



Son of Man, Brother of the People: Behold the Theorist

0. — Non-philosophy is not a discourse (a modality of world-thought, a manufacturing of man as being-in-the-world) but a theoretical and practical use of discourses. It was created by François Laruelle. On the near side of non-philosophy, signaling towards it, we have Michel Henry and Serge Valdinoci; in short, the philosophers of radical immanence. On the far side of non-philosophy, radicalizing it, we have the rigorous gnosis of the theorist.

1. — The theorist says: I am the Saint Paul of non-philosophy; that is to say, he who ensures it is ready for work and war.

1.1. — War against what? Against its theoreticist combination (with) practice, against theoreticist worldliness and sterility; and against the eternalization of world-practice carried out by and through the theoreticist attempt to reform (i.e. liberalize) the latter in the last instance.

1.2. — This requires a rectification of non-philosophy, an overhauling of its body of doctrine in such a way as to destroy the ruinous amphiboly between the subject as transcendental clone of the real, and thought as organon for the a priori use of discourses.

2. — The theorist says: theorism is the theory-method for a rebellion that would not be a pretense.

2.1. — It is the discipline for a rebellion that is anti-philosophical (in its canon) and non-religious (in its organon). Its formula —in the sense in which one speaks of the formula for falling bodies in mechanics— is provided by the statement “son of man, brother of the people: behold the theorist”.

2.2. — By decomposing this canonical statement, one obtains three terms whose axiomatic determination is as follows.

2.2.1. — First, we have man, which is to say, he who is radically immanent or that which is real-and-nothing-but, the real in-person. It is the cause of the last instance for rebellion, and that which allows the latter to escape from the (deadly) positivities (in)to which it spontaneously (re)turns.

2.2.2. — Then we have the people, which is simply non-thetic transcendence or the cutting edge of a thought-without-subject (as angelic as it is anti-humanist). This is the instance of rebellion that shatters the nested circles of worldliness in exact proportion to its own *weakness (of) thought* and the radical fragility of its incisiveness.

2.2.3. — Finally, between these two instances, and ‘tied to them by a transcendental relation which is one of ‘fraternity in some cases, filiation in others, we have the theorist, who is a



subject, but one that is unheard of because he is *without-thought* or *strictly transcendental*. This is the rebel; but the rebel who remains separate from 'his rebellion and distinct from the rebellion he determines.

2.3. — We call non-religious the methodical order which articulates man, the theorist and the people —or the real in-person, the rebel-subject, and insurgent-thought— without *s(p)ecularizing* them. Its prescriptive elucidation is homogeneous with the deployment of the concept of unilateral trinity, which is to say, with the anti-philosophical destruction of a double amphiboly: on the one hand, the identitarian or counter-philosophical amphiboly characteristic of the descriptive elucidations of radical immanence; and on the other, the dualitarian or non-philosophical amphiboly proper to the immanent practices of radical immanence.

2.4. — Thus, the theorist is the condition of reality for a rebellion that cannot be cashed out in words, obscenities, or pious silence; a rebellion that does not indulge in chatter, whether theoreticist, radical, or worldly; a rebellion that obviates the two major modes through which rebellion is corrupted: the externalizing practice of the terrorist and the internalizing practice of the mystic.

3. — The theorist says: theorism is the non-s(p)ecular order that *establishes in the filial element of the real a subject for the people, whose fraternity provides the occasion thanks to which the subject thinks* (a thought that is nothing but its own incisiveness and the exercise of that incisiveness).

3.1. — The theorist is a son on the transcendental plane insofar as he is born in the element of the real of the last instance, which is man in-person as he who is radically immanent (or matter-in-matter).

3.1.1. — Not only does the real that man is (without participating either in being or in nothingness) —a real that does not partake of the world, does not bear the slightest residue of transcendence, and is not even immanent to its own immanence (because such a relation would necessarily reintroduce transcendence)— not exempt us from the world or transcendence; it positively obliges us to it: man is promised to the world —this is what it means for him to determine it in the last instance. The world exists (instances exist), but man is not of it and does not have one; which is precisely why he is promised to it.

