operation in a place of supplementarity. Laruelle places this alongside the Deleuzian oeuvre, suggesting that this affirmation is the “affirmation of the primacy of becoming over Being (over presence and absence), the subordination of lack and the negative to the Other as *différance*, which affirms the primacy of the material over representation” (NcH

⁹⁷ « ...la problématique E.R.M./V.P. contient une thèse portant sur la syntaxe, thèse machinique ou différentiale, qui introduit une nouvelle conception de la production, de la reproduction et de la consommation. Elle pose la « primauté » de la différence active-affirmative sur la contradiction ou plutôt sur toute *spécification* de la contradiction par la *forme* différentielle (Althusser) ou par la négativité, qui restent l’une et l’autre prises de la représentation » (NcH 125).

⁹⁸ This is distinct from the picture of affirmation and negation explored in Deleuze via chapter 1. Where Deleuze uses the term affirmation, Laruelle places the positivity. Affirmation, here, is supplement to both affirmation and negation as presented in chapter 1.

125).⁹⁹ As in Deleuze, Laruelle institutes this transcendental operation in a primacy over representation (the image of thought, or Mastery); the libidinal, a-signifying motor that generates signification. Again, this position—with the motor of *différance* replacing the negative motor of dialectical materialism—is not a negation of dialectical materialism, but a displacement and transformation that continues the Marxist form in a new light (NcH 126).

The third thesis, “Machinic Thesis in the broad sense or the Functional Synthesis of Sovereignty,” brings into the conversation the already discussed principle of sovereignty. This thesis signals a “hierarchy without presence, without the mediation of generalities of representation” (NcH 126-127).¹⁰⁰ The position *différance* takes in relation to representation—the position the Rebel takes in relation to Mastery—is a hierarchical one. This would appear a contradiction, insofar as the hierarchy of *différance* over representation would seem to imply a new domination. Laruelle’s aim is to get past this contradiction through his use of duplicity and supplementarity. He does this by instituting the relation of *différance* to representation not as a primacy (as the second thesis would imply) but as a sovereignty: “A non-metaphysical or non-representational hierarchy, *the hierarchy of inclusive disjunction or duplicity, also without presence*” (NcH 127).¹⁰¹ The third thesis, then, institutes a sovereignty of the first thesis over the second, insofar as the libidinal thesis institutes a reduction from hierarchical domination in the traditional sense. Laruelle puts forward an understanding of the first two thesis in the production of the third:

This hierarchy of inclusion affirms *the sovereignty of the materialist thesis over the syntactical thesis*, of the libidinal thesis over the machinic thesis. But in such a way that, as indicated in the first thesis, the second (dominated) thesis contributes

⁹⁹ « ...l’affirmation de la primauté du devenir sur l’Être (sur la présence et l’absence), la subordination du manque et du négatif à l’Autre comme différence, que l’affirmation de la primauté de la matière sur la représentation » (NcH 126).

¹⁰⁰ « ... hiérarchie sans présence, sans la médiation des généralités de la représentation » (NcH 126-127).

¹⁰¹ « une hiérarchie non-métaphysique ou non-représentative, *la hiérarchie d’une inclusion disjonctive ou d’une duplicité elle aussie sans présence...* » (NcH 127).

to (circle) an intrinsic determination of the first (at once its means and effect), while this affirms the becoming-material or libidinal of syntaxes. (NcH 127)¹⁰²

Différance is a libidinal operation; sovereign but not primary. The cut does not precede representation but is nevertheless in a position of sovereignty to the representation that it cuts; it determines what it cuts in-the-last-instance. It should be recognized that Laruelle closes his discussion of this thesis with an addendum, suggesting that *différance* can be placed alongside both first and second thesis: “the first thesis (*différance* as political-libidinal material around which production turns) than the second (*différance* as non-specific and non-technical cut, but machinic, of the libido)” (NcH 128).¹⁰³ In Laruelle’s understanding, *différance* is not an identity but the Nietzschean rupture of signification, wherein the syntax of the eternal return and will to power breaks with the representational forces of signification.

2.2 The principle of reduction used to distinguish machines from mechanisms and propositions from statements.

Laruelle agrees with Deleuze and Guattari that the machinic is not mechanistic. In *Anti-Oedipus* the mechanistic is tied to the mechanism of a molar structure, while the machinic is in an operation on the molecular or unconscious (AO 40). In a break from Lacan, they insist that “the unconscious itself is no more structural than personal, it does not symbolize any more than it imagines or represents; it engineers, it is machinic. Neither imaginary nor symbolic, it is the Real in itself, the ‘impossible real’ and its production” (AO 53). While a coherent definition of ‘machinic,’ in contrast to the mechanistic, is never given in *Anti-Oedipus*, the introduction of Guattari’s *The Machinic Unconscious* does provide some help: “why stick this label of ‘machinic unconscious’

¹⁰² « Cette hiérarchie d’inclusion affirme *la souveraineté de la thèse matérialiste sur la thèse syntaxique*, de la thèse libidinale sur la thèse machinique. Mais de telle sorte que, comme l’indique la formulation de la première thèse, la seconde thèse (dominée) contribue (cercle) à déterminer intrinsèquement la première (comme à la fois son moyen et son effet), tandis que celle-ci affirme le devenir-matériel ou libidinal des syntaxes » (NcH 127).

¹⁰³ « ...bien la première thèse (la *différance* comme matérialité politico-libidinale autour de laquelle tourne la production) que la seconde (la *différance* comme coupure non-spécifique et non-technique, mais machinique, de la libido) » (NcH 128).

onto it? Simply to stress that it is populated not only with images and words, but also with all kinds of machinisms that lead it to produce and reproduce these images and words.”¹⁰⁴ Deleuze, too, gives a more coherent definition in work produced without Guattari. In his conversations with Claire Parnet, he provides a summary that distinguishes machinic from mechanism and gives credence to the logic of machinic as operational:

Machine, machinism, 'machinic': this does not mean either mechanical or organic. Mechanics is a system of closer and closer connections between dependent terms. The machine by contrast is a 'proximity' grouping between independent and heterogeneous terms (topological proximity is itself independent of distance or contiguity). What defines a machinic assemblage is the shift of a centre of gravity along an abstract line. As in Kleist's marionette, it is this shift which gives rise to actual lines or movements. It may be said that the machine, in this sense, points to the unity of a machine operator. But this is wrong: the machine operator is present in the machine, 'in the centre of gravity', or rather of speed, which goes through him. That is why it is useless to say that certain movements are impossible for the machine - on the contrary, these are the movements such a machine makes because one of its parts is a man... The machine is a proximity grouping of man-tool-animal-thing. It is primary in relation to them since it is the abstract line which crosses them and makes them work together. It is always astride several structures, as in Tinguely's constructions. The machine, in requiring the heterogeneity of proximities, goes beyond the structures with their minimum conditions of homogeneity. A social machine always comes first in relation to the men and animals it takes into its 'stock'.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Felix Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious*, trans. Taylor Adkins. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), 10.

¹⁰⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, Rev. ed, European Perspectives (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 104.

In this definition, the machine can be read, in part, as the libidinal complementary of an assemblage.¹⁰⁶ The machinic is not merely a series of mechanisms operating between organs, but it is the internal generator or genetic operation that puts the organs in place. The machinic materialism precedes both identity and the mechanisms between identities.

As suggested in the first synthesis of machinic materialism, Deleuze's distinction of machinic to mechanistic is extended to the technical. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the machinic unconscious is distinct from the "social, technical relation to the men and animals it takes into its 'stock'... ['and to the] organic,' which are of a molar order, while the machinic is of the molecular order" (AO 286, 289). Machinic materialism is of the molecular unconscious, generating molar structures. The technical, the social, the organic, the signifying, the textual, etc., are all molar. This distinction is important for Laruelle, insofar as the technical is a representation (NcH 104). Again, the machinic operating in a supplementary and sovereign relation to the opposition of *physis* and *techné*: the machinic is the "*politically intrinsic libidinal* or Relations of power, becoming the material determined-determinate [*déterminante-déterminée*] of the political" (NcH 105).¹⁰⁷ Machinic is not technical, mechanical, or natural, but ruptures these categories as unconscious, a-signifying, libidinal, and material. In a position of sovereignty, the machinic materialism determines these identities.

Considering this distinction, it is also useful to understand how Laruelle distinguishes machinic materialism as a Nietzschean proposition from Foucauldian statements [*énoncés*]. This distinction is notable for Laruelle's understanding of Nietzsche's use of the aphorism.¹⁰⁸ Laruelle states, "Nietzsche emits real propositions with a determined

¹⁰⁶ Though, against Laruelle's reading of Deleuze's structure as one of complementarity, the abstract line could be read more in terms of a supplementarity to the parts of the assemblage—what is here rendered the "speed, which goes through."

¹⁰⁷ « *la libido dévient intrinsèquement politique* ou Rappports de pouvoir, devient la matière déterminant-déterminée de la politique » (NcH 105).

¹⁰⁸ And, at least to some degree, the distinction between the Althusserian rendering of Marx's problematic of history from Laruelle's Nietzschean problematic of politics. Though the relationship is, perhaps, not explicit, Foucault's use of statements is, at least to some degree, connected with his concept of *episteme*, insofar as both concepts are used to define a field in which a discourse can take place. The concept of the *episteme* is fundamentally related to the concept of an epistemic break or the problematic in the work of

syntax that cannot be reduced to a logico-grammatical syntax nor a speculative articulation” (NcH 70).¹⁰⁹ He suggests that these propositions [*propositions*] are distinct from what Foucault, in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, calls statements. Foucault takes great care in defining statements. He makes clear that statements are distinct from the discourses they relate to, as he includes a long explanation for why statements are difficult to define in the first place. He does suggest that the statement is in some way an ‘atom’ of a discourse, but that this is an insufficient explanation. A few pages later, he provides something of a negative definition: “the statement is not the same kind of unit as the sentence, the proposition, or the speech act; it cannot be referred, therefore, to the same criteria; but neither is it the same kind of unit as a material object, with its limits and independence.”¹¹⁰ Foucault continues to suggest that the statement is neither material nor linguistic, and that it is not a structure of the discourse. It is instead:

A function of existence that properly belongs to signs and on the basis of which one may then decide, through analysis or intuition, whether or not they ‘make sense,’ according to what rule they follow one another or are juxtaposed, of what they are the sign, and what sort of act is carried out by the formulation (oral or written). One should not be surprised, then, if one has failed to find structural criteria of unity for the statement; this is because it is not in itself a unit, but a function that cuts across a domain of structures and possible unities, and which reveals them, with concrete contents, in time and space.¹¹¹

Althusser. Althusser himself suggests that Foucault’s notion of *episteme* is indebted to Althusser’s use of the problematic, writing, “As for Foucault, the uses he explicitly or implicitly makes of the concept of ‘break’ and ‘problematic’ are echoes either of Bachelard, or of my own systematic ‘use’ of Bachelard (as far as ‘break’ is concerned) and of what I owe to my unfortunate friend Martin (for ‘problematic’)” in Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: The Penguin Press, 1969), 287. Given that the terms are at least in the same area of theory, the displacement of Foucault’s concept may be helpful in the displacement of the Althusserian one.

