ANTHROPO-FICTION

Inheriting Latour non-philosophically

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Abstract: This article argues that Bruno Latour's compositional program reproduces the pharmaceutical structure his own diagnostic work identified in critique. Latour's 2004 "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?" exposes critique as a *pharmakon*: a double gesture — antifetishism and determination-talk — that immunizes the critic against what she applies to others. The article shows that Latour's response — the fifteen modes of *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*, their conditions of felicity, and the diplomatic protocols for value negotiation — reinstalls the same legislative position: the one that determines, from outside the field it describes, what counts as adequate practice. Seeing the pharmaceutical structure does not suspend it; it escalates it. The article then proposes *anthropo-fiction* as an alternative mode of inheritance, grounded in François Laruelle's non-philosophy. Cloning Latour's descriptive vocabulary while suspending its legislative apparatus, anthropo-fiction is demonstrated through two cases: Viveiros de Castro's Amazonian perspectivism and Roberto Beneduce's ethnopsychiatric fieldwork. The figure for this practice is the trickster: the one who inherits without installing.

Keywords: Bruno Latour, non-philosophy, pharmaceutical paradigm, anthropo-fiction, ontological turn.

1. Introduction. Latour after Latour

First, there is a sick wealthy man. He counts his symptoms the way a banker counts coin: meticulously, with the anxious conviction that health is something one can secure by contract. Doctors orbit him like planets; prescriptions are liturgies, in a household functioning like a pharmacy in the shape of a family. Then the maid — ingenious, insolent in her loyalty — slips on a white coat and a different voice. She diagnoses by contradiction, prescribes the impossible, and stages a death to see who loves whom and for what. The maid is Toinette, the patient Argan, the play Molière's *Le Malade imaginaire*. Curtain.

Now another stage: a desk. A sick man writes his symptoms for a psychoanalyst who promises cure through narrative. The writing helps, then stings; he quits. Offended, the doctor publishes the diary. Life itself may be an illness, says Zeno Cosini; human progress will invent a weapon to annihilate the species. Modernity as terminal diagnosis. The novel is Italo Svevo's *La coscienza di Zeno* (1923). Curtain.

Hypochondria and the trickster: these are the two weaving threads. In Molière, the trickster exposes the clinic by counter-staging it; in Svevo, the clinic is textualized and flips into literature when the analyst prints the diary in revenge. Both meet on the *pharmakon*'s ground, where remedy and poison are inseparable and what matters is never purity, but architecture. This theatrical-pharmaceutical structure is what Bruno Latour both diagnosed and reproduced. In "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?" (2004), he exposes critique's double gesture: debunking attachments as projections, then revealing behavior as causally determined — ensuring the critic is "always right".[1] Like Toinette, Latour counter-stages the clinic of critical theory, revealing its pharmaceutical operations as self-immunizing authority.

But having exposed the *pharmakon* with such precision, Latour does not suspend the clinic. He publishes a new therapeutic program — composition as the cure for critique's excesses, diplomatic protocols for the proper negotiation of values, a bigger metaphysical machine to fight the modernist machine. The analyst prints the patient's diary. The question is not merely whether Latour's composition escapes the structure his diagnosis revealed. It is whether anyone can — whether the pharmaceutical paradigm, once diagnosed, admits any exit at all, or whether recognition only produces better medicine. That question is what this paper follows.

Latour's call to move from critique to composition has generated a wide range of responses across philosophy, literary studies, and anthropology. Within the humanities, it has often been associated with the emergence of "post-critical" approaches that seek alternatives to suspicion-based critique.[2] Within STS and political ecology, commentators have emphasized the normative and political ambitions of Latour's later

[1] Bruno LATOUR, *Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern*, "Critical Inquiry", 30:2, (Winter 2004), p. 225.

[2] See Rita FELSKI, *The Limits of Critique*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2015 and Eve Kosofsky SEDGWICK, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Duke University Press, Durham 2003.

work, particularly its emphasis on collective composition and ecological diplomacy.[3] Meanwhile, in anthropology, Latour's concepts have intersected with the "ontological turn," influencing debates on translation, ontology, and conceptual experimentation (Holbraad and Pedersen 2017).[4] The present article engages these discussions by proposing a different line of inheritance: rather than extending Latour's compositional framework, it examines the structural position that framework occupies and asks whether Latour's diagnostic insights can be inherited without installing the legislative apparatus through which they are systematized.

2. Critique as *Pharmakon*

> Wars. So many wars. Wars outside and wars inside. Cultural wars, science wars, and wars against terrorism. Wars against poverty and wars against the poor. Wars against ignorance and wars out of ignorance.[5]

With this catalog of conflicts, Latour opens his 2004 essay, framing his intervention as strategic reassessment. Military experts, he notes, constantly revise their doctrines, their weapons, and their targets too.[6] Why would intellectuals be exempt from such revision? The question becomes urgent when Latour confronts the disturbing discovery that the very weapons he forged to expose the social construction of scientific facts have been seized by those who would deny climate science. A discovery Michel Foucault, as an example, could not make, when his rhetorical theory was read by the CIA as "a powerful military-intelligence force multiplier".[7]

A Republican strategist's memo advises: «Should the public come to believe that the scientific issues are settled, their views about global warming will change accordingly. Therefore, you need to continue to make the lack of scientific certainty a primary

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[3] See Isabelle STENGERS, *Cosmopolitics I*, tr. R. Bononno, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2010 and Noortje MARRES, *Material Participation: Technology, the Environment and Everyday Publics*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2012.

[4] See Martin HOLBRAAD – Morten Axel PEDERSEN, *The Ontological Turn: An Anthropological Exposition*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2017.

[5] LATOUR, *Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?*, p. 225.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] See Hamilton BEAN, *Foucault's Rhetorical Theory and U.S. Intelligence Affairs*, "Poroi", 6, 2, January 2010.

issue».[8] Latour recognizes his own arguments in this strategy: «I myself have spent some time in the past trying to show "*the lack of scientific certainty*" inherent in the construction of facts. I too made it a "primary issue." But I did not exactly aim at fooling the public by obscuring the certainty of a closed argument — or did I?».[9] The danger no longer comes from excessive confidence in ideology disguised as fact, but from excessive distrust of good facts disguised as ideological bias. Regardless of the original intention, knowledge can be weaponized.[10]

This realization forces a question Latour poses with characteristic directness: «Should we bring the sword of criticism to criticism itself and do a bit of soul-searching here: what were we really after when we were so intent on showing the social construction of scientific facts?».[11] The answer he offers is crucial precisely because it turns critique's analytical power against itself, revealing a pharmaceutical structure that had remained invisible as long as critique occupied the position of remedy in the economy of diseases. What Latour discovers is that critique operates through a double gesture, a two-move combination that ensures the critic remains "always right" regardless of the object under examination.

The first move is antifetishism: when believers cling to their objects — gods, poetry, political commitments — the critic reveals these attachments as mere projections, showing that what appears to act upon believers is nothing but their own displaced agency reflected back. The fetish has no power; it is an empty screen onto which humans project their desires, fears, and social determinations. The believer is humiliated: *what you thought was real is just your illusion*.

