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Plasticity, Contingency, and Virtuality in the Age of Automatic Reproduction

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In this paper, the author follows the trail of C. Malabou, Q. Meillassoux, and G. Deleuze and tries to test three philosophical concepts that seem to be particularly threatened in the era of automatic digital reproduction. These three concepts are plasticity (defended for many years by C. Malabou), contingency (reconstructed by Q. Meillassoux), and virtuality (developed by G. Deleuze). The main task of the text will be to reflect on which of these three concepts better protects our thinking against automation and stays faithful to the ideal of creativity. In what sense are plasticity, contingency, and the possibility of virtualization the a priori condition of any transformation, physical or intellectual, affective or conceptual metamorphosis? In what sense are these three concepts the only conditions for the survival of every living being? Would a being without contingency, plasticity, and disposition to virtualization simply be a dead being?

Keywords: automatic society, contingency, plasticity, technical reproduction, virtualization

Plasticity: The Promise of Transformations in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Catherine Malabou has been developing the concept of plasticity as philosophically and politically central for many years. Its starting point is the reading of Hegel, proposed in *The Future of Hegel: Plasticity, Temporality, and Dialectic* (Malabou, 2004). Thanks to Hegel, the concept of plasticity acquires the status of a strictly philosophical concept. The transformation of "plasticity" into a concept boils down to showing that only "plasticity" makes it possible to understand Hegel's philosophy and, therefore, the history of philosophy. Plasticity appears as a condition for the intelligibility of the future tense. The "future" (avenir) is not limited to the existing, immediate sense of "future" (future) but is something more—the very possibility of becoming, transforming, transmuting, remelting. The absence of thought about the future in Hegel's philosophy implies the absence of a future for philosophy in general. To say that "Hegel has no future" is to say that philosophy and "man" are without a future.

The "development" of the concept of plasticity means "assigning the form function" to the term, which in its original sense designates the very act of forming. The formation of the concept of plasticity stems from the development of an instance that would itself be able to give form to what is apprehended by it. Therefore, if the concept is, first of all, a logical form, it should not be seen as an "empty vessel" but as the potential to shape its own content. Plasticity is directly related to contingency, randomness, and fate.

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Hegel's ability to find the future depends on how the question of the future can be found where it is not expected. Consequently, plasticity turns out to be a figure of "the unexpected" and "unpredictable" in philosophy. Therefore, by "plasticity", Malabou understands a certain temporal dimension, a "surplus of the future over time", and by "temporality", she understands the "surplus of time over time" understood as an "outflow of the past" and "inflow of the future". Plasticity is primarily the plasticity of time and its ability to generate events.

The adjective "plastic" means, on the one hand: susceptible to changing shape, form, and ductile, like clay, ceramic mass which seems "susceptible to deformation without damage"; on the other hand, it means: that which is capable of giving shape and form, such as plastic arts or plastic surgery. The home and "motherland" of plasticity are not philosophy but art. The plastic arts mainly aim to develop forms; they also include architecture, drawing, and painting. The adjective "plastic", although it opposes the adjectives "rigid", "frozen", and "ossified", does not mean "polymorphic". "Plastic" means one that yields to form while resisting deformation. However, the very plasticity of the term "plasticity" leads it to extremes, to the annihilation of all form (explosive).

For philosophy, including Hegel, plasticity means, in the first place, the ability of the subject to follow the content, the thing itself, in such a way that they simultaneously get rid of its "particularity" and the arbitrary character of its "own thought", on the other hand, it acquires "necessary general" features, creating its uniqueness. "Plastic" does not mean "polymorphic" and "infinite flexibility", but it also does not mean "rigidity" and categorical fidelity to the original form.

In Hegel, the dynamics of holding and annihilating are subordinated, as far as their potentiality is concerned, to the logical development of the substance-subject. The dialectic process is malleable because it combines complete stillness (constancy), emptiness (dissolution), and "vitality of the whole" as it proceeds, as a reconciliation of the two extremes of bound resistance (*Widerstand*) and fluidity (*Flüssigkeit*) (Hegel, 1977; Malabou, 2004, p. 12). The process of plasticity is dialectical to the extent that its constitutive operations—the taking of new form and the annihilation of all earlier form, emergence, and explosion—are closely related and mutually implicate each other. The process of plasticity is also contradictory. The bond that unites three concepts—"plasticity", "temporality", and "dialectics", appears as a process of shaping the future itself.

Here arises the critical question we are facing: is plasticity, understood in this way, sustainable in modern times, not only in the times of increasing technical reproducibility of things, which Walter Benjamin has already talked about (Benjamin, 2008) but above all in the times of algorithmic reason, computational economics, and Artificial Intelligence?

