



## Re-Reading the *Grundrisse*: Beyond Two Marxist and Poststructuralist Misunderstandings

---

The increased productive force of labour is posited rather as the increase of a force [*Kraft*] outside itself, and as labour's own debilitation [*Entkräftung*]. The hand tool makes the worker independent – posits him as proprietor. Machinery – as fixed capital – posits him as dependent, posits him as appropriated. This effect of machinery holds only in so far as it is cast into the role of fixed capital, and this it is only because the worker relates to it as wage-worker.

Karl Marx<sup>1</sup>

Disembrain them, devitalize them, cut off their ears, confiscate their money and drink yourself to death, that's the life of a Salopin, that's happiness for the Master of Phynances.

Alfred Jarry<sup>2</sup>

Only from history in thought, the theory of history, was it possible to account for the historical religion of reading: by discovering that the truth of history cannot be read in its manifest discourse, because the text of history is not a text in which a voice (the Logos) speaks, but the inaudible and illegible notation of the effects of a structure of structures. [...]

Returning to Marx, we note that not only in what he says but in what he does we can grasp the transition from an earlier idea and practice of reading to a new practice of reading, and to a theory of history capable of providing us with a new theory of *reading*.

When we read Marx, we immediately find a *reader* who *reads* to us, and out loud.

Louis Althusser<sup>3</sup>

#### 44 Re-reading III – Mastery and servitude: on the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’

The problem with the Hegelian dialectic is that it makes the exterior ‘moment’ a transparent milieu, that is, a milieu the heteronomy of which is auto-soluble (ab-solute) into a *Science of Logic* wherein the real ultimately proves to be that which is effectively, actually, rational. This idealism is incapable of seeing, since it postulates the transparency of the ‘objective spirit’, that to conceive rationality in this way can lead only to an *absolutely irrational rationalization*, that is, to a universal unreason that will manifest itself as stupidity and madness.

In this Science of Logic, which is not a Science of Technology [*technologique*] or of Organology [*organologique*], the exteriority of spirit is not a supplement – it remains an element.<sup>4</sup> It is not pharmacological – it remains purely logical. As such, this exteriority must inevitably be dissolved into the science of logic, within which heteronomy would be but a moment of a negativity that is itself soluble. Or, to put it in terms closer to Nietzsche, it is not tragic.

Exteriority is sublatale, that is, it can be synthesized into a unitotality: this is what dialectics posits as a principle. To us, however, the latecomers, this synthesis shows itself to be techno-logical, and not dialectical: having reached the stage of digital grammatization, technology analyses and synthesizes the entire world – and in this synthetic world, the rational has effectively become rationalization, as the general spread of systemic stupidity and madness, as universal unreason. Such is our ‘effective reality’.

Furthermore, the speculative proposition, because it cannot neutralize the literality of language in which it holds and pro-poses itself, in the necessity of its inscription in letters, can and must be re-read from an organological perspective. That is, it must be re-read by taking seriously the question of the *inorganicity* (*the technicity*) of the organs of reading of the objective spirit.

This *other way of reading Hegel* shows that the question of the difference we must make between scanning and passing is not a matter of recording technology that would fall outside anamnesis defined as an ‘a-technical or a-technological’ passing, as Lyotard argues.<sup>5</sup> Rather, it is a question of a way of reading (and therefore of writing) on the basis of the possibilities opened up by the technicity of reading. Lyotard’s problem is that he remains here *too Hegelian* (too idealist) to take this supplementarity truly seriously. Hegel himself undoubtedly does take it seriously, since it is the condition of the objective spirit, but he ultimately dissolves it into his uni-total

synthesis: this condition is temporary, merely a ‘moment’. It is this sense of synthesis that Lyotard repeats.

It is because this moment is the condition of rational objective spirit that, in *Philosophy of History*, Hegel posits that exteriority is not just that which spatializes time (after the fact), but that which *constitutes* it as *historical* time, making clear that a proper consideration of exteriorization in general is necessary<sup>6</sup> (even if this exteriority is asked to dissolve into absolute knowledge, that is, knowledge absolutely free of any heteronomy).

History must be written because, as *Geschichte*, that is, as a new modality of psychic and collective individuation producing what Hegel described as the phenomenology of spirit (which is the history of philosophy), and not just as *Historie* (that is, as historical science and academic knowledge), history is a *modality* of time – that is, of individuation – such that it is reconfigured (in a way that comes close to Paul Ricoeur) by literal tertiary retention as the specific temporal ecstasy<sup>7</sup> that opens the epoch of ways of reading.

Within this *Geschichte*, ways of reading (and therefore of writing) are pharmacologically conditioned by literal mnemotechnics, that is, by tertiary retentions produced in lettered form. This is the question of attention (A – including the suspended attention in which working through, *Durcharbeitung*, occurs), such that it is constituted by a relation between primary retentions (R1), secondary retentions (R2) and tertiary retentions (R3), and where, as we saw in the preceding chapter,<sup>8</sup>

$$A = R3 (R2/R1 = S1),^9$$

S1 being a primary *selection* (there is no retention that is not a selection – and here, we must pass through Nietzsche).

Therefore, the problem of the capacity to produce practices and pragmatics that preserve and cultivate the possibility of anamnesis – which is Lyotard’s basic concern in 1979 (at the end of *The Post-modern Condition*),<sup>10</sup> and to which he returns in 1986 (at the end of ‘*Logos and Techne, or Telegraphy*’), except that he *no longer believes* in this possibility – involves a politics of tertiary retention, and not just ‘witnesses to the differend’. It may well be that this is what Lyotard was saying to Max Gallo. But, thirty years later, it is no doubt quite easy to say<sup>11</sup> – yet it remains to be done.

If Lyotard no longer believes in it, therefore, this is because he perpetuates a profound misunderstanding of the concepts of proletariat and proletarianization – a misunderstanding that persists in

Marx himself. This misunderstanding is also a profound contradiction. For to inherit the Hegelian dialectic is, for Marx, firstly to inherit the dialectic of master and slave – itself founded on the dialectic of the desire for recognition. Now, what leads to the dialectical inversion of the master by the slave, the latter having become ‘consciousness in itself and for itself’, is, in Hegel, the slave’s pursuit of knowledge. That is, the slave achieves this inversion by conquering determinations of the understanding, and through work, by putting technics to work – the worker (who is the slave) gives himself an art, that is, a form of knowledge and individuation, and ultimately a property, which *is* his individuation, that is, his existence recognized:

Work [...] is desire held in check, fleetingness staved off; in other words, work forms [...]. This [...] formative *activity* is at the same time the singularity [*die Einzelheit*] or pure being-for-self of consciousness which now, in the work outside of it, acquires an element of permanence.<sup>12</sup>

Work is exteriorization par excellence, that is, as individuation. As such, it is also the exteriorization of the for-itself of consciousness: it is the *retaining* of consciousness outside of itself, and the element of its permanence – retention is permanent only because it has become tertiary.

Through this conquest of self in the exteriorization of self, and for the master, slave consciousness achieves consciousness in itself and for itself, that is, beyond the master. And through the moments of this dialectic:

In the master, being-for-self is an ‘other’ for the slave, or is only *for* him [i.e. is not his own]; in fear [that of the slave who has become the slave through his recoil in the face of death, which the master does not fear, who as a result of this becomes the master], being-for-self is present in the slave himself; in fashioning the thing [in the work imposed by slavery as the stage of a *Bildung*], he becomes aware that being-for-self belongs to *him*, that he himself exists essentially and actually in his own right. The shape does not become something other than himself through being made external [*hinausgesetzt*, placed outside, as Hyppolite puts it, *pros-thetized* in some way] to him; for it is precisely this shape that is his pure being-for-self, which in this externality is seen by him to be the truth. Through this rediscovery of himself by himself, the slave realizes that it is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence that he acquires a mind of his own.<sup>13</sup>

This dialectic of work and workers, which is obviously the foundation of Marxism, is in Hegel not a question of the *worker becoming proletarian* as much as it is about the *artisan becoming an entrepreneur*, that is, bourgeois. In other words, the reappropriation of this dialectic by Marxism is based on a misunderstanding.

