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Jean-François Lyotard's "Can Thought Go On Without a Body?"—the opening chapter from his 1991 collection *The Inhuman*[1]—is a brilliantly incisive example of a now apparently defunct genre: the philosophical essay. However, my aim here is neither to provide a reading nor an exegesis of this remarkable piece of philosophical writing. Lyotard's question, "can thought go on without a body?" here serves as the pretext for dealing with another question, one that I think is perhaps more fundamental, although it only warrants a passing mention by Lyotard. This other question is: can thought go on without a horizon? The use of the word "horizon" here is intended to bear a quasi-transcendental charge. For European philosophy up to and including Nietzsche—I say "including" because I fear Nietzsche ultimately remains a Christian thinker[2]—the name for the horizon was "God." Then, in the wake of the collapse of this first horizon, for a central strain in European philosophy since Nietzsche, whose most significant representatives include figures as diverse as Husserl, Heidegger and Deleuze, the name for the horizon becomes "Earth." My aim here is to show that this horizon too needs to be wiped away.

Thus, the link between Lyotard's question, "can thought go on without a body?" and my question "can thought go on without a horizon?" is provided by an intermediary question: "what happens to thought when the earth dies?" Significantly, this is the question with which Lyotard's essay begins. Roughly 4.5 billion years from now, Lyotard reminds us, the sun will explode, destroying the earth and all earthly life. Thought's terrestrial horizon will be wiped away. This is the solar catastrophe, in the original Greek sense of the word as a "mis-turning" or "over-turning" (kata-strophe). The death of the sun is a catastrophe because it overturns the terrestrial horizon relative to which philosophical thought orients itself. Or as Lyotard himself puts it: "Everything's dead already if this infinite reserve from which [philosophy] now draws energy to defer answers, if in short thought as quest, dies out with the sun."[3] *Everything is dead already.* The catastrophe *has already happened.* Solar death is catastrophic because it vitiates philosophical temporality, thought's constitutive horizonal relation to the future. Far from lying in wait in for us in the far distant future, on the other side of the terrestrial horizon, the solar catastrophe needs to be grasped as the aboriginal trauma driving the history of terrestrial life and terrestrial philosophy as an elaborately circuitous detour from stellar death. Terrestrial history occurs between the simultaneous strophes of a death which is at once earlier than the birth of the first unicellular organism and later than the extinction of the last multi-cellular animal. Paraphrasing a remark Freud makes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, we could say this: "In the last resort, what has left its mark on the development of [philosophy] must be the history of the earth we live on and of its relation to the sun."[4] This mark, this trace imprinted upon thought by its relation to the sun, is the trace of the solar catastrophe, which both precedes and follows, initiates and terminates, the possibility of philosophizable death.

Thus, part of my aim here is to effect a philosophical radicalization of the Freudian "death-drive" by remodeling it in terms of Lyotard's "solar catastrophe." The result is an interesting but still philosophically famil-

iar trope wherein solar death figures as the condition of possibility and impossibility for the earth (rather than just consciousness or metaphysics) as ultimate horizon of philosophy. But this immediately gives rise to another question (the fourth and final one I intend to broach here): even if philosophy cannot go beyond the thought of solar catastrophe as condition of (im-)possibility for its relation to the earth and for its ties to the human organism, does this mean that all thought is bound to the earth and tied to the interests of the human organism? This question gives rise to my other aim, which is to suggest that even if philosophy remains constitutively earth-bound and species specific, thought *can* free itself from the horizon of the earth and the interests of the human organism. It can do so by adopting a non-philosophical posture—and here I mean "non-philosophical" in the Laruellean sense[5]—in which it becomes possible to discover the *identity-(of)-death*[6] This identity-(of)-death opens up a non-horizonal dimension for thought: that of the universal. Contra Nietzsche, thought can and must abandon the earth, the better to gain access to the universal. And thought effectuates the universal when it becomes capable of intelligibly uttering that which has always been the philosophical absurdity par excellence: "I am death."