Malabou seems to have believed for a long time that "neural plasticity" precludes any comparison of the "natural brain" with machines, especially computers (Malabou, 2008). However, recent advances in Artificial Intelligence, especially the development of "synaptic" chips, have posed a serious challenge to this position. As a result, it is no longer possible to define the boundary between biological and symbolic life without considering the third type of life, "the simulation of life" (Malabou, 2019).

Malabou claims that three significant metamorphoses in the understanding of intelligence have taken place in the last hundred years, which problematize the very relationship between intelligence understood as an "oasis of plasticity", "something" in opposition to the "kingdom of mechanicality", and the notion of freedom and emancipation. As a result of these metamorphoses of intelligence, we are no longer sure whether intelligence is synonymous with plasticity and whether we can still believe in the emancipation of "intelligence through intelligence". What metamorphoses in the understanding of intelligence are we talking about here?

The first metamorphosis is to characterize intelligence as a measurable entity that can be assessed by tests and related to the "g factor" or IQ. Beginning with the work of Francis Galton and the creation of eugenics in the 19th century, and then analyzing the research of Alfred Binet and Théodore Simon, there has been a consistent tendency to equate intelligence with "life success" and "better adaptation" and fitness. The second metamorphosis occurs with the change of the genetic paradigm to the epigenetic one in the biology of the early 21st century. This change allowed a reconsideration of the idea of "blind genetic determinism". It opened up the possibility of a new study of the influence of the environment on the constitution of the phenotype. Intelligence, in this paradigm, is instead a condition for internalizing various mechanisms and processes and the ability to solve complex problems. The third metamorphosis, yet to come, is the era when intelligence becomes "automated" due to the removal of rigid boundaries between nature and artificiality. The power of automatism goes far beyond simple "robotization", and the increasingly sophisticated simulation of "natural" intelligence introduces a new understanding of how the brain works.

We often say that "automaton intelligence" must be eliminated to free the mind's independent and creative intelligence. But isn't the desire to "kill the machine" even more "dumb" than the machine itself? As soon as intelligence engages in self-reflection, it doubles and loses itself as it tries to identify and eliminate the shadow it wants to distinguish itself from. This shadow is a cybernetic mechanism, a habit, a calculator that tries to do what "thought" used to do. Reflection by negating "the unreflective" (one's stupidity) reveals its collusion with the automatic. Is there any way out of this? Is there any solution to the tragic alternative—either reflective intelligence or the stupidity of automatism (machine)? Is programmable and programmed plasticity still plasticity?

According to Malabou, modern philosophy will not regain intelligence unless our understanding of "intelligence" goes beyond the dichotomy of intelligence-automatism. In the new paradigm, automatism and spontaneity are to appear as two sides of the same reality. Indeed, intelligence itself is just a habit—a problem-solving habit. In the new constellation, plasticity becomes a "privileged intersection" between the brain and cybernetic systems, thus sealing their structural identity. The combination of automatism and plasticity does not "robotize" plasticity but rather inscribes it into the machine in the "logic of fallibility". The "mechanization" of brain plasticity paradoxically signals its indefiniteness, not routine. Intelligence is often a departure from disciplined computational behavior.

Consequently, the actual excellence of machinery does not depend on increased technological efficiency, but rather on a wider margin of uncertainty. This greatly complicates the "puppet" logic. Indeed, the type of machine that cyberneticists and Artificial Intelligence theorists want to bring to life can stop itself to reorganize itself better, i.e., able to "dialectize its automatism" and suspend the process of repeating the same thing. The result is a machine endowed with regenerative plasticity. Artificial Intelligence is not a neutral technology; it is a transformative technology that challenges the architecture of traditional information systems and thus causes a total upheaval of being-in-the-world.

Malabou draws the final conclusion: intelligence is not ours—human, but neither is it non-human, artificial or algorithmic. As a result, Malabou formulates an intriguing "ontological paradox": intelligence has no "owner" and, therefore, cannot belong to anyone. Can this paradox, which for so long served as justification for a philosophical critique of intelligence, finally unleash its conceptual future? Metamorphoses of intelligence replace the rigid existence of intelligence. Intelligence consists only in its transformations. The Greeks recognized the primacy of metamorphosis over being. They called intelligence "metis" before they called it "logos", thus giving the primacy of guile over reason. In that sense, intelligence should remain the eternal irony of ontology.