The second move inverts the operation: as soon as believers, having been shown that their objects are projections, begin to believe in their own agency, their own capacity to make and *unmake* worlds, critique strikes again — this time by revealing

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[8] *Frank Luntz Memorandum to Bush White House*, 2002: https://goodtimesweb.org/industrial-policy/2014/02-6.pdf

[9] LATOUR, *Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?*, p. 227.

[10] See Roberta VALENTI – Filippo SCAFI, *Performing Thought: The Intellectual and the Collective*, "GCAS Review Journal", Vol. II, 1, December 2025, pp. 19-21. There is a structural corollary: if weaponization is not accidental but constitutive of how theoretical knowledge circulates — absorbed and redistributed by the infrastructures it seeks to analyze — the pharmaceutical problem is not only internal to the philosopher's decisional apparatus but external to it. The question for non-philosophical inheritance is whether suspending the internal legislative operation is sufficient when the external infrastructure reinstates it regardless.

[11] LATOUR, *Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?*, p. 227.

that their behavior is entirely determined by forces they do not see. Economic infrastructure, discursive regimes, ideological state apparatuses, unconscious drives, evolutionary pressures — any of these can be deployed to show that what believers took for freedom is actually determination, what they experienced as choice is actually causality working through them. The believer is humiliated again: *what you thought was your freedom is just mechanical necessity*.

Latour names this double structure explicitly: critique is «this most ambiguous *pharmakon*»[12] — Plato's term for the substance that functions simultaneously as medicine and toxin.[13] Critique presents itself as therapeutic intervention: it diagnoses the patient's illness (false consciousness, ideological capture, naturalized domination) and prescribes the cure (denaturalization, exposure of construction, revelation of hidden power). But as *pharmakon*, critique's therapeutic operation generates its own toxicity. The critic occupies an immunological position: exempt from the very operations applied to others, capable of wielding both projection-talk and determination-talk without ever being subject to either.

The mechanism that allows this immunological operation becomes visible once we recognize that critique operates through careful segregation of objects into two lists that must never cross. Latour articulates this with clarity: «If the critical barbarian appears so powerful, it is because the two mechanisms I have just sketched *are never put together in one single diagram*».[14] Antifetishists debunk objects they do not believe in by showing the projective forces of people; then, without making the connection, they use objects they do believe in to provide causal explanations that debunk people's conscious capacities. The trick — «the whole rather poor trick that allows critique to go on»[15] — is that there is never any crossover between the two lists. Objects in the "fairy position" receive the antifetishist treatment: mere projections. Objects in the "fact position" provide the causal machinery: solid realities, objective determinations. This segregation enables the critic to be simultaneously antifetishist, positivist, and realist — without ever experiencing the double humiliation visited upon naive believers. Critique

[12] *Ivi*, p. 239.
[13] The pairing of philosophy with medicine is already operative in Plato's Gorgias. See also Pierre HADOT, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995), and Martha NUSSBAUM, *The Therapy of Desire* (1994).
[14] LATOUR, *Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?*, p. 240. My emphasis.
[15] *Ivi*, p. 231.

immunizes itself by applying to others what it exempts from itself. The "always right" position is the structural necessity of critique's pharmaceutical operation.

Having exposed this structure, Latour does not conclude that critique should be abandoned. His response is subtler: critique has aimed at the wrong target.

> My argument is that a certain form of critical spirit has sent us down the wrong path, encouraging us to fight the wrong enemies [...] The question was never to get away from facts but closer to them, not fighting empiricism but, on the contrary, renewing empiricism.[16]

What critique misunderstood is what facts are. It treated them as simple, inert, purely objective givens — and then, finding this characterization implausible, moved away from facts toward their conditions of possibility. But this meant accepting «much too uncritically what matters of fact were». Matters of fact are only «very partial and, very polemical, very political renderings of matters of concern»: the shift Latour proposes is from debunking to description, from suspicion to care.[17] The language is explicitly therapeutic: what is needed is a new descriptive tool whose import is to protect and care rather than to dismantle.

This new critical attitude receives its most condensed formulation in a passage that will become programmatic for Latour's subsequent work:

> The critic is not the one who debunks, but the one who assembles. The critic is not the one who lifts the rugs from under the feet of the naïve believers, but the one who offers the participants arenas in which to gather. The critic is not the one who alternates haphazardly between antifetishism and positivism like the drunk iconoclast drawn by Goya, but the one for whom, if something is constructed, then it means it is fragile and thus in great need of care and caution.[18]

What critique treated as stable objects must now be understood as *things* in the Heideggerian sense — assemblies that gather multiple actors, human and nonhuman,

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[16] *Ibid.*

[17] *Ivi*, p. 232.

[18] The quoted phrases are from LATOUR, *Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?*, p. 232. The protective framing echoes Donna Haraway's argument for situated, partial objectivity — against the "god trick" of seeing from nowhere — which Latour explicitly invokes: «Can we devise another powerful descriptive tool that deals this time with matters of concern and whose import then will no longer be to debunk but to protect and to care, as Donna Haraway would put it?» See HARAWAY, *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*, "Feminist Studies", 14, no. 3 (1988), pp. 575-599.

in configurations that are simultaneously made and real.[19] This shift inaugurates what will become, in Latour's later work, a full compositional program: *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence* will enumerate fifteen modes and specify protocols for their diplomatic negotiation; *Facing Gaia* will frame composition as geological necessity; *Politics of Nature* had already proposed a bicameral parliament for human and nonhuman collective composition.[20] But whether this compositional response escapes the pharmaceutical structure Latour has diagnosed remains an open question: does offering arenas avoid occupying the meta-position that determines what counts as proper gathering?

3. The constitutional template

The pharmaceutical structure Latour diagnoses in critique does not originate with critique. In *We Have Never Been Modern*, he had already identified its template in modernity's own Constitutional arrangement. Modernity operates through two interdependent practices: "translation" creates mixtures between new types of beings — hybrids of nature and culture — while "purification" simultaneously establishes two entirely distinct ontological zones, that of human beings on one hand, that of nonhumans on the other.[21] The two practices are mutually enabling; each requires the other to function.[22] The result is a Constitutional arrangement that allows the moderns to do everything, as Latour puts it, «without being limited by anything».[23] Here is the immunological structure before it becomes critique's structure: the position that remains exempt from what it administers, that enables what it forbids.[24]

When Latour turns this same analysis on critique in 2004, he is not discovering a new structure from the outside. He is recognizing the Constitutional double bind operating one level up: the critic who deploys both antifetishism and determination-

[19] *Ivi*, p. 233. «A thing is, in one sense, an object out there and, in another sense, an issue very much in there, at any rate, a gathering».
[20] Bruno LATOUR, *Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy*, tr. C. Porter, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2004, pp. 205-206.
[21] Bruno LATOUR, *We Have Never Been Modern*, tr. C. Porter, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1993, pp. 10-11.
[22] *Ivi*, p. 11.
[23] *Ivi*, p. 32.
[24] «The more we forbid ourselves to conceive of hybrids, the more possible their interbreeding becomes — such is the paradox of the moderns» (*Ivi*, p. 12).

talk without ever being subject to either has internalized the Constitution's double practice. The same logic that makes purification enable translation makes the "always right" position structurally necessary — each move requires and enables the other, and neither can be acknowledged without dissolving both. The question is then not merely whether Latour's *compositional* response to this diagnosis escapes the structure. It is whether *any* response can — given that the structure turns out to be modernity's deepest *grammar*.

