DECONSTRUCTION AND NON-PHILOSOPHY ‡

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TRANSLATED BY NICHOLAS HAUCK

In order to determine the characteristics of non-philosophy, we frame it in opposition to an image of an established paradigm: Deconstruction (as suggested by Jean-Luc Nancy in *La deconstruction du christianisme*).[1] We comment on this image, we add to it, we transform it. It is a simple image of Deconstruction, one that speaks for itself independently of all textual techniques or mechanisms, yet it allows for an easy comparison with non-philosophy: it allows us to identify clearly their different objectives and respective methods. In the text below, the first number refers to the various themes of Deconstruction and non-philosophy that are compared; the second, which is always binary, refers first to Deconstruction (1), and then to non-philosophy (2).[2]

1.1 Deconstruction gives itself a notion and its context, a text and its corpus, a set of doctrinal beliefs (Christianity, for example), in such a way that these givens spontaneously present themselves as "philosophical" assumptions. Deconstruction is thus auto-donational. It supplies both the material to be de-

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1   See Jean-Luc Nancy, "The Deconstruction of Christianity," in *Dis-Enclosure: The Deconstruction of Christianity*, trans. Bettina Bergo, Gabriel Malenfant, and Michael B. Smith (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008).

2   By emphasizing the binarity of the number scheme, Laruelle alludes to his argument concerning the structure of philosophical decision. In his view, philosophy invariably purports to be a duality, but is in actuality a tripartite schema consisting of empirical experience, its metaphysical conditions, and a transcendental, decisional term which fastens the two together. By contrast, non-philosophy is a real unity—insofar as it is already given in-One—which is discernible as a binary composed of the Real and its clone, or of the vision-in-One and its material. Laruelle's decision to discuss Deconstruction first is likely meant to emphasize that philosophy functions as the *occasional cause* of non-philosophy.

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‡   All footnotes are those of the translator.

constructed and the method of deconstruction, the latter of which is derived from this material and therefore affected by a symptom of otherness that has yet to be determined. These givens, or assumptions, are examined from both the exterior and the interior.[3] They are subjected to a partial authority, examined like an objective topology or mechanism that is spontaneously given or assumed. The subject is himself or herself a constitutive component of the system under investigation, albeit only partially. In order for something like philosophy to appear, exteriority or meta-language—two concepts that are themselves philosophical, through and through—are the necessary conditions.

1.2 The non-philosophical subject gives itself, or rather lets itself be given, a notion and its context, a system. It is a radically immanent donation. If, therefore, a meta-language is still necessary, it should not be considered to be constitutive of this immanence (but rather as, for example, a hallucinatory authority), without running the risk of it taking the form of the operations that the subject itself carries out on the given.[4] Deconstruction is not the *only* way that exterior and interior are able to organize themselves.

2.1 We consider deconstruction as a composition of terms or parts that mutually hold themselves together like a tightly knit system, but without any apparent or explicit play between the parts. This system ensures an *a priori* principle of "logocentric" enclosing or foreclosing.

2.2 First of all, the given to be examined is not a textual constitution that supplies its own principle of enclosure, which is in itself textual. It is not to be examined from the outside or from above with authority as though it were an organization of parts assumed to be self-sufficient or given in and for them-

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3   Cf. Derrida's discussion of the "two strategies" of Deconstruction in "The Ends of Man." Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 30.1 (September, 1969), 31–57.
4   Cf. Laruelle in *Struggle and Utopia in the End Times of Philosophy*: "There is no meta-language for saying what non-philosophy is or is capable of doing… We will not even claim, like deconstruction, that there are *effects* of meta-language, but that this meta-language of a philosophical origin is the material determined and transformed in-the-last-instance by the first Name of Man." François Laruelle, *Struggle and Utopia in the End Times of Philosophy*, trans. Drew S. Burk and Anthony Paul Smith (Minneapolis: Univocal Press, 2012), 55.