3.1.2. — Except that this vocation cannot engage man in-person, for if it did this would combine him with transcendence. Thus, it is necessary that what is born, or better, *established* in the horizon of the world to which man is promised, be his (transcendental) *place-holder*, in other words, that which is in the world (or in touch with the world) in the last instance (rather than for itself). But the perfect model for this place-holder of the real is provided by Christ, who declared himself to be 'the Son of man (Matthew, 8.20).



3.1.3. — The theorist is born as the son of man, who he is in the last instance. This is the first instance of reality, and the second in the order of the unilateral trinity. The primary reality of the son, his place-holding, is required in exact proportion to the radicality of the real, in which man, the ‘true captain, consists (or rather radically inconsistencies).

3.2. — The theorist is a brother insofar as his radical birth as son does not imply or envelop any thought or practice whatsoever. Man is as established by his son in proximity to the world. But he is powerless to act on or in it, or even to think it (since there is nothing to think apart from the world).

3.2.1. — The theorist cannot indulge in semblance, because through his purely transcendental birth as son of man, the rebel does not participate in the empirical, or even in any (a priori) knowledge of the empirical. His sole vocation consists in introducing the order (of the) real into reality; in passively incising upon it the transcendental seal of the *dignity* that the world structurally refuses.

3.2.2. — But in spite of all, this is not sufficient, or rather it is too *sufficient* since we are not far from constructing a new sort of quietist subject, a subject who is intrinsically indifferent to the world and who confines his so-called ‘rebellion within that indifference and within the stance of the individuality that he unilaterally opposes to the reign of spontaneous and authoritarian banalities.

3.2.3. — Consequently, just as the radicality of the real requires reality and does not exempt one from it (or just as the last instance requires instances and acknowledges them in their consistency), similarly, *the theorist's transcendental purity, his impertinence vis-à-vis the empirical and the empirical gnosis of the empirical, requires an incisive relation to the world.*

3.2.4. — The conclusion now follows inescapably, in a way that clarifies the meaning of fraternity: since he is in himself capable of nothing, whether it be thinking or acting, the theorist has no choice but to rely on an instance of thought or an instance of acting, but only in the last instance, which means, without identifying himself with them, and consequently without appropriating them.

3.2.4.1. — This thinking or acting in the last instance is exerted or borne by the people, which is to say, the angel.

3.2.4.2. — As for the theorist, he thinks or acts in the mode of fraternity, such that it is the people who decide, not the theorist.

3.2.5. — The rebel concedes nothing, whether it be in terms of rigour or decisiveness, because he no more decides about his rebellion as a general stance (since the theorist is a rebel precisely insofar he is promised to the world, he is a rebel *from birth*), than about the occasion



for his rebellion (which is provided by this or that state of the world).

3.3. — This by way of recapitulation: rebellion exists because man is promised to the world precisely insofar as he is not of it (radically foreign to it, foreign to it without-remainder, without possessing an alternative world), and because it goes very badly. This rebellion is not a semblance because rebel and rebellion, subject and thought, transcendental and a priori, are no longer combined; and hence because one distinguishes unilaterally between a last instance (he who is radically immanent); the instances of mastery (i.e. transcendence as such); and falling between these two, ordained as one-way-only according to the real which we all are in the last instance, the subjectivity of the theorist, which is at once transcendental-and-nothing-but and the methodical proletariat that decides (a priori) by virtue of its fraternity with the rebel.

3.3.1. — The theorist is the subject as empty, poor, fragile, thoughtless, and who stands between man and the people. But like the little girl hope in Péguy's *Porch of the mystery of the second virtue*, it is he who holds his elders by the hand and shows them the way.