What Hegel nevertheless does not think here – when he analyses the becoming of objective spirit by and in work, and as a stage of the ‘work of the concept’ – is the *machine’s* work, which deprives the worker of his singularity, that is, of his work. Work is for the worker then reduced to a job (a salary), a negativity that turns it into a pure force of labour that is no longer work properly speaking, given that work, as Hegel explains, is an individuation process in which the worker is individuated at the same time as the object, which is thereby individuated technically (this is what I have tried to describe as work in an associated milieu).<sup>14</sup>

It is for this reason that, in Marxist economico-political theory, the dictatorship of the proletariat, supposedly grounded in this dialectic, is in fact based on a profound misinterpretation. For Marx himself showed in the *Grundrisse* that the determination carried out by exteriorization in machines, and as grammatization, is what structurally and materially deprives the slave of all knowledge – the slave who becomes the worker, the wage labourer, a status destined to be extended to ‘all layers of the population’ via wage labour, as Marx and Engels would write in the *Communist Manifesto*.<sup>15</sup>

It is precisely because materialism, inheriting the ‘speculative narrative’, is unaware of this question – and what necessarily accompanies it, namely, the question of desire (of recognition, that is, of work as the delay and différance of desire and beyond, desire of the Other and of the ‘Thing’ absent from the Lyotardian theory of anamnesis) – that materialism fails in building not only an ‘emancipatory narrative’ (as if materialism and dialectics were only stories told to children, such as Plato considers in Book III of the *Republic*, a bit like the tale told by Lyotard in *The Postmodern Explained to Children*),<sup>16</sup> but a horizon of political struggle capable of opening up alternatives.

To the extent that Lyotard cannot see this problem, he too fails, as does the Marxism that was his provenance and of which he ultimately fails to offer a critique: he prefers to bury it. For to give a critique means *to re-read* – and to re-read in detail and against the dominant clichés. But to do so it would be necessary to believe in it, and, in the end, Lyotard ‘no longer believes’ – at the risk of sounding cynical. This non-belief, which I also call disbelief [*mécréance*], stems

from the general Marxist confusion about the meaning of the proletariat. And the fact that Lyotard does not see this Marxist confusion (which is also Marx's own confusion, given that *Capital* tends to identify the proletariat and the working class, contrary to the *Communist Manifesto*) is all the more strange given that he refers explicitly to Marx and to the *Grundrisse* in his analysis of the so-called postmodern condition of knowledge.

Lyotard repeats the gesture of Marx that he precisely failed to critique (to have taken seriously *on this point*). This gesture consists, on the one hand, in making the concept of the proletariat synonymous with the concept of the working class, and, on the other hand, in taking the negativity of the proletarian condition as an unsurpassable horizon and in never posing the question or the hypothesis of de-proletarianization – a Marxist drift that extends Hegelian metaphysics.

What Hegel never thinks is technics as that which bypasses and short-circuits the knowledge of the slave. Marx attempts to think machine technology, but without drawing any consequences for the master–slave dialectic. This is why (because he ‘forgets’ to think the positive and negative pharmacology of this organology) he turns the negativity of the universal subject of history (that would be the proletariat) into the revolutionary principle, whereas it is in fact the curative positivity of the pharmacological supplement deriving from work that inverts the logic of disindividuation, and as technique of the self, and that must make possible a new age of individuation, that is, of knowledge. And it must do so as a new history of the love of knowledge, its savours, as knowing how to do and to live, and also how to theorize – of which I am here in a way fashioning a narrative.

As for *The Postmodern Condition*, the issue there is the ‘exteriorization of knowledge with respect to the “knower”’,<sup>17</sup> an exteriorization that makes possible ‘performance’ and makes inaccessible the experience of the ‘differend’. This placement into exteriority is, however, what Plato had already denounced with respect to writing insofar as it is a *pharmakon*. I have previously argued that this denunciation was the first time that proletarianization was thought as such<sup>18</sup> – and that this is how Derrida must be read, with or without him, if not against him.

The process of proletarianization was described by Marx in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) as a loss of knowledge resulting from exteriorization, and this was further elaborated in the *Grundrisse* (1857). This then constituted the material basis for what Althusser

and his students Étienne Balibar, Roger Establet, Pierre Macherey and Jacques Rancière would urge their generation to read and re-read, namely, *Capital* (1867) – in so doing differentiating themselves from what they refer to as ‘structuralist ideology’.<sup>19</sup> Between the *Manifesto* and *Capital*, however, the question of knowledge, and of its loss, is lost. And this will be a blow to Marxism – including Lyotard.

When in *The Postmodern Condition* Lyotard discusses ‘placing into exteriority’ [*mise en extériorité*], he refers explicitly to the *Grundrisse*.<sup>20</sup> But strangely, Lyotard does not think this in terms of proletarianization. Like all Marxists, Lyotard fails to see that the proletariat is not the working class, but the *non-working* class [*la classe des désoeuvres*], that is, the downgraded, the class of those who are *de-class-ified*. They are those who no longer know, but serve, systems that exteriorize knowledge: this includes those technicians to whom he refers in *The Postmodern Condition*, those he argues are unable to ‘bear witness to the differend’, but many others as well, subservient to the retentional systems of consumption (that is, the whole world),<sup>21</sup> not production, and who would nevertheless like to find a *job*, in default of finding *work*.

Here, however, it is not a matter of ‘bearing witness to the differend’, except in order to reconstitute anamnestic circuits – that is, to think and practise the differend as an experience of the default that leads to a pharmacological struggle against proletarianization. And in this context, *to think* is *to say*, but also *to do*, besides the fact that saying becomes doing in being exteriorized, such that a differend between the subject of the statement and that of the enunciation is constituted via a *third, the factor of proletarianization*: that which constitutes tertiary retention, including as machines and apparatus, and not just through the performativity of speech acts or ‘managerial dogma’,<sup>22</sup> but which is also a curative third or knowing-third – *organological knowledge*.

We should not conclude, therefore, that legitimation is no longer possible thanks to the computerization or informatization of language.<sup>23</sup> Instead, we must posit performatively (but in a sense other than that which Lyotard grants to performativity) that grammatization – of which computerization is the development that was contemporary with *The Postmodern Condition*, and which has today become digitalization, wherein computing is now available to everyone and no longer restricted to ‘computer engineers’ and other ‘technicians’ of ‘machine language’, and where this extends far beyond language – that this *digital grammatization completely transforms public and private space and time* (which Lyotard feels coming, but which he

does not manage to think), just as writing did for the *polis*, according to Hegel. And through this transformational upheaval, digital grammatization opens the possibility of a positive pharmacology as generalized de-proletarianization.

This grand narrative of grammatization as experience of the *pharmakon* tells the story of an idea of that which is great in the non-human being, and which is possible only as the experience of that which is small, that is, of what Deleuze called *baseness* – which may sometimes cause shame, that is, provoke thought.

As for the curative possibility of the digital *pharmakon*, it will not rise up thanks to some illumination coming from who knows where, but because digital tertiary retention, which constitutes a completely original stage of the exteriorization that is grammatization, makes it possible and necessary *at the very moment when the industrial model imposed by consumerist capitalism is collapsing*. Such a collapse represents a *generalization of baseness*, spreading it far and wide, and it requires a *generalized de-proletarianization*, as a task of thought and action in all their forms. And while the irrationality of rationalization that generates this baseness is becoming transparent and obvious, other, de-proletarianizing operations are already under way.

If the negative side of the Hegelian dialectic, however, is not toxic (and this is why it is ‘sublatable’, that is, reducible and soluble into a spirit become absolute knowledge), pharmacological negativity is on the contrary *in-soluble*, that is, it cannot find the definitive solution within which it could be dissolved. It is at all times the object of a struggle. Its toxicity, which appears firstly as disindividuation and loss of savour, that is, as absolute non-knowledge, must form part of a therapeutic, and as dependence, that is, as irreducible heteronomy: the individual individuates only insofar as it knows what to do with, or can make do with, the irreducible toxicity of the *pharmakon*.

