

“...knowledge is not made for  
understanding; it is made for  
cutting”

THE UNDER  
OF THE M

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28. *The Gay Science*, 348-349.
29. *Ibid.*, 200.
30. *The Dawn*, 42.
31. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 262.
32. *The Genealogy*, III, 13.
33. *The Gay Science*, 148. It is also to an anemia of *Entstehung* of Buddhism and Christianity, 347.
34. *The Genealogy*, I, 2.
35. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 260; cf. also *The Genealogy*, I, 2.
36. *The Wanderer*, 9.
37. *The Gay Science*, III.
38. *The Genealogy*, II, 6.
39. *The Genealogy*, preface, 7; and I, 2. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 260.
40. *The Gay Science*, 7.
41. *Ibid.*
42. See “What Is an Author?” on rediscoveries of truth.
43. This statement is echoed in Foucault’s discussion of the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 130-131, 206; or the introduction to “Transgression”.
44. *The Genealogy*, II, 12.
45. *The Dawn*, 130.
46. *The Genealogy*, II, 12.
47. *Human, All Too Human*, 16.
48. See “Theatrum Philosophicum” for an analysis of the concept of difference.
49. *Twilight*, 44.
50. *Twilight*, “Reason within philosophy,” 1 and 2.
51. *The Wanderer*, 188. (This conception underlies the concept of the *Wanderer* and *The Birth of the Clinic* even though it is not explicitly mentioned until *The Archaeology of Knowledge*; for a discussion of this concept, see especially p. 131.)
52. *The Gay Science*, 337.
53. See “Intellectuals and Power.”
54. *The Genealogy*, III, 26.
55. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 223.
56. *The Wanderer* (Opinions and Mixed Statements), 9.
57. *Human, All Too Human*, 274.
58. *Untimely Meditations*, II, 3.
59. Cf. *The Dawn*, 429 and 432; *The Gay Science*, 148.
60. “*Vouloir-savoir*”: the phrase in French means to want to know, or knowledge as revenge.
61. *The Dawn*, 501.
62. *Ibid.*, 429.
63. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 39.
64. *The Dawn*, 45.

# Notes

1. See Nietzsche's preface to *The Genealogy of Morals*, 4, 7.
2. *The Gay Science*, 7.
3. *Human, All Too Human*, 3.
4. *The Genealogy*, II, 6, 8.
5. *The Gay Science*, 110, 111, 300.
6. *The Dawn*, 102.
7. *The Gay Science*, 151, 353; and also *The Dawn*, 62; *The Genealogy*, I, 14; *Twilight of the Idols*, "The Great Errors," 7.  
(*Schwarzmagier* is a black magician.)
8. Paul Ree's text was entitled *Ursprung der Moralischen Empfindungen*.
9. In *Human, All Too Human*, aphorism 92 was entitled *Ursprung der Gerechtigkeit*.
10. In the main body of *The Genealogy*, *Ursprung* and *Herkunft* are used interchangeably in numerous instances (I, 2; II, 8, 11, 12, 16, 17.)
11. *The Dawn*, 123.
12. *Human, All Too Human*, 34.
13. *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, 9.
14. A wide range of key terms, found in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, are related to this theme of "disparity": the concepts of series, discontinuity, division, and difference. If the same is found in the realm and movement of dialectics, the disparate presents itself as an "event" in the world of chance. For a more detailed discussion, see "*Theatrum Philosophicum*".
15. *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, 3.
16. *The Dawn*, 49.
17. *Nietzsche contra Wagner*, p. 99.
18. *The Gay Science*, 265 and 110.
19. See "*Theatrum Philosophicum*" below, pp. 167-168, for a discussion of the development of truth; and also "History of Systems of Thought: Summary of a Course at the College de France—1970-1971", pp. 202-204.
20. *Twilight of the Idols*, "How the world of truth becomes a fable."
21. For example, *The Gay Science*, 135; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 200, 242, 244; *The Genealogy*, I, 5.
22. *The Gay Science*, 343-349; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 260.
23. *Beyond Good and Evil*, 244.
24. See "*Theatrum Philosophicum*," pp. 172-176.
25. *The Genealogy*, III, 17. The *abkunft* of feelings of depression.
26. *Twilight*, "Reasons for philosophy."
27. *The Dawn*, 247.

DEAR FRIENDS,

I read these texts earlier than recommended, and loved them. They seemed to be in conversation with everything I've read recently (D&G, other Foucault), and the ideas much clearer (the etymology, the argument against linearity.) I don't pretend to read the surrounding material as well, but I still got a lot out of them. Although I'm sure half of you have read them, and the other half not, I liked them so much that I spent a week retyping them (OCR software thought I'd send them out, but I decided not to, just leave it on the computer somewhere afterwards.

Two notes:

Althusser was a fuck, and I don't like the text;  
I did not use accent marks.  
Sorry.

# THE UNDERGROUND CURRENT OF THE MATERIALISM OF THE ENCOUNTER

(a partial document, excerpted from *The Philosophy of the Encounter*)

It is raining.

Let this book therefore be, before all else, a book about ordinary rain.

Malebranche wondered ‘why it rains upon sands, upon highways and seas’<sup>1</sup> since this water from the sky which, elsewhere, waters crops (and that is very good), adds nothing to the water of the sea, or goes to waste on the roads and beaches.

Our concern will not be with that kind of rain, providential or anti-providential.<sup>2</sup> Quite the contrary: this book is about another kind of rain, about a profound theme which runs through the whole history of philosophy and was contested and repressed there as soon as it was stated: the ‘rain’ (Lucretius) of Epicurus’ atoms that fall parallel to each other in the void; the ‘rain’ of the parallelism of the infinite attributes in Spinoza and many others: Machiavelli, Hobbes, Rousseau, Marx, Heidegger too, and Derrida.

and light or to end on the sands?’<sup>62</sup> W  
great problems of nineteenth-century p  
and Hegel (the reciprocal basis of tru  
ity of absolute knowledge), with the th  
solute knowledge may well form a par  
does not mean, in terms of a critical pr  
limited by the intrinsic finitude of cog  
of limitations and all claim to truth in  
subject of knowledge. “It may be that  
idea which might be made to prevail ov  
might overcome the most victorious: t  
itself. It seems indisputable that if thi  
the horizon, only the desire for truth, v  
could direct and sustain such a sacrific  
is too great. Of course, this problem h

The *Untimely Meditations* discussed the  
treatment of the past, its decisive cut  
of traditional attitudes of reverence, it  
ing him with other origins than those i  
self. Nietzsche, however, reproached c  
from every real source and for sacrifici  
the exclusive concern for truth. Somev  
etzsche reconsiders this line of thought  
rects it to altogether different ends. It i  
ing the past in the name of a truth th  
present; but risking the destruction of  
edge in the endless deployment of the

In a sense, genealogy returns to the th  
Nietzsche recognized in 1874. It retur  
jections that Nietzsche raised in the na  
ative powers of life. But they are metar  
monuments becomes parody; the resp  
comes systematic dissolution; the critic  
by a truth held by men in the present b  
man who maintains knowledge by the  
knowledge.

our native land, native language, or the laws that govern us, its intention is to reveal the heterogeneous systems which, masked by the self, inhibit the formation of any form of identity.

The third use of history is the sacrifice of the subject of knowledge. In appearance, or rather, according to the mask it bears, historical consciousness is neutral, devoid of passions, and committed solely to truth. But if it examines itself and if, more generally, it interrogates the various forms of scientific consciousness in its history, it finds that all these forms and transformations are aspects of the will to knowledge: instinct, passion, the inquisitor's devotion, cruel subtlety, and malice. It discovers the violence of a position that sides against those who are happy in their ignorance, against the effective illusions by which humanity protects itself, a position that encourages the dangers of research and delights and disturbing discoveries.<sup>59</sup> The historical analysis of this rancorous will to knowledge<sup>60</sup> reveals that all knowledge rests on injustice (that there is no right, not even in the act of knowing, to truth or a foundation for truth) and that the instinct for knowledge is malicious (something murderous, opposed to the happiness of mankind.) Even in the greatly expanded form it assumes today, the will to knowledge does not achieve a universal truth; man is not given an exact and serene mastery of nature. On the contrary, it ceaselessly multiplies the risks, creates dangers in every area; it breaks down illusory defenses; it dissolves the unity of the subject; it releases those elements of itself that are devoted to its subversion and destruction. Knowledge does not slowly detach itself from its empirical roots, the initial needs from which it arose, to become pure speculation subject only to the demands of reason; its development is not tied to the constitution and affirmation of a free subject; rather, it creates a progressive enslavement to its instinctive violence. Where religions once demanded the sacrifice of bodies, knowledge now calls for experimentation on ourselves,<sup>61</sup> calls us to the sacrifice of the subject of knowledge. "The desire for knowledge has been transformed among us into a passion which fears no sacrifice, which fears nothing but its own extinction. It may be that mankind will eventually perish from this passion for knowledge. If not through passion, then through weakness. We must be prepared to state our choice: do we wish humanity to end in fire

That is the first point which—revealing  
would like to bring out: *the existence of a  
materialist tradition in the history of philosophy: t*  
have some word to distinguish it as a te  
*encounter, the take [prise]*. I shall develop  
matters, let us say, for now, a materialis  
fore of the aleatory and of contingenc  
as a wholly different mode of thought,  
cord, including that widely ascribed to L  
like every other materialism in the ratio  
of necessity and teleology, that is to say  
of idealism.

The fact that this materialism of the er  
the philosophical tradition does not me  
it: it was too dangerous for that. Thus i  
repressed, and perverted into an *idealism*  
raining down parallel to each other in th  
is in order to bring out, in the guise of  
men, the existence of human freedom  
Obviously, producing this misreading,  
to preclude any other reading of the re  
ing the materialism of the encounter. W  
misreading, idealist interpretations can  
question is just the clinamen or all of L  
Spinoza and Hobbes, the Rousseau of  
even Heidegger (to the extent that Hei  
What triumphs in these interpretations  
losophy and the history of philosophy  
call Western, because it has presided ov  
and also logocentric, because it identif  
of the Logos charged with thinking th  
reality.

To free the materialism of the encount  
cover, if possible, its implications for

ism; and to ascertain its hidden effects wherever they are silently at work—such is the task that I have set myself here.

We can start with a surprising comparison: between Epicurus and Heidegger.

Epicurus tells us that, before the formation of the world, an infinity of atoms were falling parallel to each other in the void. They still are. This implies both that, before the formation of the world, there was nothing, and also that all the elements of the world existed from all eternity, before any world that ever was. It also implies that, before the formation of the world, there was no Meaning, neither Cause nor End nor Reason nor unreason. The non-anteriority of Meaning is one of Epicurus' basic theses, by virtue of which he stands opposed to both Plato and Aristotle. Then the clinamen supervenes. I shall leave it to the specialists to decide who introduced the concept of the clinamen, present in Lucretius but absent from the fragments of Epicurus. The fact that this concept was 'introduced' suggests that it proved indispensable, if only on reflection, to the 'logic' of Epicurus' theses. The clinamen is an infinitesimal *swerve*, 'as small as possible'; 'no one knows where, or when, or how' it occurs<sup>2</sup>, or what causes an atom to 'swerve' from its vertical fall in the void, and breaking the parallelism in an almost negligible way at one point, induce *an encounter* with the atom next to it, and, from encounter to encounter, a pile-up and the birth of a world—that is to say, of the agglomeration of atoms induced, in a chain reaction, by the initial swerve and encounter.

The idea that the origin of every world, and therefore of all reality and all meaning, is due to a swerve, and that Swerve, not Reason or Cause, is the origin of the world, gives some sense of the audacity of Epicurus' thesis. What other philosophy has, in the history of philosophy, defended the thesis that *Sswerve was originary*, not derived? We must go further still. In order for swerve to give rise to an encounter from which a world is born, that encounter must last; it must be, not a 'brief encounter', but a lasting encounter, which then becomes the basis for all reality, all necessity, all Meaning and all reason. But the encounter can also not last; then there is no world. What is more, it is clear that

tory": a history given to reestablishing development and their maintenance in a recovery of works, actions, and reactions to their personal essence. But in 1874, Nietzsche was totally devoted to veneration, of barriers and creations of life. The parody of history that "monumental history" is itself a parody in the form of a concerted carnival. The systematic dissociation of identity. This is a weak identity, which we attempt to suppress. It is in itself only a parody: it is plural; it is a possession; numerous systems intersect and every one makes one "happy, unlike the metaphysics not an immortal soul but many mortal souls, history will not discover a forgotten but a complex system of distinct and not mastered by the powers of synthesis: 'to maintain, in a fully conscious way, which lesser men pass through without that we can understand those who remained systems and as representative of as necessary and capable of modification separate the phases of our own evolution ally.'" <sup>57</sup> The purpose of history, guided to the roots of our identity but to commit not seek to define our unique threshold to which metaphysicians promise a return of those discontinuities that cross us. "to the *Untimely Meditations*, pursues opportunities of soil, language, and urban life and, by cultivating in a delicate manner it tries to conserve for posterity the conditions born."<sup>58</sup> This type of history was objected it tended to block creativity in support of what later—and already in *Human, All* considers the task of the antiquarian, but with a phasis. If genealogy in its own right gives

will the historical sense free itself from the demands of a suprahistorical history.