selves. The system to be examined is indeed constituted, but it is not just any textual system. Rather, it is philosophy as a system of thought, specifically as a principle of enclosure that cannot in any way be reduced to its texts. Above all, the system is a *material* constitution, for it is immanently given *prima facie* or *a priori* (in the vision-in-One). Because of its theoretical or phenomenal status, the constitution is both a *material* and a *symptom*. It is not an essential or funda-mental point of departure that has authority over itself, nor is it an assumed and self-legislating symptom that needs to be deconstructed. The primary and immanent exclusion of all authority (not only "objectifying" authority but authority in the form of "actualization" or "realization," or a "doubly objectifying" authority that posits the thing itself as independent or as be-ing [*étant*]) amounts to the impossibility of a transcendental or metalinguis-tic account of radical immanence (which is nevertheless capable of thinking [itself] axiomatically or without reflexivity). This is the vision-in-One. The system's *a priori* condition of being-given [*être-donné*] is the Whole that—even if it is indeterminate, imaginary, or illusorily self-sufficient—is identified as philosophizable. The philosophizable does not appear out of nowhere, since it comes in and as the form of a unilateral Outside specific to immanence.

3.1 A system that is subjected to the partial authority of a subject, for which meta-language has at least some constitutive effect, is predisposed to dis-as-sembly *en pointillé*—that is, to a rightful, proper disassembly—if it is not al-ready disassembled. The text already includes within itself a first deconstruc-tion, a deconstruction that has taken place prior to the intervention of any subject, which only needs to be resumed or revived by an additional act of otherness, by a supplementary work of writing. Greek otherness—the other-ness of an opposite, an antonym, black vs. white—cannot exist without the need for a Judaic otherness[5]—the otherness of an alien script, or an infinite God compared to its finite creation. Judaic otherness is the eternal supple-ment to the Greek. Finally one last variation: Deconstruction as "Christian" (Nancy),[6] a blend of Greek and Judaic alterity.

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5   Laruelle here distinguishes between the otherness of Ancient Greek philosophy—which is always opposed bi-laterally to some mode of sameness or selfhood—and the radical, non-binary alterity of Jewish philosophy. See Laruelle, *Philosophies of Difference*, trans. Rocco Gangle (New York: Continuum, 2011).

6   Nancy raises the possibility that Derrida's Joycean conflation of "Jew" and "Greek" as "jewgreek" at the close of "Violence and Metaphysics" may actually refer to Christianity.

3.2 What is primary is not the spontaneously given text with its spontaneous self-deconstruction, but rather its being-given *a priori* as material reduced in its philosophical sufficiency by the vision-in-One. The given to be re-deconstructed is not the self-deconstructive spontaneity of a system but the phenomenon of (the system of) philosophy itself, a system that exists prior to all implied deconstruction or the possibility of a textual deconstruction. The basis of non-philosophy is neither Greek nor Judaic, nor is it the exaggerated and excessive conjugation of the two. It is pre-eminently "Christian,"[7] a Christianity that is not simply the blend of its Greek and Jewish precursors, and therefore non-Christian in the non-philosophical sense of "non-," which consumes Christianity.[8]

4.1 The system subjected to Deconstruction is rendered possible to the point of its own suspension or impossibilization. The system's deconstruction is a way of showing what it truly was, a way of making its fundamental principles and presuppositions appear. The system's deconstruction balances the possibility and the impossibility of the text, which are the same. This sameness is nevertheless unbalanced. It is an unbalanced balance that is always refined and adjusted by equilibrium.

4.2 Acting as an *a priori*, the vision-in-One is another combination of the possibility and the impossibility of philosophy. Its impossibility is immanent or radical, its possibility—or its *a priori* givenness as phenomenon—is unilateral and therefore a complete Stranger to auto-donational philosophy. The Stranger remains immanent. The balance between possibility and impossibility in the vision-in-One is an immanent equilibrium, which is not evened out

See Nancy, "The Deconstruction of Christianity," 140.

7   Cf. Lyotard's characterization of the Christian "narrative of love," a radically inclusive genre of discourse, which accommodates and accounts for all events: "Any referent can be signified as a sign of the good news announcing that 'we' creatures are loved." Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend*, trans. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 160.

