

“REBELLIOUS
POSTULATIONS”:

FROM *BEYOND THE POWER PRINCIPLE*

by FRANÇOIS LARUELLE

Translated from the French by JEREMY R. SMITH

A MATERIALIST POLITICS OF MEANING¹ [*SENS*]

1. There are at least two means of making a politics of meaning. A dominant means, which proceeds by extension from the traditional criteria of social reproduction to its production, which is always by this fact its normalization, its identification to signification which falls back onto it, coding, specifying, and marshalling [*canalise*] it. And a minoritarian and revolutionary means, which draws, within the production of properly-called power, new criteria to determine the origin and the functions of meaning and to distinguish it from significations, representations, and images. For reasons which will appear later on, these criteria are not those of something like “structure,” which nevertheless would already imply one such distinction, but obviously a false

1. Whilst the typical translation of «*sens*» can either be “meaning” or “sense,” I have opted for “meaning” for reasons that will become apparent in the note at the end of the translation. As will be seen below in one sentence, I will only note wherever “sense” and “meaning” appear almost interchangeably to clarify.

distinction, since the structure would finally bring down meaning onto a duplication of denotation through a wholly provisional passage through connotation.

Everything is tied and transformed together: a new definition of meaning, a new definition of politics, a new definition of the classical operations of hermeneutics. These minoritarian mutations are what we will exhibit. But their statement suffices to suppress the appearance of that which we would voluntarily denounce as an overpoliticization of meaning. We define that which is "political" by the essence of power or by the *objet (r)*,² without ever proceeding in the inverse manner, and we therefore distinguish it from objects, goals, and the processes of bourgeois and Marxist politics. As for meaning: it is the set of complex relations of powers, the ones with the others, something like their functioning as identical to their formation, such, at least, that we have to determine it under the conditions of the *objet (r)* and the Class Struggle in its "machinic" concept.

Here is the thesis which concentrates some of the effects of these investigations: only a really minor thought is a really political thought, i.e. anti?political,³ too; only a

2. The *objet (r)* is, *prima facie*, a parody of Lacan's *objet a*. Laruelle's conceptualization of the *objet (r)* is detailed at length in the original text. In the first section, "Introduction to Political Materialism," Laruelle writes that the *objet (r)* is designated as "resistance" and as 'revolution,' as a minoritarian power, as anti?power, as un?power" (19). The *objet (r)* is, furthermore, distinguished from the principle of power, which is "at once the 'reality' and 'theory' of dominant-fascistic power," with the *objet (r)* having its own "reality" and "theory" in the form of the *Beyond* of the power principle (30).

3. The use of the question mark, in place of the hyphen between prefix and the root word so familiar in Laruelle's later writings, is a Deleuzian residue peculiar to this period of his writing. See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press 1994), 64. This period of writing, Philosophy I, is noted

minoritarian power-to-think [*pouvoir-penser*] renders the political field co-extensive with its internal limits, those of anti?power. As these limits are transcendental in their own way, without consisting in a subject, minoritarian thought is thus universal by dint of poverty, unavoidable by dint of being stray [*sans feu ni lieu*], and inalienable by dint of being shorn. There is no radical political evil: even the seventh circle of the hell of fascism, the only one to yet be inhabited, contains a rebellious postulation.

On the one hand, politics is the universal element of philosophy: the whole of Western ontology draws life, being, and movement from it, and one wonders by what aberration, distraction, or lack of thought that some philosophies were distinguished as “political.” However, power is only its universal element, and not only its object, considered in its essence: as anti?power and from the point of view of a rebel thought. Under this condition alone, metaphysics or first philosophy, as a dominant thought, can be defined as onto-theo-politics, i.e. as politics, cast back [*revient*] into the same: sometimes dualist, sometimes monist (Lord/Slave, Prince/Subject, God/Creature, Master/Rebel,