The compositional vocabulary Latour proposes in response reproduces precisely this grammar at the level of epistemology. For Latour, matters of fact do not exhaust reality, they are selective, polemical, and politically charged reductions of something richer: matters of concern, in which objects are always already entangled with the forces that make them matter.[25] This formulation presents itself as descriptive correction: critique mistook the partial for the whole, the polemical rendering for the full reality. The correction, however, requires something precise. To say that matters of fact are "only very partial" renderings of matters of concern is to occupy a position from which the partiality can be recognized, the adequacy measured, and the full reality distinguished from its reductive representations. It is to claim access to what matters of fact miss and exclude.

The critical practice Latour proposes reveals this legislative operation directly. «The critic is not the one who debunks, but the one who assembles [...] the one who offers the participants arenas in which to gather».[26] But who is "the one who offers arenas"? The phrase locates the critic not within the gathering but above it, providing its architecture, determining what counts as a space where genuine gathering can occur. This becomes explicit in *An Inquiry*, where Latour asks: «why not transform this whole business of recalling modernity into a grand question of design?»[27] The designer knows what the inhabitants cannot see: that their current dwelling is poorly arranged, that he possesses the *expertise* (and therefore the authority) to offer them "more conveniences."[28] Gerard de Vries is precise on what this requires: the anthropologist «does not *criticize* modernity» but aims «to provide a better view on what the Moderns

[25] LATOUR, *Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?*, p. 232.
[26] *Ivi*, p. 246.
[27] Bruno LATOUR, *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence: An Anthropology of the Moderns*, tr. C. Porter, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 2013, p. 23.
[28] *Ivi*, pp. 22-23.

conceive as modernity's contributions to civilization, to end their *aporia*» — offering other peoples «her letters of credence: this is our civilization, what about yours?»[29] Yet this diplomatic offer requires positioning oneself as the one capable of providing that better view, of ending the aporia, of convening the exchange itself. Care renovates rather than escapes the doctor-position.

This is not a problem Latour fails to see; it is one he openly acknowledges and accepts. The trajectory from the "Critique" essay to *An Inquiry* makes the pharmaceutical operation explicit. In the later work, Latour proposes that «values, if they are not to disappear, have to be diplomatically negotiated» through «a protocol of relationship-building and benchmarking».[30] The prescriptive formulation is striking: values have to be negotiated, and negotiation must follow specified protocols. Who determines what counts as diplomatic negotiation versus mere conflict? Who establishes the protocols? Latour positions himself as "diplomat," but immediately acknowledges he claims this role, obviously, «without the slightest mandate».[31] He knows he lacks authorization, yet proceeds with the diplomatic program because the pharmaceutical framework offers only two positions: patient or doctor. Having diagnosed modernity's illness, Latour can only respond by offering treatment. To refuse the doctor-position would mean abandoning the therapeutic project entirely.

At every step, composition requires occupying the position that determines, prescribes, evaluates — the very operations that enabled critique's pharmaceutical doubling. Any attempt to prescribe how to overcome modernist purification must legislate the terms of that overcoming: what counts as purification versus legitimate distinction, what counts as adequate composition versus failed assembly. Having diagnosed the disease, one must either prescribe the cure or accept the disease as incurable.

What makes this particularly striking is that Latour diagnoses the pharmaceutical structure with such precision in the "Critique" essay, yet reproduces this structure in his compositional program. The irony is not that he fails to see the problem — he sees it clearly — but that seeing it does not, cannot, provide escape as long as thought operates therapeutically. To recognize that critique operates pharmaceutically is not yet to suspend the pharmaceutical framework; it is to propose better medicine, more

[29] Gerard DE VRIES, *Bruno Latour*, Polity, Cambridge 2016, p. 172.
[30] LATOUR, *AIME*, p. 481.
[31] *Ivi*, p. 13.

careful treatment, protocols that will finally cure what previous interventions merely masked.

4. Compositionist Legislature

The compositional program Latour develops in *An Inquiry* makes the legislative operation structural. It begins with enumeration. *An Inquiry* identifies fifteen modes of existence: [REP]roduction, [MET]amorphosis, [HAB]it, [TEC]hnology, [FIC]tion, [REF]erence, [POL]itics, [LAW], [REL]igion, [ATT]achment, [ORG]anization, [MOR]ality, [NET]work, [PRE]position, and [DC] for Double Click. Latour notes that «no special meaning should be attached to that figure»—fifteen is simply the number necessary to «get an image of the modern experience taken as a whole with a satisfactory resolution».[32] As de Vries explains, «if readers think something is missing, they are invited to contribute to the enquiry on the website that accompanies the book».[33] But this apparently modest claim conceals a legislative operation. To determine that fifteen modes provide "satisfactory resolution" or even necessity is to occupy the position that judges adequacy, that recognizes when the image is complete versus when it remains blurry or partial. It is to establish a *canon*. The number may be provisional — readers can suggest additions — but the framework is already installed. The invitation to participate does not suspend the legislative framework; it extends or optimizes it, asking readers to propose amendments to a constitution already drafted.

This becomes clearer when we examine how the modes are constituted. Latour is explicit about the theoretical apparatus he is importing: «I propose to use a term that is quite familiar in speech act theory, felicity and infelicity conditions. On each path of veridiction, we will be able to ask that the conditions that must be met for someone to speak truths or untruths be specified according to its mode».[34] The source matters: by borrowing Austin's speech-act framework, Latour is not merely describing how modes

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[32] The phrase "no special meaning should be attached to that figure" appears in de Vries's gloss; Latour's own formulation at pp. 479-480 (*AIME*) specifies that fifteen modes are required to achieve a complete image of modern experience at "satisfactory resolution".

[33] DE VRIES, *Bruno Latour*, p. 188.

[34] See in *ibid.* for further elaboration. The quote is from *AIME*, pp. 55-56. The Pivot Table (pp. 486-488) codifies these conditions for all fifteen modes in a single chart, specifying for each: hiatus, trajectory, felicity/infelicity conditions, beings to institute, and alteration. The chart's form — its exhaustiveness, its parallel structure, its column logic — enacts the legislative operation the text claims to be merely discovering.

happen to function but installing a normative grid — a standard by which any enunciation can be judged adequate or inadequate to its mode.[35] These conditions of felicity and infelicity establish criteria by which we can judge whether a mode is operating properly or has been distorted, whether its trajectory is being respected or violated, whether the beings it institutes are adequately recognized or illegitimately reduced. But who determines these conditions? Latour presents them as discovered through empirical inquiry, as detected through ethnographic attention to how scientists, lawyers, politicians, religious practitioners actually proceed. Yet the very act of codifying conditions of felicity establishes a standard against which practices can be measured, a norm that determines success versus failure. When Latour specifies that [REF]erence chains must maintain certain forms of continuity to count as genuine reference, or that [REL]igion requires particular kinds of rupture and renewal to avoid collapsing into mere belief, he legislates what counts as *adequate practice* within each mode. The empirical inquiry doubles as normative legislation, the descriptive enterprise as prescriptive program.