8   Laruelle does not suggest that non-philosophy is "Christian" in the sense of being an extension or symptom of the organized religion "Christianity." Rather, he uses the term "Christianity"—or "non-Christianity"—*heretically*, as one possible first name for the non-consistent, radically immanent Real. See, François Laruelle, *Future Christ: A Lesson in Heresy*, trans. Anthony Paul Smith (New York: Continuum, 2010).

by equilibrium. It is the *Grand Midi* of Man. The vision-in-One acts accord-
ing to a radical unbalance, one without return, and it never ceases to come
as Stranger or Messiah, as a permanent struggle against the philosophical
spontaneity of the world. Thus we uphold and maintain that philosophy is
given to subjects as the object of their struggle. We avoid the spontaneous
and empirical self-donation of philosophy as a signifier to which access is only
granted and assured by Writings and Texts—that also is to say by religion and
perhaps religious sophism—because subjects have a rightful and legitimate
access to philosophy as the object of their struggle. They have this access even
without taking into account the aporias of entry, exit, and return.

5.1 Deconstruction consists in establishing play "between" the parts, in mak-
ing them move in relation to each other. This relation between parts is abso-
lute because of the supplement of an absolute Other. Deconstruction consists
in undoing the enclosure or the foreclosure of a system without breaking it, in
unbinding the organization of the set, in weakening the disposition [*systase*] of
the system (Heidegger), in making disseminated strangeness appear.

5.2 Non-philosophy does not emphasize otherness or differences; it does not
compound them through *différance*, and does not content itself with establish-
ing play while conserving the deconstructionist's *ex machina* authority (which
amounts to the same thing as enclosure). It does not add to nor subtract from
the immanent deconstruction of the thing (of texts); rather, it substitutes uni-
lateralism for difference (*différance*), the structure of the immanent existing-
Stranger for differing, and it breaks the enclosure, at least for the Real. If in
the best of philosophical cases there is pure difference—a signifier in contrast
to nothing, not even another signifier nor one that is absolutely removed from
the chain, a "Greco-Judaic" signifier we could say—then there is a pure oth-
erness that delimits, not in opposition to immanence (which has no limit), but
a One-limitation that is opposed to the system as its possibilizing impossibility.

6.1 Since it does not come from any identifiable space, the play of distances
in a deconstructed system cannot be attributed to any particular or unique
part that would constitute an origin; such a part is precisely the point of effer-
vescence or condensation of play, not a source. Difference (*différance*) appears
to emerge from the core of the deconstructed system, as an unlocatable, at

once internal and external to the system, but finally external a second time, as an exaggerated otherness, a relative-absolute Greco-Judaic alterity, which is therefore twice external. Deconstruction is a supplement to Greek logic. It initiates the dominance of metalinguistic exteriority and logocentric enclosure relative to philosophical phenomena, but continues to situate itself in the last instance to this dominance.

6.2 Unilateralism has another structure than the one provided by an exaggerated and doubled otherness. It is indeed otherness, but in a unique sense. It is a unidirectional otherness. It is immanent without being relative to immanence. It is the "vision" in the vision-in-One, a unique intentionality driven by a single impulse, like a drive that renders philosophy impossible precisely because it expresses philosophy as *the* philosophy [*"la" philosophie*]. Unilateralism acts as a radically immanent One-Stranger that does not itself come from the system, nor from its immediate exterior like an enclosure beyond an enclosure, nor even from further afar like an otherness with Judaic emphasis. It comes from Nowhere and has No Time, the One-Stranger is utopic and uchronic, that is to say it is celestial (and not extra-terrestrial) and eternal (and not outside of time). It consists of an operation that is not internal/external but immanent in itself and therefore heteronomous for philosophy. This Outside is an immanent *a priori*, which makes an *a priori* understanding of the philosophizable unknown to and impossible for philosophy.

7.1 Duality, because there always is one, takes the form of a Judaic supplement of otherness graphed to and integrated in a Greek or weak otherness. It is a duality that begins in anonymity and transcendence, one that never ceases to be anonymous except as Judaic excess, except as its characterization as "*Autre homme*" (Levinas), or as "*epekeina*" [beyond].