But without further ado, let me briefly recapitulate the philosophical structure of Lyotard's essay. It is divided into two halves and takes the form of an exchange between two anonymous philosophical protagonists, simply entitled HE and SHE. I will have more to say about the significance of this gender distinction later. Suffice it to say for now that HE, who may or may not be Lyotard's mouthpiece, adopts the stance of a certain philosophical materialism, whereas SHE, who once again may or may not represent Lyotard's own views, espouses a distinctly phenomenological perspective. Let me begin by reiterating the case HE sets out in the first half of the essay.

HE

HE, the materialist, insists on the inseparability between thought and its material substrate the better to argue for the necessity of separating thought from its rootedness in organic life in general, and the human organism in particular. Why? Because 4.5 billions years from now the sun will explode, destroying the earth and all earthly life. And, HE argues, the death of the sun poses a challenge to philosophy which differs in kind from that of any other death. Unlike the model of death that, at least since Hegel, has been the motor of philosophical speculation, the death of the sun does not constitute a limit for thought, a limit that thought can overstep, recuperate, sublate. Thought is perfectly capable of transcending the limits it has posited for itself. But the death of the sun is not a limit of or for thought. It doesn't belong to thought and cannot be appropriated by it. Moreover, this is adamantly not because it functions as some quasi-mystical apex of ineffable transcendence. On the contrary, it is a perfectly immanent, entirely banal empirical fact. What thought cannot circumvent is the blunt empirical fact that "after the sun's death there will be no thought left to know its death took place"[7]. Or as HE puts it:

> With the disappearance of earth, thought will have stopped—leaving that disappearance absolutely unthought of. It's the horizon itself that will be abolished and, with its disappearance, [the phenomenologist's] transcendence in immanence as well. If, as a limit, death really is what escapes and is deferred and as a result what thought has to deal with, right from the beginning—this death is still only the life of our minds. But the death of the sun is a death of mind, because it is the death of death as the life of the mind.[8]

Nevertheless, HE continues, there is one way of rendering this death conceivable, of turning this death of the death which is the life of thought into a death like any other: by separating the future of thought from the fate of the human body:

> Thought without a body is the prerequisite for thinking of the death of all bodies, solar or terrestrial, and of the death of thoughts that are inseparable from those bodies. But "without a body" in this exact sense: without the complex living terrestrial organism known as the human body. Not without hardware, obviously.[9]

Moreover, HE claims, the process of separating thought from the human body, which is to say the process of providing human software with a hardware that would function independently of the conditions of life on earth, and of ensuring the survival of morphological complexity by shifting its material substrate, has been underway for billions of years: it is simply the history of the earth. The dream of what John Haugeland called "Good Old Fashioned AI," which is to say the attempt to achieve a precise digital codification of cognitive complexity in a way that doesn't supervene on the details of biological hardware, is merely the latest manifestation of a generalized technological process already underway with amoeba. Thus, the history of technology overlaps with the history of life on earth understood as originary unity of *techne* and *physus*. There is no "natural" realm subsisting in contradistinction to the domain of technological artifice because matter—whether organic or inorganic—already possesses its own intrinsic propensity to self-organization. Technology is the name for the process striving to find a means of ensuring that the negentropic complexification underway on earth these last few billion years will not be annihilated by the imminent entropic tidal wave of solar extinction.

Now, clearly, even from a strictly materialist perspective, some of these claims are philosophically suspect. The notion that terrestrial history is the history of complexification smacks dangerously of some sort of absurd evolutionary eschatology. Evolution is not driven by an intrinsic tendency to complexification. And the assumption that all AI embraces functionalism (substrate independence) and endorses the computational paradigm betrays an ignorance of connectionism, where the software/hardware distinction is at least seriously compromised, if not wholly undermined. Nevertheless, I am not going to take issue with these claims here since they are largely irrelevant to my concerns. Instead I will now move onto the second part of Lyotard's essay and delineate the phenomenological rejoinder with which Lyotard's feminine alter-ego, SHE, counters the foregoing materialist diatribe.