The [REL]igion mode makes this legislative operation most visible, precisely because here the judgment contradicts the practitioner's self-understanding. Latour specifies that religious speech operates through a particular kind of rupture and renewal — a transformation in the relation between speaker and addressee that has nothing to do with transmitting information about distant events. A priest who explains the resurrection as a historical fact, an apologist who defends religious claims by their accuracy as descriptions of the world — these do not merely practice religion inadequately; much more, they commit a category mistake, violating [REL]'s conditions of felicity by importing [REF]'s trajectory into the wrong domain.[36] The practitioner who believes he is doing religion is told by the anthropologist that he is doing

[35] The contrast with other ANT practitioners is instructive. Callon's sociology of translation (1986) tracks inscription, enrollment, and obligatory passage points without specifying felicity conditions; Law's "modes of ordering" (*Organizing Modernity*, Blackwell, 1994) describes patterns without a complete enumeration or normative grid; Mol's *The Body Multiple* (Duke, 2002) tracks ontological multiplicity in clinical practice without adjudicating which enactment commits a category mistake. All three demonstrate that Latour's descriptive vocabulary is not inherently bound to the legislative apparatus AIME installs.

[36] Latour, *AIME*, pp. 304-309. The [REL] mode and its specific conditions of felicity — rupture, renewal, transformation of the relation between speaker and addressee — are developed across this range; the category mistake of translating religious speech into information-transfer is Latour's central example of [REL]'s infelicity condition.

something else. This is the judge-position in its clearest form: the codification of felicity conditions does not describe how religion proceeds; it determines when what calls itself religion genuinely instantiates the mode versus when it has been distorted by modernist category confusion. Empirical attention to practice has become the standard by which practice is corrected. The contrast with Mol's parallel operation in clinical ethnography is precise: where different practices each enact a different version of atherosclerosis, Mol tracks each enactment's consequences without adjudicating which correctly instantiates the "real" disease or commits a category mistake against it.[37]

The legislative operation intensifies when modes must be negotiated. Latour insists that «values, if they are not to disappear, have to be diplomatically negotiated» through «a protocol of relationship-building and benchmarking».[38] Values have to be negotiated, and negotiation must follow protocols. This is a *prescription for how negotiation should proceed*. Someone must determine what counts as diplomatic negotiation versus mere conflict or premature compromise. Someone must establish the protocols. Someone must occupy the position of diplomat—the one who convenes negotiations, establishes their terms, judges their adequacy. De Vries observes that the modal system enables a diplomatic exchange with other peoples, with one function of the Pivot Table being «to provide an antidote against» the "pretence" of universality.[39] The Pivot Table, in other words, operates therapeutically, providing the "antidote" that will cure modernist presumption.

Returning to the question of legitimation and authorization, Latour acknowledges the aporia openly. He knows he lacks authorization, yet proceeds, because the pharmaceutical framework recognizes no position outside the clinic. This necessity reaches its limit in the explicit declaration:

> We shall not cure the Moderns of their attachment to their cherished theme, the modernization front, if we do not offer them an alternate narrative made of the same stuff

[37] Annemarie MOL, *The Body Multiple: Ontology in Medical Practice*, Duke University Press, Durham 2002, pp. 30-55. Mol's concept of "ontological politics" names precisely the unavoidable choices between enactments – but as local, negotiated, and provisional decisions within the clinical situation, not applications of a pre-given grammar determining felicity. The contrast with AIME's modal grammar is the contrast between inevitable political choice and legislative verdict.
[38] LATOUR, *AIME*, p. 481.
[39] DE VRIES, *Bruno Latour*, p. 188.

> as the Master Narratives whose era is over [...] We have to fight trouble with trouble, counter a metaphysical machine with a bigger metaphysical machine.[40]

What makes this remarkable is it states openly what the entire compositional program requires. To overcome modernist purification, to reform institutions that fail to express their modes' values, to prescribe adequate composition: the position is always at the center of the whirlwind, and it needs to be as such. Seeing the pharmaceutical structure does not suspend it. It escalates it. In *Facing Gaia*, the escalation reaches its terminal form. The shift is already audible in the conclusion of *An Inquiry*, where Latour writes: «if Gaia is against us, then not much is permitted any longer»[41] — a formulation in which the subjunctive has collapsed into the indicative and the invitation to compose has become a constraint imposed from outside the human. The diplomat who previously convened negotiations «without the slightest mandate» is now summoned to appear before a force that issues no credentials and awaits no protocol.[42] Composition ceases to be a therapeutic program and becomes a war footing: the cure is no longer offered but conscripted — pharmaceutical force without the *pharmakon*'s ambiguity.[43]

If we take Latour at his word, then the compositional program cannot escape the pharmaceutical apparatus. The fifteen modes provide the grammar, the Pivot Table specifies the conditions of felicity, the diplomatic protocols establish the procedures, the design framework determines habitability. Each operation requires occupying the legislative position that determines adequacy. This is precisely the structure Latour diagnosed in critique: the position that remains "always right" by exempting itself from

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[40] LATOUR, *AIME*, p. 22.

[41] LATOUR, *AIME*, p. 485: «if Gaia is against us, then not much is permitted any longer. While we wait for Gaia, it isn't the sense of the absurd that threatens us now, but rather our lack of adequate preparation for the civilization to come». For the development of the "strange war" register, see *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, tr. C. Porter, Polity, Cambridge 2017, lectures 3-4.

[42] LATOUR, *AIME*, p. 22: the diplomat who «without the slightest mandate» presents himself as qualified to convene the inquiry. In *Facing Gaia*, the mandate is no longer claimed voluntarily but assigned by the situation — which intensifies rather than resolves the authorization problem the AIME acknowledged

[43] Bruno LATOUR, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, tr. C. Porter, Polity, Cambridge 2017, pp. 75-145. The shift from compositionist invitation to Gaian necessity is the argumentative hinge of lectures three and four. See also LATOUR, *An Attempt at a 'Compositionist Manifesto'*, "New Literary History", 41, no. 3 (2010), pp. 471-490.

the operations it applies to others. Latour sees this — hence the acknowledgment that he acts "without mandate," hence the explicit embrace of "bigger metaphysical machine" against machine, hence the frank admission that composition operates therapeutically to "cure the Moderns." The aporia is not hidden, yet this recognition changes nothing. The question is whether there exists any practice that can inherit Latour's insights without installing his legislature, that can use his materials without occupying his authority — *that can follow his diagnostics without deploying his therapeutics*.[44]