7. The historical sense gives rise to three uses that oppose and correspond to the three Platonic modalities of history. The first is parodic, directed against reality, and opposes the theme of history as reminiscence or recognition; the second is disassociative, directed against identity, and opposes history given as continuity or representative of a tradition; the third is sacrificial. Directed against truth, and opposes history as knowledge. They imply a use of history that severs its connection to memory, its metaphysical and anthropological model, and constructs a counter-memory—a transformation of history into a totally different form of time.

First, the parodic and farcial use. The historian offers this confused and anonymous European, who no longer knows himself or what name he should adopt, the possibility of alternate identities, more individualized and substantial than his own. But the man with historical sense will see that this substitution is simply a disguise. Historians supplied the Revolution with Roman prototypes, romanticism with knight's armor, and the Wagnerian era was given the sword of a German hero—ephemeral props that point to our own unreality. No one kept them from venerating these religions, from going to Bayreuth to commemorate a new afterlife; they were free, as well, to be transformed into street-vendors of empty identities. The new historian, the genealogist, will know what to make of this masquerade. He will not be too serious to enjoy it; on the contrary, he will push the masquerade to its limit and prepare the great carnival of rime where masks are constantly reappearing. No longer the identification of our faint individuality with the solid identities of the past, but our “unrealization” through the excessive choice of identities—Frederick of Hohenstaufen, Caesar, Jesus, Dionysus, and possibly Zarathrusta. Taking up these masks, revitalizing the buffoonery of history, we adopt an identity whose unreality surpasses that of God who started the charade. “Perhaps, we can discover a realm where originality is again possible as parodists of history and buffoons of God.”<sup>55</sup> In this, we recognize the parodic double of what the second of the *Untimely Meditations* called “monumental his-

the encounter creates nothing of the nothing but agglomerated atoms, but the *atoms themselves*, which, without swerve and but *abstract* elements, lacking all consistency that we can say that the *atoms' very existence and the encounter* prior to which they led

All this may be stated differently. The *accomplished fact* [*fait accompli*] in which, once time established the reign of Reason, Meaning. But *the accomplishment of the fact* is just a possibility it depends on the aleatory encounter of the clinamen. Before the accomplishment of the world, there is only *the non-accomplishment* is merely the *unreal* existence of the atom.

What becomes of philosophy under the larger a statement of the Reason and Origin of their contingency and recognition of *fact* the fact of the subordination of necessity of the forms which ‘gives form’ to the now no more than *observation* [*constata*]: a ‘*crystallization*’ [*prise*] of the elements in which ice ‘crystallizes’.) All question the great philosophical questions: ‘Why nothing? What is the origin of the world *d’etre*? What is man’s place in the ends of repeat: what other philosophy has, history contain such theses?

I mentioned Heidegger a moment ago. A similar tendency in the thought of Heidegger Epicuran nor an atomist. It is well known of the Origin, or of the Cause and End. Heidegger a long series of developments *es gibt*—‘there is’, ‘this is what is given’—inspiration. ‘*There is* world and matter,

of the *es gibt*, of the 'this is what is given,' makes short shrift of all the classic questions about the Origin, and so on. And it 'opens up' a prospect that restores a kind of transcendental contingency of the world, into which we are 'thrown', and of the meaning of the world, which in turn points to the opening up of Being, the original urge of Being, its 'destining', beyond which there is nothing to seek or to think. Thus the world is a 'gift' that we have been given, the 'fact of the fact [*fait de fait*]' that we have not chosen, and it 'opens up' before us in the facticity of its contingency, and even beyond this facticity, in what is not merely an observation, but a 'being-in-the-world' that commands all possible Meaning. '*Dasein* is the shepherd of being.'<sup>24</sup> Everything depends on the *da*. What remains of philosophy? Once again—but in the transcendental mode—the *observation of the 'es gibt'* and its presuppositions, or, rather, its effects in their insurmountable 'givenness'.

Is this still materialism? The question is not very meaningful for Heidegger, who deliberately takes up a position outside the great divisions and the terminology of Western philosophy. But then are Epicurus' theses still materialist? Yes, perhaps, doubtless, but on condition that we have done with a conception of materialism which, setting out from the questions and concepts it shares with idealism, makes materialism the response to idealism. We continue to talk about a materialism of the encounter only for the sake of convenience: it should be borne in mind that this materialism of the encounter includes Heidegger and eludes the classical criteria of every materialism, and that we need, after all, some word to designate the thing.

Machiavelli will be our second witness in the history of the underground current of the materialism of the encounter. His project is well-known: to think, in the impossible conditions of fifteenth-century Italy, the conditions for establishing an Italian national state. All the circumstances favorable to imitating France or Spain exist, but *without connections* between them: a divided and fervent people, the fragmentation of Italy into small obsolete states that have been condemned by history, a generalized but disorderly revolt of an entire world against foreign occupation and pillage, and a profound, latent aspiration of the people to unity, an aspiration to which all the great works of the

land of interminglings and bastardy, the culture." We have become barbarians with the ruins of high civilization: cities in ruin and empty streets; we stop before gaping with our mouths open at these empty temples. Great epochs lack the excessive deference; they ignored their predecessors; they ignored Shakespeare. The decadence of the modern spectacle (while stronger periods reflect the nature of this scene is to represent the monuments of our own making, which produce the crowded scenes. But there is more. Europeans have lost themselves; they ignore their mixed ancestry; they lack individuality. We can begin to understand the moral bent of the nineteenth century: the mixture of the mixtures that effaced all its individual traits as the mortification of asceticism; its indifference to artistic works, and its need to rely on the masses to adopt the base curiosity of plebs.

If this fully represents the genealogy of the modern, in its own right, a genealogical analysis of the modern form of a demagogic or religious knowledge, what roles on the same stage? Only by being born against its birth. And it is this movement that defines the specific nature of the *Entstehung*: it is not the result of a long preparation, but a scene of chance of confrontations, where they can also be confiscated. The locus of the modern is surely Athenian demagogy, the vulgar desire for immortality, and Plato could have sought to turn it against itself. Undoubtedly, but his defeat lies in its consecration. The modern nineteenth century: to avoid doing for the modern what Plato did for Socrates. The modern is founded upon a philosophy of history, and the things it produced; it is necessary to return to genealogical uses, that is, strictly ant



things that should be repugnant to him. His apparent serenity follows from his concerted avoidance of the exceptional and his reduction of all things to the lowest common denominator. Nothing is allowed to stand above him; and underlying his desire for total knowledge is his search for the secrets that belittle everything: “base curiosity.” What is the source of history? It comes from the plebs. To whom is it addressed? To the plebs. And its discourse strongly resembles the demagogue’s refrain: “No one is greater than you and anyone who presumes to get the better of you—you who are good—is evil.” The historian, who functions as his double, is heard to echo: “No past is greater than your present, and, through my meticulous erudition, I will rid you of your infatuations and transform the grandeur of history into pettiness, evil, and misfortune.” The historian’s ancestry goes back to Socrates. This demagogy, of course, must be masked. It must hide its singular malice under the cloak of universals. As the demagogue is obliged to invoke truth, laws of essences, and eternal necessity, the historian must invoke objectivity, the accuracy of facts, and the permanence of the past. The demagogue denies the body to secure the sovereignty of a timeless idea and the historian effaces his proper individuality so that others may enter the stage and reclaim their own speech. He is divided against himself: forced to silence his preferences and overcome his distaste, to blur his own perspective and replace it with the fiction of a universal geometry, to mimic death in order to enter the kingdom of the dead, to adopt a faceless anonymity. In this world where he has conquered his individual will, he becomes a guide to the inevitable law of a superior will. Having curbed the demands of his individual will in his knowledge, he will disclose the form of an eternal will in his object of study. The objectivity of historians inverts the relationships of will and knowledge and it is, in the same stroke, a necessary belief in Providence, in final causes and teleology—the beliefs that place the historian in the family of ascetics. “I can’t stand these lustful eunuchs of history, all the seductions of an ascetic ideal; I can’t stand these whitened sepulchres producing life or those tired and indifferent beings who dress up in the part of wisdom, and adopt an objective point of view.”<sup>54</sup>

The *Entsebung* of history is found in nineteenth-century Europe: the

period bear witness, including that of D of all this, but was waiting for the arrival of an atomized country, every atom of which without encountering its neighbor. It was *for a swerve*, and thus an encounter, if . . . How was this to be done? Machiavelli rejected existing states—and, in particular, any of them—all—could play the role of unifier. Instead of the next, but only to reject them as a result of the prior, feudal mode of production are its alibis and captives. And he poses the question in stark simplicity.

Once all the states and their princes—those that have been rejected, Machiavelli, using the same logic, moves on to the idea that unification would be done by some nameless man who has enough luck to appear somewhere, in some nameless corner of the world. At this atomic point, gradually aggregate the states in a grand project of founding a national state. This is the history line of reasoning, which leaves positions for the Federator and that of the region who would be the for the constitution of this federation. The game is a gaming table, which is itself empty (but

In order for this encounter between a man and a place it has to *take place*. Politically conscious of the existing states and princes, Machiavelli is looking for a place and this place. But let us not be fooled by the condition for the encounter. Machiavelli’s vision of a unified Italy, the encounter should take place with this Cesare, who, starting out with the Kingdom, and, after taking Florence, would unify Italy if he had not been stricken by fever at the critical moment, when he was heading for himself, to strip him of his office. *A man with nothing starting out from an unassignable place*

conditions for regeneration.

In order for this encounter to take place, however, another encounter must come about: that of fortune and *virtu* in the Prince. Encountering *Fortuna*, the Prince must have the *virtu* to treat her as he would treat a woman, to welcome her in order to seduce or do violence to her; in short, to use her to realize his destiny. [*sic*] Thanks to this consideration, we owe Machiavelli a whole philosophical theory of the encounter between fortune and *virtu*. The encounter may not take place *or* may take place. The meeting can be missed. The encounter can be brief or lasting: he needs an encounter that lasts. To make it last, the Prince has to learn to govern fortune by governing men. He has to structure his state by training up its men, commingling them in the army (see Gramsci), and, above all, by endowing this state with constant *laws*. He had to win them over by accommodating them, while knowing how to keep his distance. This dual procedure gives rise to the theory of seduction and the theory of fear, as well as the theory of the ruse. I leave aside the rejection of the demagoguery of love<sup>6</sup>, the idea that fear is preferable to love,<sup>7</sup> and the violent methods designed to inspire fear, in order to go straight to the theory of the ruse.

Should the prince be good or wicked? He has to learn to be wicked, but in all circumstances he has to know to *appear to be* good, to possess the moral virtues that will win the people over to his side, even if they earn him the hatred of the mighty, whom he despises, for, from them, nothing else is to be expected. Machiavelli's theory is well-known: the prince should be 'like the centaur of the Ancients, both man and beast'. But it has not been sufficiently remarked that *the beast divides* into two in Machiavelli, becoming both lion and fox, and that, ultimately, it is the fox who governs everything.<sup>8</sup> For it is the fox who obliges the Prince either to appear to be evil or to appear to be good—in a word, to fabricate a popular (ideological) image of himself that either does or does not answer to his interests and those of the 'little man'<sup>9</sup>. Consequently, the Prince is governed, internally, by the variations of this other aleatory encounter, that of the fox on the one hand and the lion and the man on the other. This encounter *may not take place*, but it also may take place. It has to last long enough for the figure of the prince

heights and degenerations, poisons and a curative science.<sup>51</sup>

The final trait of effective history is its perspective. Historians take unusual pains with their work which reveal their grounding in a particular set of preferences in a controversy—the unavailing position. Nietzsche's version of historical criticism is sensitive and acknowledges its system of inquiry, being a deliberate appraisal, affirmation and negation of lingering and poisonous traces in order to move forward. It is not given to a discreet effacement because it does not submit itself to their processes. It does not give equal weight to its own sight and to the historical sense, knowledge is allowed to be a by-product of the act of cognition; and "wirkliche Historie" is history as the vertical projection of its

6. In this context, Nietzsche links the historian's history. They share a beginning that is fused, share the same sign in which they are recognized as well as the seed of an explosion that simultaneously to follow their separate ways from a common genealogy.