by Laruelle as an early implementation of the mature themes played out in his later writings though under the authority of the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy. See François Laruelle, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, trans. Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith (London: Bloomsbury 2013), 33. Taylor Adkins, in a footnote to one of his translations, notes that “Laruelle’s use of the question mark indicates the variable and unstable status of the orientation of what binds the ‘non(-)’ to the ‘philosophical’, including the different ways in which the ‘non(-)’ is understood depending on the particular philosophy considered” (*Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, trans. Taylor Adkins, Minneapolis: Univocal Press 2013, 118n15). Because this period of Laruelle’s thought is under the authority of philosophical sufficiency, one must *simultaneously* not confound the spontaneous unitary thought of Philosophy I with that of Philosophy II and the

other periods' real critique of philosophical faith *and* reckon that these immature formations of Laruelle's thought are consistent, not teleological, and practical with the other periods.

4. The Political Continent is another term from Philosophy I-era writings. Althusser once remarked in his interview for *L'Unità* in 1968, translated as "Philosophy as a Revolutionary Weapon" for *New Left Review* in 1971, that Marx had discovered the "third continent of scientific knowledge" with History. Laruelle remarks both in this text as well as a previous work, *Nietzsche Contre Heidegger* (Paris: Payot 1976), that Nietzsche had discovered the continent of Politics. In *Nietzsche Contre Heidegger*, Laruelle writes: "Under pretext that Nietzsche had still recognized better than Lenin the extension of imperialism and its becoming-fascist, one confounds the critique of this object with the love of this object necessary for

Bourgeois/Proletariat, General Will/Particular Will), i.e. with a dominant and fascistic tendency. As for the definition of metaphysics as "onto-theo-logy," it still participates in the vanity of its object, an infatuation of logos and the dominance of Being.

All is political [*Tout est politique*], but rightly there is no "all," [*il n'y a pas de «tout»*] because the "Political Continent"⁴ forbids reconstituting politics into a universal of the first position and minoritarian thought into a political vision of the world. Our categories are with a double *entente* and make the object of a duplicitous usage: metaphysical or vulgar, it is all one, finally minoritarian, and which must decide alone, or almost alone, the *meaning* of the onto-theo-political. Thus, one will not see in this usage the undue extension of a concept beyond its restrictive, i.e. dominant, meaning, an extension of borders, all things equal otherwise, in the manner of *gauchist* mistakes. The invention of the Political Continent, i.e. of a radically fractional universal, is what rightly renders impossible every overpoliticization of the subject and thought. This category liquidates the dominant universals of these times (bourgeois economism, castration of

psychoanalysis, and Marxist activism), substituting for them a specific *Referential* of the production of power, i.e. a plastic system of internal criteria which are confounded with the exposition of syntaxes and the materiality of the Continent. Without any doubt, it is a changing of borders of the category of “politics.” But, on the one hand, its extension or generalization is subordinated to its intensification, to a politico-libidinal usage of this category; and on the other hand, they are not its significations (Marxist, bourgeois, Platonic, Freudian) which are modified or extended, but especially its meaning. These two differences define a revolutionary usage of the old categories as minoritarian and no longer dominant generalities. Thus, we have to take up the category of “onto-theo-politics”: as an invention that the Rebel carries out [*met au compte*] from the technology specific to anti?powers.

2. Let us distinguish between two extreme types of concepts or, rather, categories, i.e. generalities: the dominant (generic but also specific) generalities, material in their fashion, but such that their determined character is secondary in relation to their

its critique, or yet: the Political Continent and its revolutionary margins with fascization co-extensive with this new continent and necessarily discovered with it” (26, my translation). In *Beyond*, the Political Continent is determined in the last instance by the *objet (r)*, for which both become the components of political materialism. See the following translator’s note at the end of the translation for more details.

empirical extension and their comprehension of the concept and signification; and the minor or fractional generalities which subordinate them to their determination, or, in Marxist terms, the unity of contraries to the contradiction (but here, determined as *objet (r)*). These two kinds of generalities are both material, i.e. in any way determined and individuated: matter is also co-extensive with generic categories. And they both comport, even the second, an element of ideality, which is thus not confounded with the a priori. It is why it is necessary to abandon the denomination of “ideological” for the first and “materialist” for the second, and to substitute with this qualitative-empirical distinction, which in fact supposes the confusion of the real and thought, a political distinction (dominant/minoritarian) which implies between both the pertinent differences in the degree of efficacy or materiality, in materialist and determinant value, and differences in the mode of existence and the form of ideality which belongs to both.