This means that toxicity itself, like a practice of voluntary intoxication, can be curative: the curative is not the opposite of the toxic.<sup>24</sup> This is why Bateson posits that, for the alcoholic, there must be something ‘right’ about alcoholic intoxication, and why he argues that the alcoholic must recognize this at the moment of disintoxication.<sup>25</sup> What Alcoholics Anonymous say to those wanting to detox is that they must firstly understand why alcohol worked for them, what was good about it. And they must do so in order to be able to choose something other than alcohol, to continue their individuation, and to struggle against the disindividuation that is alcoholic dependence. And this also means that, from the pharmacological point of view,



there is no final synthesis, but a *savoir-vivre-with-its-dependencies* (what Nietzsche called chains, and which are those of Prometheus bound): a *savoir-vivre* each time singular, that is, individuating.<sup>26</sup>

Lyotard posits on the contrary that the exteriorization of knowledge, without any return to knowing, and without an alternative horizon, is an inescapable fact: it is precisely the impossibility of such a return that constitutes the postmodern in the strict sense – where ‘there is no alternative’. Now, this seems highly questionable, in relation, for example, to the free software movement as an industrial organization of work founded on de-proletarianization, that is, on sharing knowledge and responsibility, and, through that, on the reconstitution of associated industrial milieus – whereas earlier forms of industrialization always led to the dissociation of milieus, that is, to disindividuation.<sup>27</sup>

That this situation can become pharmacologically positive does not mean, therefore, that this tendency to dissociation can be *overcome*, that is, ‘sublated’, in the sense of the Hegelian *Aufhebung*. It means:

- that it can and must be fought against, and contained, and that this should be the principle of industrial politics and economics in the twenty-first century, through which priorities and lines of flight will be organized, and goals projected;
- that *it is in this that the responsibility of the university lies*, as we shall see in the second part of this book.

## 45 Re-reading IV – The *Grundrisse*

The Hegelian and ‘idealist’ definition of the understanding was inverted by Marx when he proposed that exteriorization, in which understanding essentially consists, is first and foremost that of the means of production: such is his ‘materialism’. But in so dismissing idealism Marx lost sight of the question of ideality, that is, idealization as that which is at work in all investment and in all knowledge of the object of desire. And poststructuralism, too, leaves this in the shadows by tending to confound desire and drive: the misunderstanding in relation to the proletariat is at the same time a misunderstanding of desire.

In *The German Ideology* (1845), Marx’s materialism initially consists in identifying the first ‘historical act’ of noetic beings with their technical capacity. Non-inhuman beings ‘begin to distinguish

themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organisation'.<sup>28</sup> The Hegelian question of exteriorization is thus 'put back on its feet', to some extent as a question of general organology, where the materialist dialectic assigns *being* (and its becoming) to *doing*, that is, to *production*:

As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. Hence what individuals are depends on the material conditions of their production.<sup>29</sup>

That this exteriorization can lead to the proletarianization of workers is explained in the *Grundrisse* in terms of the passage from the tool to the machine, that is, to a new stage of exteriorization:

The means of labour passes through different metamorphoses, whose culmination is the *machine*, or rather, an *automatic system of machinery* (system of machinery: the *automatic* one is merely its most complete, most adequate form, and alone transforms machinery into a system) [...]; this automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so that the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages.<sup>30</sup>

And Marx continues:

In no way does the machine appear as the individual worker's means of labour. Its distinguishing characteristic is not in the least, as with the means of labour, to transmit the worker's activity to the object; this activity, rather, is posited in such a way that it merely transmits the machine's work, the machine's action, on to the raw material – supervises it and guards against interruptions. Not as with the instrument, which the worker animates and makes into his organ with his skill and strength, and whose handling therefore depends on his virtuosity. Rather, it is the machine which possesses skill and strength in place of the worker, is itself the virtuoso, with a soul of its own in the mechanical laws acting through it.<sup>31</sup>

This analysis forms the basis of Simondon's argument in *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*. The process of disindividuation that he describes paraphrases these statements by Marx:

The technical individual becomes at a certain point man's adversary, his competitor, because man had, when there were only tools,

centralized all technical individuality within himself; the machine then takes the place of man because man grants to the machine the function of tool-bearer.<sup>32</sup>

Marx does indeed emphasize that this industrial division of labour, and the replacement of workers and tools by machines, is also a change in the status of knowledge and of the science that it brings. Scientific knowledge is placed at the service of the process of exteriorization, whereby it is knowledge itself, and in general, that is exteriorized:

The science which compels the inanimate limbs of the machinery, by their construction, to act purposefully, as an automaton, does not exist in the worker's consciousness, but rather acts upon him through the machine as an alien power, as the power of the machine itself.<sup>33</sup>

Hence there occurs, if one here follows Marx to the letter, a *dis-embraining* [*décervelage*] – as *King Ubu* puts it in 1896. It is thus both scientific knowledge (that is, intellectual labour) and *savoir-faire* (that is, manual labour) that mutate.

Intellectual labour is used in the service of the reduction of the role of manual labour in the production process:

The production process has ceased to be a labour process [...] individual living workers [are] only a link of the system, whose unity exists not in the living workers, but rather in the living (active) machinery [...]. The increase of the productive force of labour and the greatest possible negation of necessary labour is the necessary tendency of capital.<sup>34</sup>

And it is placed in the service of capital, and of the appropriation of labour by capital, in the form of fixed capital:

The accumulation of knowledge and of skill, of the general productive forces of the social brain, is thus absorbed into capital, as opposed to labour, and hence appears as an attribute of capital, and more specifically of *fixed capital*, in so far as it enters into the production process as a means of production proper.<sup>35</sup>

It is in this sense that, for Simondon, a machine is a crystallization of repeatable gestures that become 'functional structures': 'What machines contain is human reality, the human gesture set and crystallized into functional structures.'<sup>36</sup> The subordination of labour (of

servitude) to capital (to mastery) operates via the materialization of this knowledge, that is, its grammatization, which eventually enables the elimination of the worker in favour of an *autonomization* of technics, in the form of its *automatization*:

The productive force of society is measured in *fixed capital*, exists there in its objective form; [...] living labour [as] subsumed under self-activating objectified labour. The worker appears as superfluous.<sup>37</sup>

This grammatization appears with machine technology, which replaces instrumental technics, via the application of science and the loss of empirical *savoir-faire* resulting from a shift in the end (or purpose) of formal and theoretical knowledge:

The entire production process appears as not subsumed under the direct skillfulness of the worker, but rather as the technological application of science. [It is,] hence, the tendency of capital to give production a scientific character.<sup>38</sup>

Hence knowledge has changed status, both in terms of *savoir-faire*, which has been replaced by the materialized knowledge of automated machines, and in terms of theoretical knowledge, which could undertake this replacement only by itself becoming technological – that is, as we shall see, by losing its theoretical aspect, and thus itself becoming a proletarianized pseudo-knowledge, that is, a rationalization<sup>39</sup> that produces systemic stupidity.

This becoming or this development leads to a capitalist contradiction that would later be described by Marx as the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.

To the degree that labour time – the mere quantity of labour – is posited by capital as the sole determinant element, to that degree does direct labour and its quantity disappear as the determinant principle of production – of the creation of use values – and is reduced both quantitatively, to a smaller proportion, and qualitatively, as an, of course, indispensable but subordinate moment, compared to general scientific labour, technological application of natural sciences, on one side, and to the general productive force arising from social combination [*Gliederung*] in total production on the other side [...]. *Capital thus works towards its own dissolution as the form dominating production.*<sup>40</sup>

A contradiction exists between the fact that labour is the sole source of profit possible for capitalism, and the fact that there is

nevertheless a tendency to reduce it so as to transform it into fixed capital, which leads to what in *Capital* Marx called the tendency of the rate of profit to fall.<sup>41</sup>

Here, *invention* becomes the crux of capitalism: 'Invention then becomes a business, and the application of science to direct production itself becomes a prospect which determines and solicits it.'<sup>42</sup> This invention is above all the advance of the process of grammatization as spatialization, reproduction and repetition of gestural time. Gestures are thus turned into the automatic movements of the machine, just as speech became text at the time history began to take the form of *Geschichte* (and just as today, with digitalization and vocal synthesis, speech is automatically 'written' and 'read'):

But this [...] road along which machinery [...] progresses [...] is, rather, dissection [*Analyse*] – through the division of labour, which gradually transforms the workers' operations into more and more mechanical ones, so that at a certain point a mechanism can step into their places.<sup>43</sup>

It is this process of grammatization, which exceeds the opposition of language and technics (and thus also goes beyond 'logocentrism'), that constitutes the fundamental stakes of *différance*, and thus of writing in the sense invoked by Lyotard in his theory of anamnesis. To place these two forms of exteriorization in opposition, an opposition that organizes the reasoning and arguments of both *The Post-modern Condition* and *The Inhuman*, would therefore be profoundly metaphysical: it is a philosophical regression.