SHE

SHE challenges the claim that it is even possible in principle to separate thought from the body by abstracting a set of digitally codifiable cognitive algorithms from their material substrate. Thought and the body, SHE argues, are entwined in a relation of analogical co-dependence, rather than extrinsically conjoined in a relation of hylomorphic duality. Each is analogous to the other in relation to their respective perceptual or symbolic environment. And that relationship itself is analogical rather than digital. Or as SHE puts it: "Real 'analogy' requires a thinking or representing machine to be *in* its data *just as* the eye is in the visual field or writing is in language."[10] Thought is constitutively experienced as embodied, just as embodiment is constitutively lived as thought.

Moreover, if embodiment as condition for thought implies the inseparability of thought and body, then that very inseparability is itself anchored in a primordial separation in-

scribed in human corporeality as such: the separation of gender. Thus, SHE concludes:

> Thought is inseparable from the phenomenological body: although gendered body is separated from thought and launches thought. I'm tempted to see in this difference a challenge to thought that's comparable to the solar catastrophe. But such is not the case since this difference causes thought—held as it is in reserve in the secrecy of bodies and thoughts. It annihilates only the One.[11]

For SHE then, it would seem that sexual difference indexes a fissuring of metaphysical unity even more primordial than Heideggerean *Unterschied* or Derridean *differance*. What SHE calls "the irremediable differend of gender" becomes the ultimate *ur-grund* of ontological difference and the originary wellspring of the phenomenological Lifeworld. But for SHE, though sexual separation seems to pose a challenge to philosophy at least as radical as that of solar death, the key difference is that while the latter threatens to annihilate thought, the former engenders it.

Now, once again, there are some obvious objections to this line of argument. The phenomenological insistence on the inseparability of thought and body dubiously assumes that our embodied subjective experience of thought provides the best paradigm for defining what thought is. Against this extravagant phenomenological holism, whose excessive emphasis on the role of embodiment in sentience simply mirrors classical AI's equally unwarranted disdain for embodied cognition, one would want to insist that there is a difference between what thought is and what it is like to think for organisms endowed with certain specific sensory and cognitive modalities. But, as before, this is not my concern here and I will not pursue these objections further.

Instead, I will proceed by summarizing the two contrasting philosophical theses laid out by HE and SHE alternately:

For HE, solar death as "irreparably exclusive disjunction between death and thought" is the death of the death which is the life of thought. For thought to survive this death, it must separate itself from the human body.

For SHE, however, it is the irremediable disjunction of gendered embodiment that gives birth to the death which is the life of thought. Unless the thought striving to preserve itself by separating itself from the human body manages to retain an imprint of this primordial separation, it will not be thought at all. In other words, it will merely be the ghost of thought, a dead thought, and living thought—by which SHE means phenomenological subjectivity—will effectively have perished.

The peculiar challenge of Lyotard's essay lies in the way he seems to present us with these two incompatible sets of claims, the materialist thesis and the phenomenological thesis, without attempting to reconcile them or providing clues as to which of them he espouses. How are we to respond to them? Yet there is in fact a clue of sorts as to how Lyotard views the relation between HE and SHE in the introduction to *The Inhuman* (entitled "About the Human"). There, as the following remark from this introduction reveals, Lyotard makes it clear that he considers it necessary to distinguish between two inhumans:

> The inhumanity of the system which is currently being consolidated under the name of development (among others) must not be confused with the infinitely secret one of which the soul is hostage. To believe, as happened to me [a reference to Lyotard's "libidinal materialist" phase], that the first can take over from the second, give it expression, is a mistake.[12]

Thus, throughout the book, Lyotard strives to distinguish between a "good" inhu-

man, an improper propriety that defines the singularity of the human as an anomaly or caesura in the ontological order (Levinas is the secret influence here), and a "bad" inhuman, which erases the anomalous specificity of the human and reduces it to an inert material, a neutral ontological "stuff" (e.g., the Human Genome Project, etc.). So it would seem that in "Can Thought Go On Without A Body?" Lyotard is implicitly pitting the in-human singularity of sexuation against the anti-human genericity of the technoscientific neuter.