It is necessary to cease from opposing materiality and ideality. This opposition only has meaning with the confusion of the real order and the thought order. It is only their co-belonging in both kinds of generality which is distributed otherwise. Hence, the relation of *transversal causality*, and in both meanings, between phenomena that dominant materialism, i.e. Marxist, classes into Infrastructure or Superstructure. The univocity, at once of matter and ideality for all of the degrees of determination or the Productive Force, renders necessary the reversibility of the

causality between facts of “infrastructure” and “ideological” facts. “Machinic Materialism” only deals with generalities or individuated or materialized categories which are ideal-material multiplicities; it does not know facts opposed to “ideas.” The whole of its critical labor consists in *selecting* the minor generalities (anti?powers or F.O.P.⁵ with theoretical effects) and to destroy the dominant generalities (powers) and, among them, even the specific generalities of the most conscious Marxism on these problems. “Matter,” for example, is also a category: sometimes generic, sometimes specific, sometimes trans-specific, i.e. materialized under conditions at once infra- and supra-specific and forming an ideal-material multiplicity. A category like that of “matter” is not solely “materialist” in the banal and facile sense in which Marxism is so often content with, but susceptible to a *usage* that is itself material (it is necessary to subordinate the materialist moment to the material moment, or the ontological to the ontic). This *material* determination of *materialist* categories considered as process will be opposed to the concept of matter produced by abstraction. It is not because matter is not determined in a sensible

5. F.O.P. stands for “fractional organs of power.” When concerning the material production of power, power *becomes* a Body (perhaps without-organs) “only if it is first really produced and not assumed given under the form of a class, institution, or a State” (47). These fractional organs of power are one of the three “forms” the Beyond of the Power Principle takes, and make up the “machinic” aspect that is impossible for classes, institutions, and the State to be able to determine; instead, the F.O.P. determine them in the last instance without a reciprocal or mediating relation.

quality or an intellectual form which is an undetermined category: as the internal and transcendental determination of ideality = generality = unity of contraries, matter is “without” form or figure; it is a “function” but all the more determined as it is determinant.

3. Then, what is the category in a minor hermeneutics if it does not leave itself to be defined by signification and no longer by the signifier, through a process of signifi⁶ance? It is a knot of significations and signifiers tied by abstract syntaxes or fractional schema: machinic syntaxes of the Relations of Power. This dispositive of the category is profoundly complex, its unity problematic, so that “Politics” becomes a category or an ambiguous generality like “anti?politics” or “onto-theo-politics.” One would comprehend nothing from this attempt at “political” hermeneutics if one would suppose with common sense that these “terms” are concepts or signifieds: one would confound the statements and the hermeneutical categories, which comprehend each other by a revolutionary enunciation (Class Struggle as the cleaving Resistance of the subject) with discourse, the phrase, the process of

6. The choice of “signifi⁶ance” for «signifi⁶ance» is directed from Brian Massumi’s decision in his translation of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1987). An alternative to Massumi’s translation would also be Alphonso Lingis’ translation of Emmanuel Levinas’ *Otherwise than Being, or Beyond Essence* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers 1981) where «signifi⁶ance» is rendered as “signifyingness.”

signification, with connotation or denotation—all of which we have to eliminate in the following of this labor. They are not concepts, they are categories: they especially have meaning, and not only significations; rather, against which their meaning is produced. Thus, “politics” will designate as well, in the whole of this text, the objective reflection of the overdetermined but statist [*statistique*] unity of dominant politics and anti?politics *under* dominant power. A fetishist unity of a duplicity and a unity of simulacra is the category in a “politics” (anti?political ...) of meaning, a unity as little imaginary and fictive as possible, the overdetermined product of a condensation, and which holds face to face, or in an absolutely immediate body, both power and un?power, meaning and signification, and even other “contraries”... Under the unity of the term “politics” (of meaning), a term with a *dominant tendency* since it still affirms the primacy of the unity of contraries over their difference, and which functions a little like an abbreviation of the relation of complex forces which is a category, is also an “anti?politics”: each time, it is to interpret by seeking the powers of dissimulated resistance which articulate the dominant powers (significations).