For Althusser, 'the text of history is [...] the inaudible and illegible notation of the effects of a structure of structures',<sup>44</sup> and the issue for Marxism is to exceed the *logos* and logocentrism of teleological and idealist history by thinking, reading and writing this text *as* this 'notation of the effects of a structure of structures'.

But the *Grundrisse* shows that such an approach requires us to think in terms of grammatization<sup>45</sup> – and in passing through not only Derrida, but also Leroi-Gourhan, himself a structuralist,<sup>46</sup> but one who does not reduce the structural question to language and combinatorial analysis: on the contrary, he thinks structures in terms of what Althusser called the 'combination' of Marx, and closer to what Deleuze and Guattari think as an 'arrangement'. Balibar cites, in relation to this point, Book II of *Capital*:

Whatever the social form of production, labourers and means of production always remain *factors* (*Faktoren*) of it. But in a state of

separation from each other either of these factors can be such only potentially (*der Möglichkeit nach*). For production to go on at all they must combine (*Verbindung*). The specific manner in which this combination is accomplished distinguishes the different epochs of the structure of society one from another.<sup>47</sup>

The analysis that Marx proposes in the *Grundrisse* leads to organology, and more particularly to an organology of knowledge – a question to which I will return in the second part. Without such an organology of knowledge it is not possible to think economic epochs in terms of such combinations:

Nature builds no machines, no locomotives, railways, electric telegraphs, self-acting mules etc. These are products of human industry; natural material transformed into organs of the human will over nature, or of human participation in nature. They are *organs of the human brain, created by the human hand*; the power of knowledge, objectified. The development of fixed capital indicates to what degree general social knowledge has become a *direct force of production*, and to what degree, hence, the conditions of the process of social life itself have come under the control of the general intellect and been transformed in accordance with it. To what degree the powers of social production have been produced, not only in the form of knowledge, but also as immediate organs of social practice, of the real life process.<sup>48</sup>

It is, however, not savoir-faire alone that is destroyed by industrial grammatization – and to the service of which theoretical knowledge is submitted. Savoir-vivre, too, is liquidated, through processes that capture attention and reconfigure it by standardizing behavioural patterns.

It is then consumers who are deprived of any inventive role, and who no longer transmit any savoir-vivre to their descendants, nor receive any from their ascendants, since they are on the contrary forced to abandon it in the name of adapting to whatever marketing devises. And, today, all this occurs with the help of the social and cognitive sciences – neuromarketing being the most advanced stage of this aspect of proletarianization.

In addition, fundamental theoretical knowledge is proletarianized, that is, decoupled from theoretical activity – and it is this development that is analysed in *The Postmodern Condition* in terms of ‘performativity’. The destruction of the theoretical dimension of formal knowledge consists in transforming *formalisms* into *automatisms*. These are implemented so as to increase the analytical

performance of these formalisms, which leads to the automatization of scientific understanding itself. Reason is thereby autonomized – and as such becomes rationalization, that is, material, formal and efficient causality without final causality.

What is taught today, therefore, is increasingly a purely procedural technological knowledge, including in the faculty of sciences, at the expense of the historical and critical knowledge of the theories lying at the origin of these formalisms. Scientific instruments have become machines to which scientists, who are more and more technologists and less and less scientists, must adapt themselves without having time to go back to the axioms and synthetic judgements that govern the mechanisms through which they formulate analytic judgements.<sup>49</sup>

In the economic field, one result of this abolition of theory has been the proletarianization of Alan Greenspan himself.<sup>50</sup>

## 46 Alternatives, reform and revolution

The political dogma of the dictatorship of the proletariat postulates that there is nothing beyond proletarianization. In other words, this dogma posits a priori that there is nothing beyond the liquidation of knowledge, that proletarianization is insurmountable and that labour or work cannot be reinvented through a new relation to the *pharmakon* and to the generalized grammatization that makes possible generalized proletarianization. This is the point of view of dialectical materialism inasmuch as it puts to work the Hegelian concept of negativity.

This dogma is the true problem of Marxism – which will then be translated into the errancies and inversions of Lenin in relation to Frederick Taylor.<sup>51</sup> The major question of materialism becomes blurred as a result, namely, the materiality of knowledge, and the problems associated with its mechanized grammatization in the industrial age, the determinations of the understanding (in the Hegelian sense and as faculty of the *res cogitans*) being concretized through a process of automatization via the writing of formalisms in matter (the highest degree of automatization being achieved when this matter becomes silicon). In matter: that is, in space (*res extensa*).

Overcoming this Marxian dogma means inverting the negativity of toxicity into a curative positivity through the creation of a new age of work founded on a new industrial model that would also constitute a new libidinal economy of the industrial age, that is, a *new kingdom of industrial ends*.

In the process of proletarianization, the techno-logical determinations of the understanding and the formalisms in which they consist – formalisms that are designed to serve efficiency (which Lyotard calls performance) through their materialization – are cut off from the time of final causality (which is temporality as the reason of matter, of form and of efficiency) without which there can be no theory, that is, anamnesis.<sup>52</sup> But final causality, after Freud, is constituted as the object of desire, that is, as libidinal economy (in a sense very different from the way this is understood by Lyotard).

Marx (like Althusser after him) commits a fundamental error in assuming that the way the proletariat can escape their condition is by becoming conscious of their proletarianized situation, rather than through the elaboration of a new kind of knowledge. This new type of knowledge would not be the Marxist ‘science’ sought by Althusser, but the invention of a new process of psychic, collective and technical individuation constituting a new relation to technics. This is the horizon of the following statement by Simondon:

These structures [functional machines] must be maintained in the course of functioning, and perfecting them coincides with increasing their openness, increasing the freedom of their functioning.<sup>53</sup>

This proposition provides a particularly clear perspective on positive pharmacology. Through it, we can understand how and why machine-based tertiary retention, written and read in silicon by the reading and writing machines that are contributory digital systems and networks, opens the possibility of de-proletarianization, not in some ‘post-industrial’ age, but in a new industrial age.

Despite his extreme foresight in the *Grundrisse*, Marx did not think technics as this memory it would always have been (constituting as such an organology of the unconscious), something that becomes patently obvious in the stage of digital grammatization, when industrial *hypomnēmata* (called software, hardware, data, netware, web, metadata, and so on) become the primary economic element. Marx continues to think technics under the category of means for the collective subject that is the proletariat, as class and as class-consciousness. He does tend, however, to identify the proletariat with the working class-become-inactive [*désœuvrée*], that is, no longer working in the sense of opening the world. They are proletarianized: those to whom the world is closed by dissociation.<sup>54</sup>

Unaware that the technical ‘element’ is a *supplement* putting to work a logic of the supplement through a history of the supplement,



and not a means in the service of ends,<sup>55</sup> Marx failed to think the trio of psychic, collective and technical individuations. Even if he suggests that all wage labour leads to the proletarianization of labourers, he postulates that it is the *manual* working class that is the bearer of the contradictions of capital, and that can overthrow them – which is an error in every way that has led Marxists in general in the direction of what is wrongly called ‘workerism’.

The proletariat is in no way what Lyotard, Althusser or Marxist thought in general believed it to be: the proletariat is constituted not by the working class or labour in general, but by the ‘exteriorization of knowledge with respect to the “knower”’. The great significance of *The Postmodern Condition*, despite everything for which it can be reproached (for a start, by Lyotard himself, who later declared that this text was no more than a product of circumstance), lies in making clear that the fate of knowledge consists in its exteriorization, which is both its condition and the possibility of its loss.