¹⁰⁹ « Or Nietzsche émet de véritables propositions, avec une syntaxe déterminée qui n’est réductible ni à la syntaxe logico-grammaticale, ni à l’articulation dialectique-spéculative » (NcH 70).

¹¹⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge: And the Discourse on Language*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. (New York, NY: Vintage, 1982), 86.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

The statement remains a function of signification, even if it is not reducible to signification. In an essay on Foucault, Deleuze describes statements: “A statement always represents a transmission of particular elements distributed in a corresponding space. As we shall see, the formations and transformations of these spaces themselves pose topological problems that cannot adequately be described in terms of creation, beginning, or foundation.”¹¹² According to Deleuze, the statement functions as the transmission of a *regularity*: “it represents, not an average, but rather the whole statistical curve.”¹¹³ Deleuze conceives of statements as multiplicities that are distinguished by thresholds: a new statement ruptures the threshold of the old as epistemic break. It is on this basis that Laruelle suggests that Deleuze affirms Foucauldian statements. The difference Laruelle puts forward between statement and proposition can then be generated as such: the proposition exists as sovereign to both statement and signification, no matter the relationship between statement and signification.

Laruelle acknowledges Deleuze’s reading of statement as multiplicity but renders these multiplicities as produced by the Nietzschean syntax. He suggests that this syntax is the “condition of other syntaxes, in particular of the distribution of the singular points of the statement, or of the statements between them” (NcH 71).¹¹⁴ This distinction is notable given that, for Foucault, the statement is not merely textual, even if it is said to belong to signs. To give a simplistic account, statements can be understood as the ‘atom of discourse’ even if not reducible to that position.¹¹⁵ A distinction between the Nietzschean proposition and the Foucauldian statement can be situated in the distinction between ‘in interiority’ and ‘of interiority’ raised in chapter one. Here the statement operates as an interiority that belongs to the discourse—a complementary attribute (*of*

¹¹² Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 3.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹¹⁴ « conditionne les autres syntaxes, en particulier celle de la répartition des points singuliers des énoncés, ou des énoncés entre eux dans la quasi-totalité qu’ils forment. » (NcH 71). The use of *singular points* here is imperative, given the discussion of singular points in the Deleuzian problematic in chapter 3.

¹¹⁵ Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, 80.

interiority) while the proposition (as problematic syntax) operates *in* interiority to the statement and discourse, but as a supplement. Nevertheless, this distinction is not sufficient for differentiating the statement and the proposition, as the latter has yet to be defined.

Laruelle suggests that the Nietzschean text does not give statements in a typical sense, but,

...consists precisely in producing and reproducing statements, phrases, texts, in the form of this complex syntax and *reduces* [*réduire*] (=critique) only their semantic, formal, stylistic, and judicative (discursive) properties, to the least ideological reflection of their properties in the definition of the being-Nietzschean or machinic-materialist (NcH 71).¹¹⁶

The notion of *reduction* is central to this analysis. The *différential* is not an expansion from the syntax, but a reduction or withdrawal from the ideological. In a move foreshadowing the non-standard philosophical practice of radicalization to a generic identity, the Nietzschean proposition is the reduction of the statement from its ideological properties: Nietzschean propositions are the generic reduction of the statement.

It is useful to again turn to Laruelle's later work to expand on this notion of radicalization. This can provide a better understanding of the process of the reduction to its generic condition. Radicalization was mentioned in the first chapter, insofar as the concept of the unilateral in Laruelle is a radicalization of Deleuze's concept of the unilateral, and it is worth continuing along that example. Katerina Kolozova explains radicalization as the attempt to explain the inner 'working of the real' that reside behind (as syntax) the "transcendental material or philosophical *chôra* that thought operates with."¹¹⁷ The process of radicalization takes up that philosophical material and attempts

¹¹⁶ « Nietzsche consiste justement à *produire* et à reproduire les énoncés, les phrases, les textes dans la forme de cette syntaxe complexe, et à *réduire* (= critique) sinon leur propriétés sémantiques, formelles, stylistiques et judicatives (discursives), du moins la réflexion idéologique de ces propriétés dans la définition de leur être-nietzschéen ou machinique-matérialiste. » (NcH 71)

¹¹⁷ Kolozova *Cut of the Real*, 3.

to radicalize it by withdrawing it from the philosophical system of which it is apart. This is an attempt to understand the syntax determining those materials in-the-last-instance:

For example, one can resort to and actively operate in his or her theorizing with the concept of ‘unilaterality’ one finds in Deleuze, but one can do it without having to ‘become a Deleuzian’ and use it only in ways that are determined by Deleuze’s system (or ‘organized thought’) as presented in *Difference ad Repetition* and his other works. In order to accomplish this, one has to ‘radicalize’ the term, that is, reduce it to its ‘transcendental minimum’ or to the conceptual content that describes the workings of the real that have necessitated it (the concept), to its determination in the last instance. In order to arrive to the radical concept, thought has to correlate only with the real and in an immanent way [*de la manière immanente*] rather than with the entire conceptual apparatus of a school of thinking.¹¹⁸

The concept of unilaterality is determined (unilaterally, one might add) by the Real, but does not reciprocally mediate the Real. Insofar as this concept is unilaterally determined by the Real, it is generically reduced from the larger philosophical system of thought in which it is instituted, and instead able to be used as a (fictional) tool withdrawn from that system of thought.

Yet, one does not need to go to the later work to consider the genericity of statements. Even here in *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*, Laruelle suggests that the statement bears, simultaneously, “on the one hand an individuality and on the other, a generality of a generic type” (NcH 78).¹¹⁹ The statement is not signifying but withdrawn from its position in signification. A distinction can be made between the statement as text and its reduction to a machinic proposition:

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 4.

¹¹⁹ « à la fois en deçà de l’individualité et au-delà de la généralité de type générique. » (NcH 78)

More simply the productive and critical reading of the Nietzschean 'text' implies that one knows how to operate the distinction of a descriptive phrase or a judgement from a machinic proposition (the critique [or reduction] of Nietzsche in their ideological appearance); that one can distinguish, of a traditional evaluation of Nietzsche's texts, and a true, Nietzschean and machinic evaluation. (NcH 72)¹²⁰

The productive reading of the Nietzschean text does not treat the text as an ideological structure. Instead, it reduces the text from the ideological structure of the text, treating the text as a generic and non-ideological proposition (withdrawn from the ideological statement). The work is condensed in the internal, *différential* syntax that generates both statement and proposition.

Considering the above, the critical reading of Nietzsche, via Laruelle, is the reduction of statements to propositions, providing an understanding of Nietzsche's text as aphoristic. Aphorisms, read as non-ideological, are propositions developed through the syntax. Laruelle notes "the actual production and destruction of statements or propositions, finally condensing in the 'canonical' or 'invariant' syntax... is the internal 'law' of the aphorism" (NcH 76).¹²¹ In other words, he is suggesting that the proper reading of Nietzsche is not an examination of the text as such—as ideological product—but an exploration of the aphorism as a reduction from ideology: one that develops out of the Nietzschean problematic/syntax. Aphorism is reduced from the ideological and is understood as immanent to (but not of) the ideological. Under Laruelle's schema, the aphorism is a relation of transversality, not a principle of verticality or transcendence (NcH 87). Aphorisms are always home to the transversality of the syntactical problematic that rumbles beneath its surface, cutting and reducing. Laruelle writes that the syntax "in

¹²⁰ « Plus simplement la lecture productive et critique du « texte » nietzschéen implique qu'on sache opérer la distinction d'une phrase descriptive ou d'un jugement, et d'une proposition machinique (soit la critique des énoncés nietzschéens dans leur apparence idéologique) ; qu'on sache distinguer, d'une évaluation traditionnelle que note Nietzsche, une vraie évaluation nietzschéenne et machinique » (NcH 72).

¹²¹ « la production proprement dite des énoncés ou des propositions ainsi qu'à leur destruction, toutes enfin se condensant dans la syntaxe « canonique » ou « invariante » [...] et qui est en quelque sorte la « loi » interne de l'aphorisme » (NcH 87).

the aphorism is not mixed, a representation, a qualitative (generic or specific) generality, precisely because it is a strictly ‘individualized’ and irreducible *partial* generality” (NcH 88).¹²² What appears is a relationship between reading the aphorism as non-ideological and generic to an act of discerning the a-signifying syntax through the reduction of statement to proposition.

2.3 On the attribute of intensity

Even with some definition of the machinic and proposition in place, an understanding of these processes as materialist remains opaque. The most obvious point of reference is the relationship with historical and dialectical materialism, which serve as the basis for political and machinic materialism respectively. While these terms are not used by Marx, his work in *The German Ideology* serves as a basis for the materialist consideration of history. The premise for this materialism comes out of its contrast to German Idealism:

In direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth, here is a matter of ascending from earth to heaven. That is to say, not of setting out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh; but setting out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process demonstrating the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process.¹²³

Marx rejects historical movement as ideological progression, insisting that materialist production in the real is the driving force. Marx’s distinction fits with Laruelle’s positioning of a-signification as sovereign to signification, with the latter playing the role of ideological overdetermination of the real syntax, much as in Marx’s diagnosis where the ideological overdetermines life.

¹²² « l’aphorisme n’est pas une mixte, une représentation, un généralité qualitative (générique ou spécifique), justement parce qu’il est une généralité rigoureusement « individualisée » comme irréductiblement *partielle* » (NcH 88).

¹²³ Karl Marx, *The German Ideology including Theses on Feuerbach and Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998), 42.