3.3.1.1. — Despite his weakness, his emptiness and his fragility, the theorist is that in virtue of which 'a flame shall pierce the eternal darkness —he is that in virtue of which the world, whether replete or famished with worldliness, shall be broken and the sufficiency of its everlasting machinery dismantled.

3.3.1.2. — This requires a healthy dose of hatred, which only a rigorous love legitimates: the love of theory, of theory alone, separated, and hence rendered proletarian and militarized.

4. — The theorist says: I am the lover of theory, and theorism is the subject-organon for the love of theory, the method in love with theory.

4.1. — Unlike the worldly lover, the lover of theory puts his love (the love that is not his because he is in its grip) into that which neither participates nor gives rise to any practice, any world-making.

4.1.1. — Consequently, the love of theory is a love that cannot be *made*.

4.1.2. — Better: it is a love whose vocation it is to *truly destroy practice*.

4.2. — Since practice is the matrix of the world and of all mastery (regardless of what form it takes), to call forth this love is to call for the most intransigent, least conciliatory, transactional, or dialectical rebellion imaginable —precisely that which is indexed by the statement 'rebellion that is not a semblance.

4.3. — To take the risk of this rebellion is to brook no hesitation, since the topology of fallback positions is nothing but the description of the world-practice against which the theorist rebels.



5. — The theorist says: there are two stances of thought, both resolutely *practical* without being spontaneously worldly, which relate to theory and love in a manner as astute as it is ambiguous.

5.1. — He who practices theory indifferently is a *theoreticist*; either in the vague sense of idealist philosophy, which is of no concern to us; or in the more precise sense we give to the term here, which designates the non-philosopher in general, and more specifically François Laruelle, who invented its autonomous stance and has continuously striven to deploy its consequences ever since.

5.2. — The *theorrist* is he who blinds himself to all transcendence by flattening it on itself (even the transcendence of theory as immanent in the last instance). He is the advocate of the philosophy of auto-affection, of which Michel Henry is the exemplar.

5.3. — Theorism, theoreticism, and theorristism, which are the terms of a typology often mobilized in the statements of theorism, are organized according to the rules of a combinatorial of love and theory.

5.3.1. — The love that joins only with itself thereby crushes all transcendence, all vision, and hence all theory through this theorrist auto-junction. All that remains is an identitarian determination of unilaterality, which promises man as amphiboly of the real, the transcendental, and the a priori, to a subjective effectuation in the order of pure practice (whose paradigm and consummation is provided by charity). This is a love whose eyes are closed, in the words of the oft-quoted title of a novel by Michel Henry; a love which accomplishes itself as an *archi-Christology* in the living word of he who made himself flesh and offered it to men as the substance and bread of all life so that they might be saved from the world (from the worldly horizon as horizon) and from the words of death (the Greek logos realized and extended under the aegis of Galileanism as negation of the very possibility of any living self).

5.3.2. — When theory has the upper hand, and love is expelled along with the world through a radical elucidation of the real and a dualitarian unilateralisation of transcendence, we have theoreticism, in whose eyes (and in whose a priori-transcendental hands, as force (of) thought) all mundanity can be treated indifferently as a material for a non-philosophical theory of the world. The result is an apparatus of domination by man (man-in-man rather than the man of the world or transcendence) and of the universal human determination of all thought —an apparatus that is ultra powerful yet ineffectual, and hence a way of ensuring a mastery-without-mastery that extends to every world and to every possible region of the world insofar as the latter is liable to be captured by some philosopheme.

5.4. — Only theorism takes up both sides, love and theory, giving up neither (and not giving in



to either).

5.4.1. — Theorism, which operates on the basis of the radical elucidation of the real (which is the unsurpassable achievement of non-philosophy), refuses the amphibological practice and semi-worldly violence of theerrorism, just as it refuses theoreticisms indifferent and negatively domineering force (of) thought.