5. Non-Philosophy as Inheritance: The Clone Operation

François Laruelle belongs to the generation of French philosophers formed in confrontation with structuralism, a contemporary of Derrida, Deleuze, and Lyotard rather than their successor, and one whose non-philosophical project takes shape in explicit dialogue with deconstruction.[45] Derrida's "La Pharmacie de Platon" (1972) had argued that the *pharmakon*'s undecidability, namely its refusal to be fixed as either remedy or poison, marks the limit of any system seeking to master its own conditions: the text resists the philosophical purification that would determine it once and for all. Laruelle accepts this diagnosis but presses a further question: does installing undecidability as the master-figure, the irreducible supplement around which deconstructive reading perpetually orbits, not itself constitute a Decision? The movement that makes *différance* the One encompassing presence and absence repeats,

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[44] Isabelle STENGERS, *Cosmopolitics I*, tr. R. Bononno, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2010. *Politics of Nature* is dedicated to Stengers, who introduced the cosmopolitics concept (1996–1997) that Latour's diplomatic program then systematized. Where Latour specifies protocols, Stengers proposes only to "slow down" — to introduce hesitation without determining in advance what adequate hesitation looks like. From the present article's perspective, this remains a philosophical response: it still operates through a Decision determining, however minimally, what counts as genuine slowdown versus premature closure. The difference is one of dosage within the pharmaceutical framework, not exit from it.

[45] The genealogical claim is well documented: *Les Philosophies de la différence* (1986), Laruelle's systematic critical reading of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and Deleuze, is the founding text of the non-philosophical distinction between difference as philosophical Decision and difference as immanent Real. The structural affinities between Latour and Laruelle — both resist the purification of immanent practices by transcendent frameworks, both treat theoretical vocabularies as materials rather than doctrines — reflect parallel responses to shared post-structuralist pressures rather than filiation. The connection this article proposes is a wager about structural homology.

at a higher level, the structure it claims to expose: a term that governs the field while remaining exempt from it. Non-philosophy names this operation as Decision and proposes a suspension of the decisional movement itself, treating philosophical materials, including Derrida's *pharmakon*, as resources determined by what Laruelle calls the Real.

The risk of installing a new *pharmakon* must be faced directly here. If the Real were defined as what philosophical gesture cannot master, the irreducible supplement that conditions thought from a constitutive outside, it would reproduce Derrida's figure at one remove: a term exempt from the system by virtue of exceeding it, which is still a relational definition, still a term whose identity depends on its function within the problematic it supposedly escapes. Laruelle's specification is different in kind. The Real is not characterized by undecidability within a system but by *indifference* to every system's operations; it does not resist philosophical determination as obstacle resists force, nor exceed it as remainder exceeds resolution. It simply fails to be touched by the decisional operation, philosophy attempts to co-determine it and the attempt slides off without purchase. What Laruelle calls asymmetric determination names this strictly unilateral structure: the Real determines philosophy *in the last instance*,[46] but philosophy cannot determine the Real in return. The relation, if it can be called one, runs in one direction only, which is what prevents the Real from functioning as a new

[46] The formula "determines in the last instance" bears an explicit Althusserian lineage. In Althusser, who borrowed the expression from Engels, the economy determines the social formation "in the last instance," yet this determination is always overdetermined by superstructural elements: crucially, "the lonely hour of the 'last instance' never comes" (Louis ALTHUSSER, *For Marx*, tr. B. Brewster, Verso, London 1996 [1965], p. 113), since the cause never appears in corporeal presence but exists only in its effects. Laruelle inherits the expression and subjects it to non-philosophical transformation: where in Althusser the last instance remains reciprocally co-constituted by what it determines, obeying a bilateral logic of decision, in Laruelle the last instance is separate-without-separation from decisional logic, which it unilaterally determines (Ray BRASSIER, *Axiomatic Heresy: The Non-Philosophy of François Laruelle*, "Radical Philosophy", 121, 2003, pp. 24-25). The displacement is thus precise: what is in Althusser a regional, worldly decision on determination by the economy becomes in Laruelle a non-worldly, non-philosophical determination by the Real (Keith TILFORD, *Generalized Transformations and Technologies of Investigation: Laruelle, Art, and the Scientific Model* in *Superpositions: Laruelle and the Humanities*, Rowman & Littlefield International, London 2017). The non-philosophical subject does not decide the Real; it is, along with every other instance of thought, determined by it, which is precisely what makes the determination asymmetric rather than dialectical (François LARUELLE, *Introduction au non-marxisme,* PUF, Paris 2000, p. 39).

exempt term, as it is not defined by what it cannot be captured by, but indifferent to the question of capture altogether.

The connection to the present argument is structural: the *pharmakon* with which Latour names critique's double gesture is the same figure through which Derrida had located philosophy's constitutive undecidability, and Laruelle's diagnosis encompasses both. François Laruelle's non-philosophy provides a practice for inheriting philosophical materials without occupying the legislative position that converts them into doctrine. Where philosophy operates through what Laruelle calls "Decision"— the structure that posits terms and then legislates their relation, establishing both what things are and how they must be properly understood — non-philosophy suspends this legislative operation, treating philosophical materials as resources rather than as systems requiring orthodox transmission. The shift refuses the movement from one philosophical position to another: it's a transformation outside philosophy to a practice that uses philosophy without being determined by it, that clones philosophical materials without reproducing their authority structures.

What is at stake in Laruelle's concept of Decision is not a "conscious" philosophical choice, but a structural operation through which philosophy simultaneously posits terms and legislates the conditions under which their relation can be understood. The importance of this concept for the present argument lies in its capacity to identify how theoretical frameworks convert descriptive insights into normative apparatuses. Laruelle describes philosophical Decision as a structure in which a dyad — any pair of opposing terms — is resolved through a supplementary One that encompasses both while remaining exempt from the dyad itself: a "quasi-circular doublet" in which philosophy simultaneously describes reality and prescribes how description must proceed.[47] This Decision establishes what he calls the "Principle of Sufficient Philosophy" (PSP) — philosophy's claim that reality requires philosophical (theoretical) legislation to be adequately grasped, that without philosophy's mediating operations, reality remains chaotic, indeterminate, or inaccessible.[48] This is precisely the structure

[47] François LARUELLE, *Principles of Non-Philosophy*, tr. N. Rubczak and A.P. Smith, Bloomsbury, London 2013, pp. 211-234. The "empirico-transcendental mixture", p. 9, formulation derives from Foucault; Laruelle's own preferred formulation is the 2/3 or 3/2 fractional structure of Decision, developed at length in *Les Philosophies de la différence* (1986) and summarized by Anthony Paul SMITH, *Laruelle: A Stranger Thought*, Polity, Cambridge 2016, pp. 37-48.
[48] SMITH, *Laruelle*, pp. 42-45.

we have traced in Latour: the anthropologist-diplomat who must offer protocols because without them, values will "disappear"; the modal grammarian who must enumerate fifteen modes because without them, modern experience lacks "satisfactory resolution."