The problem is that, even if Lyotard refers to the text of the *Grundrisse* in order to show that Marx is the first to think and to posit in principle this becoming,

- on the one hand, he does not see that proletarianization is a fate common to both manual labour and intellectual labour (and this is something that Marx himself did not conceptualize in clear terms, even though he posited from the outset that proletarianization affects ‘all layers of the population’);
- on the other hand, he does not see that this was already Plato’s subject, in relation to the pharmacological dimension of writing – which becomes ‘telegraphic’ only in the absence of a therapeutic as *epimēleia* practised in order to access anamnesis.

In effacing the fact that knowledge and its loss is the principal factor associated with proletarianization, Marx himself could not see that the fundamental contradiction of capital is less that the rate of profit tends to fall – as counter to which Schumpeter will devise an answer (albeit temporary)<sup>56</sup> in the form of ‘Creative Destruction’ – than that libidinal energy tends to fall. In other words, Marx did not see that capital brings about the destruction of knowledge *in all its forms*, which is also the destruction of tastes [*saveurs*] and, with them, of desire, as that which engenders them through sublimation. And if he cannot see this, it is because he is no longer able to see that the main problem that the Hegelian dialectic poses lies in the fact that it induces the end of desire – and that it anticipates an actual,

effective becoming that in fact describes the world we inhabit today. And, through a ruse of history, the installation of this world is due in no small part to the contribution of poststructuralist anti-Hegelianism.

Liotard in fact shared with poststructuralism in general, as with Marxism in general, this erroneous perspective on the proletariat, a perspective *that stems from an error concerning the question of desire*. This error consists in failing to take into account the evolution of Freud's ideas in relation to his theory of the drives – indicated, for example, in Freud's statement in 1920 that 'the immediate aims of psycho-analytic technique are quite other to-day than they were at the outset'.<sup>57</sup> By largely leaving in the shadows this new question that Freud opened up,<sup>58</sup> the poststructuralist perspective on desire remains confused about how desire and the drives are to be distinguished and articulated.

The proletariat must be thought otherwise: it must be thought via re-readings of Plato, Hegel and Marx (and also Adam Smith) *with* Freud, precisely because *desire and its economy are destroyed by capital*, something that is implicitly foreshadowed in *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Grasping this, however, depends on being able to distinguish desire and drive clearly, which is obviously not the case for that 'Great Ephemeral skin' through which Lyotard aims to think the affects in what he imagines to be the libidinal economy of capital: in *Libidinal Economy*,<sup>59</sup> published in 1974, one year after *Dérive à partir de Marx et Freud*<sup>60</sup> and two years after Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, desire is *explicitly not* this economy – the issue there is not desire, but the drives.<sup>61</sup> And this is to a large extent true of poststructuralist thought in general – which claims to define its place by breaking with Marcuse but on this point largely repeats him.<sup>62</sup>

Two misunderstandings are therefore established during the twentieth century: one concerning the proletariat; the other concerning desire. Together, these misunderstandings have resulted in great confusion about how these two concepts relate to work (which is the principal modality of *différance* – this is what must be retained from Hegel, but in passing through *The German Ideology*, the *Grundrisse*, and the *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*).

Moreover, these two misunderstandings have not ceased to mutually reinforce each other – at the same time as they have inhibited understanding of what would be the historical specificity of the twentieth century, namely consumerism. And this severely flawed theoretical situation was to lead progressive movements into errant oscillations between reform and revolution:

- *Reform* is what proposes no alternative: it aims to improve a finite system, assuming that it can manage the contradictions-without-alternative implied by its finitude.<sup>63</sup> Lyotard's systemic turn is from this perspective a return to reformism.
- *Revolution* is what posits that a finite system has reached or will reach a limit, at which point the system must be changed. A strict Marxist materialism argues that this system-change becomes necessary when the material of the system leads it to its limits – inducing a passage to the limit in the sense of René Passet.<sup>64</sup> But, because he misunderstood his own theory of exteriorization as leading to proletarianization, Marx himself was ultimately incapable of thinking this hyper-material materiality that is knowledge as fixed capital, and he failed to think and to critique the technicity of capitalism as pharmacological revolution as well as therapeutic revolution: he failed to theorize technological *shock* and its transformation by psychosocial individuation and by a state of philosophical shock.

The twenty-first century begins, however, by establishing a *revolutionary situation*, for two reasons:

- on the one hand, a mutation of industrial material, produced by an industrial world now dominated by this industry of the supplement that is digitalization (by the digital tertiary retention industry, firstly as hardware and software, then as dataware and metadata-ware),<sup>65</sup> resulting in a systemic industrial mutation both by accelerating the obsolescence of the consumerist system founded on centralist organizations, and by opening new, undetermined possibilities in the field of machines, which amount to new possibilities of psychic and collective individuation;
- on the other hand, the 'technicians' of 'language machines', technicians assumed by Lyotard to be incapable of 'bearing witness to differends', have for almost thirty years (that is, since shortly after the publication of *The Postmodern Condition*: firstly at MIT,<sup>66</sup> then in California, in particular at Berkeley) been engaged in a revolutionary struggle, a struggle concerned with the production and sharing of knowledge, with a new industrial organization of work, and with intellectual property, and the goal of this struggle has been to constitute an industrial organization founded on de-proletarianization.

Here, 'revolution' does not necessarily imply barricades or the seizure of power: it refers to the process through which an epoch that

has run its course [*une époque révolue*] gives way to a new epoch. A revolution is as such an exceptional modality of what Simondon called ‘quantum leaps’ in individuation, in which it is the very conditions of individuation that are transformed. The question is thus to define what makes an epoch – and we shall return to this question in the following part.

#### 47 The decline of progressivism, the twin fictions of the ‘working class’ and the ‘middle class’, and the reconquering of knowledge

A revolutionary process is under way. It is both technological and economic. It is not yet political: it is yet to reach the second moment of the doubly epokhal redoubling in which the revolutionary socialization of technological shock always consists, this being what, for example, the bourgeoisie accomplished in the nineteenth century, according to Marx and Engels.<sup>67</sup>

It has not reached this second moment because those in the twentieth century have failed to grasp this dual misunderstanding (including André Gorz, who in some respects caught glimpses of it).<sup>68</sup> The movements and parties that in the twentieth century called themselves ‘progressive’ continue, in the twenty-first century, to suffer more than ever from this dual misunderstanding – having learned strictly nothing capable of bringing us into the twenty-first century, and this is yet one more aspect of the reign of stupidity.

Progressive movements and parties are at the same time blind to what is being played out on this new revolutionary scene, and they have proven incapable of playing their role as laboratories of alternative perspectives. Furthermore, these movements and parties are also cut off from the ‘popular’ classes and the ‘middle’ classes, thereby reinforcing the extreme rightward drift of government, and contributing to the possibility that forces of the extreme right will succeed in taking power.

During the twentieth century, progressive movements and parties addressed the ‘popular’ classes and the ‘middle’ classes in discourse that did not speak to them: the *popular* classes<sup>69</sup> may have been those who bore the brunt of proletarianization, but no illumination of the meaning or significance of this proletarianization (as loss of knowledge) was received from these so-called progressive movements and parties. Hence the struggle was essentially aimed at ‘defending

buying power', that is, at reinforcing consumerism, and this in turn contributed to the liquidation not only of the skills (*savoir-faire*) required for work, but also of the knowledge of how to live (*savoir-vivre*) outside of work.

The same logic was at work among the so-called *middle* classes: the same liquidation of *savoir-vivre*, to which was added the liquidation of theoretical knowledge (that which is taught in secondary schools and universities), which became obsolete thanks to the proletarianization of processes of design and decision-making by automated understanding.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, their pauperization and downgrading [*déclassement*] pushed them towards the popular classes, given that the general degradation of wage labour was the inevitable result of speculative financialization (which became, from the 1970s, the new response to the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, at the moment when Schumpeterian entrepreneurial capitalism reached its limits with the postcolonial situation).