5.4.2. — Theorism is deployed in the guise of a trinitarian unilateralisation of transcendence, insofar as the subject of theory in love and of the love of theory is not cloned between the real and the world (with the real as constant and this or that worldly instance as occasion) *but established in the element of the real on the occasion of the angel that separates the angel from the master* (or of the people that separates the people from the master).

5.5. — *Theoreticism does not love* (though it may consider giving rise to a science of lovers if need be); *theerrorism sees nothing* (in spite of providing so many illuminating pages that things initially seem muddled); *but theorism sees by virtue of the love or hate that animate it*, and it loves with the exacting incisiveness borne of its dual yet indivisible vision.

6.— The theorist says: I am the new man.

6.1. — The theorist is established in the element of man in-person as the radically immanent; he is his transcendental son; he is established in-man, not as *the* Christ but as *a* christ. More precisely: the theorist established in-man is established as *christ*.

6.1.1. — In order to dispel certain misunderstandings and to avoid being mistaken for Jesus Christ (or rather his roman catholic dogmatization), we will say that the theorist is established in-man as christo-rebellion, and hence as subject (of) christo-rebellion (of which *the* Christ was the first rebel).

6.1.2. — Christ-Jesus is a figure of theorism. Angel of all angels, he can also be called brother of the people (the people which, as Christian Jambet admirably puts it, does not need the angel because it is the angel).

6.2. — The christ of theorism is neither that of non-christianity, nor that of archi-christology.

6.2.1. — He is the christ of christo-rebellion, which is the beating heart of the gnostic-materialist tradition, that is to say, the tradition of the struggle against sufficiency (against contentment, against the self-satisfaction that is sufficient unto itself), which is illustrated among other things by the Maoist struggle against egoism and the Rousseauist struggle against self-love.

6.2.2. — The christ of theorism is he who announces the good news that theory is now rigorously separated from practice. He is the messiah whose announcement in-person



proceeds one-way from the angel to theory, which is to say, as a pure stroke of genius.

6.3. — Following comrade Boris Vian, the theorist distinguishes between those geniuses that are gifted and those that are not. The expression 'genius is longsuffering can only have come from one who was not gifted.

6.3.1. — The impatience of the theorist is a function of his genius. Does this mean his talent? His intelligence? His labour-force? None of these. It comes from the absence of all this, which legitimates and is legitimated by his relation to the angel.

6.3.2. — Genially impatient, or rather impatient in virtue of its genius, theorism is the infancy of theory, just as one talks of the infancy of art. It is theory as direct, poor, armed —the theory whose methodical violence and even methodical stupidity fears neither ridicule nor death —unlike the hegemonic maturity and wisdom of world-practice, and the cretinism with which both of these are homogeneous.

6.3.2.1. — For do not be misled: cretinism in no way excludes intelligence; on the contrary, it finds its fulfillment in it. Intelligence despises stupidity because stupidity decides, it refuses to compromise; *whereas intelligence compromises with everything: this is its defining characteristic.*

6.3.2.2. — As militant anti-cretinism, theorism is ultimately an anti-christianism; which is to say, an anti-worldism, because the world in which we have been living since Paul is Christian through and through.

6.3.2.3. — The theorist, whose role vis-à-vis non-philosophy is that of Paul, is in fact he who consigns Paul to the scrapheap.

6.4. — Here is a quadripartite: we have Pauls christo-worldliness, Henrys archi-christology, Laruelles non-christianity, and the theorists christo-rebellion. In this configuration, the two terms that count are christo-worldliness and christo-rebellion. Or if you prefer: the real 'debate is between Paul and the theorist, with Henry and Laruelle preparing the ground for the latter, but otherwise distracting attention from the real debate.

6.5. — This is a delirious set-up, but its delirium strictly corresponds to its explosive rigour.

7. — The theorist says: I am a moral atomic bomb of incomparable power.

(Translation by Ray Brassier)

Gilles Grelet