The descent (*Herkunft*) of the historian is a birth. A characteristic of history is to be born through understand and excludes quality from all things without distinction, a commonality of preferences. Nothing must escape it, and nothing must be excluded. Historians argue that this is a fiction. After all, what right have they to judge others when they seek to determine what is true? Their mistake is to exhibit a total lack of awareness that becomes smug in the present. It finds satisfaction in reducing them to a level relative to the most disgusting things; or rather

We want historians to confirm our belief that the present rests upon profound intentions and immutable necessities. But the true historical sense confirms our existence among countless lost events, without a landmark or a point of reference.

Effective history can also invert the relationship that traditional history, in its dependence on metaphysics, establishes between proximity and distance. The latter is given to a contemplation of distances and heights: the noblest periods, the highest forms, the most abstract ideas, the purest individualities. It accomplishes this by getting as near as possible, placing itself at the foot of its mountain peaks, at the risk of adopting the famous perspective of frogs. Effective history, on the other hand, shortens its vision to those things nearest to it—the body, the nervous system, nutrition, digestion, and energies; it unearths the periods of decadence and if it chances upon loft epochs, it is with the suspicion—not vindictive but joyous—of finding a barbarous and shameful confusion. It has no fear of looking down, so long as it is understood that it looks from above and descends to seize the various perspectives, to disclose dispersions and differences, to leave things undisturbed in their own dimension and intensity.<sup>48</sup> It reverses the surreptitious practice of historians, their pretension to examine things furthest from themselves, the grovelling manner in which they approach this promising distance (like the metaphysicians who proclaim the existence of an afterlife, Situated at a distance from this world, as a promise of their reward.) Effective history studies what is closest, but in an abrupt dispossession, so as to seize it at a distance (an approach similar to that of a doctor who looks closely, who plunges to make a diagnosis and to state its difference.) Historical sense has more in common with medicine than philosophy; and it should not surprise us that Nietzsche occasionally employs the phrase “historically and physiologically”<sup>49</sup>, since among the philosopher’s idiosyncracies is a complete denial of the body. This includes, as well, “the absence of historical sense, a hatred for the idea of development, Egyptianism,” the obstinate “placing of conclusions at the beginning,” of “making last things first.”<sup>50</sup> History has a more important task than to be a handmaiden to philosophy, to recount the necessary birth of truth and values; it should become a differential knowledge of energies and failings,

to ‘take hold’ among the people—to ‘take hold’ that, institutionally, he instills the fear of the possible, so that he ultimate is good, but one never forget how to be evil if need be.

The reader may object that this is missing the fact that a philosophy is situated in a *void*. A curious *philosophy which is a ‘materialist’ of politics*, and which, as such, does not exist in the political void that the encounter with the national unity must ‘take hold’. But *this is a void*. No Cause that precedes its effects, no principle of morality or theology (as in the condition: the good and bad forms of government, the good into the bad.) One reasons history, not in the certainty of the accomplished fact, but in the fact to be accomplished. As in the Epicurean, are both here and beyond, to come rather than *pleuvoir*] (see above, the Italian situation), abstract, as long as the unity of a world is counter that will endow them with existence.

It will have been noticed that, in this alternative: the encounter may not take place. Nothing determines, no principle of determinative in advance; it is of the order of a dice will never abolish chance.’ Indeed, that is not brief, but lasts, never guaranteed tomorrow rather than come undone. When placed, it may *no longer* take place: ‘for the firm Borgia, who succeeded at everything, stricken with fever. In other words, *no of the accomplished fact is the guarantee of a truth is true: every accomplished fact, even a and reason we can derive from it, is one since every encounter is provisional eventuality in the ‘laws’ of any world or any state.*

manent revocation of the accomplished fact by another undecipherable fact to be accomplished, without knowing in advance whether, or when, or how the event that revokes it will come about. Simply, one day new hands will have to be dealt out and the dice thrown again on the empty table.

Thus it will have been noticed that this philosophy is, in sum, a philosophy of the *void*: not only the philosophy which *says* that the void pre-exists the atoms that fall in it, but a philosophy which *creates the philosophical void* [*fait la vide philosophique*] in order to endow itself with existence: a philosophy which, rather than setting out from the famous ‘philosophical problems’ (why is there something rather than nothing?),<sup>10</sup> *begins by evacuating all philosophical problems*, hence by refusing to assign itself any ‘object’ whatever (‘philosophy has no object’)<sup>11</sup> in order to set out from *nothing*, and from the infinitesimal, aleatory variation of nothing constituted by the swerve of the fall. Is there a more radical critique of all philosophy, with its pretension to utter the truth about things? Is there a more striking way of saying that philosophy’s ‘object’ *par excellence* is nothingness, nothing, or the void? In the seventeenth century, Pascal repeatedly approached this idea, and the possibility of introducing the void as a philosophical object. He did so, however, in the deplorable context of an apologetics. Here, too, it was only with Heidegger, after the false words of a Hegel (‘the labor of the negative’) or a Stirner (‘all things are nothing to me’),<sup>12</sup> that the void was given all its decisive philosophical significance again. Yet we already find all this in Epicurus and Machiavelli: in Machiavelli, we evacuated [*fit le vide de*] all Plato and Aristotle’s philosophical concepts in order to think the possibility of making Italy a national state. One measures the impact of philosophy here—reactionary or revolutionary—despite the often baffling outward appearances, which have to be patiently and carefully deciphered.

If Machiavelli is read along these lines (the foregoing are just brief notes which have to be developed, and which I hope to some day<sup>13</sup>), how is it possible to imagine that his work is, under its political cloak, anything other than an authentically philosophical body of thought? And how is it possible to imagine that the fascination exercised by

fective” history deprives the self of the nature, and it will not permit itself to be stinacy toward a millenial ending. It will tions and relentlessly disrupt its pretensions and knowledge is not made for understand

From these observation, we can grasp ical meaning as Nietzsche understood “wirkliche Historie” to traditional history relationship ordinarily established between and necessary continuity. An entire his rationalistic) aims at dissolving the singi ity—as a teleological movement or a n tory, however, deals with events in ter characteristics, their most acute manifestati not a decision, a treaty, a reign, or a ba tionship of forces, the usurpation of v vocabulary turned against those who h nation that poisons itself as it grows la er”. The forces operating in history ar regulative mechanisms, but respond to not manifest the successive forms of a attraction is not that of a conclusion, the singular randomness of events. The spun entirely by a divine spider, and d Greeks, divided between the realm of ly, the world of effective history know providence or final cause, where there i sity shaking the dice-box of chance.<sup>45</sup> C ing of lots, but raising the stakes in e through the will to power, and giving ri chance.<sup>46</sup> The world we know is not th tion where events are reduced to accen final meaning, or their initial and final profusion of entangled events. If it ap profound and totally meaningful,” this ues its secret existence through a “ho

ism.” On the other hand, the historical sense can evade metaphysics and become a privileged instrument of genealogy if it refuses the certainty of absolutes. Given this, it corresponds to the acuity of a glance that distinguishes, separates, and disperses, that is capable of liberating divergence and marginal elements--the kind of dissociating view that is capable of decomposing itself, capable of shattering the unity of man’s being through which it was thought that he could extend his sovereignty to the events of his past.

Historical meaning becomes a dimension of “wirkliche Historie” to the extent that it places within a process of development everything considered immortal in man. We believe that feelings are immutable, but every sentiment, particularly the noblest and most disinterested, has a history. We believe in the dull constancy of instinctual life and imagine that it continues to exert its force indiscriminately in the present as it did in the past. But a knowledge of history easily disintegrates this unity, depicts its wavering course, locates its moments of strength and weakness, and defines its oscillating reign. It easily seizes the slow elaboration of instincts and those movements where, in turning upon themselves, they relentlessly set about their self-destruction.<sup>40</sup> We believe, in any event, that the body obeys the exclusive laws of physiology and that it escapes the influence of history, but this too is false. The body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays; it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits or moral laws; it constructs resistances.<sup>41</sup> “Effective” history differs from traditional history in being without constants. Nothing in man--not even his body--is sufficiently stable to serve as the basis for self recognition or for recognizing other men. The traditional devices for constructing a comprehensive view of history and for retracing the past as a patient and continuous development must be systematically dismantled. Necessarily, we must dismiss those tendencies that encourage the consoling play of recognitions. Knowledge, even under the banner of history, does not depend on “rediscovery,” and it emphatically excludes the “rediscovery of ourselves.”<sup>42</sup> History becomes “effective” to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being—as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets it against itself. “Ef-

Machiavelli has been merely political, or the question of where he was a monarchist or a philosopher of the Enlightenment was irrelevant. When the philosophical resonances of his thought came to Machiavelli himself, among the most pressing questions from this painful past? I would like to address a challenge not simply the meaningless nihilism of the alternative, but also the widespread thesis that history is a political science. I would like to suggest that the nature of his ‘materialism of the encounter’ that has had the influence he has had on people who do not believe in it and rightly so—*no one is obliged to ‘engage’ with him*—is a misled about him, vainly striving to pin down the elusive source of this *eternally* incomprehensible.

Someone understood this fascination with Machiavelli’s death. His name was Spinoza. In the high praise for Machiavelli, mentioned in the previous subject, once again, would appear to be a philosophy as well.<sup>15</sup> In order to grasp the fullness of what we have to take a step back, since Spinoza’s philosophy is radical and extremely complex. This is a full world and was stalked by adversaries in every word, adversaries who occupied all the ground. Moreover, he had to develop a discourse on a high ground, which dominates all the other.

Here. I shall defend the thesis that, for Spinoza, philosophy is the void.<sup>16</sup> This is a paradoxical world of many concepts that are worked out in the void. I notice *how Spinoza begins*. He confesses in the beginning of the world and others with the mind of others: first, the Schoolmen, who begin with the created world, trace things back to God and then to the thinking subject who starts with the thinking subject and traces things back to the dubito and God and then to that leads through God. Spinoza shuns

takes up his position *in God*. Hence one can say that he occupies, in advance, the common fortress, the ultimate guarantee and last recourse of all his adversaries, by starting with this *beyond-which-there-is-nothing*, which, because it thus exists in the absolute, with absence of all relation, *is itself nothing*. Saying that one ‘begins with God’, or the Whole, or the unique substance, and making it understood that one ‘begins with nothing’, is, basically, the same thing: what difference is there between the Whole and nothing?—since nothing exists outside the whole... What, for that matter, does Spinoza have to say about God? This is where the strangeness begins.

*Dues sive natura*, God *is only* nature. This comes down to saying that He is *nothing* else: He is only *nature*. Epicurus, too, set out from nature as that which outside nothing exists. What, then, is this Spinozist God? An absolute, unique, infinite substance, endowed with an infinite number of infinite attributes. This is obviously a way of saying that anything which can exist never exists anywhere other than in God, whether this ‘whatever’ is known or unknown. For we know only two attributes, extension and thought, and even then, we do not know all the powers of the body,<sup>19</sup> just as, when it comes to thought, we do not know the unthought power of desire. The other attributes—of which there are an infinite number, and which are themselves infinite—are there to cover the whole range of the possible and impossible. The fact that there is an infinite number of them, and that they are unknown to us, leaves the door to their existence and their aleatory figures wide open. The fact that they are *parallel*, that here everything is an effect of parallelism, recalls Epicurus’ rain. The attributes fall in the empty space of their determination like raindrops that can undergo encounters [*sont recontraables*] only in this exceptional parallelism, this parallelism *without encounter or union* (of body and soul...) known as man, in this assignable but minute parallelism of thought and the body<sup>20</sup>, which is still only parallelism, since, here as in all things, ‘the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things.’<sup>21</sup> In sum, a *parallelism without encounter*, yet a parallelism that is already, in itself, *encounter* thanks to the very structure of the relationship between the different elements of each attribute.

The isolation of different points of en... the successive configurations of an ide... sult from substitutions, displacements, thematic reversals. If interpretation were... ing hidden in an origin, then only m... development of humanity. But if inter... reptitious appropriation of a system o... essential meaning, in order to impose... will, to force its participation in a diffe... secondary rules, then the development... pretations. The role of genealogy is to r... morals, ideals, and metaphysical conce... of liberty or of the ascetic life; as they... ferent interpretations, they must be m... stage of historical process.