Nevertheless, given the influence of Deleuze (and Althusser) on *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*, there might be something added to Marxist materialism from the Spinozist lineage. A discussion of Spinoza is especially pertinent given the move from dialectic to problematic.¹²⁴ In *Reading Capital*, Althusser reads Marx through Spinoza to keep Marx from a “classical conception of the economic object” where the economic object is determined by something outside itself.¹²⁵ Althusser puts forward an alternative wherein “the structure is immanent in its effects, a cause immanent in its effects in the Spinozist sense of the term, that the *whole existence of the structure consists in its effects*, in short that the structure, which is merely a specific combination of its peculiar elements, is nothing outside its effects.”¹²⁶

While, for reasons that will become clear later, it would be a mistake to suggest that Laruelle adopts this Spinozist framework, his persistent utilization of the attribute *intensive* to describe machinic materialism points to some relation with the Spinozist side of Deleuze.¹²⁷ The concept of intensity is linked to Deleuze’s interpretation of the will to power. For Deleuze, force is mechanistic while the will to power is machinic. Will to power is “the differential and genetic element” internal to production (NP 51). It is the

¹²⁴ Mustafa Cemal argues that the Althusserian problematic absconds the dialectic in Marx for a Spinozism. In Mustafa Cemal, “Althusser’s rejection of dialectics through Spinoza,” *Marxists.org*: <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/hegel/txt/althusse.htm>

¹²⁵ Louis Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Verso Books, 1970), 189

¹²⁶ *Ibid.* This text is quoted in Cemal’s “Althusser’s rejection of dialectics via Spinoza.” The full quote from *Reading Capital* is worth reproducing: “The structure is not an essence outside the economic phenomena, which comes and alters their aspect, forms and relations, and which is effective on them as an absent cause, absent because it is outside them. *The absence of the cause in the structure’s ‘metonymic causality’ on its effects ins not the fault of the exteriority of the structure with respect to the economic phenomena; on the contrary, it is the very form of the interiority of the structure, as a structure, in its effects.* This implies, therefore, that the effects are not outside the structure, are not a pre-existing object, element or space in which the structure arrives to *imprint its mark*: on the contrary, it implies that the structure is immanent in its effects, a cause immanent in its effects in the Spinozist sense of the term, that *the whole existence of the structure consists in its effects*, in short that the structure, which is merely a specific combination of its peculiar elements, is nothing outside its effects.”

¹²⁷ Deleuze’s reading of Nietzsche and Spinoza are linked. This is no more clearly seen than at the beginning to Deleuze’s book *Spinoza Practical Philosophy*, which opens with a discussion on Nietzsche. See Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 3.

aspect of forces that determines their interaction—the selective or evaluative element which interprets forces, providing the evaluative or interpretive aspects of production (NP 53). Deleuze provides a Spinozist reading of Nietzsche where forces interact in dominant and dominating relations that follow Spinoza’s understanding of the affects.¹²⁸ He states in his short book on Spinoza: “The Spinozists are... Hölderlin, Kleist, and Nietzsche, because they think in terms of speeds and slowness, of frozen catatonias, and accelerated movements, unformed elements, nonsubjectified affects”.¹²⁹ Deleuze considers Nietzsche as a thinker of affects—now forces, speeds and slowness—intersecting with one another. For him, the will to power is the internal syntax or motor of these movements. It is in these movements that the concept of intensity comes about.

A bridge can be built between Deleuze’s writings on the will to power in *NP* and the concept of intensity from *DR* through an essay titled “Conclusions on the Will to Power and the Eternal Return,” published in between the two texts. Deleuze states: “Nietzsche was interested in physics as a science of intensive qualities, and ultimately he was aiming at the will to power as an ‘intensive’ principle, as a principle of *pure intensity*—because the will to power does not mean wanting power.”¹³⁰ Pure intensity marks the extension of the will to power in the Deleuzian oeuvre. In *DR*, Deleuze considers

Pure intensity insofar as it is implicated in that deep region where no quality is developed, or any extensity deployed. In this case, we define energy in terms of the difference buried in this pure intensity and it is the formula ‘difference of intensity’ which bears the tautology, but this time the beautiful and profound tautology of Difference. (DR 240)

Difference of intensity is pure intensity—a Spinozist and immanent production that operates as difference in itself.

¹²⁸ Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. Edwin Curley. (London: Penguin, 1994), I. P27.

¹²⁹ Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, 129.

¹³⁰ Gilles Deleuze, “Conclusions on the Will to Power and the Eternal Return” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts: 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004) 117-128: 122.

The concept of intension is related to the Kantian notion of extension. In *The Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant develops ‘magnitudes’ for the possibility of rationally deriving causal relations within phenomenal conditions.¹³¹ Defining magnitudes as, “the unity of the assembly of the manifold homogenous in thought,” Kant understands magnitudes as phenomenal appearances.¹³² Extensive magnitudes are principles of the intuition or reason, relating to mathematical axioms. They are derived via deductive reason. As such, these magnitudes can be derived rationally, prior to real instantiation. Kant defines extension as:

...a magnitude where the presentation of the parts makes possible (and hence necessarily precedes) the presentation of the whole. I can present no line, no matter how small, without drawing it in thought, i.e. without producing from one point onward all the parts little by little and thereby tracing this intuition in the first place.¹³³

Extensive magnitudes are axiomatic rules that exist *a priori* to empirical observation. This is expressed in “the conditions of sensible *a priori* intuition under which alone the schema of a pure concept of outer appearance can come about—e.g. the axiom that is between two points only one straight line is possible.”¹³⁴ Similar to the geometrical method of Spinoza or Descartes, extension is an *a priori* structure developed from the appearance of the aggregate via rational deduction.

Intensive magnitudes develop alongside the extensive as perceptive and sensational. They are the *a posteriori* in relation to the *a priori*. Kant places intension in relation to

¹³¹ See Brent Adkins, “To Have Done with the Transcendental: Deleuze, Immanence, Intensity,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 32, no. 3 (2018): 533–43: 535.

¹³² Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar and Patricia Kitcher, Unified ed (Indianapolis, Ind: Hackett Pub. Co, 1996), A162, B203. On the concept of magnitudes, see Daniel Sutherland, “The Role of Magnitude in Kant’s Critical Philosophy,” *Canadian Journal of Philosophy* 34, no. 3 (January 2004): 411–41, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00455091.2004.10716573>.

¹³³ Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, A162-163, B203.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, A163, B204. This citation closes with Euclid’s first axiom—an important one, insofar as it is rejected in some alternative forms of geometry.

perception: “The principle that anticipates all perception, as such, reads thus: In all appearances sensation as well as the real that corresponds to it in the object, has an intensive magnitude, i.e. a degree.”¹³⁵ Intension is a magnitude of degree, an appearance of sensation rather than intuition or reason, a degree from zero.¹³⁶ Kant describes it as the magnitude of the real: an appearance that comes out of real experience, rather than developed in the intuition. Intensity, as perceptive, follows a rationality of induction. Extensive difference is distinct from intensive difference insofar as the former is an absolute, abstract difference (a difference in kind) while intensive difference is a difference in degree.

Kant recognizes both magnitudes as altered in spatio-temporal relations.¹³⁷ Even the *a priori* falls under the sovereignty of space and time. There is a synthetic continuity between the two magnitudes, where changes in the Real alter the extensive properties derived in the intuition. Nevertheless, in posing the extensive as *a priori* to the real/intensive, Kant retains a hierarchical relationship of primacy between the two in their synthetic unity. Because, for Kant, one can only measure change under the transcendental illusion of phenomena (via the extensive magnitude of intuition), extension is not understood as real, but it nevertheless is present as an *a priori* primacy over intension and the real.¹³⁸ The axiomatic conditions of extensive magnitudes render the intensive magnitude (that is particular to the real) as immanent to (in the sense of an ‘interiority of’) the extensive.

Retaining the principle of inclusive disjunction, one can think intension in Deleuze as the closure of the negative. It is here that the influence of Spinoza is apparent. In *The Ethics*, Spinoza conceives of an infinite substance, God, which contains all finite things. On this basis, Deleuze introduces his equation—monism=pluralism—where a theory of the one

¹³⁵ Ibid., A166, B207.

¹³⁶ Ibid., A166, B208

¹³⁷ Ibid., A170, B212.

¹³⁸ See Adkins, “To Have Done with the Transcendental,” 536.

(God) is simultaneously inclusive of the plurality of beings. From the perspective of monism there is no negation. Instead, there is only intensive change within the plurality. This change is intensive because all modes differ only in degree, insofar as they are all modes of God.¹³⁹

Through this understanding of intensity, Deleuze aims to invert the Kantian structure by placing intension in a place of primacy over extension. In one example this is shown through the distinction between ordinal and cardinal numbers. Ordinal numbers are ordered based on a spatial relation of real intension. Their numbering is a weak abstraction that only signals where each object is placed in relation to the other objects. Objects in a line are relayed as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd on the basis of their intensive relations. There can be no negation here, but only a movement within the spatial coordinates, changing the order of the numbers. Cardinal numbers are of the intuition, existing as a strong abstraction. These include the numbers 0, 1, 2, 3, etc. Cardinal numbers are not present in the real, but only in the intuition (DR 232-233).¹⁴⁰ Beneath and immanent to the docile and equalizable sameness of the cardinal lies the rumblings of a differential, intensive ordinality: an ordinality that renders itself as the determination or problematic of the cardinal.

Following this, it is not difficult to ascertain why Laruelle suggests that Deleuze turns the will to power (as intensity) into a naturalism. If Deleuze does retain will to power as naturalism, then he stays on the side of signification, insofar as *physis* is signification (NcH 45). Whether or not Laruelle's suggestion that Deleuze institutes will to power as a naturalism is accurate, a larger rupture is at play. There is, I argue, a deeper division that takes place on the basis of the role that Spinozist metaphysics play in the development of intensity in Deleuze and Laruelle's thought—with the element of supplementarity in Laruelle signaling a rupture of the Spinozist complementarity.

¹³⁹ Spinoza, *Ethics*, I. P15.

¹⁴⁰ Deleuze returns to this distinction in his work with Guattari, specifying that the “ordinal, directional, nomadic, articulated number, the numbering number pertains to smooth space, just as the numbered number [cardinal] pertains to the striated space” (in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 285). The ordinal and distance become the problematic alternatives to the axiomatic cardinal and extensive magnitude.