I do not believe this opposition is tenable. However, rather than trying to resolve or synthesize or supplement it philosophically, I want to radicalize the Lyotardian model of solar catastrophe via the Freudian notion of the death-drive so as to render it capable of overturning both the birth and the death which are the life of thought. Then this catastrophic exacerbation of the death-drive can be universalized non-philosophically in the form of a non-human subject-(of)-death that neutralizes the distinction between the good and the bad inhuman.

The Death-Drive

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud's initial concern consists in trying to account for the compulsion to repeat indexed by the phenomenon of traumatic neurosis, where the sufferer compulsively relives the traumatic incident in his dreams. If the function of dreams is primarily that of wish-fulfillment, in accordance with the pleasure principle, which strives to maximize pleasure—where pleasure is defined as a diminuition of excitation—and to minimize unpleasure—where unpleasure is defined as an increase in excitation— then traumatic neurosis pauses a problem for psychoanalysis because it resists explanation in terms of the pleasure principle: why is the patient compulsively driven to relive a shatteringly unpleasurable experience? Freud's answer is that the patient suffering from traumatic neurosis is driven to repeat the moment of trauma so that his psyche can muster the anxiety required to achieve a successful *cathexis* (*Besetzung*: investment, occupation) or *binding* of the excess of excitation concomitant with the traumatic breaching of the organism's psychic defenses. Thus, the compulsion to repeat consists in an attempt on the part of the unconscious to relive the traumatic incident in a condition of anxious anticipation that goes some way to buffering the traumatic shock—unlike the impotent terror that disabled the organism in the face of this violently unexpected trauma. This unconscious drive to effect an anxious re-experiencing of trauma is the organism's attempt to staunch the excessive influx of excitations brought about by a massive psychic wound.

The compulsion to re-experience trauma follows from the fact that the "originary" traumatic experience was only ever registered in the unconscious. It was never consciously "lived." Strictly speaking, there is no "originary experience" of trauma because trauma marks the point of an obliteration of consciousness. Trauma occurs as an unconscious wound which continues to resonate in the psychic economy as an unresolved disturbance; an un-dampened excess of excitation. It is because it indexes an influx of excitation vastly in excess of the binding capacities exercised by what Freud calls "the perception-consciousness system" that trauma leaves behind this permanent imprint in the unconscious. Moreover, it is this unconscious trace that demands to be renegotiated and that gives rise to compulsive repetition, rather than the traumatic "experience" itself, because strictly speaking the trauma was never experienced as such. It never originally registered in the perception-consciousness system because for Freud consciousness always arises instead of a memory trace.[13] This is why trauma is constitutively unconscious: it only exists as a trace. And this traumatic trace persists as a permanent and indelible imprint in the uncon-

scious because it testifies to something unmanageable for the filtering apparatus of the perception-consciousness system: a hemorrhaging of the psyche.

Freud then proposes a remarkable speculative hypothesis linking the origins of this filtering apparatus to the genesis of organic individuation. A primitive organic vesicle (i.e., a small bladder, cell, bubble, or hollow structure) becomes capable of filtering the continuous and potentially dangerous torrent of external stimuli by sacrificing part of itself in order to erect a protective shield against excessive influxes of excitation, thereby effecting a definitive separation between organic interiority and inorganic exteriority:

> [The vesicle] acquires the shield in this way: its outermost surface ceases to have the structure proper to living matter, becomes to some degree inorganic and thenceforth functions as a special envelope or membrane resistant to stimuli. In consequence, the energies of the external world are able to pass into the next underlying layers, which have remained living, with only a fragment of their original intensity. . . . By its death the outer layer has saved all the deeper ones from a similar fate—unless, that is to say, stimuli reach it which are so strong that they break through the protective shield. Protection against stimuli is an almost more important function for the living organism than reception of stimuli. . . . In highly developed organisms the receptive cortical layers of the former vesicle has long been withdrawn into the depths of the interior of the body, though portions of it have been left behind on the surface immediately beneath the shield against stimuli.[14]

Two features of Freud's hypothesis are particularly worthy of note.