The necessity and implications of this “nodal” syntax of the hermeneutic category should be understood. In this specific and exemplary case (but its exemplarity is rightly an objective appearance to interpret and destroy), the unity of the condensation of opposites under one of two terms, which is always, by definition, the dominant term, signifies that “politics” (in the dominant sense of a dominant politics)

is the indestructible guise of anti?politics, that power as the Master never will make room for the anti?power which resists it. Never will signification, the guise of meaning, be levied as enchantment by a philosophical method, i.e. a political practice. The hour of the *objet (r)* or the revolutionary enunciation will never ring; never will they appear in person to the subject, in a last unveiling and an ultimate truth, for it is still very beautiful to say that truth comes out of the well only halfway ... The whole problem is of understanding how this "half" responds to a calculation or operation which always comports a remainder.

Since there was never any chance for any pure anti?politics, for any absolute liberation, and even for any possible wager for a deposition of Mastery, it is important to not speak of anti?politics as pure and abstract, like a massive levy of mastery. No empirical reason, however obvious, can exhaust it or suffice to explicate it. No empirical reason can, for example, explicate why some "ideological" discourses of liberation make a vicious circle with repression. The true reasons lie in the quad(r)uplicity of anti?politics: History as unique and split. Anti?power, as a process or correlation of Resistance and Revolution, is the transcendental-material element immanent to dominant power: it is that which renders *actively possible*, and impossible, *in the last instance* Mastery itself, for it is Mastery's determinant cause. Duplicity signifies inseparability without mediation. It is necessary to speak of the *objet (r)* as an immanent limit of destruction and transvaluation of the dominant forms of the

hermeneutic; anti?power cannot be abstracted from power or soar over it, etc., otherwise it would be transcendent and not at all transcendental (inseparable from the empirical). The *objet (r)* resolves the paradox of a “beyond” of power and explicates why there is a question of an inconceivable antinomy for classical onto-theo-politics, in particular for the anti-Marxist dualism of the moderns. “Anti?power” is like the “death instinct”: a contradiction in terms.

If no external empirical reason can contain this impossibility here, it is because there are only reasons of syntax, this syntax which adds under the same yoke of duplicity, and not of duality, power and unpower, and renders equally impossible, in the same gesture, pure, a priori, and eternal Mastery, and pure, a priori, and eternal Rebellion. But how can a syntax alone identify the im-mediate opposites without the help of a mediating generality, under a unity which is only condensation, overdetermined and second? The solution results from the difference of this syntax to the *objet (r)*, in which one will otherwise see that it is necessary to determine it progressively and each time anticipatively. The *objet (r)* is more than this syntax of difference and the immediate condensation of opposites; it is *also* the material cause of this syntax which articulates the powers and their beyond, thus the material cause of meaning which is produced, in an immanent manner, in the Field of Power. The political determination of meaning ends when its definition as a Relation of Powers between then is completed by its materialist determination. The two operations are

“founded” in the complex unity of the *objet (r)* and make from it *the determination in the last instance*, immanent and divided, of the material production of meaning.

The last section of this essay develops the implications of this political and materialist theory of meaning. Meaning as the process of resistance against signification undoubtedly results from an *intensification or potentialization* of the dominant forms of ideality; but here, intensification does not designate accumulation or capitalist outbidding, the capitalization of significations, or the signifiers of culture, but the destruction of these dominant forms: meaning as the limit of destruction and reproduction, or transvaluation, hermeneutics. Transvaluation is a word from Nietzsche, but it has nothing to do with values in the spiritualist sense; it is a category to interpret: rather, it designates a materialist process, the effective production of new values, i.e. the potentials of the determination of the Relations of Power, here of meaning and signification.