Non-philosophy does not reject these materials. Laruelle is clear his endeavor is not an anti-philosophical one (which would still legislate and prescribe): it performs what he calls "cloning under different conditions". Biologically, cloning reproduces materials without reproducing the organism that generates them, extracts genetic sequences without maintaining the biological apparatus that gave rise to them. In *From Decision to Heresy*, Laruelle uses the image of *fugu*, the Japanese pufferfish: consuming the philosophical only once the toxic organs of its reproduction have been removed.[49] This is not superficial appropriation — non-philosophy requires rigorous engagement with materials, close attention to how they operate, precise understanding of the mechanisms one is suspending. But the rigor serves different ends: productive use of the system's elements, where generation of insights is placed above any aim of transmission of doctrine.

The objection writes itself. If recognizing the pharmaceutical structure does not help Latour escape it, why would Laruelle's recognition be different? Doesn't identifying Decision as philosophy's invariant structure, and declaring that it can be suspended, require precisely the meta-position the suspension is supposed to dissolve? Laruelle's, arguably universalist, claim[50] to have identified the Principle of Sufficient Philosophy — the doublet form that governs thought from Heraclitus to Derrida — would itself seem to reproduce the gesture of exemption: the non-philosopher who sees what all philosophers share is still claiming a view from nowhere.[51]

Laruelle's answer is structural, and it turns on the direction of determination. In philosophical Decision, the philosopher posits a dyad and resolves it through a supplementary One — a term that encompasses both while remaining outside them. Auto-position, Laruelle argues, «is not a simple syntactic trait whose effects it would be possible to limit: it is identically the claim of philosophy to be able to co-determine the

[49] François LARUELLE, *From Decision to Heresy: Experiments in Non-Standard Thought*, tr. T. Adkins, Urbanomic, Falmouth 2012, p. 17.
[50] See Ray BRASSIER, *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction,* Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke 2007, pp. 118-126.
[51] LARUELLE, *Principles*, pp. 33-55.

Real».[52] Non-philosophy suspends this claim by operating from a Real (the immanent side of the dyad) that is "given without-position and without-givenness" — immanent to itself rather than to any form of thought, preceding every philosophical gesture including non-philosophy's own recognition of it.[53] The asymmetry runs one direction only: «if there is a difference or distance between this immanence and the transcendent objectification it undergoes, such a difference is operative only on the side of the latter».[54] The Real determines philosophy; philosophy cannot determine the Real. The non-philosopher does not claim a view from nowhere; she claims to operate from a position that was always already established *before any philosophical operation began*. Whether asymmetric determination genuinely escapes the exemption-gesture it identifies in philosophy, or merely displaces it onto a foundational Real that functions as a covert ground — a charge Ray Brassier presses against Laruelle in his reading of the non-standard program — this article treats it as a theoretical wager: its value lies in what it enables rather than in the metaphysical claim it stakes.

The implications for Latour are direct. What makes the compositional program a Decision in Laruelle's sense is not that it claims too much, but that its One — the modal grammar, the conditions of felicity, the protocols of negotiation — is produced by a philosophical operation:[55] enumeration, codification, benchmarking. The supplementary term that resolves the dyad (adequate/inadequate representation of modern experience) is a product of the same anthropological inquiry it is supposed to ground. Non-philosophical inheritance suspends precisely this founding gesture. As Laruelle specifies, the point is «not to engender non-philosophical effects within philosophy, which would still be to presuppose philosophy's uncircumventable validity»[56] — but to use philosophy's materials without repeating the decisional

[52] *Ivi*, p. 4.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] LARUELLE, *From Decision to Heresy*, p. 16.
[55] For a sustained engagement with Latour as a philosopher of objects and modes rather than a sociologist of science, see Graham HARMAN, *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphys,* re.press, Melbourne 2009. The exchange in *The Prince and the Wolf* (2011) records the point at which Latour's ontological commitments become explicit objects of debate, and where the distance between his project and object-oriented ontology becomes visible. Both traditions share the legislative gesture this article identifies: each proposes a grammar of what objects or modes ultimately are.
[56] Ray BRASSIER, *Introduction to François Laruelle,* What Can Non-Philosophy Do?, "Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities", 8:2 (2003), p. 171. Original from LARUELLE, *Philosophie et non-philosophie,* p. 32.

operation that converts them into legislation. This paper operates in the register of philosophical argument — naming the operation, identifying what gets cloned, specifying the genre of inheritance — while the non-philosophical posture belongs to Section 6 rather than to the argument as a whole; the distinction between arguing for a practice and enacting it is precisely one this practice can acknowledge without contradiction.

What gets cloned from Latour is his descriptive vocabulary — networks, mediators, translations, the injunction to follow actors rather than determine their essence in advance[57] — and his diagnostic insights: that purification operates by separating what depends on maintaining connection, that critique immunizes itself through double gestures, that the modernist Constitution denies the mediations it depends upon. These materials remain generative wherever questions of association and collective emergence arise, without requiring his compositional program. What gets suspended is everything that converts this description into prescription: the fifteen modes as canon, the Pivot Table's conditions of felicity as norms determining adequate versus inadequate practice, the diplomatic protocols as legislative procedures, the design framework that positions the compositionist as architect, the therapeutic imperative to cure the Moderns.[58] In short: the decisional operation that transforms attention to how things hold together into legislation of how they should be composed.

What gets suspended is rendered, in Laruelle's term, "non-philosophisable" — placed in a relation where it no longer operates through Decision, its materials available without their legislative force. This is what Laruelle means by distinguishing philosophy's *de jure* claims from its *de facto* operations. Gangle and Greve note that

[57] These concepts developed across the ANT tradition before being integrated into Latour's later compositional project: Callon on translation and enrollment (1986), Law on modes of ordering and the actor-network as empirical method (*After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*, Routledge, London 2004), Latour on mediators and immutable mobiles (*Reassembling the Social*, 2005). The clone operation inherits the tradition's descriptive vocabulary without being bound to any single theorist's legislative program — including Latour's own.

[58] This distinguishes the article's operation from Graham Harman's critique in *Prince of Networks: Bruno Latour and Metaphysics* and *The Prince and the Wolf*. Harman objects that Latourian relationism is ontologically incomplete: objects must withdraw from their relations. The present argument does not share this objection. Non-philosophical inheritance accepts Latour's relational vocabulary precisely because it makes no ontological commitments about what actors are beyond their associations — which is what makes it available for cloning without either Harman's demand for substance or AIME's conditions of felicity.

non-philosophy operates from the "*de facto* humanity" that philosophy attempts to determine *de jure*.[59] We can apply this to Latour: *de facto*, he provides extraordinarily rich descriptions of how scientists work, how legal systems operate, how religious practices function, how technical mediations shape possibilities for action. These descriptions generate insights that remain valuable wherever similar questions arise. But *de jure*, he claims these descriptions are adequate only when parsed according to fifteen modes, only when negotiated through diplomatic protocols, only when framed as compositional design. The *de facto* materials can be cloned without the *de jure* claim that they require Latour's legislative apparatus to be properly deployed.

Cloning Latour non-philosophically means using his materials without accepting his authority to determine adequate practice. It means following actors without becoming Latourian, tracking translations without installing modal grammar, attending to things as gatherings without framing this as institutional design. This describes a *selective inheritance*, a productive use, not critique (which would reproduce the very pharmaceutical structure we indicated) but cloning under conditions that suspend the decisional apparatus converting description into legislation.