7.2 It is philosophy that is dualyzed, not the Real itself. Duality belongs to the Real, which is immediately non-anonymous because it is Man, and it belongs to the transcendental subject. Man is a unilateral duality, without a divided One, whether in its capacity as Real or as subject. We cannot say that the subject is a supplement to Man's Real. The subject is Real via the cloning of its essence, and the Real is subject when it is occasionally solicited by sufficient or non-reduced philosophy. The dyad undoes the system-form in two

unilateral temporalities. The philosophy-form is not a simple effect, as deconstruction would have it; it is, on the contrary, divided (transcendental-real and transcendental-empirical). Therefore there are two phases to the dualysis of philosophy: 1) Unilateral identity suspends, *a priori*, its sufficient form, or neutralizes it. This is the effect of the Real's impasse toward philosophical material; 2) This non-operation that results from the suspension of philosophical sufficiency is then treated as the condition that prepares the ground upon which dualysis disassembles, takes apart, or decomposes, this time strata by strata, the very structure of the philosophical system. This system has never been an indeterminate nor simply textual assembly, but rather a complex or transcendental structure (in order to call upon a "transcendental signified" to be deconstructed, the structure of the transcendental must be known). We therefore distinguish between the suspension that gives rise to the hallucination of philosophy and its deconstruction, and a new type of deconstruction or disassembly that acts not on the parts of the system but on the system's subjective or transcendental structure. Philosophy, a structure larger than logocentrism and larger than the text, is suspended a first time by the Real that gives it its *a priori* unilateral character and heightens its sufficiency. Philosophy is then suspended a second time by the strata-by-strata dismemberment of the very structure that was committed to the system. The operation of the dyad is purely oriented toward the structure of philosophy's transcendental system (and toward each of its parts as they express or condense the structure of which they are a part), but only as an operation that is materially given *a priori* as an intuition or as an immanent Outside. For the system or for its parts, the operation of the dyad appears as a heteronomous subject or Stranger. The non-philosophical dyad signifies a one-way otherness, and is therefore lacking any sense, encountering sense only as a symptom.

8.1 Deconstruction is not destruction or annihilation but a "taking apart" (*Abbau*, Heidegger) or a disassembling. However this disassembling is not a mechanical operation (this is the paradigm's insufficiency) but a spectral slipping. It leaves the parts of the system or even the system itself in a spectral state where the "play" is a form of *différance* that operates neither from part to part (as sign) nor from part to system. Deconstruction is a staggered and deferred starting-over of tradition as a whole, which is each time taken on in totality. Tradition is not destroyed in order to be restructured or perpetuated.

To deconstruct is neither to identify constituted materials, nor to find a way out of them into some external space, but rather a means to transmit them. It is an un-bearing, an offsetting, of tradition.

8.2 Non-philosophy leads to a philo-fiction[9] that consists not so much of disassembling an assumed and given system in a spectral dimension, but which rather starts by presenting the system as given under the auspices of human Identity[10] (an identity that is unknown and foreign to the system), and describes what is deduced as "deconstruction" from the structure of the philosophical system. On the one hand, the operation is less a spectralization of reality, less a real supplement to its idealization, and more a radical fiction, an evacuation of any mixed solution for a unique and simple unilateralization. On the other hand, the operation acts on the fundamental structure of philosophical systems. From there it eventually acts on the structure of the textual system, rather than starting with the text and then moving on to philosophy (there exists a distinct structure of philosophy apart from all textuality).

9.1 Coming from the interior and the exterior, play is an archi-possibility from which textual constitution is derived. The text conserves its own constitution as aberrant and unsuited, as if the text existed as already deconstructed *en pointillé* or as a spectre.