Thus, by minor hermeneutics, we intend the reversion from the onto-theo-politics of meaning to its anti-politics, the invention of a technology of meaning which is finally subordinated, with its products, to fractional agents or processes of resistance: against classical hermeneutics, which was always serving dominant powers (perhaps it was also a mask, a ruse, it was in any way its “positivity”—to produce the technology of meaning specific to minoritarian processes.

SERVITUDE AND LIBERATION OF MEANING

1. One can imagine with difficulty (thought can neither soar over it nor anticipate it) what labor it took, what long education of meaning and power over meaning, to produce the subtlety, complexity, and plasticity of the juridical, penal, biblical, and literary techniques of interpretation. Let us take, for example, biblical exegesis and philology, the high degree of elaboration of their processes, the critical apparatus of their distinctions, the techniques of the establishment of a text, and their intellectual customs. Only a structuralist and Marxist thought, chopped with an axe, could have made us forget for a moment the technical and human possibilities (which will one day study the personality of the hermeneutician, his spiritual habitudes, his capacity and incapacity à la intellectual cleanliness [*propreté*]) of these marvelous instruments of the traditional interpretation of texts (juridical, sacred, and literary).

It is true that one can only say that the dominant hermeneuticians knew how to serve or procure their best diet for them. To the contrary, they have only thought to place them more or less expressively in competition with the methods of exact sciences, or, at least, to give them an object of the same type, supposing the same mode of being, and only qualitatively distinct, than the objects taken from nature. Under pretext from theology, they have underappreciated [*méconnu*] this great chain of the political projects of meaning, the specific technologies of power-knowledge and

the power of meaning, which traverses Western culture and is proven irreducible as much to “science” as to “ideology.” They are incapable of cutting this chain, of diversifying this network of the onto-theo-political, of inscribing [*imprimer*] in it the new mutations in which it has need to *become that which it is*. Taking it sometimes in the originary unity of an external telos, sometimes in the heteroclite of scattered goals, objects, and techniques, the hermeneuticians never know; in other words—but it is in fact already the art of hermeneutics—to *produce in a recurrent manner its historical continuity* by techniques that are sharpened and adjusted by cut and mutation, not knowing to revive it by new cleavages of their goals, *re-cuttings* [*redécoupages*] of their objects, adjusted to its future—not knowing to invent a future from it.

Now that structuralism—among others—and a certain scientific infatuation which supported it in existence, fades under our steps with our very march, now that a possible future, very different from the expected, undoubtedly because of its badly presented political determination through its past forms, extricates itself for it, we are more free to appreciate its past with a fresh eye, to evaluate in their positivity up to its theological temptations. In the strict measure where we are capable of inscribing it with mutations (let’s say non-Diltheyian, non-Heideggerian, non-Husserlian), we will remake a sparkling past for it, we will make its materiality rise to the surface of history. To render *justice* for its past attempts, not only for those of theoretical hermeneutics (more or less always in a posture of failure)

but for all of the technologies which have worked, and with what success, for the institution of meaning, i.e. its education (the religious, judicial, academic, literary, political, and economic institutions as well), to cease from judging them in reference to the capital of our present values, and to perceive their positivity, when it would only be their presence in all of the social practices. It is necessary to conquer, with new means, in part *already invented elsewhere* and which can transform it, a resolutely minor hermeneutics; to invent a new power of interpretation in which minority can finally be positive.