5. How can we define the relatio... as the examination of *Herkunft* and *E...* ditional sense? We could, of course, c... apostrophes against history, but we w... ment and consider those instances whe... “wirkliche Historie,” vor its more frequ... “spirit” or “sense.”<sup>39</sup> In fact, Nietzsche... second of the *Untimely Meditations*, alwa... tory that reintroduces (and always assu... tive: a history whose function is to com... sity of time into a totality fully closed u... encourages subjective recognitions and... ation to all the displacements of the pa... on all that precedes it implies the end o... ment. The historian’s history finds its su... tends to base its judgments on an apoc... possible, however, because of its belie... ity of the soul, and the nature of cons... itself. Once the historical sense is mas... spective, metaphysics can bend it to its... to the demands of objective science, it

endlessly repeated play of dominations. The domination of certain men over others leads to the differentiation of values;<sup>35</sup> class domination generates the idea of liberty;<sup>36</sup> and the forceful appropriation of things necessary to survival and the imposition of a duration not intrinsic to them account for the origin of logic.<sup>37</sup> This relationship of domination is no more a “relationship” than the place where it occurs is a place; and, precisely for this reason, it is fixed, throughout its history, in rituals, in meticulous procedures that impose rights and obligations. It establishes marks of its power and engraves memories on things and even within bodies. It makes itself accountable for debts and gives rise to the universe of rules, which is by no means designed to temper violence, but rather to satisfy it. Following traditional beliefs, it would be false to think that total war exhausts itself in its own contradictions and ends by renouncing violence and submitting to civil laws. On the contrary, the law is a calculated and relentless pleasure, delight in the promised blood, which permits the perpetual instigation of new dominations and the staging of meticulously repeated scenes of violence. The desire for peace, the serenity of compromise, and the tacit acceptance of the law, far from representing a major moral conversion or a utilitarian calculation that gave rise to the law, are but its result and, in point of fact, its perversion: “guilt, conscience, and duty had their threshold of emergence in the right to secure obligations; and their inception, like that of any major event on earth, was saturated in blood.”<sup>38</sup> Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination. The nature of these rules allows violence to be inflicted on violence and the resurgence of new forces that are sufficiently strong to dominate those in power. Rules are empty in themselves, violent and un-finalized; they are impersonal and can be bent to any purpose. The successes of history belong to those who are capable of seizing these rules, to replace those who had used them, to disguise themselves so as to pervert them, invert their meaning, and redirect them against those who had initially imposed them; controlling this complex mechanism, they will make it function so as to overcome the rulers through their own rules.

One cannot assess this unless one perceives the parallelism of this strategy and this parallelism. This is *nothing* but nature, and that this nature, with its finite number of parallel attributes, is not *nothing* but *say about God*, but that there is also not *nothing* but a problem that invaded all of Western philosophy, especially, Descartes: *the problem of knowledge*. The knowing subject and the known object are the cause of so much discussion, and the *Cartesian*, ‘man thinks’,<sup>22</sup> that is just how it is, the facticity, that of the ‘this is how it is,’ which anticipates Heidegger and recalls the first of Epicurus. Thought is simply the successive contribution ‘thought’, and refers us, not to a Successor, but to the succession of the modes.

Also interesting is the way in which thought proceeds. That he starts to think by thinking concepts, and that until these elements at last ‘take’ form, and that these “common notions” (from the first kind to the second, by thinking singular essences)<sup>23</sup> is impossible to remain at the level of hearsay, and the thought does not “take hold” with those of the second kind, who remain at the level of the first kind, who is, at the level of the illusion that they are thinking. That is just how it is. One can remain at the level of the first kind, not. There is not, as there is in Descartes, a transition brings about the transition from conflict to distinct thinking. There is no subject, no object, no act of reflection guaranteeing this transition, and the thought is not. And experience shows that, as a general rule, a philosophy which is aware that it is not

What remains of philosophy once both the subject and the object, destined to establish supreme confidence of all things, have been reduced to a philosophy, or, above all, religion. Better: a theory of

long before Nietzsche, destroys them right down to their imaginary foundations of “reversal”—the “inverted *fabrica*” (see the appendix to Book I of the *Ethics*.)<sup>24</sup> No more finality (whether psychological or historical.) In short, *the void that is philosophy itself*. And inasmuch as this result is a result, it is attained only after an immense amount of labor, which makes for all the interest of the *Ethics*, has been performed on concepts: “critical labor”, as it is usually called; a labor of “deconstruction”, as Derrida would say, following Heidegger. For what is destroyed is simultaneously reconstructed, but on other foundations and in accordance with an altogether different plan—witness the inexhaustible theory of the imagination or the imaginary, which both destroys and reconstructs the theory of knowledge, the theory of religion, the theory of history, and so on—but in their actual, political functions.

A strange theory, which people tend to present as a theory of knowledge (the first of the three kinds), whereas *the imagination is not by any means a faculty, but, fundamentally, only the only*<sup>25</sup> *world itself in its “givenness”*. With this slide [*glissement*], Spinoza not only turns his back on all theories of knowledge, but also clears a path for the recognition of the “world” as that-beyond-which-there-is-nothing, not even a theory of nature—for the recognition of the “world” as a unique totality that is *not totalized, but experienced in its dispersion*, and experienced as the “given” illusions [*fabricae*]. Basically, the theory of the first kind as a “world” corresponds distantly, yet very precisely, to the thesis that God is “nature”, since nature is nothing but the world thought in accordance with ordinary notions, but given before them, as that prior to which there is nothing. For Spinoza, politics is then grafted on to the world’s imaginary and necessary myths. Thus Spinoza converges with Machiavelli in his profoundest conclusions and his rejection of all the presuppositions of traditional philosophy, the autonomy of the political being nothing other than the form taken by the rejection of all finality, all religion and all transcendence. But the theory of the imaginary as a world allows Spinoza to think the “singular essence” of the third kind, which finds its representation par excellence in the history of an individual or a people, such as Moses or the Jewish people. The fact that it is necessary means simply that it has been accomplished, but ev-

realize itself as a species, as something  
ity, uniformity, and simplicity of its form  
petual struggle against outsiders or the  
from within.” On the other hand, individ  
other stage of the relationship of force  
victorious and when it is no longer the  
condition, we find a struggle “of egoi  
each bursting forth in a splintering of  
for the sun and for the light.”<sup>31</sup> There  
tends against itself, and not only in the  
which allows it to divide itself, but at  
Force reacts against its growing lassit  
poses limits, inflicts torments and mo  
tions as a higher morality, and, in exc  
this manner, the ascetic ideal was born  
life which...struggles for its own existe  
movement in which the Reformation ar  
was least corrupt;<sup>33</sup> German Catholicis  
tained enough strength to turn against  
and history, and to spiritualize itself int  
Emergence is thus the entry of force  
from the wings to center stage, each in  
Nietzsche calls the *Entscheidungsbird*<sup>34</sup> of th  
specifically the energy of the strong o  
precisely this scene where they are disp  
face. It is nothing but the space that c  
which they exchange their threatening  
descent qualifies the strength or wea  
scription on a body, emergence designa  
but not as a closed field offering the  
equals. Rather, as Nietzsche demonstra  
evil, it is a “non place,” a pure distanc  
ies do not belong to a common space. C  
sible for an emergence; no one can glo  
the interstice.

In a sense, only a single drama is ever



soil—is the domain of the *Herkunft*. The body manifests the stigmata of past experience and also gives rise to desires, failings, and errors. These elements may join in a body where they achieve a sudden expression, but as often, their encounter is an engagement in which they efface each other, where the body becomes the pretext of their insurmountable conflict. The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration. Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history’s destruction of the body.

4. *Entstehung* designates *emergence*, the moment of arising. It stands as the principle and the singular law of an apparition. As it is wrong to search for descent in an uninterrupted continuity, we should avoid thinking of emergence as the final term of an historical development; the eye was not always intended for contemplation, and punishment has had other purposes than setting an example. These developments may appear as a culmination, but they are merely the current episodes in a series of subjugations: the eye initially responded to the requirements of hunting and warfare; and punishment has been subjected, throughout its history, to a variety of needs—revenge, excluding an aggressor, compensating a victim, creating fear. In placing present needs at the origin, the metaphysician would convince us of an obscure purpose that seeks its realization at the moment it arises. Genealogy, however, seeks to reestablish the various systems of subjection: not the anticipatory power of meaning, but the hazardous play of dominations.

Emergence is always produced through a particular stage of forces. The analysis of the *Entstehung* must delineate this interaction, against adverse circumstances, and the attempt to avoid degeneration and regain strength by dividing these forces against themselves. It is in this sense that the emergence of a species (animal or human) and its solidification are secured “in an extended battle against conditions which are essentially and constantly unfavorable.” In fact, “the species must

everything in it could have swung the other counter or non-encounter of Moses and his people, that it was necessary to explain to the people the truth they reported of their conversations with God in a limit-situation, of nothing itself, which is everything to him for as long as you like.”<sup>26</sup> A proof by nothingness of nothingness.

Hobbes, that “devil” or “demon”, with his transition from Spinoza to Rousseau. This is not the business, because each of these bodies is for itself, despite the intermediary role of the cause what is in question is, above all, buried and then revived, resonances which

All society is based on fear, Hobbes says. You have *keys*. What do you have keys for? An attack from you don’t know whom: it may be your best friend, transformed into a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” on the occasion and desire to enrich himself. This is which is worth as much as our best friend. This draws a whole philosophy: namely, that of “the war of all against all”, an “endless race” which almost everyone loses, judging by the number of competitors (whence the “passions” about which was then the fashion, in order to distinguish ahead, behind, or neck-and-neck in the general war: not that it breaks out, here as there would logically claim), but, rather, in the form of “the threat of an outbreak of foul weather at any time of the day or night, without warning.” This threat against one’s life and possessions hangs, always, at every moment, over the head of the fact that he lives in society. I am well because of something very different from competition (as was once thought)—namely

was a witness (one is not a contemporary of Cromwell and the execution of Charles I with impunity), in which he saw the equilibrium of the minor fear of the “keys” suddenly overturned in the face of the great fear of popular revolts and political murders. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, it is this great fear in particular that he means when he evokes the times of misfortune in which part of society could massacre the other in order to take power.

As a good theoretician of Natural Law, our Hobbes obviously does not restrict himself to these outward appearances, even if they are appalling; he wants to come to terms with the effects by tracing back to their causes, and therefore proceeds to give us a theory of the state of Nature as well. To reduce the state of Nature to its elements, one has to pursue the analysis down to the level of the “atoms of society” constituted by *individuals endowed with conatus*, that is, with the power and will “to persevere in their being” and create a void in front of themselves [*faire le vide devant eux*] in order to mark out the space of their freedom there. Atomized individuals, with the void as condition for their movement: this reminds us of something, does it not? Hobbes does indeed contend that freedom, which makes the whole individual and the force of his being, resides in the “void of impediments,” the “absence of impediments”<sup>29</sup> in the path of his conquering power. An individual joins the war of all against all only out of a desire to avoid every obstacle that would prevent him from forging straight ahead (one thinks here of the atoms descending in free fall parallel to each other); basically, he would be happy to encounter no one at all in a world that would in that case be empty.

It is an unfortunate fact, however, that *this world is full*—full of people pursuing the same goal, who therefore confront each other in order to clear the way before their own *conatus*, but find no other means of attaining their end than “to bestow death upon” anyone who blocks their path. Whence the essential role of *death* in Hobbes’s thought, which is a thought of infinite life; the role not of accidental death, but of necessary death, bestowed and received by man; the role of economic and political murder, which alone is capable of [*propre a*] maintaining this society of the state of war in an unstable but necessary equilibrium.

is an acquisition, a possession that grows from an unstable assemblage of faults, fissures, and cracks that threaten the fragile inheritor from within. The order, the justice or instability in the minds of certain men, the rules of decorum, are the final consequences of a long series of logical inaccuracies, hasty conclusions, and errors. Descent for descent is not the erecting of foundations that disturb what was previously considered as a solid ground; it disturbs what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity that is consistent with itself. What convictions, what principles of knowledge can resist it? If a genealogy of knowledge made—of one who collects facts and concepts—of *Herkunft* would quickly divulge the official genealogy of pleadings of the lawyer—their father’s—of their own subjectivity.