Laruelle does not explicitly define ‘intensive’ in *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*, but the fact that it is perpetually raised alongside the concept of the libido and the machinic suggest an origin in Deleuze, with the three concepts operating as attributes of the machinic syntax of the will to power/eternal return. As in Deleuze’s work, intensity is the productive force in desiring production. It is put into conversation with the libido: “libido as intensive: It’s the fluctuation or oscillation of the libido when it goes through the circle of the ERS or of affirmation, the circle of jouissance, or rarely, decidedly narrow, even entangled in the primary repression” (NcH 117).¹⁴¹ This is as close to a definition as Laruelle gives. Nevertheless, it is possible to put forward an understanding of Laruellean intensity on the basis of the other principles put forward thus far. In Deleuze, intensity develops through a Spinozist ontology where the monistic is in a complementary inclusive disjunction with the pluralistic.¹⁴² Here, the pluralistic is said to differ only in intensity, insofar as it is *of* the monistic. For Laruelle, there is a rejection of this complementarity for a supplementarity (as is explored in chapter 1). Laruelle’s use of supplementarity and *différential* ruptures the Deleuzian reliance on this Spinozist metaphysics insofar as the Spinozist monism is ruptured because the problematic is a *différential supplement*. Intensity, in Laruelle, must be an intensity without the Spinozist heritage; one that elides the monist-pluralist tautology of difference in Deleuze: a tautology which itself becomes a form of Mastery. Laruelle’s use of intensity can be theorized through the prospect of a critical *reduction*—cut from its heritage, reduced to a generic concept. In continuing the language of intensity, Laruelle reduces the intensive to its generality, promoting an intensity without the Spinozist lineage. Laruelle breaks from the Spinozist aspects of Deleuzian intensity, putting forward a concept that is taken from Deleuze and Althusser’s Spinozism, but one that ruptures the Spinozist aspect of that concept: again, a reduction of the concept to its generic principles. Intensity is cut and

¹⁴¹ « ...de la libido comme intensité : c’est la fluctuation ou l’oscillation de la libido lorsqu’elle passe dans l’anneau de l’E.R.M. ou de l’affirmation, anneau de la jouissance ou de la rareté, décidément étroit, voire étranglé par le refoulement primaire » (NcH 117).

¹⁴² Laruelle distinguishes his conception of the non-standard philosophical One from the Spinozist One (or God) in his paper “Letter to Deleuze” (1988) trans. Robin Mackay, in *From Decision to Heresy: Experiments in Non-Standard Thought*, eds. Robin Mackay (Windsor Quarry, UK: Urbanomic, 2012): 393-401.

withdrawn from its Spinozist framework. As such, it can be read as infused with supplementarity as an intensive alterity or machinism that is not of God, nor of the assemblage. An intensive alterity is present in Laruelle's machinic materialism in the adoption of the supplement, given the distinction between *of* and *in*, where *in* can be bracketed, signaling no inclusion with what it is immanent (*in*). This intensity is, then, a unilaterality that *never* permits a rejoinder with its Other, because the unilaterality is not a Deleuzian difference in itself, but the Other as *différance*: an Other that refuses any signification, representation or name; a refusal to become a Master. It is, then, each time a *différance*, not a tautology of difference.

Chapter 3

3 Nietzschean Problematics

With the aforementioned materials consolidated, it is now possible to conceptualize the Nietzschean problematic from *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*. In this chapter the Nietzschean problematic is presented as a reduction [*réduire*] of the Deleuzian problematic put forward in *DR*. As noted in the introduction, Laruelle situates his project in *Philosophy I* as “the attempt to construct a problematic rivaling that of Marx, though mainly on Nietzschean terrain and with Nietzschean means.”¹⁴³ The aim of this chapter is to understand this problematic as it is put forward in *NcH* by working through its formalization first in Althusser, then Deleuze, before closing with Laruelle.

3.1 The Althusserian problematic

In *For Marx*, Althusser defines the problematic as the essence of an ideological thought: “Every ideology must be regarded as a real whole, internally unified by its own *problematic*, so that it is impossible to extract one element without altering its meaning.”¹⁴⁴ The problematic is what unifies all elements of thought within that system. It is the ‘*determinate content*’ of the “*objective problems posed for ideology by its time*.”¹⁴⁵ For Althusser, the problematic is the immanent ideological framework that conditions what questions can be asked within an epistemic epoch. The problematic determines the possible questions that can be asked within the framework it determines.

For Althusser, Marx institutes a new problematic (one related to the discussion of the continent of history in chapter 2). The exact timing of this break changes within Althusser’s oeuvre, but this is of less importance than the notion of the break as a

¹⁴³ Francois Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, 33.

¹⁴⁴ Althusser, *For Marx*, 62. The concept of the problematic institutes, for Althusser, an aleatory materialism. The problematic constitutes an epistemological framework that breaks with the epistemological framework preceding it. The introduction of a new problematic allows for new kinds of knowledge to develop.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

whole.¹⁴⁶ In any case, the Marxist problematic is a new theoretical framework that allows thought to develop in novel ways that weren't possible under the old way of thinking. For Althusser, this takes place in the break with Feuerbach—and to that degree a break with Hegel—which is situated as “the adoption of a new problematic which even if it did integrate a certain number of the old concepts, did so into a whole which confers on them a radically new significance.”¹⁴⁷ Marx's problematic works by placing these concepts in the sphere of a materialism rather than an idealism.

Both Laruelle and Deleuze alter the problematic from Althusser, instituting it as a rupture rather than a break.¹⁴⁸ By implementing it as a break, Althusser places the problematic within history: the new problematic breaks with the old by implementing a new epistemology. History contains the possibility of moving from one problematic to another. In signaling the problematic as a rupture—an a-signifying rupture at that—Deleuze and Laruelle position the problematic as Other to history.¹⁴⁹

Laruelle describes the Nietzschean problematic as a ‘politico-libidinal cut.’ This is a cut that ruptures the fabric of signification (Mastery) in an act of Rebellion. It is introduced in the discussion of Machinic and Political materialism. He describes it as:

A unique cut, but twice split. A first time in two disciplines, a second time in the very object of each of these disciplines. Thus, the Political Materialism (PM) has as its object the relations of power [*pouvoir*] from which it withdraws [*prélevés*] and specifies diverse practices, instances, or levels of the social structure. But it

¹⁴⁶ In *For Marx* he suggests that the break occurs in 1845 with the writings of *The German Ideology* and the *Theses on Feuerbach*, with the former defined as “a commentary, usually a negative or critical one, on the different forms of the ideological problematic Marx had rejected” (35). He suggests that this critical period offer a break with the old problematic, but that the implementation of a new problematic occurs in what he calls Marx's *Mature Works* occurring after 1857

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁴⁸ See Kelly, “Problematizing the Problematic: Foucault and Althusser,” 156.

¹⁴⁹ Where they differ is in how they situate this Other in relation to history: one of complementarity, the other of supplementarity. As in the previous chapter, this break comes out of the different relationship towards Spinoza.

relates these relations of power, object of the materialist explication of the social Body, a specifically material cause: the libido, the productive forces of desire, in their relations of rigorously immanent causality which implicates a reformulation of ‘the last instance.’ With a machinic materialism (MM), the philosophical generality in which it poses these relations of matter and its ‘machinic’ syntaxes cannot dissimulate the duality (duplicity) of its objects and the problems of their necessary hierarchy. The Nietzsche cut does not contain any term, any essence, but only the relations of duplicity and chiasm. It is what distinguishes it from the Marxist cut, which contains, despite its contradictory and complex nature, essences under a type of *form* of contradiction becoming suddenly an essence (a form not only rationalist for the most part, but transcendental in Althusser). It is not ‘radical’ in the sense where its radicality would be that of a generic or specific type, unilaterally qualitative, by a relation, for example, in the Hegelian dialectic or in the ideologies of history. (NcH 32-33)¹⁵⁰

This cut is composed of two motions: first a cut of the discipline itself (for example, the production of the concept of history). The second is a deeper cut that splits from the first to get to the foundation of Mastery. Nandita Biswas Mellamphy has described this as a ‘double-crossing/dual-processing’ operation of the Nietzschean problematic.¹⁵¹ The double-cross or double split ruptures the Althusserian conception (and, as will be

¹⁵⁰ « Coupure unique. Mais deux fois dédoublée. Une première fois en deux disciplines, une seconde fois dans les objets mêmes de chacune de ces disciplines. Ainsi le Matérialisme politique (M.P.) a pour objet les Rapports de pouvoir sur lesquels sont prélevés et spécifiés les diverses pratiques, instances ou niveaux de la structure sociale. Mais il rapporte ces Rapports de pouvoir, objet de l’explication matérialiste du Corps social, à une cause matérielle spécifique : la libido, les Forces productives du désir, dans un rapport de causalité rigoureusement immanent qui implique une refonte du concept de « dernière instance ». Quant au Matérialisme machinique (M.M.), la généralité philosophique dans laquelle il pose les rapports de la matière et de ses syntaxes « machiniques » ne peut dissimuler la dualité (la duplicité) de ses objets et le problème de leur nécessaire hiérarchie. La Coupure nietzschéenne ne contient aucun terme, aucune essence, mais seulement des rapports de duplicité et de chiasme. C’est ce qui la distingue de la Coupure marxiste qui contient encore, malgré sa nature contradictoire et complexe, des essences sous l’espèce de la *forme* de la contradiction devenue du coup une essence (forme non seulement rationaliste chez la plupart, mais transcendante chez Althusser). Elle n’est donc pas « radicale » au sens où sa radicalité serait de type générique ou spécifique, unilatéralement qualitative, par rapport par exemple à la dialectique hegelienne ou aux idéologies de l’histoire » (NcH 32-33).

¹⁵¹ Biswas Mellamphy, “Nietzsche and the Engine of Politics,” 154.

discussed, the Deleuzian conception as well). The initial split fits within the Althusserian problematic, insofar as it understands the break within history: the move from the continent of Physics to the continent of History. It is in the second cut that this problematic reduces itself further from signification. This time, signaling a deeper rupture that does not merely provide the framework for a new problematic within history, but the understanding of a problematic that breaks from any formalization. Thus, when the Althusserian problematic institutes itself as a break, it presupposes a historical form or essence that each break must conform to. The Nietzsche cut withdraws from that essence, cutting on a deeper, more radical level; one that operates without any form. The politico-libidinal cut is not a cut *in* any structure. It is a *différential* operation that ruptures any signification, including the historical. Political materialism places the operations of machinic materialism in an immanent position to signification, and it is from that position that this rupture occurs.

3.2 The Deleuzian problematic

Like the concepts investigated in previous chapters, Laruelle's use of the problematic can be read through Deleuze. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze refers to the problematic as an 'indispensable neologism' (DR 323).¹⁵² Rather than cite Althusser, Deleuze uses mathematical theory to situate the 'problematic' as a mode of formalization contrasted with 'axiomatic formalization.'¹⁵³ Axiomatic formalization is, perhaps, best known from Euclidean geometry, where Euclid develops a geometrical system on the basis of 5

¹⁵² In this footnote, Deleuze references both the philosopher Georges Canguilhem and the mathematician Georges Bouligand. I discuss Bouligand in the paragraphs to come. The former is interesting given his relationship with Bergson. Deleuze suggests that Canguilhem develops a 'problem-theory distinction' that is integral to the concept of the problematic. Unfortunately, Canguilhem's *The Normal and Pathological*—the text cited by Deleuze—doesn't provide as clear an understanding as one might hope. It could be inferred, however, that Deleuze is drawing upon Canguilhem's suggestion that the aim of philosophy is to "reopen rather than close problems." (George Canguilhem, *The Normal and Pathological* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 35). In contrast to the Bergsonian search for true problems, this reopening of problems gets closer to what Althusser has in mind regarding the problematic as an epistemological framework. By uncovering the problematic at the heart of an episteme, one might be able to generate better questions.