2. Hermeneutics either does not yet exist or only exists too much. It is from the decline of its dominant forms, from the hermeneutic of the future, to know how to carefully distinguish a real recurrence of a masked teleology, which we can evaluate with justice its historical attempts [*essais*] and liberate them, at least partially, from the encumbering shadows of metaphysics, dogmatics, science, history, and linguistics (which have not ceased from veiling it since its birth). What contradiction would there be with what a materialist hermeneutics, delivered from its ancient molar and transcendent objects (Faith, Text, Existence), from its convened places of exercise (Institutions), from its techniques (still a little primitive and more adapted to land surveying [*arpentage*] than topology), and to place its positivity in its irreducibility, its non-dependency on Being, in its affirmative dependency on the Other? Can it be capable of not

incriminating the merciless *historical conditions* that it will find in its birth, to not cry out against the universal repression exercised by disciplines for a long time constituted and more apt than it to survive in conditions that they have contributed in fashioning? It is by renouncing to the model of this pilot-disciplines [*disciplines-pilots*], by seeking in the power-to-interpret [*pouvoir-d'interpréter*] the immanent criteria of its minority and its intrinsically political meaning—a task which already assumes a materialist conception of the power-to-interpret—that it will make these disciplines appear in the duplicity (let's not say duality) of their effects over the technologies of meaning.

It would be necessary to install a double reading of these effects (but we will not do it here). On the one hand, the history of a merciless but fecund education; and on the other hand, the history of a repression, of a crushing of meaning by inadequate technique, so that the sign of positivity could seem, each time, to be reversed when one will insist on the positivity, sometimes of the traditional techniques to form meaning, the sense of meaning [*le sens du sens*], and to draw from the sciences, metaphysics, and existing institutions (the *mixture* of dominant hermeneutics), and sometimes, on the contrary, of meaning as crushed, normalized, and coded under the somewhat uncouth kinds of signification. But this slippage [*glissement*] of the sign of positivity does not signify, in the second case, a negative evaluation of the dominant hermeneutics. It is because meaning is in progress of formation at the same time as intrinsically repressed, because

it is par excellence positive from side to side (its materiality), and because the coded and preset forms of its production are positive in their manner. One can consider its process of production in its abstract internal functioning, the “process of labor” of meaning in some sort, or the inclusion in this process of social forms of its existence: religious, judicial, penal, political, and artistic through which it is exercised. One should always look with an eye of a symptomatologist, sensible to the lesser variations of hierarchy, the entirely relative fluctuations of relation, the face-to-face adjointment [*ajointement*],⁷ the end-to-end apposition of a coded form of its production, and a pure, abstract form of this very production, or a line of active resistance to the normalization of meaning under signification.

One would doubt this line of resistance is identical at once to the second term of the “contradiction,” to the process of immanent production, and to the *im-mediate border*, with which it is confounded with “two” terms. What active resistance is: meaning is (anti?) political, it is thus not a term, it is confounded with its relation of repulsion to signification; it is a displaced limit of resistance

7. At the time of translation, there are no English equivalents to the French word «*ajointement*» though it appears in a separate text, with reference to Beda Allemann's *Hölderlin und Heidegger* (Zürich: Atlantis Verlag 1954). See Luce Fontaine-De Visscher, “La pensée du langage chez Heidegger,” in *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, vol.64, no.82 (1966): 224-262. According to Godefroy's *Lexicon of the Old French*, «*ajointement*» is an adverb that implies “in a tightly bound manner,” which, with an educated approximation, can be linked to some degree to Heidegger's notion of *das Gefüge*. In his study on the Presocratic influence in Heidegger's thought, W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz notes that *das Gefüge* can be rendered in English as “the ensemble,” “the structure,” or “the conjunction.” See W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz, *The Presocratics in the Thought of Martin Heidegger* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang Editions 2017), 126.

to the extension of sedimented cultural forms. It is always necessary to follow the displacement of this false border of disjunction or disjointment [*disjointement*], and a-jointment [*a-jointement*], to adjust, according to the conjuncture, the evaluation of its techniques—to follow this border of apposition which follows, à la the trace, the *objet (r)* and unifies movement and ubiquity.