First, that the separation between organic interiority and anorganic exteriority is won at the cost of a primordial death of part of the primitive organism itself: it is this death that gives rise to the protective shield filtering out the potentially lethal influxes of external energy. Individuated organic life is won at the cost of this aboriginal death whereby the organism first becomes capable of separating itself from the inorganic outside. This death, which gives birth to organic individuation, thereby conditions the possibility of organic phylogenesis as well as of sexual reproduction. Thus, not only does this death precede the organism, it is the precondition for the organism's ability to reproduce and die. If, for Freud, the death-drive qua compulsion to repeat is the originary, primordial motive force driving organic life back to its originary inorganic condition, this is because the motor of repetition—the repeating instance—is this trace of the aboriginal trauma of organic individuation. The death-drive, the drive to return to the inorganic, is the repetition of the death that gave birth to the organism—a death that cannot be satisfactorily repeated, not only because the organism that bears its trace was never there to experience it, but because that trace indexes an exorbitant death, one that even in dying, the organism cannot successfully repeat. Thus, the trace of aboriginal death harbors an impossible demand for organic life: it is the trace of a trauma that demands to be integrated into the psychic economy of the organism, but which cannot because it indexes the originary traumatic scission between organic and inorganic. The organism cannot live the death that gives rise to the difference between life and death. The death-drive is the trace of this scission: a scission that will never be successfully bound (cathected, invested) because it remains the unbindable excess that makes binding possible.

Moreover, since this death that gives birth to organic phylogenesis precedes and conditions the birth that allows for reproduction and the organic difference between life and death, death is older than sex. In other words,

it is necessary to insist, contra Freud if need be, that death as traumatic scission between the organic and the inorganic precedes and conditions sexuation and sexual reproduction. The repetition of death drives the reproduction of sex. And as we shall see, this undermines the phenomenological thesis which claims that the sexual difference proper to gendered bodies is somehow more originary than the irreparable disjunction between thought and solar death.

The second noteworthy feature of the Freudian hypothesis is that the cerebral cortex and central nervous systems in higher animals, which are sophisticated versions of the primitive vesicle's receptive cortical layer, are parts of the filtering apparatus which has been sacrificed to the inorganic. In other words, they are dead things. Brains and nervous systems are the internalized dead things necessary for the functioning of a particularly complex variety of living thing. Not in the sense of being, as Freud puts it, "baked though," completely permeable to the influx of stimulae and hence undifferentiated—for in higher animals, the receptive layer itself is already highly differentiated. But dead in the sense of being organic simplificationss, subtractions from torrential inorganic complexity: even the highly differentiated connective functions within the mnemic system operate by subtracting from a degree of differentiation in excess of the organism's adaptively specified neuorphysiological conduits. The point is that the organic is merely a temporary simplification of the inorganic. Consequently, if thought is secreted by dead things—the cerebral cortex and nervous system—then there would seem to be a case for insisting that thought itself is constitutively dead and that, contrary to the phenomenological thesis, philosophical questioning, or what Lyotard calls thought as interminable quest, is not originally engendered by sexual difference. Rather—and this is a familiar but nonetheless sound observation—philosophical thought is a psychic disturbance brought about by the traumatic trace of the inorganic, a symptomatic manifestation of the death-drive. Thus, if thought is not constitutively animated by its gendered embodiment, there is no good reason to suppose it stands to lose something essential by striving to dissociate itself from the body. From a philosophical point of view, the question is rather whether thought's motivating disturbance will survive the separation from the organic body and the reunion with the inorganic, so that thought as quest carries on unimpeded, which is what HE maintains; or whether the return to the inorganic brought about by thought's separation from the organic body will be its death, so that, as SHE argues, thought will be reduced to a mere digital ghost of its phenomenological life.