6. Anthropo-fiction

Anthropo-fiction names the practice that Section 5's framework makes possible: using Latour's descriptive materials as resources for generating analysis, without installing the legislative apparatus that determines what adequate analysis must look like. The term derives from Laruelle's *philo-fiction* and *photo-fiction* — practices that use philosophical or photographic materials generatively rather than systematically, treating concepts as raw material for producing insights rather than as doctrines requiring transmission.[60] It is not a method in the prescriptive sense: it is a posture of selective inheritance, one that treats theoretical frameworks as resources rather than as systems demanding orthodox deployment. The clearest way to show what this means is to demonstrate it working.

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[59] *Ivi*, p. 15.

[60] The term philo-fiction is developed across François LARUELLE, *From Decision to Heresy*, pp. 88-92; photo-fiction in LARUELLE, *The Concept of Non-Photography*, tr. R. Mackay, Urbanomic, Falmouth 2011. In both cases, fiction names a mode of use that refuses to determine its materials from within their own legislative framework.

What this operation produces is a description anchored in the immanent specificity of the practice itself — in what the situation generates as its own terms — rather than in any framework's prior determination of what the practice must ultimately be. Consider Amerindian perspectivism as documented by Viveiros de Castro. The ethnographic material is precise, rich, and richly interpreted and methodologically engaged: in Amazonian cosmologies, different beings — jaguars, spirits, humans — do not inhabit different cultures against a shared nature: turning "on its head" the multiculturalist motif, VdC claims that they inhabit different natures from within a shared cultural position. What varies across species is not perspective then, but the body that anchors it: the jaguar sees blood where the anthropologist sees manioc beer, sees itself as human, because its body differently disposes it toward the world. The shaman who undergoes perspectival transformation is not metaphorically "becoming" another species but shifting the bodily equipment through which the world is engaged. These are precise, detailed, ethnographically documented descriptions of how perspectival practices operate, how transformations are enacted, what work they do in mediating human and non-human relations within specific Amazonian collectives.[61]

Latour's vocabulary illuminates this material, then, with considerable force. The shaman's perspectival transformation is a translation — a passage between actor-networks that enables new associations and redistributes agency. The body is a mediator, not an intermediary: it transmits perspective and most importantly transforms it, producing a different actor-network relation rather than relaying a pre-existing one.[62] Following actors here means following the shamanic practice itself: attending to how perspectival shifts are enacted, what enables them, what they make possible, how they fail, what work they perform in sustaining the collective. None of this requires modal grammar or diplomatic protocols. One can describe how these translations function without determining whether they instantiate [REL], [REF], [NET], or any crossing thereof.

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[61] Eduardo VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, *Cannibal Metaphysics*, tr. P. Skafish, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2014, pp. 46-52. The canonical manioc beer/blood example appears on p. 47.

[62] Bruno LATOUR, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network Theory*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005, pp. 37-42, on the distinction between intermediaries, which transport without transforming, and mediators, which transform, translate, and distort. The shaman's body functions as a mediator in precisely this sense: it does not relay perspective but produces a different one.

The performed description looks like this. The jaguar who sees blood where the observer sees manioc beer operates as an obligatory passage point: to access game, the collective must route its relations through this perceptual differential. The shaman's body is a mediator in the strict ANT sense — it does not relay a pre-existing perspectival content but produces a different one, making new associations possible and redistributing the collective's capacities for action. When the transformation fails, when the shaman cannot return, what breaks is a translation: a specific link in the network that sustained the collective's access to nonhuman actors is severed, with concrete consequences traceable through the associations that depended on it.[63] This description generates analytical traction — it allows us to ask which translations are most vulnerable, which obligatory passage points are hardest to reconstruct, how the collective reestablishes access when a key mediator is lost — without requiring adjudication of whether the jaguar "really" shares a human cultural position or "genuinely" inhabits a different nature.

But the more important suspension is the one that targets Viveiros de Castro's own legislative operation. When perspectival multiplicity is translated into "multinaturalism" — a generalized ontological framework opposed term-for-term to Western "multiculturalism" — the ethnographic material is converted into a philosophical Decision. The dyad (nature/culture, multinaturalism/multiculturalism) is resolved through a supplementary One: the concept of ontology itself, which encompasses all perspectives as equally valid instantiations of ontological difference. The anthropologist's authority to legislate alterity is not suspended but reinscribed at a higher level of abstraction.[64] The anthropologist becomes, in Laruelle's terms, a Stranger only in the relative, philosophical sense: they think the Other through their own Decision, even when that Decision takes the form of affirming radical alterity — what Laruelle calls a "non-stranger stranger".[65] Non-philosophical inheritance suspends this legislative resolution at the same moment and by the same operation that it suspends Latour's modal grammar: both are Decisions that convert descriptive material

[63] The distinction corresponds to Laruelle's asymmetric determination: the immanent practice determines the description in the last instance; the theoretical vocabulary provides tools for articulation without claiming to constitute it. See VIVEIROS DE CASTRO, *Cannibal Metaphysics*, p. 47; LATOUR, *Reassembling the Social*, pp. 37-42.

[64] HOLBRAAD and PEDERSEN, *The Ontological Turn*, pp. 155-160.

[65] François LARUELLE, *Théorie des Étrangers: Science des hommes, démocratie, non-psychanalyse*, Éditions Kimé, Paris 1995, pp. 153-161.

into prescriptive apparatus. What remains — the perspectival practices themselves, described through Latourian vocabulary as translations and mediations — is more analytically productive than either legislature, precisely because it makes no claim to determine what those practices ultimately are.

This is where Mol's ontological politics reaches its limit: it accommodates the Viveiros de Castro case by treating the choice between enactments as a local, negotiated, provisional political decision, but such negotiation presupposes a subject capable of contesting which enactment is privileged, an actor who can enter the political process at all. The stakes of this become fully visible at the limit case Roberto Beneduce identifies in his ethnopsychiatric work. When the anthropologist encounters a migrant or asylum seeker whose ontological fabric has been torn by historical violence, the legislative apparatus fails not merely theoretically but concretely. The attempt to make such suffering speakable through culturally or ontologically pre-given schemas doubles the violence by framing trauma within structures the subject's own worldmaking capacity has been shattered precisely by.[66] Laruelle names this figure in his earliest work: the ordinary man (*homme ordinaire*), which is not the Subject of philosophy, not the patient of psychoanalysis, and not the object of anthropology, but the one determined in the last instance by an immanence that every system attempts to capture and none succeeds in exhausting.[67]

In Beneduce's ethnopsychiatric fieldwork in Cameroon, subjects whose affliction has been attributed to sorcery move through multiple therapeutic networks in sequence — biomedicine, traditional healing, evangelical churches — each of which claims the

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[66] Roberto BENEDUCE, *Corpi e saperi indocili: Guarigione, stregoneria e potere in Camerun*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2010, pp. 34-37. The broader ethnopsychiatric framework is developed in Roberto BENEDUCE, *Etnopsichiatria: Sofferenza mentale e alterità fra Storia, dominio e cultura*, Carocci, Roma 2007.