This duplicitous conception of production and repression signifies that both pass through the same cultural organs, the same techniques, the same institutional places, but that they are always invested twice, or by two material types of powers, that they are the seat of two politico-libidinal processes with opposite tendencies. The duplicity of the operation, the enormous cultural effort to liberate meaning, to form it, to give it its suppleness, all by making the fluxes of power pass through determined institutional canals, implies that meaning, not more than sexuality, was not primordially or “originally” repressed. We begin to know—the conjuncture having changed, other perspectives have traversed it, which overdetermine it otherwise and tie the thread of production and the thread of repression, the revolutionary and fascistic tendencies otherwise—that *repression is an external limit of every production, but attached in an internal manner to this very production*, that it refers to its internal social conditions, that every production includes an instance of reproduction with a regime that is always transcendent in its commencement and in which the *reduction* (Revolution as process) is the guiding thread, if one wants, of history,

but cut, zigzagged, and especially does not reconstitute any goal under the form of a Revolution-entity. It is why, as hermeneuticians or symptomatologists, we must each time, before whatever theoretical or practical technique of meaning, treat it as a process produced by overdetermination, that is to say as: *a*) the disjunction or reciprocal displacement of a production and a repression of meaning, of a rebellion and mastery of meaning: its “revolutionary” side (in the sense of a process); *b*) the fusion and crosschecking [*recoupement*] of a rebel and master production: its dominant, reproductive, and conservative side.

3. “Overdetermination,” more generally, is the only “method.” Not the only strategy *adjusted* to the political duplicity of the history of meaning. It is a complex technology, in affinity with this fundamental phenomenon of hermeneutics: its capacity to be colonized by linguistics, analysis, by the techniques of rhetoric, philology, and etymology; its plasticity, its indetermination, and its incompleteness, its character as a supple, re-utilizable, and re-activated technology—in short, its underdetermination—permits an over-determination. This political weapon of overdetermination permits the renouncing of *molar, monist, or dualist conceptions of the history of meaning*, to denounce them as dominant: abstract and complicit: *a*) the denunciation of a position of universal mastery over meaning; *b*) the position of a massive liberation and an abstract materialization of meaning which goes as far as its negation, its confusion with signification, and

the refusal of identifying it as “functioning” comprised as production or formation. We should not identify meaning and signification to reject them together as idealist: nothing is ever definitively idealist. There is always the risk that there will be in particular a much too negative, exclusively libidinal materialism of meaning: it would lack, for it, the possibility of *a political analysis of meaning, of an analytic of the “historical” projects of meaning and their technologies*. The pure and simple identification of power, for example, with *drive* makes the drive, in turn, identified very quickly with desire: power fall backs onto libido, meaning onto power. We must avoid posing meaning as an irreducible entity, the object of technical mastery, or as identical, in fact, to signification and susceptible from being excluded to the benefit of material “functionings.”

The revolutionary question is solely that of a *decline* of meaning: it deracinates the paralognism which is at the basis of the refusal of elaborating new hermeneutic forms or of *possibilizing = intensifying* the ancients. The confusion of the symptom (dominant hermeneutics), articulated in the machinic syntax, with the interpretation directly, or in an internal manner, sets these syntaxes into play. It is through the recognition that every libidinal materiality passes through the Relations of Power and undergoes the law of an always dominant political strategy that is never susceptible to being massively levied, that one will avoid from splitting in an external manner the conditions of production or the reality of meaning and the conditions of its subjugation,

the necessity for every *Politico-Libidinal Formation* of passing through cultural organs, the practical or social institutional instances to which, however, it is not reduced. Thus, there is indeed a politics of meaning, its birth and decline: it is the “*Prätention*” (but certainly not the telos) of attempts of theoretical hermeneutics and its practices co-extensive with the Social Body. It is why we do not at all think that hermeneutics is destroyed because both decide so. That which is destroyed and to be destroyed are its dominant forms.