But note that both HE and SHE continue to think in terms of the life and death of thought relative to a body, organic in one case, inorganic in the other. Thus, both still presuppose that the solar catastrophe merely entails reconfiguring the horizon, rather than abandoning horizonality altogether. HE believes it is simply a matter of reinscribing the death-drive in an inorganic body—as though thought's quest could carry on by indefinitely postponing its encounter with death. Accordingly, HE suggests, perhaps on quasi-Deleuzean grounds, that thought can embrace a new, inorganic life by overcoming organic death, by abandoning the terrestrial horizon in favor of a cosmic one. Similarly, SHE hints, on phenomenological grounds this time, that thought can continue to live off sexual difference by re-inscribing it in the context of inorganic embodiment (there is a whole strain of cyberfeminist discourse enthusiastically endorsing this particular possibility). Ultimately then, both HE and SHE believe thought as quest can survive by orienting itself toward a new horizon, thereby perpetuating the life or the death which drives thought.

Nevertheless, from my point of view neither possibility is satisfactory. What if, instead of switching horizons and staving off

death, thought could annihilate every horizon by effectuating the death that drives it? It is with this goal in mind that I now propose to remodel the death-drive in terms of Lyotard's solar catastrophe.

IT: The Subject-(of)-Death

I want to suggest that the traumatic scission that divides organic life from inorganic death has its transcendental analogue in the irreparable disjunction between thought and solar death. Bear in mind that what is repeated in the death-drive is something that never happened: a non-event that cannot be registered within the perception-consciousness system. Thus, organic life merely recapitulates the non-occurrence of aboriginal inorganic death. Similarly, terrestrial philosophy as quest is fuelled by the non-occurrence of solar death as impossible possibility. Solar death is catastrophic because the collapse of the terrestrial horizon is unenvisageable for embodied thought—unless that thought can switch from organic to inorganic (silicone based) embodiment—and it is because it is unenvisageable that solar catastrophe overturns the relation between thought and its terrestrial horizon. Thus, for embodied terrestrial thought solar death is not an event but a trauma, something that does not take place within thought's terrestrial horizon but persists as an unconscious trace disturbing embodied philosophical consciousness. Recall the earlier pronouncement made by Lyotard's HE: "Everything's dead already if this infinite reserve from which you now draw energy to defer answers, if in short thought as quest, dies out with the sun." Everything is dead already, not only because the solar catastrophe vitiates the earth's horizonal status as infinite, supposedly inexhaustible reservoir of noetic possibility, but also because thought as quest is driven by death, and strives to become equal to the death whose trace it bears by disembodying itself. Yet absolute disembodiment remains philosophically inconceivable. Although the materialist is less refractory on this issue than the phenomenologist, all HE can suggest is a change of embodiment, a shift from a carbon to a silicone-based substrate. This is only to postpone the day of reckoning, because sooner or later thought will have to reckon with the collapse of the ultimate horizon: the asymptopic death of the cosmos roughly one trillion, trillion, trillion (10^{1728}) years from now, when matter itself will cease to exist—along with the possibility of any kind of embodiment.

Because disembodied thought is philosophically unimaginable, HE, Lyotard's materialist, limits the scope of the catastrophe by turning the collapse of the terrestrial horizon into an occasion for a change of horizon. The infinite horizonal reserve fuelling philosophical questioning is merely expanded from the terrestrial to the cosmic scale. The cosmos is now the locus of the irreparable disjunction between death and thought. But if thought is already dead this expansion of horizon is ultimately to no avail: of what use is the perpetuation of thought's embodied life if what is perpetuated is philosophy's constitutive inability to resolve, i.e., bind, the traumatic disjunction between thought and death? Since the death of the cosmos is just as much of an irrecusable *faktum* for philosophy as the death of the sun, every horizonal reserve upon which embodied thought draws to fuel its quest is necessarily finite. Why then should thought continue investing in an account whose dwindling reserves are circumscribed by the temporary parameters of embodiment? Why keep playing for time? A change of body is just a way of postponing thought's inevitable encounter with the death that drives it. And a change of horizon is just a means of occluding the transcendental nature of the trauma that fuels thought.