Finally, descent attaches itself to the body, to the nervous system, in temperament, in the way of thinking, in faulty respiration, in improper diets, in the constitution of the body of those whose ancestors committed errors, to mistake effects for causes, believe in the possibility to maintain the value of eternal truths, and to believe that one will suffer. Cowardice and hypocrisy, for example, are the shoots of error: not in a Socratic sense, but in a sense of a mistake, not because of a turning away from the truth, but because the body maintains, in life as in death, a weakness, the sanction of every truth and of every error in a reverse manner, the origin—descent. Why do we value a finite life? Why give a supreme value to a finite life? Why maintain the absolute truth of those finite things of the barbarous ages...if the strength of a man is not himself tired or sick, melancholy or sad, but only without desire or appetite for a short time? Why is a man, that is, less dangerous. His power is not to perform as words or reflections. In this form, he is not a thinker and prophet or used his imagination. His actions.”<sup>30</sup> The body—and everything that

social type.<sup>22</sup> But the traits it attempts to identify are not the exclusive generic characteristics of an individual, a sentiment, or an idea, which permit us to qualify them as “Greek” or “English”; rather, it seeks the subtle, singular, and subindividual marks that might possibly intersect in them to form a network that is difficult to unravel. Far from being a category of resemblance, this origin allows the sorting out of different traits: the Germans imagined that they had finally accounted for their complexity by saying they possessed a double soul; they were fooled by a simple computation, or rather, they were simply trying to master the racial disorder from which they had formed themselves.<sup>23</sup> Where the soul pretends unification or the self fabricates a coherent identity, the genealogist sets out to study the beginning--numberless beginnings whose faint traces and hints of color are readily seen by an historical eye. The analysis of descent permits the dissociation of the self, its recognition and displacement as an empty synthesis, in liberating a profusion of lost events.<sup>24</sup>

An examination of descent also permits the discovery, under the unique aspect of a trait or a concept, of the myriad events through which--thanks to which, against which--they were formed. Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form to all its vicissitudes. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations or conversely, the complete reversals--the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents.<sup>25</sup> This from the moment it stops being pious and be has value as a critique.<sup>26</sup>

Deriving from such a source is a dangerous legacy. In numerous instances, Nietzsche associates the terms *Herkunft* and *Erbschaft*. Nevertheless, we should not be deceived into thinking that this heritage

Yet these appalling men are also men; “*calculate*”, weighing up the respective state of war or entering into a contract based on the inalienable foundation of *ror*. They reason, then, and eventually co advantage to make a mutual pact, a cur pact, in which they pledge (as atomist omnipotent power of the one to who ally and without receiving anything in natural rights): Leviathan—whether th archy or the omnipotent assembly of th In making this pact, they make a mutu delegation of power without ever viola incur the terrifying punishment of Lev himself bound to the people by any co unity of the people through the exercis all have consented, by making fear and law, thanks to his sense (what a miracle it is his “duty” to maintain the people so as to spare it the horrors of the state fear of him.<sup>31</sup> A Prince bound to his p duty to protect it from the state of war, nothing other than the promise—resp him in everything, *even in the realm of ide* first to think, if that is possible, ideolog It is here that we find all the originality thinker (his conclusions were correct, Descartes would later say: his reasoning theoretician, whom no one understood He thought (this privilege of thinking, toss about what people will say, or abo reputation; in reasoning in absolute sol lute solitude.)

What, then, did the accusations leveled at Spinoza) matter, accusations to sary of Hell and the Devil among me

that every war was a preventative war, that no one had any recourse against the Other he might some day face than to “get the jump on him.” Hobbes thought (and with what audacity!) that all power is absolute, that to be absolute is the essence of power, and that everything which exceeds this rule by however little, whether from the Right or the Left, should be opposed with the greatest possible rigor. He did not think all this with a view to justifying what people would today call—using a word blurs all distinctions, and therefore all meaning and all thought—“totalitarianism” or “estatism”; he thought all this in the interests of free economic competition, and the free development of trade and the culture of the peoples!

For, on closer inspection, it turns out that his notorious totalitarian state is almost already comparable to Marx’s, which must *wither away*. Since all war, and therefore all terror, are preventive, it was sufficient for this terrible state to exist, in order, as it were, to be so thoroughly absorbed by its own existence as not to have to exist. People have talked about the fear of the gendarme and the need to “make a show of one’s force so as not to have to make use of it” (Lyautey);<sup>32</sup> today we talk about *not* making a show of one’s (atomic) force so as not to have to make use of it. This is to say that Force is a myth which, as such, acts on the imagination of men and peoples preventively, in the absence of any reason to employ it. I know that I am here extending an argument that never went this far, but I remain within the logic of Hobbes’s thought, and am accounting for his paradoxes in terms of a Logic that remains his.

Be that as it may, it is painfully clear that Hobbes was not the monster that he has been made out to be, and that his sole ambition was to contribute to securing the conditions of viability and development of a world which was what it was, his own world, that of the Renaissance, then opening itself up to the monumental discovery of another, the New World. To be sure, the “hold” of the atomized individuals was not of the same nature or as powerful as in Epicurus and Machiavelli; and Hobbes, unfortunately for us, was no historian, although he lived through so much history (these are not vocations that one can acquire by simple decree.) Yet, in his way, he had arrived at the same result as

fute error and oppose itself to appear developed (initially made available to the of piety to an unattainable world where of consolation and imperative, finally r perfluous, and contradicted on all side an error we call truth? Truth, and its o within history from which we are barely shortest shadow,” when light no longer of the sky or to arise from the first mo

A genealogy of values, morality, ascetic er confuse itself with a quest for their inaccessible the vicissitudes of history vate the details and accidents that acco be scrupulously attentive to their petty gence, once unmasked, as the face of th go, it will not be reticent--in “excavating for these elements to escape from a lab detained them. The genealogist needs of the origin, somewhat in the manner needs a doctor to exorcise the shadow recognize the events of history, its surp unpalatable defeats--the basis of all be ties. Similarly, he must be able to diagno conditions of weakness and strength to be in a position to judge philosophic crete body of a development, with its r its extended periods of feverish agitation a metaphysician would seek its soul in t

3. *Entstehung* and *Herkunft* are r cording the true objective of genealogy translated as “origin,” we must attempt

*Herkunft* is the equivalent of stock or a to a group, sustained by the bonds of The analysis of *Herkunft* often involv

fundamental to man's nature or at the root of his attachment to being and truth. What is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity.<sup>14</sup>

History also teaches how to laugh at the solemnities of the origin. The lofty origin is no more than "a metaphysical extension, which arises from the belief that things are most precious and essential at the moment of birth."<sup>15</sup> We tend to think that this is the moment of their greatest perfection, when they emerged dazzling from the hands of a creator or in the shadowless light of a first morning. The origin always precedes the Fall. It comes before the body, before the world and time; it is associated with the gods, and its story is always sung as a theogony. But historical beginnings are lowly: not in the sense of modest or discreet like the steps of a dove, but derisive and ironic, capable of undoing every infatuation. "We wished to awaken the feeling of man's sovereignty by showing his divine birth: this path is now forbidden, since a monkey stands at the entrance."<sup>16</sup> Man originated with a grimace over his future development; and Zarathustra himself is plagued by a monkey who jumps along behind him, pulling on his coattails.

The final postulate of the origin is linked to the first two in being the site of truth. From the vantage point of an absolute distance, free from the restraints of positive knowledge, the origin makes possible a field of knowledge whose function is to recover it, but always in a false recognition due to the excesses of its own speech. The origin lies at a place of inevitable loss, the point where the truth of things corresponded to a truthful discourse, the site of a fleeting articulation that discourse has obscured and finally lost. It is a new cruelty of history that compels a reversal of this relationship and the abandonment of "adolescent" quests: behind the always recent, avaricious, and measured truth, it posits the ancient proliferation of errors. It is now impossible to believe that "in the rending of the veil, truth remains truthful; we have lived long enough not to be taken in."<sup>17</sup> Truth is undoubtedly the sort of error that cannot be refuted because it was hardened into an unalterable form in the long baking process of history.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, the very question of truth, the right it appropriates to re-

his teachers in the materialist tradition of *constitution of a world*: and if this thinker in-  
cuss this some day) and even Marx as pro-  
owing to the fact that he revived this (it  
not impossible) he was not aware of the  
in these matters, consciousness is only  
matters is that the horses pull the train  
of the plains or the long slow plods of

Although there are no references to Ep-  
seau's second *Discourse* or the "[Discou-  
es", it is to the author of these works  
the "materialism of the encounter."

Not enough attention has been paid to  
*course* begins with a description of the  
from other such descriptions in that it  
*of pure nature*" that is the radical Origin  
*nature*" that follows certain modifications  
all the examples of the state of nature  
Law tradition provide, it is clear that the  
society—either of the war of all against  
and peace as in Locke. These authors de-  
icizes them for: they project the state of  
nature. Rousseau alone thinks the state  
does, thinks it as a state lacking all so-  
or negative.<sup>34</sup> He uses the fantastic in-  
represent it, recalling another Rousseau  
ings show us isolated individuals who  
wandering about: *individuals without encoun-*  
woman can meet, "feel one another out-  
in a brief encounter without identity of  
become acquainted (indeed, they do not  
there is absolutely no question of child-  
fore *Emile*, were oblivious to their exist-  
them—neither children nor, therefore,  
sum)<sup>35</sup> than they part, each of them w-

finite void of the forest. As a rule, when two people do encounter one another, they merely cross paths at a greater or lesser distance without noticing each other, and the encounter does not even take place. The forest is the equivalent of the Epicuran void in which the parallel rain of the atoms falls: it is a pseudo-Brownian void in which individuals cross each other's paths, that is to say, do not meet, except in brief conjunctions that do not last. In this way, Rousseau seeks to represent, at a very high price (the absence of children) a *radical absence [neant] of society* prior to all society; and—condition of possibility for all society—the radical absence of society that constitutes the essence of any possible society. That the radical absence of society constitutes the essence of all society is an audacious thesis, the radical nature of which escaped not only Rousseau's contemporaries, but many of his later critics as well.

For a society to be, what is required? *The state of encounter has to be imposed* on people; the infinity of the forest, as a condition of possibility for the non-encounter, has to be reduced to the finite by external causes; natural catastrophes have to divide it up into confined spaces, for example islands, where men *forced* to have encounters and forced to have encounters that last: forced by a force superior to them. I leave to one side the ingenuity of those natural catastrophes that affect the surface of the earth—the simplest of which is the very slight, the infinitesimal, tilt of the equator from the ecliptic, an accident without cause akin to the clinamen—in order to discuss their effects.<sup>36</sup> Once men are forced to make encounters and found associations which, *in fact*, last, *constrained relationships* spring up among them, social relationships that are rudimentary at first, and then are reinforced by the effects that these encounters have on the their human nature.

A long, slow dialectic comes into play at this point; in it, with the accumulation of time, forced contacts produce language, the passions, and amorous exchanges or struggle between men: such struggle eventually leads to the state of war. Society is born, the state of nature is born, and war as well. Along with them, there develops a process of accumulation and change that literally *creates socialized human nature*. It should be noted that it would be possible for this encounter not to last if the

ment with this question: he recalls the philosophy, when he questioned if God the origin of evil. He now finds this ly characterizes it as a search for *Ursprung* same term to summarize Paul Ree's analyses that are characteristically *Not Human, All Too Human*. Here, he speaks of the word *Herkunft* cannot be arbitrary a number of texts, beginning with *Human* with the origin of morality, asceticism yet, the word used in all these works had that at this point in the *Genealogy* Nietzsche position between *Herkunft* and *Ursprung* lier. But immediately following the use sense, Nietzsche reverts, in the final paragraph that is neutral and equivalent.<sup>10</sup>

Why does Nietzsche challenge the pursuit at least on those occasions when he is true it is an attempt to capture the exact essence sibilities, and their carefully protected idesumes the existence of immobile forms of accident and succession. This search already there," the image of a primordial ture, and it necessitates the removal of close an original identity. However, if tend his faith in metaphysics, if he listens is "something altogether different" behind essential secret, but the secret that the essence was fabricated in a piecemeal amining the history of reason, he learns together "reasonable" fashion--from the precision of scientific methods arose their reciprocal hatred, their fanatical their spirit of competition--the person the weapons of reason.<sup>12</sup> Further, gene concept of liberty is an "invention of

pean monuments”<sup>2</sup> are constructed from “discreet and apparently insignificant truths and according to a rigorous method”; they cannot be the product of “large and well meaning errors.”<sup>3</sup> In short, genealogy demands relentless erudition. Genealogy does not oppose itself to history as the lofty and profound gaze of the philosopher might compare to the molelike perspective of the scholar; on the contrary, it rejects the meta-historical deployment of ideal significations and indefinite teleologies. It opposes itself to the search for “origins”.

2. In Nietzsche, we find two uses of the word *Ursprung*. The first is unstressed, and it is found alternately with other terms such as *Entstehung*, *Herkunft*, *Abkunft*, *Geburt*. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, for example, *Entstehung* or *Ursprung* serve equally well to denote the origin of duty or guilty conscience;<sup>4</sup> and in the discussion of logic or knowledge in *The Gay Science*, their origin is indiscriminately referred to as *Ursprung*, *Entstehung*, or *Herkunft*.<sup>5</sup>

The other use of the word is stressed. On occasion, Nietzsche places the term in opposition to another: in the first paragraph of *Human, All Too Human* the miraculous origin (*Wunderursprung*) sought by metaphysics is set against the analyses of historical philosophy, which poses questions *uber Herkunft und Anfang*. *Ursprung* is also used in an ironic and deceptive manner.