Comprehending next to nothing of these developments, progressive parties and movements, or those historically deemed to have been such, have proven incapable of deriving any political advantage from them. The struggle against 'downgrading' in all its forms, by emphasizing the solidarity of the 'middle classes' with 'manual labourers' and 'employees', should thus also have consisted in positing the reconstruction of knowledge as a main objective. Instead, the opposition between the 'blue-collar' (who have become) employees and 'white-collar' (who have become) managers (or '*bobos*') can lead only to populisms of all kinds.

It is understandable, however, that until the 1980s, such an objective could not be adopted or even imagined: the material and technological reality of knowledge exteriorized in fixed capital simply did not allow for it. What is not understandable, on the contrary, is that this is *still* the case today: the therapeutic specificities of the new digital pharmacology – brought about by the evolution of grammaticalization in which consists not only industrial machinery, but also and above all, now, the apparatus of digital cultural and cognitive technology that typifies the 'technical reproducibility' of the twenty-first century – make it obvious that such prospects are already developing. Parties and movements are, however, nearly wholly ignorant of these developments, and for this reason they can rightly be referred to as 'progressive' only between inverted commas.

Having forgotten that the extension of wage labour was also the extension of proletarianization, unaware that the latter proceeded

essentially from the exteriorization of knowledge, through a grammatization that with the rise of financialization affects even the ruling classes (in relation to which it is necessary to read Paul Jorion), the 'progressive' parties and movements, in the twentieth century, ultimately made common cause with consumerism. And they did so by maintaining the fiction (since the proletariat are no longer workers) of a 'working class' whose purchasing power it was necessary to defend, as well as the fiction of a separation between the 'popular classes' and the 'middle classes'.

The 'working class' have been transformed into a reserve army, that is, into a pure force of deskilled labour. They are a class who for quite some time have not been workers, and who for a very long time have been 'downgraded' and 'de-class-ified' under the constant and threatening pressure of unemployment. This transformation has created an electorate that is increasingly difficult to convince, because to talk to them about 'buying power' is to address them with messages that are incomprehensible – because they are incoherent.

Failing to understand the problem common to the 'popular' and 'middle classes', namely their loss of knowledge, one constantly 'betrays' these 'popular segments' by turning towards the 'middle class', preferring a safer and more understanding electorate, thereby ignoring the fact that the 'middle class' is itself just as much a fiction and a fantasy as the 'popular segments' or the 'working class', and is so because it is equally entangled with and affected by proletarianization – as, even more, are its children. One thus at the same time 'betrays' the 'middle class' itself.

These issues are now emerging as such, and they should lead to the abandonment of the discourse that defends purchasing power, in favour of the goal of developing a *purchasing knowledge*, founded on a new *producing knowledge* and a new *conceiving and designing knowledge* in the age of digital grammatization and of the contributory economy that it makes possible. The contributory industrial economy must be founded on shared knowledge, on conceptual processes (that is, processes of the individuation of knowledge) that are elaborated collectively, and on processes of critical decision-making – all of which are made possible by the transindividuation technologies that disseminate 'netware'.<sup>71</sup>

The alternative, then, is to de-proletarianize the middle classes also – who are undergoing downgrading and de-classifying just as much as the popular classes – an alternative the possibility of which clearly lies in the reticular reorganization of knowledge.

## 48 Beliefs and disbelief, credit and discredit

I had to seriously undertake, once in my life, to rid myself of all the opinions I had received into my set of beliefs [*créance*] up until that moment, and to begin afresh from the foundations.<sup>72</sup>

So writes René Descartes at the beginning of his *Meditations on First Philosophy*. ‘Créance’, here, refers to that in which one believes, to which one gives credit.<sup>73</sup>

Three hundred and thirty eight years later, Lyotard declares at the beginning of *The Postmodern Condition*: ‘I define *postmodern* as incredulity toward metanarratives.’<sup>74</sup> And in *The Inhuman*, he posits that ‘capital is grounded in the principle that money is nothing other than time placed in reserve, available’.<sup>75</sup>

Now, such ‘time placed in reserve’, that is, exteriorized through a supplement, which Marx called the general equivalent, can function only through being invested, that is, through being re-temporalized, that is, given credit: in re-constituting belief [*créances*]. Money is indeed, as element of grammatization and as tertiary protention, that which allows time (the time of the protentions in which belief essentially consists) to be trans-formed into an exchangeable and storable quantity.<sup>76</sup>

In the middle of a desert a billion dollars may be spent (but not invested) on a little water or some bread, by someone who, in absolute desperation, is no longer capable of believing – that is, of projecting themselves beyond their situation, and, as such, of ex-sisting – because what must be assured before anything else is their immediate subsistence. He or she suddenly realizes that his or her capital has lost its entire value, that is, its capacity to crystallize belief and to give credit: in a desert, objects of credit in this sense no longer exist.

The consumerist system has become such a desert in which one can no longer believe, that is, give credit. Consumerism is the reality of nihilism as the destruction of all values, and it is where the desert grows by destroying the libidinal economy, giving way to drive-based capitalism and industrial populism. Consumerism, after the conservative revolution, has become totally speculative and is systemically destroying all credit and bringing with it the reign of stupidity and madness – which are the ineluctable consequences of ‘disembraining’.

Since the crisis of 2008, which caused this situation of planetary discredit to become general, hyper-financialized consumerism has turned to the immediate necessity of its own self-reproduction. It has tried to do so by fighting to defend its ‘positions’, but by struggling

in this way it is succeeding only in digging its own grave and preparing its self-collapse – induced by the logic of disinvestment that it establishes in every domain. It generates discredit in a mechanical way by making ‘credits’ circulate that no longer maintain any belief. By circulating this ‘funny money’ it prepares the increasingly likely ruin of the whole system – of which the failure of states is only the second stage (after the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers and the first series of systemic consequences that followed from that initial collapse).

Incredulity – or rather, miscreance and disbelief [*mécraence*] – ruins all economy. Can a claim or a belief [*créance*] be constituted outside of all metanarrative, to put it in Lyotard’s terms? Further analysis would be necessary of the meanings of ‘meta’ and ‘narrative’. I will not undertake these analyses here (but this question is the horizon of the question of metadata).<sup>77</sup> And I will close this first part<sup>78</sup> by asking whether the crisis of public debt has been the result of the incredulity and disbelief that has led to the general spread of a loss of credit, which can benefit speculators only in the very short term – while leading all of them, and all of us, to the very brink of the abyss.

The problem of public debt was caused by a global economic war of unprecedented destructiveness, which is creating greater ruin than the first two world wars combined. Since the implementation of the conservative revolution by Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan and continued by Tony Blair, Silvio Berlusconi and Nicolas Sarkozy, there have been countless victims as a result of this extremely destructive war.

A billion people currently suffer from hunger, populations migrate from the South to the North in search of work, urban zones have been destroyed or lost their ‘urbanity’, rural regions have been turned into deserts, the younger generation is confronting economic despair, illiteracy grows, there is widespread regression in terms of health, the apparatus of production is being destroyed by speculation, both familial education and public education are being annihilated, and on it goes. This situation has been systematically cultivated by the financialization of the economy, which has initiated a struggle to the death – and a suicidal struggle – against all forms of human collectivity, and in particular against public powers, which have been forced into public impotence. Hence have been ruined and destroyed those states formerly considered sovereign.

Certainly, towns are not being razed, factories are not being bombed, agricultural regions are not being mined, or battered by shelling. But what Joseph Schumpeter called ‘Creative Destruction’,



having become, with financialization, exclusively speculative, has indeed led to generalized disinvestment. A logic of disposability and destruction has been imposed, with the result that 'globalization' has become a faithless and lawless battle by speculators against all values. This war is blind: those conducting it are themselves blind to the fact that they are destroying the objects of their speculation, that soon there will no longer be any economic combatants. And that it is then that military combatants will emerge.

Faced with the extreme effects of global economic war, and with the imminence of a global military war, it is imperative that an alternative to this global war be proposed. This imperative imposes itself on political organizations and on universities. An alternative to war: we call this peace. For this reason the second part of this work is devoted to the need for universities throughout the world to constitute an '*internation*', to elaborate an *economic peace treaty between nations*, founded on a new idea of public power (national and international).