It is because we are dealing with a transcendental catastrophe that Lyotard's question needs to be specified. It should be: can

philosophical thought go on without a body? I believe it cannot and can only continue to oscillate—perhaps indefinitely—between two possibilities: the claim that there is a horizon of all horizons, if not the earth then some other candidate, and the claim that we can keep changing horizons indefinitely. Thus, I want to conclude by very briefly delineating the minimal requirements for a thought without horizon. In other words, show that it is possible for thought to effect a successful binding of transcendental trauma in a way that consummates, rather than obviates, the death-drive. As I said earlier, this kind of thinking will be non-philosophical in the Laruellean sense.

The non-philosophical alternative to philosophy's horizonal sublimation of the death-drive consists in effecting a radically immanent desublimation of death. This desublimation has three moments: unidentification, unilateralisation, and excarnation.

Thought achieves a binding of transcendental catastrophe by becoming death—not through fusion or synthesis, but by constructing a subject that effectuates the exclusive disjunction between thought and death as unidentification (identity without synthesis) of death and thought. This subject-(of)-death is the immanent identity of the death of the death that is the life of thought. Moreover, this subject-(of)-death unilateralises sexual difference as well as the difference between organic and inorganic. Thus, the non-human subject of the death-drive is neither HE nor SHE but IT: the transcendental clone. The cloned subject-(of)-death is established through a form of transcendental parthogenesis which yields IT as universal non-human subject of the unconscious—the unconscious subject with which I am identical in the last instance. And IT neutralizes the difference between the good and bad inhuman, i.e., between the singularity of in-human sexuation and the genericity of the anti-human neuter. Moreover, desublimation means that death is already in effect: my subjectivation as IT puts death into effect as thought. Thus, since I am IT, the subject as universal unconscious organon, then I am the subject-(of)-death. Thought is not labor of the negative but organon of death. As organon, IT, the subject-(of)-death, inhabits the non-thetic universe of the autistic unconscious: IT is deaf, dumb and blind. This is the *excarnation* of thought.

ENDNOTES

1. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, trans. G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).
2. His enthusiasm for evaluation, his mania for discrimination, his incapacity for indifference bear witness to this. There is a sense in which active nihilism remains a peculiarly inverted libidinal exacerbation of passive nihilism. More fundamentally, Nietzsche's gravest mistake lies in his uncritical acceptance of the Christian subterfuge which insists that "God" must be a synonym for "truth." In fact, the Christian God has always been a synonym for "redemption," which is to say: "meaning," "sense," "intelligibility," but never truth. The inability to distinguish between truth and meaning is characteristic of religious thinking in general. Which is why phenomenology remains constitutively theological.
3. *The Inhuman*, 1991, p. 9.
4. Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *The Penguin Freud Library* Vol. 11: *On Metapsychology* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1991), p. 310.
5. Neither "anti-philosophical" nor "post-philosophical," Laruelle's "non-philosophy" is a novel theoretical practice that proposes to use philoso-

phy in a way which is irreducible to the structures, methods and goals of philosophy. The aim is to process philosophical theses in such a way as to effect their transcendental universalisation. For a full account of what this non-philosophical methodology involves, cf. in particular François Laruelle's *Philosophie et Non-Philosophie* (Liège: Mardaga, 1989) and his *Principes de la Non-Philosophie* (Paris: P.U.F., 1996).

6. This bracketing of the "of" is intended to effect a suspension both of the objective and subjective senses of the genitive: this is what Laruelle calls a "non-thetic identity," or an identity without unity.
7. *The Inhuman*, 1991, p. 9.
8. Ibid., p. 10.
9. Ibid., p. 14.
10. Ibid., p. 17.
11. Ibid., p. 23.
12. Ibid., p. 2.
13. Cf. Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," p. 296, and "The "Mystic Writing-Pad," in *The Penguin Freud Library* Vol. 11: *On Metapsychology* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1991), p. 430.
14. Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," p. 299.

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