9.2 Non-philosophy does not conserve philosophy or its structure, whether incomplete or misused, thinned out and spectral, ghostly and hidden by the supposedly given system. It is a philo-fiction and it has certain characteristics of the spectre. It is immanent in its principle, and penetrates and encompasses the system, finding subtle support in each of its parts, brushing up against them where necessary without lingering, settling, or becoming attached. Yet, the philo-fiction is never simply hidden or covered by the philosophical system. It is not the role of non-philosophy to unearth the philo-fiction that was always already there. For the Real there is no philosophical appearance, only a hallucination that philosophy has identified or produced; for the non-

9   "Philo-fiction" is a term Laruelle has recently used to designate the unilateralized clone effectuated by non-philosophy. See, for example, François Laruelle, *Photo-Fiction, a Non-Standard Aesthetics*, trans. Drew S. Burk (Minneapolis: Univocal Press, 2012).
10   "Human Identity" here functions as another name for what Laruelle elsewhere calls "Man-in-Person."

philosophical subject however, there is a transcendental illusion that is already more consistent. Ubiquitous in its cause, philo-fiction penetrates and encompasses all systems, each time at a point that is no longer nodal but unilateral. For the non-philosophical subject, the philosophizable *a priori* constantly threatens to reclaim its sufficiency and to "recharge" from its philosophical pretenses; it hides the real *a priori* and confirms spontaneous philosophy. Philosophy perpetually wants to claim the philo-fiction as just more philosophy. But all bets are off; the Lived-life is resilient, the inalienable Real cannot be forgotten, for it does not cease to resist any more than the subject (transcendentally radicalized) is able to forget itself in the struggle. The outcome of non-philosophy is a radical Lived-life of hallucination and illusion. The immanent Lived-life is unforgettable without the need for an absolute memory or a memory refashioned by operations and then reconstituted. It is the real condition of salvation such that it engages a task and maintains the subject, head above the world.

Let us generalize toward contemporary philosophy. Non-philosophy places philosophy in a radical state; it takes phenomena as they are given *a priori* in the human or real state, as they are given in their immanent identity, and therefore given *a priori* unilaterally or by the Other. Non-philosophy does not impose an everyday structure or a system of knowledge, whether linguistic or mathematic and based on the "set." The linguistically rendered text or the ontological knowledge based on the set have to be given as unilateral identity, at the risk that they revert to particularity or Judaic exceptionality, or to a materialistic void and its corresponding idealism; they have to be given as Other rather than in their own sufficiency. There is no preconditioning set that allows for an immediate and tautological reading of mathematical knowledge, nor is there a textualization that allows for an immediate and violent or raw deconstruction. In both cases, we open the door to a practice that is burdened with empiricism and therefore theoreticist and spontaneous or violent and raw, a practice that has forgotten to radically "phenomenalize" the given and in its place has substituted a transcendent phenomenon, in other words a philosophical one. By placing both cases in a state of radical identity, a series of transformations is released. These transformations move from the suspense of sufficiency to the breaking-up of the structure of the philosophical system that was invested in each part of the play. The enclosure is not simply logocentric, nor is it simply quantifiable or calculable, rather is

it always duplicity or double enclosure. This is the principle of a "non-de-construction" (of a construction of deconstruction within an immanent and *a priori* intuition: a philo-fiction), or a togetherness or *ensemblisme* (in the sense of real identity "en"/"in" semblance), both of them real and transcendental, and destined to relieve and replace the transcendent or *ex machina* divides, whether these divides are linguistic or mathematical.

Non-philosophy is not just a new experience of Man or of the subject, one that sets itself apart from contemporary thought and the way it honours the philosophical paradigm. Non-philosophy demands a new theoretical practice. Instead of taking as given the text—as well as the signifier, the set, desire, or power—as transcendent empiricals conveying, more or less secretly, religious determinations (not only "transcendental signifiers") that are unjustified except by a certain lazy philosophical rush, non-philosophy places them in a radical state where they are no less ontological than linguistic, scientific, etc. What is actually given as phenomenon or foundation upon which thought can be based? All philosophy partakes in the magic act that transforms the empirical into absolute, and the absolute… into absolute. We ask how the empirical is itself given to us, given to the philosophical subject, and how does this philosophical subject know that he or she has rightful access to language or mathematics? Does the subject speak? Is she a mathematician? Without doubt, but if his or her knowledge is immanent to these activities, what relation, what non-relation does he or she have, as a subject, to this immanence?