In what, for instance, do we find the original basis (*Ursprung*) of morality, a foundation sought after since Plato? “In detestable, narrow-minded conclusions. *Pudenda origo*.”<sup>6</sup> Or in a related context, where should we seek the origin of religion (*Ursprung*), which Schopenhauer located in a particular metaphysical sentiment of the hereafter? It belongs, very simply, to an invention (*Erfindung*), a sleight of hand, formula, in the rituals of black magic, in the work of the *Schwarzkünstler*.<sup>7</sup>

One of the most significant texts with respect to the use of all these terms and to the variations in the use of *Ursprung* is the preface to the *Genealogy*. At the beginning of the text, its objective is defined as an examination of the origin of moral preconceptions and the term used is *Herkunft*. Then, Nietzsche proceeds by retracing his personal involve-

constancy of external constraints did not  
in the face of the temptation of disper  
law of proximity without asking men  
thus emerges from behind their backs  
emerges as the dorsal, unconscious cor

No doubt man in the state of pure nature  
as it were, no soul, carries within him  
all that he is and all that will happen to  
to speak, the abstraction and transcen  
for all anticipation of all development  
haps more important: *pity*, which, as the  
to bear the suffering of one’s fellow ma  
sence [*societie par manque*], hence latent s  
in the isolated man, athirst for the Other  
this, which is posed from the beginning  
is not active there, has no existence or e  
of the future that awaits man. Just as s  
it is constituted come about behind ma  
active involvement, so both perfectibili  
tive [*null*] anticipation of this future, in

There have been studies of the genea  
schmidt’s book is definitive),<sup>38</sup> but the  
of the effects of this system as a whole  
second *Discourse* by the theory of the  
force concluded with the obedience of  
the powerful, who are also the “most  
true meaning of the Social Contract,  
only under the constant threat of the  
word [*abime*] in the *Confessions*) represen  
state of nature, an organism haunted  
exorcise: in sum, an encounter *that has*  
sary, but against the background of the  
and its forms, into which the contact  
this remark, which would have to be de  
resolve the classical aporia that const

to the second *Discourse*, an academic difficulty whose only equivalent in the history of Western culture is the absurd question as to whether Machiavelli was a monarchist or a republican.

...By the same token, it would clarify the status of the texts in which Rousseau ventures to legislate for the peoples (the Corsican people, the Poles, and so on) by reviving, in all its force, the concept that dominates in Machiavelli—he does not utter the word, but this hardly matters, since the thing is present: the concept of the *conjuncture*. To give men laws, one must take full account of the way the *conditions* present themselves, of the surrounding circumstances, of the “*there is*” this and not that, as, allegorically, one must take account of the climate and many other conditions in Montesquieu, of these conditions and their history, that is to say, of their “having come about”—in short, of the encounters which might not have taken place (compare the state of nature: “that state that might never have arisen”) <sup>39</sup> and which have taken place, shaping the “given” of the problem and its state. What does this signify, if not an attempt to think not only the contingency of necessity, but also the necessity of the contingency at its root? The social contract then no longer appears as a utopia, but as the inner law of any society, in its legitimate or illegitimate form, and the real problem becomes: *how does it happen that one never rectifies an illegitimate (the prevailing) form, transforming it into a legitimate form?* At the limit, the legitimate form does not exist, but *one has to postulate it* in order to think the existing concrete forms: those Spinozist “singular essences”, whether individuals, conjectures, real states or their peoples—one has to postulate it as the transcendental condition for any condition, that is, any *history*.

The most profound thing in Rousseau is doubtless disclosed and covered back up [*decouvert et recouvert*] here, in this vision of any possible theory of history, which thinks the contingency of necessity as an effect of the necessity of contingency, an unsettling pair of concepts that must nevertheless be taken into account. They make themselves felt in Montesquieu and are explicitly postulated in Rousseau, as an intuition of the eighteenth century that refutes in advance all the teleologies of history which tempted it, and for which it cleared a broad path under the irresistible impulsion of the French Revolution. To put

1. Genealogy is gray, meticulous, operates on a field of entangled and comments that have been scratched over and

On this basis, it is obvious that Paul Ricoeur's British tendency in describing the history of the ear development in genesis to an exclusion of the presumed that words had kept their meaning in a single direction, and that ideas retained their fact that the world of speech and desire is a struggle, plundering, disguises, ploys. From genealogy retrieves an indispensable restraint of events outside of any monotonous flow in the most unpromising places, in what we term the sentiments, love, conscience, instincts; genealogy, not in order to trace the gradual to isolate the different scenes where they finally, genealogy must define even those that were sent, the moment when they remained (did not become Mohammed).

Genealogy, consequently, requires patience and it depends on a vast accumulation



57. The allusion is to the Renault Plant in Sandouville, in Normandy.
58. Presumably a slip for “exploitation.” [*Trans.*]
59. We have reproduced the original version of the following passage here, because the changes Althusser made in it so as to incorporate it into his projected book (see note 63 above) yielded a patently unsatisfactory result. “We” in Althusser’s text doubtless means the authors of *Reading Capital*.

it in polemical terms: when one raises the “theory”, Epicurus and Spinoza, Montesquieu and himself in the same camp, on the basis, of course, of the materialism of the encounter or, in the words of Althusser, the idea of the *conjecture*. Marx too, of course, had to think within a horizon torn between the demand of the Revolution and the necessity of the Revolution.

Let us hazard one last remark, which is perhaps no accident that this curiosity, above all, men who sought, in the *conjecture*, a means with which to think not only above all, the reality of *politics*; not only above all, the essence of *practice*, and the realities in their *encounter in struggle* (I say *encounter* (Hobbes, Rousseau). This struggle was not (Hegel), but also, and well before Hegel, that is known as competition or, when it is a struggle (and its “contradiction”).<sup>40</sup> Is there a struggle whose behalf Spinoza speaks when he speaks only to think Machiavelli’s thought, and practice, to think practice via that thought.<sup>41</sup>

All these historical remarks are just a pointer to attention to in Marx. They are not, to be sure, to attest that, from Epicurus to Marx,<sup>42</sup> even if it was covered over (by its very covering, especially, by denial and repression, with the conditions that cost some their lives)—the “contradiction that sought its materialist anchorage” (and therefore in a more or less atomistic “fall”, being the simplest figure of incarnation’s radical rejection of all philosophy’s *Wesen*), that is, of Reason (*Logos, Ratio, Origin and End*—the Origin being nothing, the End in Reason or primordial condition of Order, whether it be rational, moral,

interests of a philosophy which, rejecting the Whole and every Order, rejects the Whole and order *in favor of* dispersion (Derrida would say, in his terminology, “dissemination”) and *disorder*.

To say that in the beginning was nothingness or disorder is to take up a position prior to any assembling and ordering, and to give up thinking the origin as Reason or End in order to think it as nothingness. To the old question “What is the origin of the world?”, this materialist philosophy answers: “Nothingness!”, “Nothing,” “I start out from nothing,” “There is no obligatory beginning of philosophy,” “philosophy does not start out from a beginning that is its origin;” on the contrary, it “catches a moving train,” and, by sheer strength of arm, “hoists itself aboard the train” that has been running for all eternity in front of it, like Heraclitus’ river. Hence there is no end, either of the world, or of history, or of philosophy, or of morality, or of art or politics, and so on. These themes, which from Nietzsche to Deleuze and Derrida, from English empiricism (Deleuze) to (with Derrida’s help) Heidegger, have become familiar to us by now, are fertile for any understanding not only of philosophy, but also all its supposed “objects” (whether science, culture, art, literature, or any other expression of existence.) They are crucial to this materialism of the encounter, however well disguised they may be in the form of other concepts. Today we are capable of translating them into plainer language.

We shall say that the materialism of the encounter has been christened “materialism” only provisionally<sup>a</sup>, in order to bring out its radical opposition to any idealism of consciousness or reason, whatever its destination. We shall further say that the materialism of the encounter turns on a certain interpretation of the single proposition *there is* (*es gibt*, Heidegger) and its developments or implications, namely: “there is = there is nothing”; “there is” = “*there has always-already been nothing*”, that is to say, “something”, the “always-already”, or which I have made abundant use in my essays until now although this has not always been noticed—since the always-whatever is the grip<sup>43</sup> (*Greifen*: grasp [*prise*] in German; *Begriff*: grasp or *concept*) of this antecedence of each thing over itself, hence every kind of origin. We shall say, then, that the materialism of the encounter is contained in the thesis of the primacy of

42. In a handwritten addendum to an earlier text, Althusser here inserts: “who, let us note, devoted himself to a splendid piece of nonsense, which the text interprets as an interpretation of the “clinamen” as “freedom.”

43. The French word here translated as “variety” is *variété*, a variety of tools used for clutching or clamping; Althusser identifies the designer or manufacturer of a game.

44. See Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, Book V.

45. “The world is everything that is the case,” Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, which I translate in German.

46. In a handwritten addendum to another text, Althusser writes: “but interpreted in the sense, not of throwaway,” [Trans.]

47. Althusser’s library contained a copy of Heidegger’s *Holzwege*.

48. This phrase is a handwritten addendum to the text. The phrase “aleatory materialism” in the present text is from a text, written in 1986, “On Aleatory Materialism,” by Francois Matheron, *Multitudes* 21, 2005, pp. 11–12.

49. *Coule de source*, a rather unaleatory idiom for “source/spring” [Trans.]

50. Cesare Borgia died fighting before the Battle of Ravenna, March 1507. [Trans.]

51. C1 100n., 101-2. See p. 17 and note 2 above.

52. Here, as well as a few lines later, Althusser uses the phrase (here translated as “taking-hold”) and surprise (*surprendre*, means in English, silently evokes a neologism, “surprise realism”). *Surprendre*, to surprise, thus comes to mean “overdetermination” or “surprise”. Compare note a, above. [Trans.]

53. An allusion to the biggest of demoniacs, the text of May 1968. The words “or, a fortiori, when the text is written in an addendum to the text; the reference is to the text, in which the “workers” and the “students” are criticized for lacking the will to move beyond “derisory materialism.”

54. The pages that follow originally come from a book described in the editors’ introduction to *The Philosophy of the Encounter*. They represent a lightly revised version of “On the Mode of Production”.

55. C1 874. [Trans.]

56. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and others, 1977, pp. 225. [Trans.]

empty space of their indetermination like the drops of rain that have encountered each other only in man, in the assignable, but minute parallelism of thought and the body.”

21. E II, P 7. [Trans.]

22. E II, A 2. [Trans.]

23. E II, P 40, S 2. [Trans.]

24. E I, Appendix, p. 74: “This doctrine concerning the end turns Nature completely upside down. For what is really a cause, it considers as an effect, and conversely.” Elsewhere, Althusser translates Spinoza’s phrase *tota illa fabrica*, which occurs in the Appendix to Book I of the *Ethics* shortly before the sentence just quoted, as “an entire “apparatus””, likening it to his own concept of the “Ideological State Apparatus”. [Trans.]

25. It would appear that two handwritten emendations are juxtaposed here; the first does not appear to have been deleted.

26. TTP 78. [Trans.]

27. L 186.

28. Thomas Hobbes, *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, ed. Ferdinand Tönnies, 2nd ed., London, 1969, p. 47 (Part I, ch. 9, 21). [Trans.]

29. L 261. [Trans.]

30. *A rester dans un etat de guerre ou a entrer dans un Etat de contrat: etat* means “state”, in the sense of “political state”, “nation-state” when it begins with a capital letter, and “state” in the sense of “condition” when it begins with a small letter. [Trans.]

31. L 170. [Trans.]

32. See p. 103 and note 115 on p. 159 of *Philosophy of the Encounter*. [Trans.]

33. The common French expression *la mouche du coche* comes from Lafontaine’s fable “Le coche et la mouche” (*Fables*, Book VII, fable 8). A coach gets stuck; the horses finally succeed in pulling it up the hill; the fly, whose contribution consists in buzzing around and biting them, concludes that she is the one who “makes the machine go”, taking all the glory for the exploit and complaining that she had to do all the work herself. [Trans.]

34. “RSD” 132, 215-6 (Exordium 5; Note XII, 7.) [Trans.]

35. *Ibid.*, p. 145 (Part I, 25). [Trans.]