Our project is not of analyzing such and such technology of interpretation and its historical configuration, for example, that which is immanent to the *power to punish*, the *power to speak*, or to the power to believe; but of recognizing the possibility, the terrain, the general theoretical and technological resources of a minor hermeneutic, i.e. *a political and materialist analysis of the power-to-interpret*, by marking each time, as much as possible, the duplicity of a face-off [*mise front contre front*], without mediation, of the “will” of meaning which roams the constitution of Western knowledge, and its limits placed on this will in the very act of exercising, “external” limits, but to think in their co-belonging internal to the production of this “will.” Attention to this double process must go so far as to recognize this paradox, that the attempts at linguistic, judicative, or other reductions of meaning, are still a manner of prolonging, in a dissimulating and masking mode, the incoercible tendency of production, i.e. the education of meaning—as a last recognition, carried back to its limits, of its sovereignty.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: Published in 1978, parodying Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Laruelle's text comes at the tail end of the period known as *Philosophie I*, prior to what he would consider his "break" from the principle of sufficient philosophy. Due to a lack of attention, both academic and translational, this period has been somewhat forgotten: either because the academics (predominately Anglo-American), with their vested interest in non-philosophy as another grand theory in the marketplace of theories, have sought to find some "ethical" kernel that can help thought and action in a world wrought by travesty; or (somewhat similarly) because non-philosophy has "broken" from philosophical sufficiency, these interpretations and translations see no use-value for anyone simply because they are untranslated, somewhat impenetrable, and unavailable to a broader audience. The overall problem,

to situate this text in the grand scheme of the vicious *ritornello* of fascism, is not so much about finding an ethics which only repeat the world, nor is it about inventing a new politics (Badiou), but that of what Laruelle calls, in *Tétralogos*, a "politics of invention." Because of this, and despite undeservedly authoritative accounts to stamp non-philosophy as part of the "ethical turn," ultimately defanging the serpentine line, it is necessary to not reduce non-philosophy as political, but to reconsider these accounts in a new light, to follow the serpentine line right back to its *phangs* (philosophy + fang).

Beyond the Power Principle has five sections with an overview of the two types of materialisms that Laruelle develops in this early period: machinic materialism and political materialism. *Beyond* (alongside *Nietzsche contre Heidegger*, *Le déclin d'écriture*, and *Machines textuelles*) produces a type of post-Marxist and Nietzschean

fusion of both deconstruction and libidinal economy where both materialisms, prior to the break with philosophy and its sufficiency, seek to break new grounds in the philosophy of that time period, pre-dominantly post-structuralist thought. Machinic materialism and political materialism are both considered to be the "completion" of dialectical materialism and historical materialism, respectively. Whereas with dialectical materialism, which implies a reciprocal relationship between one and the other, machinic materialism implies a unilateral relationship (much like the unilateral causality later on) where resistance, revolution, rebellion and other forms of the *objet (r)* determine Mastery and Authority in the last instance. Whereas with historical materialism, which implies the ever-changing historical conditions between the oppressed and oppressing classes summed up in the phrase "life determines consciousness," political

materialism, inflected with Nietzschean transvaluation, is akin to, but distinct from, Foucault's discourse and power-knowledge: it starts from the dominant and empirical meanings of "power" (juridical or theological, for instance) to that of the universally and radically immanent power of "meaning." To Laruelle, all hitherto forms of politics (bourgeois, aristocratic, and even Marxist or Freudian) belong to the prehistory of politics, and that meaning, if it is this oblique and opaque human black box, is to be freed from the shackles of its worldly significations, to develop new human politics from out of the ruins of the old.

The stalemate that is the ethical turn has for far too long been dictated by worldly desires of salvation from within the seventh circle of the hell of fascism; the point is to find new weapons against it.

FRANÇOIS LARUELLE is professor emeritus of University of Paris X: Nanterre, the founder of Organisation Non-Philosophique Internationale (ONPhI), and the progenitor behind non-philosophy and non-standard philosophy.

JEREMY R. SMITH is a doctoral candidate at Western University at the Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism. His work investigates the theoretical in(ter)vention, scholarly reception, and practical application of François Laruelle's concept of non-philosophy.