We are told that the reason public powers and governments have become impotent is because they are in debt. But the problem of public debt, which is certainly not a false problem, is not the *cause* of this impotence. A debt is generated by a credit that itself has a rate. This rate is tied to a *belief* that creates the credit: one extends credit to the degree that one has belief in the beneficiary. Since it has become clear that the economy is now a war without limits of all against all, and because everyone, beginning with the speculators, now knows that the road ahead promises widespread ruin, speculators speculate more than ever – until there is no longer anything left to pillage – including by lowering credit ratings (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, America, Spain) and by speculating 'downwards', as they say, by making use of the system of 'credit default swaps'.<sup>79</sup>

The 'financialization' of credit has engendered generalized discredit – and, in Europe, it has led to the liquidation of all public sovereignty, the Treaty of Maastricht and then the Treaty of Lisbon submitting the European Central Bank, and thus the European currency, exclusively and as nowhere else in the world, to the law of financial markets, themselves having become purely speculative.<sup>80</sup> In order to oppose this mortifying logic, it will not suffice to propose new regulatory mechanisms. These may be indispensable, but they are not capable of reconstituting the horizon of belief without which there can be no credit. Public debt has become unsustainable only because the 'financial industry' is based on a generalization of discredit that inevitably engenders disinvestment.

The reason for such discredit, the reason that belief in the future has been lost, and that confidence has been lost between banks, economic actors, public actors, political institutions, between the generations and, finally, between citizens themselves and in relation to themselves, is because the consumerist model that appeared at the beginning of the twentieth century has become toxic and destructive for the planet (as foreshadowed in the 1972 Meadows report),<sup>81</sup> and did so at the moment ‘Creative Destruction’ combined with financialization, the logic of which was imposed in the form of ‘globalization’.

Consumerism then became the bearer of addictions, maladies, malaises, the depletion of natural resources, environmental disequilibrium, the systematic flouting of fiscal laws and regulations, attention deficit disorder, the destruction of educational models, the looting and liquidation of systems of production via leveraged buyouts, and on and on.

Regulations must obviously be introduced in relation to global finance. But the real issue lies elsewhere: we must massively invest in the new industrial model that is emerging with digital tertiary retention, and we must implement totally new public industrial policies, and rethink all other policies (educational, fiscal, familial and inter-generational, that is, social policies, health policies, regional planning policies, and so on) according to this imperative, which alone will enable humanity to regain confidence and avoid a new global military war.

This model, which is that of the economy of contribution, and which was first developed by computer science with the advent of free software, is valid for almost all sectors that hold promise for the future, and in particular in the energy sector – the centralist organization of which must, after the Fukushima nuclear accident, be abandoned. But this model is also being extended into the sphere of material production – with the development of ‘fab labs’,<sup>82</sup> for example, which should be analysed in terms of the ideas developed by Marx in the *Grundrisse*, and on the basis of which the *Grundrisse* itself must in turn be reassessed.

These propositions, which will be developed in greater detail in the following three chapters and then in a forthcoming book,<sup>83</sup> are a way of responding to the final two pages of *The Postmodern Condition*, where Lyotard explores, ‘pharmacologically’, the effects of the ‘computerization of society’ (the report published with this title by Simon Nora and Alain Minc having obviously struck a chord with the author of the *Report on Knowledge*):

The computerization of society [...] could become the ‘dream’ instrument for controlling and regulating the market system, extended to include knowledge itself [...]. In that case, it would inevitably involve the use of terror. But it could also aid groups discussing metaprescriptions by supplying them with the information they usually lack for knowledgeable decisions.<sup>84</sup>

Liotard refers at this point to what he calls *paralogy*, which he had developed in the preceding pages, and, from this point of view, he anticipates in a surprising way what, starting in 1992, will be put into place with the specific stage of digital grammatization that is the constitution of the world wide web. In his singularly lucid conclusion, Lyotard advocates a true politics of digital tertiary retention: ‘The line to follow [is to grant] the public free access to the memory and data banks.’<sup>85</sup> One can see here that in 1979 Lyotard still believed what by 1986 (in *The Inhuman*) he will hold in profound doubt.

Perhaps he moves in this direction because *The Postmodern Condition* and paralogy closed off all critical access to Hegel and Marx – seeming at the time and afterwards to have constituted a legitimization of delegitimation, that is, of the destruction of sovereignty, reason and responsibility, and to have done so by suggesting there is no alternative to the systemic dilution of responsibility – in a context where the metaprescriptions of the focus groups evoked by Lyotard are incapable of opening any prospect for de-proletarianization, the proletariat having not been thought beyond Marxist dogma. Thus, seven years later, Lyotard’s viewpoint has become more sceptical.

The proposals contained in *The Postmodern Condition* therefore seem compatible with those which, especially in the universities of Columbia, Berkeley, Brown and Harvard (but there are a thousand other examples), have led to academic malfeasance in relation to the industrialized speculation of the ‘financial industry’. The latter has become so pervasive that it could with reason be referred to as a suicidal industry (whether financial or otherwise), given that it submits to the imperatives of global economic war (wherein, for example, it becomes possible for a seismologist warning of the extreme dangers associated with the Fukushima nuclear power plant to be dismissed by the shareholders who are its operators).

‘Grand narratives’ have in the meantime given way to the little narratives of ‘storytelling’, and the postmodern condition, as a narrative of the end of narratives and fables (which could only be one more vast fable), has emerged as a confabulation in the service of a base narrativity – not minor, but in the service of baseness, and constituting a key element of systemic stupidity.

## Chapter 6 Re-Reading the *Grundrisse*

- 1 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 702.
- 2 Alfred Jarry, 'King Ubu', in Philip G. Hill (ed.), *Our Dramatic Heritage. Volume 6: Expressing the Inexpressible* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1992), p. 53.
- 3 Althusser, 'From *Capital* to Marx's Philosophy', in Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital*, pp. 17–18.
- 4 G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969).
- 5 Lyotard, 'Logos and *Techne*, or Telegraphy', p. 56, and see p. 97.
- 6 *Technics and Time* attempts to draw the consequences of this primordial *fatum*.
- 7 I have developed this point in 'Une insensible incertitude: Technique et facticité du temps', *Les Cahiers de Fontenay* 51/52 (1988), pp. 143–64, and in *Technics and Time*, 2, pp. 37–64.
- 8 See p. 113.
- 9 I repeat here what I developed in *What Makes Life Worth Living*, pp. 81–7. On these questions, see also 'Attention, Rétention, Protention', pp. 380–2.
- 10 See pp. 147–8.
- 11 It would no doubt have been easier to say this nearly twenty years later, when Lyotard, friend of Sylviane Agacinski, also became the friend of Lionel Jospin.
- 12 Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, §195, translation modified.
- 13 *Ibid.*, §196, translation modified.
- 14 See also Stiegler, *The Re-Enchantment of the World*, pp. 34–7.
- 15 Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 88, translation modified.
- 16 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Explained to Children: Correspondence 1982–1985* (Sydney: Power Publications, 1992).
- 17 Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, p. 4.
- 18 See Stiegler, *For a New Critique of Political Economy*.
- 19 See Althusser, 'Foreword to the Italian Edition', in Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital*, p. 7.