¹⁵³ I have given an extended discussion on the mathematical basis of Deleuze's theory of problematics elsewhere. See Jacob Vangeest "Deleuzian Problematics: On the Determination of Thought," *LaDeleuziana* 11 (June 2020): 81-98.

axioms.¹⁵⁴ Axiomatic formalization begins with *a priori* axioms, which are used as building blocks for a theoretical system. Deleuze cites mathematician Georges Bouligand as a justification for moving from this axiomatic formalization to a problematic formalization on the basis of Kurt Gödel's incompleteness theorems. These theorems render "present-day attempts to formalize and axiomatize mathematics both trivial and doomed to failure, that formalization and axiomatization have proven barren as methods of mathematical discovery."¹⁵⁵ For Deleuze, an alternative method of formalization is required to get to the possibility of axiomatic formalization.

Where axiomatic formalization begins with abstracted, *a priori* axioms derived through the use of deductive reasoning, a problematic formalization begins with real world conditions and operates using inductive reasoning. Deleuze situates this alternative mathematical history in the schools of Archimedean and non-Euclidean geometry. For Deleuze, these alternative schools of thought generate a formalization that isn't based in abstract axioms but in the conditions of real world. For example, in Euclidean geometry it is said that the quickest path between two points is a straight line. While this is true in an abstract sense, it might not be true in reality. One must consider the topology in which a problem exists.¹⁵⁶ Following his insistence that the extensive is an abstraction of the intensive discussed in chapter 2, Deleuze suggests that axiomatic formalization is an abstraction of real or problematic formalization. The real (and not the understanding) is what determines the mathematical forms in problematic formalization.

¹⁵⁴ This method of investigation would serve as the model for 'geometrical investigation' within Philosophy. See Laura Byrne, "The Geometrical Method in Spinoza's Ethics," *Poetics Today* 28, no. 3 (September 1, 2007): 443–74, <https://doi.org/10.1215/03335372-2007-004>

¹⁵⁵ Hughes Leblanc, "Review of Georges Bouligand and Jean Des-Granges: *Le Declin Des Absolus Mathe-Matico-Logiques*," *Isis* 42, no.1 (April 1951): 71-72, <https://doi.org/10.1086/349256>, 72. Leblanc is quite critical of Bouligand's claim, suggesting that it overstates the impact of Gödel's incompleteness theorems on all axiomatic investigation. See also Georges Bouligand and Jean Desgranges, *Le decline des absolus mathematico-logiques*. (Paris: Sedes, 1949).

¹⁵⁶ "Euclidean geometry defines the essence of a line in purely static terms that eliminate any reference to the curvilinear ('a line which lies evenly with all points in itself'). Problematics, by contrast, found its classical expression in the 'operative' geometry of Archimedes, in which the straight line is characterized dynamically as 'the shortest distance between two points.'" Daniel W. Smith, "Axiomatics and Problematics as Two Modes of Formalisation: Deleuze's Epistemology of Mathematics," in *Virtual Mathematics: The Logic of Difference*, ed. Simon Duffy (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2006), 145–68.

Albert Lautman's consideration of Poincaré singularities provide Deleuze with a model for the problematic form: A '*mathesis universalis*' as a model for all problematic structures. This is not a mathematical model of the universe. Rather, it is a model from mathematics that is symptomatic of a model underlying all discourses.¹⁵⁷ According to Poincaré, a curve will continue around a single point to infinity within a closed cycle. It will only diverge upon reaching a second singular point.¹⁵⁸ Lautman outlines how these singular points are granted a 'dominant and exception role' in modern theory: "the nature of singular points on a domain determines, at each point of the domain of the variable z , the existence of solutions of the proposed equation."¹⁵⁹ Singular points do not precede the curve, for without the curve there is no point. Nevertheless, the singular point determines the curvature of the curve: it determines the curve in the last instance. This is not a relation of origin, but of sovereignty. The point is never dissolved into that which it determines but remains implicated in the curve as a formalized problem.

For Deleuze, each solution contains an immanent, genetic element, that insists upon the solution in the manner of the dialectic between the point and the curve. The curve is determined by the point, but not preceded by it. This is a sovereign, unilateral relation. In each case, the problematic is not represented in the Idea, but immanently generates it as a place of rupture (DR 178). Deleuze extends Lautman's notion that the problematic is manifest in a solution to suggest that every solution contains an immanent problematic that insists upon it as a sovereign determination (DR 179).¹⁶⁰ Lautman provides Deleuze with a structure for an immanent problematic—the singular point that insists on the

¹⁵⁷ See Simon B. Duffy, "Deleuze and the Conceptualisable Character of Mathematical Theories," in *What Is a Mathematical Concept?*, ed. Elizabeth de Freitas, Nathalie Sinclair, and Alf Coles (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 108–22, <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781316471128.007>.

¹⁵⁸ Albert Lautman. *Mathematics, Ideas and the Physical Real*, trans. Simon Duffy. (London: Continuum, 2011), 176-177.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 178, 181.

¹⁶⁰ Duffy points out that: "For Deleuze, the way that a mathematical theory, and the mathematical concept derived from it, is implicated immanently in the conditions of the problem that determines it serves as the model for a way that a philosophical concept is implicated in the philosophical conditions of the problem that determines it" (119).

curve—by using the problematic in mathematics to structure the problematic in other discourses. For his purposes, this is useful because it allows him to extend this mathematical model onto philosophy. Using the prefix ‘non’ to signal the singular point or problematic of Being as ‘non-Being,’ Deleuze writes, “Being is also non-being, but non-being is not the being of the negative; rather it is the problematic, the being of the problem and the question” (DR 64). To signify this non-being as the problematic, rather than a negation, Deleuze alters the term to ‘(non)being’ or ‘?being.’¹⁶¹ Being is said in the sense of Spinoza: the Being which encapsulates everything; Being is One (though not ‘One’ in the sense of non-standard philosophy).¹⁶² Via Lautman, Deleuze applies the problematic form of the Poincaré curve to Being through the insistence of (non)being. (Non)being is an intensive determination that undermines the conceptualization of Being as abstract universal. In searching for the determination of the question of Being, rather than attempting to solve it, Deleuze ruptures Althusser’s problematic break at its foundation: the problematic rupture explores the conditions of possibility, allowing for the possibility of speaking the unspoken.

Being and (non)being form an aporia. (Non)being is placed on the side of difference and intensity; Being with the same and extensity. Historically, difference is thought in terms of an exclusive disjunction between two identities. Forms are assumed *a priori* to the difference between those forms. For Deleuze, this conception ignores the fact that ‘something in the world’ determines those representations (DR 149). He inverts the historical structure so that the forms are determined by a problematic, transcendental intensification: difference in itself. Deleuze abstracts from real conditions to produce a determining principle of identity and representation. Suggesting that difference includes the unequal in itself, this concept is integral to the inclusive disjunction monism=pluralism. The univocity of Being provided by Spinozist monism is simultaneously a differential and intensive becoming. Difference in itself mixes the two sides of the being-(non)being aporia. Difference is no longer the difference between

¹⁶¹ For a more thorough investigation of Deleuze’s use of the ‘non’ see Daniel Colucciello Barber, “The Creation of Non-Being,” *Rhizome* 29 (2016), <https://doi.org/10.20415/rhiz/029.e10>.

¹⁶² As mentioned earlier, I have capitalized Being in order to distinguish Being [*Être*] from being [*étant*].

identities, but the generative differential in the formation of identity: the singular points or singularities that determine various curvatures of Being. This is not the negation of one identity in the mediation of another, but the positive force that produces identity by way of a cut. Difference in itself, as (non)being or problematic of Being, undermines the classical conception of philosophy wherein Being totalizes thought. Now, Deleuze boldly claims, “difference is behind everything, but behind difference there is nothing” (DR 157).

In promoting difference from its subordination to Being, Deleuze breaks with Being’s transcendence, identity, and representation. Yet, difference is not instituted as a transcendent form. Difference in itself does not transcend but is immanent to Being. Deleuze attempts to undermine the logo-centrism of the image of thought, liberating thought from the domination of a central dogmatic hermeneutic. For Deleuze, this liberation can only come about through this problematic (non)being of Being—the immanent generator of Being which, as immanent to Being, is no longer transcended by Being. Here, difference is co-constituted in Being, rather than preceded by it: it is in a position of sovereignty. Being, under these conditions, does not determine difference, but is determined by the problematic problem: (non)being as determination of Being.

3.3 The move from (non)being to the Body-of-the-Other; and the first synthesis of political production

Like Deleuze, Laruelle’s politico-libidinal cut operates on Being as immanent problematic. The operative production of the politico-libidinal cut operates by putting this aporia into the syntax developed through the consideration of the quadripartite. This operation is explored most prominently in the 12th chapter of *Nietzsche contre Heidegger* with a focus on three synthesis of political production. These syntheses serve as the foundation for the coming analysis.

The first synthesis, “the actual production of power [*pouvoir*] and politics,” solidifies the idea that political production in the will to power is not a technical or natural energy. Instead, it is the unconscious matrix of power operating upon the technical or natural as a politico-libidinal cut (NcH 112). This is the rebellious cut of a-signification that operates

unilaterally upon signification as an intensive rupture. As in Deleuze, this functions as an internal mechanism (interior to, but not of) that which it produces. Laruelle describes this as a cut that is constantly cutting the undifferentiated. In a Deleuzian sense, this operation ‘makes the difference,’ as the internal motor of change. It is represented in an algorithmic formula:

O/B-b

But also at least in its full operation,

B-b/Ob

thus: O/B-b/Ob (NcH 121).