[67] François LARUELLE, *Une Biographie de l'Homme Ordinaire: Des Autorités et des Minorités*, PUF, Paris 1985. English translation: François LARUELLE, *A Biography of Ordinary Man: On Authorities and Minorities*, tr. J. Hock and A. Dubilet, Polity, Cambridge 2018. The *homme ordinaire* is defined there precisely against the competing legislative claims of philosophy, psychoanalysis, and sociology, each of which proposes to name what the ordinary person ultimately is and thereby misses what Laruelle calls her "non-consistency," her structural resistance to every system's enrollment. The relevance to the Beneduce case is that the migrant or asylum seeker moving sequentially through therapeutic systems is precisely the one who cannot be adequately enrolled by any single system's conditions of felicity, the one whose suffering exceeds every modal grammar's resolution. The *homme ordinaire* is a structural remainder: what is left over after each system has attempted its capture and failed.

condition under its own modal grammar and specifies its own conditions of felicity for legitimate suffering.[68] Applied concretely, AIME would seek to assign the affliction to [MET]amorphosis or a [REL·MET] crossing and would specify felicity conditions requiring the sorcery attribution to be recognized as genuine metamorphic agency — identifying biomedicine's competing diagnostic procedure as a [REF·MET] crossing error, the importation of reference-chain logic into a domain whose proper trajectory is metamorphic rather than inscriptive; the failure is that occupying the legislative position from which such conditions can be read is precisely what the subject's own shattered worldmaking capacity cannot confirm, and what the anthropologist cannot supply on her behalf without repeating the substitutive gesture that preceded the violence. What the pharmaceutical paradigm cannot metabolize is the remainder that exceeds every compositional resolution: suffering that resists adjudication of what mode it instantiates, what ontology it inhabits, what protocol would adequately address it.

The non-philosophical posture does not adjudicate which system correctly identifies the mode the suffering instantiates. It tracks which translations occur as the person moves between systems; which mediators enable or block passage; which obligatory passage points have been destroyed by historical violence and can no longer be crossed; which associations must be rebuilt before any network can sustain the person's collective existence. This is description anchored in what the situation generates as its own terms, not in what any framework's prior grammar permits. A non-philosophical posture at this limit does not ultimately offer a better description; it refuses the claim that adequate description requires adjudication. No abandonment of rigor is required: it's a question of redirection toward attending to what is actually happening, in the terms the situation itself generates, without requiring those terms to satisfy an external grammar of adequacy.

In sum, I propose anthropo-fiction as designating a posture of theoretical inheritance rather than a method in a strict sense. It involves three operations: (1) extracting descriptive vocabularies from existing theoretical systems, (2) suspending the legislative

[68] BENEDUCE, *Corpi e saperi indocili*, pp. 34-37; *Etnopsichiatria*. The sequential movement through therapeutic systems is itself a translation network: each system enrolls the subject and fails when its felicity conditions cannot be met. The non-philosophical analyst tracks these enrollments and failures without installing a meta-grammar determining which system's conditions are legitimate. For the Stranger as the one who cannot be adequately enrolled by any system's conditions, see LARUELLE, *Théorie des Étrangers*, Kimé, Paris 1995, pp. 153-161.

claims that accompany them, and (3) redeploying these vocabularies as analytical resources determined *by the empirical situation rather than by doctrinal frameworks*.

7. Conclusion: the Trickster's Inheritance

We return to the theater. In Molière's *Malade imaginaire*, Toinette's counter-staging exposes therapeutic authority without installing new prescriptions; she demonstrates the doctor's charlatanism through parody, rather than offering genuine cures. Svevo's Zeno publishes his psychoanalysis as literature, making therapy into material for readers who were never his analyst's patients. Both gestures share a strategy: they honor the diagnostic power of what they inherit — medicine's attention to the body, psychoanalysis's tracking of the unconscious — while refusing its prescriptive authority. This is *contaminated fidelity*: they use without obeying, inherit without installing.

Three modes of inheritance present themselves. *Orthodox inheritance* accepts both Latour's diagnosis and his prescription: one follows him into compositionism, becomes a Latourian, adopts the fifteen modes and diplomatic protocols, frames inquiry as design problem. This reproduces precisely what Latour diagnosed in critique. *Simple rejection* dismisses Latour entirely, refuses both diagnosis and prescription, abandons the powerful materials his decades of empirical work generated. To reject Latour entirely is to abandon the materials that make the cloning operation possible. *Non-philosophical inheritance* clones Latour's materials while suspending his authority, treating them as resources determined by *inquiry's immanent needs* rather than by Latour's compositional doctrine.

The figure for this practice is the trickster. Lewis Hyde argues that the trickster is, at bottom, a figure of the threshold: «the boundary is where he will be found—sometimes drawing the line, sometimes crossing it, sometimes erasing or moving it, but always there, the god of the threshold in all its forms».[69] What defines the trickster is not "opposition to the system" but the absence of territory: no world to defend and no legislature to install. Hyde describes Tsimshian Raven entering the chief's lodge as an innocent child, earning the gift of the Daylight-Box, and then fleeing through the hole in the sky before the family can reassert its claim. The trickster has no interest in

[69] Lewis HYDE, *Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art,* Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York 1998, p. 7. The Raven/Daylight-Box story is from the Tsimshian cycle, retold at pp. 102-104.

destroying the system that holds daylight captive. «He knows how to slip the trap of culture» — and slipping the trap means finding, in Hyde's terms, «the pore in the web of signification», the joint in the cultural apparatus where pressure can be applied without installing a counter-apparatus.[70] The trickster's method is appetite: it moves from local, specific, immanent need rather than from a systematic program.

This is why the trickster figures non-philosophical practice more precisely than either the critic or the reformer. Critique attacks the trap and thereby names itself as the trap's adversary: it remains defined by what it opposes. Reform proposes an alternative trap. The trickster neither attacks nor proposes; it takes what serves and departs before the authority question can be raised. Toinette never cures Argan, she uses his hypochondria *against his doctor*, exposes the charlatanism, and vanishes back into the servant's role. Zeno never refuses psychoanalysis, he publishes his analyst's confidential notes as fiction, redistributing the material to readers who never authorized the therapeutic relation. The non-philosopher never demolishes Latour's system, she clones his network descriptions, his mediators, his refusal of purification's shortcuts, and departs before the modal grammar can reassert its legislative claim.

Latour taught us to see networks where we saw only objects, to recognize distributed agency where we saw only human intention, to track mediations where we saw only transparent representation. These remain gifts — materials that continue generating insights wherever associations form, translations operate, collectives emerge. To honor them through orthodox inheritance would be to repeat the pharmaceutical structure Latour himself diagnosed, and "accepted": the prescription that immunizes itself against the very disease it claims to cure. The trickster's inheritance is a mode of inheritance that refuses this repetition — that honors what Latour showed us precisely by refusing to be shown how to use it.

[70] *Ivi*, p. 470. The full passage: «Cultures take their shape from distinctions such as 'gift and theft' or [...] 'essence and accident.' These exactly are the joints of the cultural web and therefore the potential sites of trickster's play».

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