- 20 See Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, p. 86, n. 17. *Translator's note*: the reference to 'mise en exteriorité' occurs on page 4 of the English translation, and is translated as 'exteriorization'.
- 21 As Andy Warhol said. See pp. 215–16.
- 22 And here the discourse of Lyotard must confront the analyses of Pierre Legendre.
- 23 See p. 94ff.
- 24 I have commented on these questions in *What Makes Life Worth Living*.
- 25 Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an Ecology of Mind* (Frogmore: Granada, 1973), p. 281.
- 26 On this subject and its relation to the question of habit in Hegel, see the discussion by Julien Gautier, available at <http://arsindustrialis.org/atelier-des-techniques-de-soi>.
- 27 On this subject, see 'Milieu (associé/dissocié)', pp. 414–16, and Stiegler, *The Re-Enchantment of the World*, pp. 34–5.
- 28 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology* (Moscow: Progress Press, 1976), p. 37.
- 29 Ibid.
- 30 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 692.
- 31 Ibid., pp. 692–3.
- 32 Simondon, *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*, p. 15.
- 33 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 693.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Ibid., p. 694.
- 36 Simondon, *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*, p. 12. This suggests functioning matter (see Stiegler, *Technics and Time*, 1), and this functioning of organized inorganic matter leads to hyper-matter (see Stiegler, *Économie de l'hypermatériel et psychopouvoir*).
- 37 Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 694–5.
- 38 Ibid., p. 699.
- 39 In the sense indicated in the preceding chapters.
- 40 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 700, my emphasis.
- 41 See Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 3* (London: Penguin, 1981), p. 132f. I have commented on this theory and its critique in Stiegler, *For a New Critique of Political Economy*, p. 75f.
- 42 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 704.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Althusser, 'From *Capital* to Marx's Philosophy', in Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital*, p. 17.
- 45 I should note here that I owe this concept to Sylvain Auroux, and that I have extended it to all spheres of the discretizable, that is, beyond the linguistic field, and in a sense that is not Auroux's.
- 46 In 1990, during a ten-day conference at Cerisy-la-Salle dedicated to Jacques Derrida, later published under the title *Le Passages des*

- frontières*, Étienne Balibar said to me, after a speech in which I referred frequently to Leroi-Gourhan, that, for himself and for the group led by Althusser, the true structural anthropology was that of *L'Homme et la matière*, *Milieu et technique* and *Le Geste et la parole*.
- 47 Cited in Étienne Balibar, 'The Basic Concepts of Historical Materialism', in Althusser and Balibar, *Reading Capital*, p. 212. The quotation is from Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy, Volume 2* (London: Penguin, 1978), p. 120.
- 48 Marx, *Grundrisse*, p. 706.
- 49 On the difference between these two types of judgements, see Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p. 48f.
- 50 On this point, see Stiegler, 'Du temps-carbone au temps-lumière', p. 50.
- 51 On this subject, see Robert Linhart, *Lénine, les paysans, Taylor* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1976), pp. 84–116.
- 52 On this point, see pp. 188–90.
- 53 Simondon, *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*, p. 12.
- 54 See p. 130.
- 55 The logic of the supplement, which is the true fate of materialism, but which cannot be understood independently of a material history of the supplement, radically changes the relations between the four causes – material, formal, efficient and final – which, having become transductive, require going beyond both substantialism and hylomorphism.
- 56 On this point, see Stiegler, *For a New Critique of Political Economy*, pp. 81–3.
- 57 Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, Vol. 18 (London: Hogarth Press, 1955), p. 18.
- 58 This will be the main subject of *La Technique et le temps 5: La guerre des esprits*, to appear.
- 59 Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy* (London: Athlone, 1993).
- 60 Jean-François Lyotard, *Dérive à partir de Marx et Freud* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1973).
- 61 The question of desire is certainly always posed *through* that of the drives, so long as the latter is correctly posed: the drive is the transformation of the dynamic that in animals is called instinct, but it is *not* instinct precisely because its goals can be diverted, both into polymorphous perversion and into sublimation. The drive-based regression of desire is therefore a privative mode of the libido, an unbinding of the drives resulting from a failure of the socialization of the drives in which desire consists.
- 62 I have tried to show, in *The Lost Spirit of Capitalism*, why and how Marcuse himself plays out this confusion.
- 63 It is interesting to read from this angle the remarks made by Aquilino Morelle, published in *Le Monde* on 8 September 2011 under the title

‘La démondialisation inquiète les partisans d’un libéralisme aux abois’ [De-globalization worries the advocates of a beleaguered liberalism] (available at [http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2011/09/07/la-demondialisation-inquiete-les-partisans-d-un-liberalisme-aux-abois\\_1568675\\_3232.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2011/09/07/la-demondialisation-inquiete-les-partisans-d-un-liberalisme-aux-abois_1568675_3232.html)). In the next part I will show why it seems to me the question should not be posed in terms of ‘de-globalization’ but rather of ‘re-globalization’, and of a re-territorialization of ‘world-making’ and of the ‘whole world’. Except on this point, I adhere quite closely to Morelle’s analysis of social democracy as the management of contradictions that it poses as being a priori without possible alternatives.

- 64 Passet, *L’Économique et le vivant*.
- 65 On these questions see especially Christian Fauré, ‘Dataware et infrastructures du cloud computing’, in Stiegler et al., *Pour en finir avec la mécroissance*, and see ‘Dataware’, in Petit, *Vocabulaire d’Ars Industrialis*, in Stiegler, *Pharmacologie du Front national*, pp. 387–8.
- 66 Richard Stallman developed his ideas about free software at MIT during the 1970s, where he also developed the GNU operating system in 1983.
- 67 Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, p. 82: ‘The bourgeoisie, historically, has played a most revolutionary part.’
- 68 I owe to Gorz the discovery of the role of Edward Bernays in the consumerist evolution of American capitalism. Gorz was also the first to understand the importance of free software and to rethink the question of work in its relation to knowledge. But he overlooks the material questions and gets stuck in the ‘immaterial’ economy. I will return to his analyses in *Veux-tu devenir mon ami?*, forthcoming.
- 69 *Translator’s note*: the more literal ‘popular classes’ is preferred here to ‘working class’, because the precariousness and proletarianization of work are precisely what is at issue here.
- 70 On the proletarianization of decision, see Stiegler, *What Makes Life Worth Living*, pp. 37–54.
- 71 The Institut de recherche et d’innovation (IRI) is essentially dedicated to the conception and design of these technologies. And these questions constitute the central theme of the working group on ‘relational technologies’ led by Christian Fauré within Ars Industrialis (see [www.arsindustrialis.org/groupe-de-travail-technologies-relationnelles](http://www.arsindustrialis.org/groupe-de-travail-technologies-relationnelles)).
- 72 René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 12, translation modified.
- 73 *Translator’s note*: ‘créance’ today has the meaning of claim or debt, or of credibility, but, as the author states, in Descartes’s more archaic French it means the set of beliefs to which one gives credence. All these resonances are played upon in the paragraphs that follow.
- 74 Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, p. xxiv.
- 75 Lyotard, ‘Time Today’, *The Inhuman*, p. 66.
- 76 See Stiegler, *For a New Critique of Political Economy*, p. 66.

- 77 See Bernard Stiegler, ‘Pharmacologie des métadonnées’, in Stiegler et al., *Pour en finir avec la décroissance*, p. 87.
- 78 I argue in the second part that this requires the setting up of an economy of contribution, founded on contributory research, on the constitution of an internation where universities throughout the world together assume (and network) their responsibilities, and on a new intergenerational social contract or arrangement of technological (that is, pharmacological) nativities from which the generations are derived – which is the condition of contemporary contributory research.
- 79 See Jorion, *Le Capitalisme à l’agonie*, p. 180.
- 80 In this regard, European academics have been especially blind or resigned. They have not ceased, most of them, to extol the virtues of a united Europe, without paying attention to the characteristics of its political economy, which has been, from a monetary perspective, the most neoliberal on the planet. On this point in particular, the naivety, and at times the foolishness, not to say the stupidity or beastliness, of the debates in France about the stakes of the Maastricht treaty, which are staggering, all derive from the effects of the successive shocks under the pressure of which the European Union has been ‘constructed’ – while the ideological machine that exploits these effects continues to operate at all levels of society, whether via the mass media, think tanks, consulting firms, lobby groups, or whatever.
- 81 Donella H. Meadows, Dennis L. Meadows, Jørgen Randers and William W. Behrens III, *Limits to Growth* (New York: Signet, 1972), a report commissioned by the Club of Rome in 1970 and made public in 1972.
- 82 ‘The notion of *fab lab* (a contraction from the English *fabrication laboratory*) refers to any kind of workshop consisting in machine-tools controlled by computers and new information technologies [...], which can produce various sorts of items rapidly and on demand [...]. This includes products that might not be able to be produced on a large scale (possibly unique pieces). These *cooperatives of the future* bring together computer scientists, designers, and artists in *hacklabs*.’ ‘Fab lab’, article in the French *Wikipédia*.
- 83 Bernard Stiegler, *Pour une économie de la contribution*, forthcoming.
- 84 Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*, p. 67.
- 85 *Ibid.*