This equation expresses the cut of the Other on Being. ‘O’ is the Other that takes the place of (non)being in the Deleuzian problematic. The Other is that which cuts the sameness of representation or presence. ‘B-b’ signals what Laruelle terms Being-without-being [*Être-sans-étant*]. Being-without-being is described by Laruelle as constituting the false totality of Being. Being in Nietzsche is never Being-in-totality (as one might consider Being in the dogmatic image of thought). Nietzsche’s Being [*Être*] is described as “the ‘totality’ specific to difference or the cut without being [*étant*], the *différance* out of the abyss, therefore a false totality, that we name this object—also cumbersome, but unavoidable—*Being-without-being*, or the *Body-of-the-Other*” (NcH 174).¹⁶³

The distinction of *Être* and *étant* is key, with *Être* signaling the totality of Being (not unlike Deleuze’s monism) and *étant* signaling the plurality of beings in the process of becoming. In positioning Being as a false totality or ‘Being-without-being,’ Laruelle signals a rupture at the heart of Being: Being is empty and that emptiness is generative. It makes sense to position this conception alongside what Deleuze and Guattari call the Body-without-organs, insofar as it is Being without Image as a false totality: Being without composition, Being-without-organs. Nevertheless, Laruelle’s language can still be read as a disruption of Deleuze’s Spinozism, insofar as it ruptures the equation of

¹⁶³ « ...la « totalité » spécifique de la différence ou des coupures sans étant, de la différence hors-néantir, donc une fausse totalité, que nous nommons cet objet, aussi encombrant qu’incontournable, *L’Être-sans-étant* ou le *Corps-de-l’Autre* » (NcH 174).

Deleuze and Guattari's inclusive disjunction (Being-without-being is a rejection of being [*étant*] as Being [*Être*]). This rupture of Being(without-being), by way of the Other, is represented in the algorithm by the '/', indicating a position of sovereignty. Thus, the Other operates in a position of sovereignty over Being(-without-Being), which has, itself, perpetually been placed in a position of sovereignty over being [*étant*] or Body-of-the-Other.

In both Deleuze and Laruelle there is a shift in the consideration from a historical problematic to an a-historical problematic—a shift from signification to a-signification—in the rupturing of Althusser. When Deleuze positions the (non)being as problematic of Being, or when Laruelle institutes the Other as the rupture of Being(-without-being), it signals the problematic of Being as a rupture rather than a break. (Non)being as Other is not transcendent to Being but operates as a sovereign rupture of Being. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze refers to this problematic as “the mode of the event.”¹⁶⁴ Singular points can be understood as conditioning and determining the event in a determination of “singularities inside the field of vectors [which] preside over the genesis of the solutions of the equation.”¹⁶⁵ This singularity in Deleuze constitutes a rupture: it pushes through a threshold in what is called an aleatory point. The aleatory point is introduced in *DR* as a single roll of the dice that alters all other rolls. He gives a further account in *The Logic of Sense*:

The set of throws is included in the aleatory point, a unique cast which is endlessly displaced through all series, in a time greater than the maximum of continuous, thinkable time. These throws are successive in relation to one another, yet simultaneously in relation to this point which always changes the rule, or coordinates and ramifies the corresponding series as it insinuates chance over the entire length of each series.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 54.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

The aleatory point is not merely the affirmation of the roll of the dice; it is the affirmation of chance each time in a single roll that contains all the throws in a single point. The one point alters the playing field. This dice roll is linked with singular points, suggesting that it is the singular point which contains the possibility of the rupture: “the throw of the dice carries out the calculation of problems, the determination of differential elements or the distribution of singular points which constitute a structure.”¹⁶⁷

This is, furthermore, placed in direct relationship with Nietzschean transvaluation:

This aleatory point which circulates through singularities and emits them as preindividual and impersonal does not allow God to subsist. It does not tolerate the subsistence of God as an original individuality, nor the self as a Person, nor the world as an element of the self and as God’s product... It is the decentred centre which traces between series, and for all disjunction, the merciless straight line of the Aion, that is the distance wherein the castoff of the self, the world, and God are lined up: the Grand Canyon of the world, the ‘crack’ for the self, the dismembering of God. Upon this straight line of the Aion, there is also an eternal return.¹⁶⁸

This passage situates the aleatory and transvaluation with a reading of Nietzsche that is repeated in Deleuze’s oeuvre. In *Foucault*, Deleuze suggests that Nietzsche is not the thinker of the death of God, but the death of Man. The death of God is found in Feuerbach, who produces a dialectic between man and God. Feuerbach “shows that since God has never been anything but the unfold of man, man must fold and refold God.”¹⁶⁹ This relates to *Nietzsche and Philosophy*—written 25 years earlier—when Deleuze suggests that “Man takes God’s place, [man] recuperates the divine as his own property or essence, and that theology becomes anthropology... God becomes Man, Man becomes God” (NP 158). Man and God enter into a relationship where man inverts God, but in that

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 198.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 176.

¹⁶⁹ Deleuze, *Foucault*, 130.

overcoming, re-inscribes God in himself. God may die but continues living in Man. The failure of the death of God is a failure of degree. Feuerbach repeats God where God is folded into Man. This Man-God relationship does not break from the structure of God, but folds, unfolds and refolds the theistic structure in a variety of ways. Man is an inversion of God, but as inversion reflects God. This is why Nietzsche is not the thinker of the death of God: he aims beyond this simple repetition of reversals. For Deleuze, Nietzsche is unique in refusing both Man and God, instituting the notion of the overhuman as one that goes beyond the Man-God dichotomy.

It is from this position, I argue, that it is possible to place Nietzsche in the place of the problematic within Deleuze's work by way of Laruelle. This is both an inventive move on the part of Laruelle, but also something that appears within the text, given the intensive and machinic characteristics that Deleuze aligns with his problematic. Deleuze considers the overhuman as a rupture of the Man-God image of thought; an aleatory point that ruptures from a singular point immanent to the structure. This is an epistemic rupture, a problematic that alters the playing field. Yet, insofar as it is a rupture of the aleatory sort, it is not merely a rupture *within* history, but from an immanence that is outside of history (in but not of). The intensive qualities of the will to power rupture the Man-God epistemic field, instituting the realization of a new image of thought that is inventive, operating through the complex relation of forces that, for Deleuze, constitute the relation of the will to power and force.

It is at this point, however, that a critique of Deleuze's can be made from Laruelle's position. To do this, I find it helpful to turn to Barbara Stiegler's critique of Deleuze's Nietzsche. Stiegler focuses on Deleuze's attempt to escape from representational thought (with a new image of thought), suggesting that *The Birth of Tragedy* undermines his reading. She writes: "When we read *The Birth of Tragedy* is it the world of representation that collapses? Quite the contrary! And it is closely analyzing Nietzsche's accounts of biology and their part in the conception of the eternal return, there just is no dissolution

of Identity or the Same.”¹⁷⁰ According to Stiegler, Deleuze disqualifies *The Birth of Tragedy* when he denies Apollo (the representational) for Dionysus (chaos, the will to power, the machinic-intensive). While it is true that Nietzsche mostly abandons Apollo after his initial text, Stiegler recognizes the continuation of representation in his use of Ariadne.¹⁷¹

Like those between Dionysus and Apollo, the tensions between passive exposures to alterity (the flux) and active reorganizations by identity (the stasis) remain, for Nietzsche, insurmountable. They lead him to argue that every living being, *because it is suffering* [...] is already a subject that produces conscience, fictions, and necessary representations. From this point of view the 1960s in general, and Deleuze in particular, were wrong to read Nietzsche as either dissolving or denouncing identity. A ‘Fractured I,’ yes, in the sense that all organic identity of the I is forever fractured or wounded by the excess of Dionysus and by the threatening, abrupt arrival of difference.¹⁷²

For Stiegler, Nietzsche is interested in the interplay between the suffering identity (Apollonian) and the flux of chaos (Dionysian). In the production of a new, Nietzschean image of thought on the basis of difference, Deleuze collapses Being and difference. Deleuze himself frames this as a tautology: “difference is behind everything, but behind difference there is nothing” (DR 157). In promoting difference from a subordination to Being, Deleuze breaks with a transcendent Being (of the Same). Difference becomes an immanent, unilateral, transcendental force that functions as the immanent operation (a problematic) of Being. But in promoting this new image of thought, Deleuze does away with representation and Being. Rather than implementing a dynamic play of Being and difference (signification and a-signification, *Être* and *étant*), difference in itself comes to

¹⁷⁰ Barbara Stiegler, “WHAT IS TRAGIC: A Few Questions on the Deleuzian Interpretation of the Eternal Return,” <http://blogs.law.columbia.edu/nietzsche1313/barbara-stiegler-what-is-tragic-a-few-questions-on-the-deleuzian-interpretation-of-the-eternal-return/>.

¹⁷¹ For Stiegler, Ariadne is a far cry from Deleuze’s 1963 essay where Ariadne is a mirror of Dionysus. For Stiegler, Ariadne is a continuation of Apollo.

¹⁷² Barbara Stiegler, “WHAT IS TRAGIC.”

dominate the aporia as a new Master. For Deleuze, critique absconds the negative in an act of rupture—a perpetual rupture that doesn't negate. Certain critics of Deleuze attempt to turn him into a figure of identity or the One, emphasizing the Spinozist aspect of monism within the monism=pluralism equation.¹⁷³ Stiegler's critique comes from a different position and gets to a deeper problem. She maintains a negativity of identity that is outside of the dialectic that she reads into Nietzsche through Apollo. This is not a negativity of identity, but a flux of identity and non-identity where neither are placed in a primary or hierarchical relation with the other. Stiegler reveals a third position that is in contrast to both Deleuze (who prioritizes Dionysus) and alternatives that prioritize Apollo. In siding with Dionysus against Apollo—placing Difference in a position of primacy over Being—Deleuze falls into the rubric that Laruelle puts forward regarding rebellion: overthrow and re-inscription. Deleuze overthrows representation with his machinic materialism, but in the act of rebellion implements a new image of thought on the basis of difference. In doing so, difference becomes a new form of Master where monism and pluralism are mixed under the form of difference.¹⁷⁴

3.4 The second and third syntheses of political production

The process Deleuze falls into can be understood through Laruelle's second synthesis of political production: "the production of inscription or political reproduction." Where the first synthesis is the disruption of Being as totality, recognizing it as a false totality or Being-without-being that is overthrown by the Body-of-the-Other on its own terrain, the second synthesis is a second movement within Nietzschean rebellion where Being is re-inscribed as the being of becoming. The problematic retains its status as a partial organ of power in relation to this Being, yet, "Inversely, the partial organs, which form the content of political production, are trans-appropriated or related *with the* undifferentiated, grounded

¹⁷³ See Alain Badiou, "Fascism of the Potato" in *The Adventure of French Philosophy*, trans. Bruno Bosteels, (New York: Verso 2012); Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies*, trans. Eric Santner and Joan Copjec, (New York: Routledge, 2012); and Benjamin Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative: A Critique of Contemporary Continental Theory*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

¹⁷⁴ This is largely, the argument that Laruelle puts forward in *Philosophies of Difference*.