36. “ROL” 273; Rousseau, “L’influence des climats sur la civilisation”, in Rousseau, (*Œuvres complètes*, vol. 3, Paris, 1964, p. 531. [Trans.]

37. “RSD” 151-4 (Part 1, 35-8). [Trans.]

38. Victor Goldschmidt, *Anthropologie et politique: Les principes du système de Rousseau*, Paris, 1974.

39. “RSD” 159 (Part I, 51). In the passages that Althusser cites here, Rousseau in fact says that the conditions whose convergence precipitated the transition to the state of society might never have arisen. [Trans.]

40. This sentence is so thickly covered with handwritten emendations that it is difficult to decipher.

41. Althusser intended to cite an unspecified passage from TP, V, 7 here, See note 15 above.

positivity over negativity (Deleuze), the swerve over the rectilinearity of the straight line (the swerve from it, not the reason for it), the disorder over order (one thinks here of the primacy of “dissemination” over “diffusion” which Derrida has a meaning (Derrida), and in the very heart of disorder to produce a world. The materialism of the encounter is also contained in the notion of the End, of all teleology, be it rational or aesthetic. Finally, we shall say that the materialism, not of a subject (be it God or man), but of a process, a process that has no subject, yet dominates all individuals or others) which it dominates with no assignable end.

If we were to push these theses further, we could elaborate a number of concepts that would, like *subjects*, since they would be the concepts of a subject, philosophy has no object, would make things disappear to the point of rendering it unrecognizable (which is why it was, in the last analysis, not anticipated.) To illustrate these theses, we could take the simplest and purest, which they took from Democritus and, especially, Epicurus. In our work, we would note in passing, did not occur by accident, these incendiaries of every philosophy for their sins in kind—the flames, produced by a lightning-bursting from the tips of the tallest trees (the lightning) or from philosophies (the great lightning) have, in this illustration (which must be taken from the history of philosophy), the following form:

“*Die Welt ist alles, was der Fall ist*” (Wittgenstein) “the thing that “falls”, everything that “comes about”—that is the case”—by case, let us understand it as *chance*, that which comes about in the moment of being.

Thus, as far back as we can go, “there is” = “there has always been”, there “has-always-already-been”, the “already” being absolutely necessary in order to mark this priority of the occurrence, of the *Fall*, over all its forms, that is to say, all the *forms* of beings. This is<sup>46</sup> Heidegger’s *es gibt*, the inaugural deal [*la donne*] (rather than what has been dealt out [*le donne*], depending on whether one wishes to highlight the active or passive aspect); it is always prior to its *presence*. In other words, it is the primacy of absence over presence (Derrida), not as a *going-back-towards*, but as a horizon receding endlessly ahead of the walker who, seeking his path on the plain, never finds anything but another plain stretching out before him (very different from the Cartesian walker who has only to walk straight ahead in a forest in order to get out of it<sup>47</sup>, because the world is made up, alternatively, of virgin forests and forests that have been cleared to create open fields: without *Holzwege*<sup>48</sup>.)

In this “world” without being or history (like Rousseau’s forest), what happens? For *there are occurrences there*, taking this phrase in the impersonal, active/passive sense [*car il y advient: “il”, actif/passif impersonnel*] *Encounters*. What happens there is what happens in Epicurus’ universal rain, prior to any world, any being and any reason as well as any cause. What happens is that “there are encounters” [*ca se rencontre*]; in Heidegger, that “things are thrown” in an inaugural “destining.” Whether or not it is by the miracle of the clinamen, it is enough to know that it comes about “we know not where, we know not when”, and that it is “the smallest deviation possible”, that is, the assignable nothingness of all swerve. Lucretius’ text is clear enough to designate *that which nothing in the world can designate*, although it is the origin of every world. In the “nothingness” of the swerve, there occurs an encounter between one atom and another, and this event [*evenement*] becomes *advent* [*avenement*] on condition of the parallelism of the atoms, for it is this parallelism which, violated on just one occasion, induces the gigantic pile-up and collision-interlocking [*accrochage*] of an infinite number of atoms, from which a world is born, (one world or another: hence the plurality of possible worlds, and the fact that the concept of possibility can be rooted in the concept of original disorder.)

- reference to Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, Book 2, II
3. Leibniz, “Principles of Nature and of Morals,” in *Philosophical Writings*, ed. G.H.R. Parkinson, translation, London, 1973, p. 199. I thank V. Morfino for help
4. Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism,” in *Heidegger, Basic Writings*, ed. David Krell, translation modified. [Trans.]
5. The first draft reads “itself empty (yet full)”
6. P 62-3 (“How To Avoid Hatred”). [Trans.]
7. Ibid., p. 38 (“Cruelty Prudently Used”). [Trans.]
8. Ibid., pp. 64-5 (“The Prince Must Fight”). [Trans.]
9. Ibid., pp. 66 (“The Prince Ready, in the Face of Ethics”). [Trans.]
10. See n. 3 above. [Trans.]
11. “LP” 193. [Trans.]
12. This is the first line of Goethe’s “Variation on a Theme by Max Stirner took the epigraph to *The Ego and Its Power*”
13. Here, Althusser is thinking of *MU*, 4, which is Machiavelli that he gave over the years. He sees this number of occasions.
14. Althusser intended to insert a note here in reference to “RSC” 118 (Book 3, ch. 6): “Under the influence of Machiavelli, taught important lessons to the people. Machiavelli was a Machiavellian.”
15. Althusser intended to insert a note here in reference to *TP*, V, 7. [Trans.]
16. As Althusser was writing these lines, he was also writing the same paradoxical thesis at an October 1982 conference to commemorate the 350th anniversary of Spinoza’s birth: “Spinoza: Le vide” (1982), was later published in *MU*, 4, especially pp. 165 ff: If we look beyond Pascal’s literal formulation of the void, to communicate, does he say anything different about the void, he plainly means to postulate the extension, which, as such, is irreducible to any other extension, soever, so that we must be able to think it in and out of the presence of any finite material reality. Whether one can think it, all, merely a question of the name that one chooses for the content of the reasoning that name designates.
17. Compare E II, P 15, S. [Trans.]
18. The remark that Althusser attributes to Spinoza is Leibniz after a discussion of Spinoza with Tschering.
19. E II, P 2, S. [Trans.]
20. This section of the text is so thickly coded with references that it is difficult to decipher. The original version

what makes it such-and-such, is the *mode of domination* of the structure over its elements. Thus, in the feudal mode of production, it is the *structure of dependence* which imposes their signification on the elements: possession of the manor, including the serfs who work on it, possession of the collective instruments (the mill, the farmland, etc.) by the lord, the subordinate role of money, except when, later, pecuniary relations are imposed on everyone. Thus, in the capitalist mode of production, it is the structure of exploitation that is imposed on all the elements, the subordination of the means of production and the productive forces to the process of exploitation, the exploitation of the workers stripped of the means of production, the monopoly of the means of production in the hands of the capitalist class, and so forth.

## Notes

- a. This is why Dominique Lecourt is right to advance the term “sur-materialism” in connection with Marx, in a remarkable work that has naturally been ignored by a University accustomed to responding with contempt whenever it feels that “a point has been scored against it” (see *L’Ordre et les jeux*, Paris, 1981, last part).
- b. Compare Feuerbach citing Pliny the Elder: “elephants [...] have no religion.” Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot, Amherst, New York, 1989, p. 1.
- c. See the fine and very successful conference on Darwin recently organized in Chantilly by Dominique Lecourt and Yvette Conry [Conry, ed., *De Darwin au Darwinisme: Science et idéologie*, Paris, 1983].
- d. See [Althusser et al.,] *Lire le Capital*, I [ed. Etienne Balibar, Paris, 1996, pp. I-244].
- e. See Charles Bettelheim’s remarkable *Class Struggles in the USSR*, trans. Brian Pearce, vol. 2: Second Period, New York, 1978 (1965).
- f. On this point, Engels’ “The Principles of Communism” [MECW 6: 346] leaves no room for doubt: the proletariat is the product of the “industrial revolution” (*sic*-Louis Althusser).
- g. [Albert] Soboul [1914-82] stubbornly devoted the whole of his short life to trying to prove this.
1. See Nicholas Malebranch, *A Treatise of Nature and Grace*, trans. Anon., London, 1695, p. 22, translation modified: “I use the examples of the irregularity of ordinary rain to ready the soul for another rain, which is not given to the merits of men, no more than the common rain which falls equally upon lands that are sown, as well as those that lie fallow.”
2. Althusser intended to insert a note here. It would probably have been a ref-

Whence the *form of order* and the *form of* by this pile-up, determined as they are ter; whence, once the encounter has b the primacy of the structure over its one must call an *affinity* and a comple elements that come into play in the enc slide-interlock” [*accrochabilit *], in order th that is to say “take *form*,” *at last give birth* water “takes hold” when ice is there w it curdles, or mayonnaise when it emu “nothing” over all “form”, and of *aleat*. In other words, not just anything can p elements destined [*voies*] to encounter their affinity, to take “take hold” one up Democritus, and perhaps even in Epicu scribed as, “hooked”, that is, susceptib other, from all eternity, irrevocably, for

Once they have thus “taken hold” or “c enter the realm of Being that they in assignable, distinct, localizable beings o property (depending on the time and p them a structure of Beings or of the w ements its place, meaning and role, or l ements of...” (the atoms as elements of b in such a way that the atoms, far from b merely the secondary consequence of *signement et avenement*]. If we are to talk a this way, it is necessary that the world ex oms exist, a situation which puts discou *place*, and also puts in *second place* (not fir philosophy of Being—thus making foreve therefore explicable: see the appendix repeats nearly verbatim the critique of and Lucretius) any discourse of *first ph* (which explains why Epicurus, who kno “mechanical” materialism of Democri

a resurgence, within a possible philosophy of the encounter, of the dominant idealism of Order as immanent in Disorder.)

Once these principles have been set out, the rest follows naturally, if I may be forgiven the expression.<sup>50</sup>

1. For a *being* (a body, an animal, a man, state, or Prince) *to be*, an encounter has *to have taken place* (past infinitive). To limit ourselves to Machiavelli, an encounter has to have taken place between beings with affinities [*des affinissables*]; between such-and-such an individual and such-and-such a conjecture, or Fortune, for example—the conjunction itself being junction, con-junction, congealed (albeit shifting) encounter, since it has already taken place, and refers in its turn to the infinite number of its prior causes, just as (let us add) a determinate [*defini*] individual (for instance, Borgia) refers to the infinite sequence [*suite*] or prior causes of which it is the result.

2. There are encounters only between series [*series*] of beings that are the results of several series of causes—at least two, but this two soon proliferates, by virtue of the effect of parallelism or general contagion (as Breton puts it, profoundly, “elephants are contagious.”<sup>b</sup>) One also thinks here of Cournot, a great but neglected thinker.

3. Every encounter is aleatory, not only in its origins (nothing ever guarantees an encounter), but also in its effects. In other words, every encounter might not have taken place, although it did take place; but its possible nonexistence sheds light on the meaning of its aleatory being. And every encounter is aleatory in its effects, in that nothing in the elements of the encounter it prefigures, before the actual encounter, the contours and determinations of the being that will emerge from it. Julius II did not know that he was harboring his mortal enemy in his Romagnol breast, nor did he know that his mortal enemy would be lying at death’s door, and so find himself outside history [*hors histoire*] at the critical hour of Fortune, only to go off and die in an obscure Spain before the walls of an unknown castle.<sup>51</sup> This means that no determination of the being which issues from the “taking-hold” of the encounter is prefigured even in outline, in the being of the elements that converge in the encounter. Quite the contrary:

ing, of course, for the purpose of eliminating the dominant utilization of the adjective “bourgeois.” To stand in for the concept of pure negation, the theory of the bourgeoisie as a form of production of the feudal mode of production is a conceptually inspired conception of the mode of production, the bourgeoisie is indeed nothing but a force that will unify all the other elements of the mode of production, will transform it into another combination of production. It is the dimension of the mode of production that assigns each element its role and position, and thus fixing it in its existence and role.

We are at the opposite pole from the concept of “*between the bourgeoisie*”, an element that “floats” among other floating elements, an encounter that brings the mode of production into existence, the capitalist mode of production: there is no encounter, for the unity present in the mode of production is essential to any aleatory encounter is lacking. The mode of production of thinking *the fact to be accomplished* is a mode of production of himself within *the accomplished fact*, and thus a mode of production of laws of its necessity.