Body” (NcH 113).¹⁷⁵ In the first synthesis, the undifferentiated body of Being was ungrounded by the cut of the Other. This cut operates unilaterally in a sovereign position to Being that ruptures Being as totality, recognizing it as Being-without-being. In the second synthesis that very act of rupture—that which Deleuze calls becoming or difference—finds itself installed as a new form of Master: a new totality. In this second synthesis, the rupture of the first synthesis is re-inscribed as a Master: the rupture of presence is signified “‘in front’ of presence itself” (NcH 114).¹⁷⁶ One would be mistaken, however, to suggest that this is a simple repetition of the old totality of Being: Deleuze, for instance, does not return to a “disguise of desire as lack” but instead suggests a shift from a primacy of Being as totality to a totality (or tautology) of difference (NcH 115). Despite being a repetition with a difference, the notion of a totality is nevertheless repeated: the initial rupture is introduced as a “positive guise or fetish (unavoidable as Being) produced by a determinate a-signifying cause” (NcH 115).¹⁷⁷ As with the first synthesis, the second is presented as an algorithm:

B/(O/B-b/Ob) (NcH 121)

Being, ‘B,’ returns, re-inscribed as a sovereignty over the first synthesis (O/B-b/Ob), in a complementary inclusive disjunction. The Body-of-the-Other, expressed as the cut from the abyss of Being in (but not of) Being-without-being (a false totality), is not outside of Being, but immanent and complementary of Being. For Laruelle, Deleuze is stuck in this synthesis, insofar as his tautological claim (“Difference is behind everything, but behind difference there is nothing” (DR 57)) and his Spinozist equation (‘monism=pluralism’), equate the Body-of-the-Other as Being-in-itself.

Following from Laruelle’s discussion of the Master and the Rebel, it can be surmised that being [*étant*] must overcome Being [*Être*] without itself becoming *of* Being: Rebel must

¹⁷⁵ « Inversement les pouvoirs partiels qui forment le contenu de la production politique sont transpropriés ou rapportés *au* Corps plain indifférencié » (NcH 113).

¹⁷⁶ « « en face » ou presence à soi » (NcH 114).

¹⁷⁷ « ...il est la guise positive ou le fétiche (« incontournable » comme l’Être) produit par une cause déterminante mais a-signifiante » (NcH 115).

overcome Master without itself becoming *of* Mastery. In the act of overthrowing the Master/Being, being as Rebel is re-inscribed as a new Mastery of the second synthesis. It is for this reason that Laruelle refuses to institute being as Being, instead suggesting that Being must be overcome on its own terrain—in the emptiness of Being-without-being. Immanent to this false totality is not the Other as a complement, but a supplement. The Rebel cannot overcome the Master by adopting the Master's position. The Rebel must attain a supplementary function, as Body-of-the-Other in a rupture, but a rupture that works through a process of withdrawal and reduction, rather than a rupture that attains the position of what was destroyed.

Where the second synthesis implements the initial split of the chiasm into the position of the undifferentiated totality that it cut, the third synthesis operates as the second split that allows for a rupture of Mastery on the Master's terrain. This third synthesis is titled “on the subject or affect: the internal subjectivation of agents of power.” As the name implies, this synthesis conceives an understanding of the internal subject that works in the production of power—that which has been named the problematic or the politico-libidinal cut. This synthesis operates by bringing together the first and second synthesis in a relation of inclusive disjunction in terms of duplicity or supplementarity, rather than a dualism or complementarity. Rebel retains a position of supplement to Being. Laruelle's use of duplicity enables him to consider a problematic that is not unlike Deleuze's but which function without turning the problematic (for Deleuze difference, for Laruelle *différentials*) into a new form of Master. It is his conception of critique as reduction—here a reduction from the Spinozist equation—that makes this possible. Laruelle retains the problematic in a position of immanence to that which it determines, but as supplement. Here, “Immanence, as one understands it, does not signify an interiority, but on the contrary, indicates an absolute exteriority (not of a representation (=transcendence) but a topological surface of Being [*Être*], nothing other than a passage” (NcH 119).¹⁷⁸ As supplement, the problematic is immanent to, but not of (as an immanent exteriority). It is

¹⁷⁸ « Immanente, on l'aura compris, ne signifie aucune intériorité, mais au contraire indique une absolue extériorité (pas celle de la représentation (=transcendance), mais celle de la surface topologique de l'Être), rien d'autre qu'un *passage* » (NcH 119).

withdrawn from Being, only a passage or abyss that overcomes Being on Being's terrain. Laruelle continues to suggest that it is in this third synthesis that the unconscious, libidinal production of the will to power is placed in a position outside and exterior to Being, yet where it is simultaneously immanent. Thus, it breaks from turning the unconscious into a totality, into Being: "the third synthesis reassembles the process, produces and reproduces it by consuming it in the ecstasy of a pure material e-motion, thus extracting the subject of the unconscious from analytic representation" (NcH 119).¹⁷⁹ This process of extraction and reduction (rather than a complementarity, in the case of Deleuze, or a negativity, in the case of the traditional theory), frees machinic materialism, as a libidinal unconscious, from the false totality of Being. The third synthesis works to place this machinic unconscious process in a position of sovereignty to (but not primacy over) the Being re-inscribed in the second synthesis. It is presented as:

S/(B/(O/B-b/ob)) (NcH 121)

Libidinal subjectivization, 'S,' is placed in a position of unilateral sovereignty to Being. This third synthesis conceives of this subject as the immanent problematic of Being, one which is, nevertheless, in a position of exterior supplementarity to Being. It brings together the first and second synthesis in a new, duplicitous, inclusive disjunction that ruptures the claim of Being over the World/the Real. Laruelle states,

This subject is, each time, the remainder of an inclusive operation or subordination, i.e. that which *despite* and through a primary repression, having satisfied a revolutionary critique as being-towards-death, passes from agents of power to the Continental ground on which it is inscribed. (NcH 117)¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ « ...la troisième synthèse qui rassemble le procès, le produit, le reproduit en le consommant dans l'extase d'une é-motion matérielle pure, arrachant ainsi le sujet de l'inconscient à l'extériorité de la représentation analytique » (NcH 119).

¹⁸⁰ « Ce sujet est à chaque fois le *reste* de l'opération d'inclusion ou de subordination, c'est-à-dire ce qui *malgré* le refoulement primaire et à travers lui, ayant satisfait à la critique révolutionnaire comme être-à-la-mort, passe des agents de pouvoir sur le Continent plain lorsqu'ils s'y inscrivent » (NcH 117).

The revolutionary subject is the remainder or excess of this inscription that is reduced from that which it is in excess to. Libido, as intensity, is described here as a synthesis of both negation and affirmation, rather than a negation of a negation. This is not, however, a mixture of negation and affirmation (a mixture of the aporia), but what could be called a mixture without mixing where both terms remain strictly distinct. This subjectivization is a-signifying:

Finally, it is a fluctuating synthesis (syntax) of impulses and of Body (semantics) returning beyond [*au-delà*] the wall of repression, the reconciliation of a double syntactical place of the eternal return of the same and the will to power, this subject will receive as a ‘specific’ material content, no longer power or the libido as they are properly said, but their affect reduced to intensive movement, as it envelops the complex relations of power and the libido. (NcH 118)¹⁸¹

The names given to the eternal return and the will to power are themselves ruptured in the syntax, for the syntax is a-signifying and without proper name. Any name given is only a name in the weakest sense: a naming of that which cannot be named. This is akin to the concept of *différance* in Derrida, a (non)concept insofar as it is a supplement reduced or withdrawn from the name given to it.¹⁸² Laruelle’s Nietzschean syntax or problematic envelops even those names: here, of power and the libido. All that remains is the real intensive operation of affects.

The subjectivation of this syntax is, for Laruelle, the possibility of going beyond signification. He writes: “It’s an effect of syntax or operation [*fonctionnement*] of the preceding syntheses, there is no pathetic existential here. The ‘human’-being of man, as

¹⁸¹ « Enfin, s’il est la synthèse fluctuante (syntaxe) des pulsions et du Corps (sémantique) faisant retour d’au-delà le mur du refoulement, la réconciliation du double jeu syntaxique de l’E.R.M./V.P., ce sujet recevra comme contenu matériel « spécifique », non plus le pouvoir ou la libido proprement dits, mais l’affect réduit à sa mouvance intense, en tant qu’il enveloppe les rapports complexes du pouvoir et de la libido » (NcH 118).

¹⁸² Derrida writes that “*différance* has no name in our language... ‘*différance*,’ which is not a name, which is not a pure nominal unity, and unceasingly dislocates itself in a chain of differing and deferring substitutions,” in “*Différance*,” in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982): 1-28: 26.

Nietzsche understands it, by the most rigorous necessity as both pre- and over-human” (NcH 119).¹⁸³ The human is immanent to Man where Man is a universal—a false universal or false totality. In this immanence, the human contains the possibility of the overcoming of Man through its position of immanent exteriority. This human potential is, for Laruelle, the Nietzschean overhuman. It goes beyond the universal signification of Man as human. overhuman is the subject of the Nietzschean syntax and the possibility of the beyond. Like *différance*, it is instituted as a weak identity in terms of its signification: overhuman as a supplemental externality in a duplicity with Man: the overhuman as the intensive dangerous supplement of man. This is not a strong name, but names that which escapes the signification of naming (i.e. it is a-signifying). Nevertheless, it is this overhuman subject that is granted sovereignty in the algorithm. It is instituted unilaterally as that which provides the second split of the politico-libidinal cut. It is because of this second split, that the cut can be rendered as ‘double-crossing.’

Double-crossing should be understood here, with a rejoinder to the conceptualization of determination-in-the-last-instance, as occurring ‘once each time.’ It is the second split of the cut—in the third synthesis—which is imperative here, for it is that which distinguishes Laruelle’s problematic from Deleuze’s (a distinction only made possible by first reducing Deleuze’s problematic from his Spinozist metaphysics). It is only through this second split that Laruelle presents “the possibility for theory to be surmounted as theory, and for any (practical) representation of politics to be destroyed as representation (thus also as thesis, position, primacy, etc.)” (NcH 135).¹⁸⁴ It is only with the second split that Mastery can be overcome on its own terrain without the Rebel becoming of the Master. It is useful to take theory up as a brief case study, applying it through the three syntheses, using Deleuze as an example. Deleuze comes out of a tradition of dialectics, in

¹⁸³ « C’est un effet de syntaxe ou de fonctionnement des synthèses précédentes, il n’y a là aucun pathétique existentiel. L’être- « humain » de l’homme, Nietzsche le comprend, par la plus rigoureuse nécessité, comme à la fois pré- et sur-humain » (NcH 119). It is interesting to note that Laruelle refers to the human [*humain*] of man [*homme*] before discussing the human as the overhuman [*sur-humain*] rather than the overman [*sur-homme*].

¹⁸⁴ « ... la possibilité pour la théorie de se surmonter comme théorie, et pour n’importe quelle représentation (pratique) de la politique de se détruire comme représentation (donc aussi comme thèse, position, primauté, etc.) » (NcH 135).

which he attempts to think through a process of production that doesn't operate through the Hegelian dialectic. As presented above, Deleuze institutes the initial split in Being (the first synthesis) as a cut that is more radical than those who come before him (Althusser), insofar as it is instituted as an a-historical (and a-signifying) rupture, rather than an epistemological break within history. Nevertheless, once this initial act of rebellion and overthrow is instituted, Deleuze's own split (difference in itself) comes to take the place Being as a totality. The act of the double cross operates, once each time, as a second split that cuts the initial split. This second split is derived from the initial split but acts upon the initial split as it re-inscribes the position of Mastery. This double-crossing split operates 'once each time' to perpetually overthrow the re-inscription (without itself re-inscribing Mastery) through the operation of the Nietzschean problematic or politico-libidinal cut. In other words, it cuts the initial cut as that cut is re-inscribed as totality. This unlocks a perpetual unfolding of the three syntheses (1. Cut, 2. Re-inscription, 3. Double-crossing cut). Theory or philosophy is overcome each time as it generates a false totality. This overcoming is provided by theory itself, as supplement, that is reduced from the false totality of theory. Deleuze overcomes Deleuze on Deleuzian terrain, each time, so as not to become a new dogmatism.

As perpetual, the politico-libidinal rupture is never finished, but always to-come [*a-venir*]:

The most high affirmation of machinic materialism, the sovereignty of the libido against the final theoretical (and other) code, signifies that the libidinal cut is no longer just the order of past or present, no longer the intra-historical (circa 1881), but that it re-turns, suspended as the to-come [*a-venir*], in a manner at once destructive and affirmative, in the intimate forum of the most actual history. (NcH 135)¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ « La plus haute affirmation du Matérialisme machinique, la souveraineté de la libido contre ses derniers codages théoriques (et autres), signifie que la Coupure libidinale n'est plus seulement de l'ordre du passé ou du présent historiques, n'est plus repérable intra-historiquement (vers 1881), mais qu'elle re-vient, suspendue comme à-venir, de manière à la fois destructrice et affirmatrice, dans le for intime de l'histoire la plus actuelle » (NcH 135).

The rupture of Mastery is perpetual: a constant double-crossing, a constant split. Each time splitting, once each time. The immanent generator of values is simultaneously the overcoming of values: the overhuman who is to-come. Nietzsche's double-crossing cut is, thus, rendered as immanent problematic that is always on the horizon: an immanence 'in' but not 'of' that which it determines-in-the-last-instance. His politico-libidinal cut operates at once as invention and intervention, intervening as it invents or cuts through an in(ter)vention.¹⁸⁶ This is the operation of the will to power: "It is the will to power which interprets" (NcH 12).¹⁸⁷ But this is a perpetual interpretation that is consistently intervening, inventing and interpreting. A sovereignty of the cut, but not a reduction to the cut. A perpetual play of cut and that which the cut invents. A process of invention which is then intervened upon. Through this process of in(ter)vention, the politico-libidinal cut of Nietzsche operates in the "problematic by withdrawing from dogmatism, gesturalism and activism" (NcH 133).¹⁸⁸ Any dogma is perpetually intervened upon. This act of critical reduction opens to the libidinal operations that go beyond signifying operations through the cut's a-signifying rupture.

Unlike Deleuze, where invention would involve the act of promiscuous creation, the Laruellean in(ter)vention is a reduction that is always on the horizon. The overcoming of any dogmatic image of thought is, thus, not the implementation of a Nietzschean image of thought, but a Nietzschean problematic as genetic operation of Being that perpetually intervenes on Being through the act of in(ter)vention. Each in(ter)vention takes place on the terrain of that which it intervenes: theory is overcome on the terrain of theory, Being is overcome on the terrain of Being. These overcoming, taking place on the terrain, operate through a reduction or abstinence. A refusal of the terrain's sufficiency. It is with this that it is possible, again, to turn to the opening pages of the text where it is said that "Nietzsche *is made fascist* for better defeating fascism. He has taken on the worst forms

¹⁸⁶ For the term in(ter)vention, I am indebted to my conversations with Jeremy R. Smith.

¹⁸⁷ « c'est la Volonté de puissance qui interprète » (NcH 12).

¹⁸⁸ « à la problématique en lui retirant le dogmatisme, la gestualité, et l'activisme » (NcH 133).

of Mastery to become the Rebel” (NcH 9).¹⁸⁹ Here, Nietzsche is not ‘of’ fascism, but the Nietzschean problematic is, nevertheless, immanent to fascism. Overcoming is not a simple negation, nor a mediation, but a duplicitous act of rebellion from a place of immanence that ruptures from below. This immanence is not complementary to fascism, but its supplement; a dangerous supplement that ruptures fascism by making itself supplement to fascism, but never becoming of fascism. As supplement (made possible by the reduction from Deleuze), fascism is overcome without negation or mediation (both which would return to a new form of Mastery). Instead, it enters into a contradiction without mediation—a relation of duplicity—that ruptures fascism from the inside by way of the Nietzschean problematic.

This process works in a similar manner in each case. Every totality—Fascism, Being, theory, difference—is overcome on its own terrain insofar as it is a *false* totality. Because it is false, the Other always insists upon it. In reducing the totality from its place of ideological authority, the problematic critique provides a dangerous supplement that is immanent to the totality. Take the given example of Man and human. In reducing Man from its ideological position of totality, the human is supplement. The relation between human (rebel) and Man (master) is one of duplicity, because the human refuses to complement Man. Human operates as a libidinal threat that is to-come, its very material existence threatens the totality of Man. This brings together the political materialism of duplicity with the machinic materialism of the libido. These processes provide the criteria for the rupturing of Man by the human. Yet, through this rupture, the human may institute itself as a new totality. Thus, it is the a-signifying overhuman—on the horizon or to-come—that is never signified. This to-come operates on the totality each time. Taking up something similar to the *mathesis universalis* of Deleuze, this model can be taken as modeling each totality. Each totality, as false, can be critiqued through a reduction by way of the a-signifying cut. It is here that the overcoming of each totality occurs, once each time, by way of the Nietzschean problematic as a politico-libidinal cut: The overcoming of Being by Being, the overcoming of theory by theory, the overcoming of

¹⁸⁹ « Nietzsche *s’est fait* fasciste pour mieux vaincre le fascisme, il a assumé les pires formes de la Maîtrise pour en devenir le Rebelle » (NcH 9).

difference by difference, and the overcoming of Fascism by Fascism. Each totality overcome on its own terrain by the supplementary Other that explicates the falsity of its totalizing claim.

Conclusion

An implicit aim in coming towards this project is the question of how to generate novelty. In other words: how can ‘the new’ emerge? The Nietzschean problematic, as it is rendered by François Laruelle, is offered as a possibility for this emergence. By looking to the problematic as both a reduction from the World and a supplement to the World, it offers up the possibility of novelty in a World that appears increasingly enclosed—a World with no exterior milieu to steal or borrow from. By instigating it as a withdrawn supplement, the Nietzschean problematic takes up this position of exteriority in relation to the World: it is in the World, but it is not of the World. In NcH, the production of novelty aims against the perpetual unfolding of academic citation and interpretation. The unfolding of Nietzschean interpretation focuses too strongly on the text. For Laruelle, a citation of Nietzsche can be interpreted in any number of ways. Yet, these various ways miss the central aspect of ‘Nietzsche:’ the operation that makes those various interpretations possible. It is through an investigation into that operation—what is termed throughout a problematic or syntax—that the possibility of novelty in Nietzsche may emerge.

This thesis has explored this Nietzschean problematic as the central consideration of *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*. By introducing Laruelle’s text through a number of concepts—some Althusserian but most Deleuzian—it has provided an account of how NcH both extends and subverts the lineage it exists in (but perhaps not of). NcH ruptures the theoretical model of both ideological negation and machinic complementarity to issue a new machinic supplementarity that works by way of a critical reduction. This rupture is not merely the rupture of a particular totality. Operating by way of the perpetual play of the three Nietzschean syntheses of production, this Nietzschean problematic works to rupture every totality *ad perpetuum* through its signaling of the overhuman/overturning that is to-come [*a-venir*]. Rather than signaling this as a pure outside or a complementary immanence, the source of this rupture is a determination (in-the-last-instance) which is both immanent in (but not of) while being exterior to that which it ruptures.

I have addressed this possibility through three chapters, each building upon the others, which provide an account of this problematic. The first chapter explores the four (weak) terms of the quadripartite/chiasm, relaying them as a-signifying. It outlines the position of the Rebel in terms of a duplicity or supplementarity which broke from the complementarity of Deleuze-Guattarian inclusive disjunction (of complementarity). This enables Laruelle to simultaneously rupture the dogmatic image of thought (alongside Deleuze) while refusing to allow the mediation of the unilateral action to re-inscribe itself as a new form of Master.

The second chapter enacts this movement to introduce the conception of machinic and political materialism within the continent of politics which, together, overcome (without rejecting) the dialectical and historical materialism of Marx/Althusser's continent of history. Inventing this continent, Laruelle produces a machinic materialism (via Deleuze) infused with *différance* (via Derrida) which uses a method of critical reduction to unearth the supplementarity of every totality—with the example of the Foucauldian statement reduced to the Nietzschean proposition. This, furthermore, enables an understanding of Laruelle's own machinic materialism as a critical reduction of Deleuze-Guattarian machinic materialism, insofar as it adopts the attributes of the libidinal unconscious and intensification, but without Deleuze's Spinozist monism.

All of this culminates in the third chapter which unpacks the Nietzschean problematic as it exists reduced from both Althusser and Deleuze. The three syntheses of political production (in this problematic) are of utmost importance. It is here that the critique of Deleuze is most clearly fleshed out (with help from Barbara Stiegler), to show his return to mastery by way of the first two syntheses: the rupture of the initial syntheses is encoded into the Mastery of the second (in a perverse return to the cyclical hypothesis). It is only from the third syntheses—that of the overhuman who is to-come—that this cycle is broken. With the extension of this supplementarity each totality is recognized as false, providing an opening to its own overcoming.

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