Following Marx, we<sup>59</sup> defined a mode of production as a combination (Balibar), that of the means of production and the mode of production. To pursue this analysis, we must consider the elements in it, “productive forces, means of production, possess the means of production, products, and the mode of production, nature, men, etc.” What then comprises the mode of production which subjects the production to the mode of production, the producers (to the dominant mode of production, the owners of the means of production) is essential [*est d’essence*], is essential to the mode of production; it corresponds to a center of references; but it still conserves the same structure of production. The mode of production is a combination because it is a unity on a series of elements. What co-

tablished itself firmly in France. Above all, given that the bourgeoisie is said to be the product of the feudal mode of production, what proves that it was not a class of the feudal mode of production, and a sign of the reinforcement rather than the decay of this mode? These mysteries in Capital both revolve around the same object: money and mercantile capitalism on the one hand, and, on the other, the nature of the bourgeois class, said to be its support and beneficiary.

If, to define capital, one contents oneself with talking, as Marx does, about *an accumulation of money* that produces a surplus—a money profit ( $M' = M + M'$ )—then it is possible to speak of money and mercantile capitalism. But these are *capitalisms without capitalists*, *capitalisms without exploitation of a labor force*, *capitalisms in which exchange*<sup>59</sup> more or less takes the form of a levy governed not by the law of value, but by practices of pillage, either direct or indirect. Consequently, it is here that we encounter the great question of the *bourgeoisie*.

Marx's solution is simple and disarming. The bourgeoisie is produced as an antagonistic class by the decay of the dominant feudal class. Here we find the schema of dialectical production again, a contrary producing its contrary. We also find the dialectical thesis of negation, a contrary naturally being required, by virtue of a conceptual necessity, to replace its contrary and become dominant in its turn. But what if this was not how things happened? What if the bourgeoisie, far from being the contrary product of the feudal class, was its culmination and, as it were, acme, its highest form and, so to speak, crowning perfection? This would enable us to resolve many problems which are so many dead ends, especially the problems of the bourgeois revolutions, such as the French Revolution, which are supposed, come hell or high water, to be capitalist,<sup>6</sup> yet are not; and a number of other problems that are so many mysteries: what is this strange class—capitalist by virtue of its future, but formed well before any kind of capitalism, under feudalism—known as the bourgeoisie?

Just as there is not, in Marx, a satisfactory theory of the so-called mercantile mode of production, nor, *a fortiori*, of merchant (and money) capital, *so there is no satisfactory theory of the bourgeoisie in Marx*—except-

no determination of these elements *coming backwards* from the result to its becoming. (Hegel), we must therefore say that there can be no exception except as determined by the result of the encounter itself (Canguilhem). That is, instead of a duality of necessity, or an exception to it, we have the becoming-necessary of the encounter itself. (Hegel) that not only the world of life (the biological world, their Darwin, have recently become available in the history, too, *gels* at certain felicitous moments) but elements combined in an encounter that produces a figure: such-and-such a species, individual, happens that there are aleatory men or “living beings,” a death bestowed or received, as well as the figures of the world to which the original encounter, aleatory has given their form (Antiquity, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, etc.) This means that who took it into his head to consider the world as a junctures or States of the world as either a set of premises or the provisional anticipation of a result, even, because he would be neglecting the fact that the provisional results are doubly provisional: they can be superseded, but also in that they might have come about only as the effect of a chance that they had not arisen on the happy basis of a necessity which gave their “chance” to “last” to the point of junction it so happens (by chance that the result shows that we are not—that we do not have a meaning but that, although there is no Meaning, the result transcends it, from its origins to its term), that the result, since this meaning emerges from an encounter that is either felicitous—or catastrophic, which is also

From this there follow very important consequences concerning the word “law”. It will be granted that the encounter in which things take hold. B

encounter *has* taken hold—that is, once the stable figure of the world, of the *only* existing world (for the advent of a given world obvious excludes all the other possible combinations), has been constituted—we have to do with a stable world in which events, in their succession [*suite*], obey “laws”. Hence it does not much matter whether the world, our world, (we know of no other; of the infinity of possible attributes, we know only two, the understanding and space: “*Faktum*”, Spinoza might have said), emerged from the encounter of atoms falling in the Epicurean rain of the void, or from the “Big Bang” hypothesized by the astrophysicists. The fact is that we have to do with this world and not another. The fact is that this world “*plays by the rules*” [*est regulier*] (in the sense in which one says that an honest player does: for this world plays and—no mistake about it—plays with us), that it is subject to rules and obeys laws. Hence the very great temptation, even for those who are willing to grant the premises of this materialism of the encounter, of resorting, once the encounter has “taken hold”, to the study of the laws which derive from this taking-hold of forms, and repeat these forms to all intents and purposes, indefinitely. For it is also a fact, a *Faktum*, that there is order in this world, and that knowledge of this world comes by way of knowledge of its “laws” (Newton) and the conditions of possibility, not of existence of these laws, but only of knowledge of them. This is, to be sure, a way of indefinitely deferring the old question of the origin of the world (this is how Kant proceeds), but only in order to obscure all the more effectively the origin of the second encounter that makes possible knowledge of the first in this world (the encounter between concepts and things.)

Well, we are going to resist this temptation by defending a thesis dear to Rousseau, who maintained that the contract is based on an “abyss”—by defending the idea, therefore, that the necessity of the laws that issue from the taking-hold induced by the encounter is, even at its most stable, haunted by a *radical instability*, which explains something we find it very hard to grasp (for it does violence to our sense of “what is seemly”): that laws can change—not that they can be valid for a time but not eternally (in his critique of classical political economy, Marx went that far, as his “Russian critic” had well understood,<sup>52</sup> arguing that every historical period has its laws, although he went no further,

There are indeed things in Marx that whenever he cedes to the other conception: a concept that is totalitarian, teleo-

In this case, we are clearly dealing with above, but so thought and ordered as all eternity destined to enter into contact with another, and reciprocally produce each other's conditions, and/or complements. On this leaves the aleatory nature of the “encounter” on one side *in order to think solely in terms of its own and, consequently, its predestination*. On this is not an independent history, but a history of adapting to the other histories, history that endlessly *reproduces* its own [*propre*] elements in a mesh. This explains why Marx and Engels call it a “product of big industry”, “a product of the fusion of the production of the proletariat with the production of the bourgeoisie on an extended scale, as if the capitalist mode of production and its essential elements, an expropriated labor force, no longer float in history, like so many elements of an “encounter” that might not take place, but is accomplished in advance; *the structure precedes the encounter in order to reproduce the structure*.

What holds for primitive accumulation of money. Where do they come from in the transition from mercantile capitalism, as he says: “the expression that has spawned many an alternative mode of production.”) From usury? From colonial pillage? Ultimately, this is for other purposes, even if it is of special importance: *the result: the fact that they exist*. Marx, however, holds the thesis of a mythical “decay” of the feudal mode of production from the heart of this decay, which then eventually disappears? It was not u-



I am repeating myself, but I must: what is remarkable about the first conception, apart from the explicit theory of the encounter, is the idea that every mode of production comprises *elements that are independent of each other*, each resulting from its own specific history, in the absence of any organic, teleological relation between these diverse histories. This conception culminates in the theory of *primitive accumulation*, from which Marx, taking his inspiration from Engels, drew a magnificent chapter of *Capital*, the true heart of the book. Here we witness the emergence of a historical phenomenon whose result we know—the expropriation of the means of production from an entire rural population in Great Britain—but whose causes bear no relation to the result and its effects. Was the aim to create extensive domains for the hunt? Or endless fields for sheep-raising? We do not know *just what* the main reason for this process of violent dispossession was (it was most likely the sheep) and, especially, the main reason for the violence of it; moreover, it doesn't much matter. The fact is that this process took place, culminating in a *result* that was promptly *diverted* from its possible, presumed end by “owners of money” looking for impoverished manpower. *This diversion is the mark of the non-teleology of the process* and of the incorporation of its result into a process that both made it possible and was wholly foreign to it.

It would, moreover, be a mistake to think that this process of the aleatory encounter was confined to the English fourteenth century. It has always gone on, and *is going on even today*—not only in the countries of the Third World [*sic*], which provide the most striking example of it, but also in France, by way of the dispossession of agricultural producers and their transformation into semi-skilled workers (consider Sandouville: Breton's running machines<sup>58</sup>)—as a permanent process that puts the aleatory at the heart of the survival and reinforcement of the capitalist “mode of production”, and also, let us add, at the heart of the so-called socialist “mode of production” itself.<sup>e</sup> Here Marxist scholars untiringly rehearse Marx's fantasy, thinking the *reproduction* of the proletariat in the mistaken belief that they are thinking its production; thinking in the accomplished fact when they think they are thinking in its becoming-accomplished.

as we shall see), but that they can change the aleatory basis that sustains them, and that is, without an intelligible end. This *can be no taking-hold without surprise* [*il n'y a pas de prise sans surprise*]. This is what strikes everyone so forcefully: the elements, turns or suspensions of history, (the world, ample, madness) or of the world, when it falls back on the table unexpectedly, or the world without warning, or the “elements are unloosed” [*les éléments se défont*] (Nietzsche, Artuad). No one is one of the basic features of the history of the relation that makes an unknown man, or both at once: when Holderlins, the world conjointly; when the French triumphs down to the march of Napoleon through the windows at Jena; when the Commune of 1871 explodes in Russia, or, *a fortiori*, when it does, a revolution in which, truly, almost unloosed over vast spaces, although the last day like the 13th of May,<sup>54</sup> when the workers have “joined up” (what a result would be their long parallel demonstrations crossing at all costs, joining up, conjoining, uniting, still forever unprecedented (the rain in

To<sup>55</sup> give some sense of the underground of the encounter, which is very important by a (philosophical) materialism of the mode of production. No one can think a concept, which serves not only to think also to periodize the history of social forms of theory of history.<sup>d</sup>

In fact, we find *two* absolutely unrelated productions in Marx.

*The first* goes back to Engels' *Condition of the Working-Class in England*; its real inventor was Engels. It recurs in the famous chapter on primitive accumulation, the working-day, and so on, and in a host of minor allusions, to which I shall return, if possible. It may also be found in the theory of the Asiatic mode of production. *The second* is found in the great passages of *Capital* on the essence of capitalism, as well as the essence of the feudal and socialist modes of production, and on the revolution; and, more generally, in the "theory" of the transition, or form of passage, from one mode of production to another. The things that have been written on the "transition" from capitalism to communism over the past twenty years beggar the imagination and are past all counting!

In untold passages, Marx—this is certainly no accident—explains that the capitalist mode of production arose from the "encounter"<sup>56</sup> between "the owners of money" and the proletariat stripped of everything but his labor-power. "It so happens" that this encounter took place, and "took hold", which means that it did not come undone as soon as it came about, but *lasted*, and became an accomplished fact, the accomplished fact of this encounter, inducing stable relationships and a necessity the study of which yields "laws"—tendential laws, of course: the laws of the development of the capitalist mode of production (the law of value, the law of exchange, the law of cyclical crises, the law of the crisis and decay of the capitalist mode of production, the law of the passage—transition—to the socialist mode of production under the laws of the class struggle, and so on.) What matters about this conception is less the elaboration of laws, hence of an essence, than the aleatory character of *the "taking-hold" of this encounter, which gives rise to an accomplished fact* whose laws it is possible to state.

This can be put differently: the whole that results from the "taking-hold" of the "encounter" does not precede the "taking-hold" of its elements, but follows it; for this reason, it might not have "taken hold", and, *a fortiori*, "the encounter might not have taken place."<sup>57</sup> All this is said—in veiled terms, to be sure, but it is said—in the formula that Marx uses in his frequent discussions of the "encounter" [*das Vorgefundene*] between raw labor-power and the owners of money. We can

go even further, and suppose *that this history before taking hold in the West*, but, able arrangement of the elements, failed in the thirteenth-century and fourteenth-century where there were certainly men who could harness energy (machines driven by the hydraulic press) as manpower (unemployed artisans), but nevertheless failed to "take hold". What is the hypothesis (perhaps, this is a hypothesis) that which is being sought in the form of his appeal for a mode of production capable of absorbing what might have

The slightest reflection on the presuppositions of the theory of the relationship between the structure and the elements proposed to unify. For what is a mode of production? The answer to this question, following Marx, is: an accumulation of elements. These elements are an accumulation of "the owners of money", an accumulation of tools (tools, machines, an experience of production), an accumulation of workers, an accumulation of the raw materials, and an accumulation of producers (producers of production.) The elements do not exist in isolation; production may exist, they exist in history. Their "accumulation" and "combination" is their own history, and none being the teleology of their history. When Marx and Engels speak of the "product of big industry", they utter a formula positioning themselves within the *logic of the production of the proletariat on an extended scale*. The "encounter" which produces (rather than produces) the proletariat, this mass of impoverished, expropriated elements making up the mode of production, and Engels shift from the first conception of a historico-aleatory conception, to a second philosophical.