Absolute Contingency as a Condition of Suspension of the Metaphysical Machine

According to Quentin Meillassoux, the culmination of metaphysics is the ontological proof for the existence of God. In this proof, God is the only necessary being, without whose existence we could not imagine anything (Meillassoux, 2008). "Necessary existence" is a being that is the cause of itself. The philosophy of modern times will look for substitutes for such a necessary being and find it in various places—substance, spirit, history, the will to power, the transcendental subject, or life itself. In this sense, the focus and turning point of metaphysics is Leibniz's monadology, which formulates the principle of sufficient reason. According to this reason: at least one entity is absolutely necessary. The culmination of the principle of "sufficient reason" will be the assertion that every being in the world is absolutely necessary. The latter means that there is no room for chance in the world, or even more so, contingency.

It should be no surprise that rejecting dogmatic metaphysics is rejecting all "real necessity". The rejection of metaphysics, and therefore the condition of all criticism, is the rejection of ideology, understood as any form of pseudo-rationality aimed at establishing what actually exists as necessarily existing. For Meillassoux, metaphysics is "the illusory production of necessary beings", and ideology is "the production of social situations presented as inevitable" and not just as any variety of deceptive representation (Meillassoux, 2008, p. 58). The key question for Meillassoux seems to be: how to discover an absolute necessity that leads to no "absolute being"? The answer to this question is speculative thinking, which tries to reach the "absolute" in a general sense, and not, as metaphysical thought does, to some absolute being. In short, this new absolute will be contingency. For Meillassoux, only one thing is absolutely necessary: that the laws of nature are contingent.

But what is contingency? And is contingency different from mere randomness? For Meillassoux, contingency means being open to something to last as well as to disappear; neither of these options contradicts the invariants of this world. Contingency implies knowledge about the actual impermanence of a certain thing. Contingency is knowing the fragility of this world. The absolute is the possible transition from my current state to another state. It is not ignorance but knowledge of what is possible. The "possibility of being different" is not only "for us" because it presupposes the "possibility of our non-existence".

Therefore, it seems crucial to develop a concept of the contingency of the laws of nature different from the concept of chance. The contingency of laws cannot be confused with chance. Meillassoux reminds us that "chance" presupposes the existence of probabilistic laws when contingency calls them into question. The French "hazard" comes from the Arabic "as zahr". "Aleatoric", on the other hand, comes from "aleitoire". Chance and aleatoric have the same etymology: roll the dice. The theme of the game and the calculation are intertwined in the calculus of probability. When we identify being with chance, the subject of "cold calculation" appears—the frequency of events and their arbitrariness. The ontology of closure of "possibilities in necessity" places us in a world that takes only "methods of calculation" seriously. The term "contingence", on the other hand, refers to "contingere", which means "to happen". We must remember that contingency always "arrives" unexpectedly. Something happens, but it happens in such a way that it happens to us unexpectedly. Contingency is not a game (statistical) effect. Contingency is something that eludes all classified possibilities.

Meillassoux claims that the only imperative of reason obliges to non-contradiction and not to the principle of sufficient reason. Anything consistent can happen. In the rational world, everything is unreasonable. It is a world liberated from the "law". It is a world in which the logical requirement of consistency would persist, but not the metaphysical requirement of permanence.

As a result, with Meillassoux, a new concept of rationality is born because belief in necessity is modern man's last fetish (superstition). David Hume's great discovery is the discovery of a world that is "fully rational" but at the same time "fully chaotic" (Meillassoux, 2007a). The rejection of the principle of reason is not the rejection of reason but the discovery of the power of chaos. Why is this concept of absolute contingency so important? It is important because it allows us to go beyond the logic of potentiality.

For Meillassoux, there is no given finite universe of events. There is no way of constructing a set of possible worlds within which the notion of probability would apply. There is no great ontological pre-selection within which the process of becoming is not subject to unshakable laws. The world is not subject to the logic of potentiality and its articulation. Only within the latter is the world a set of events that can be noted (conceptually or empirically noted), i.e., they exist before their discovery and constitute the potentiality of this world. Chance can only occur under the assumption of a stable universe of possible events. Chance leaves the "time parameter" the possibility of freedom within defined possibilities. Belief in chance is a metaphysical belief because it presupposes belief in the necessity of probabilistic laws. Time in this world is only the actualization of the eternal set of possibilities, i.e., the actualization of potential events. The whole means subordinating time to the set of possibilities it can actualize but not modify.

Potentiality (a set of events from the catalog of possibilities conditioned by law) and randomness (an event for which there is no determining instance based on initial conditions), Meillassoux contrasts these with contingency (an event that is not an element of a set of sets of events) and virtuality (a sequence of events consisting in that it is not dominated by any pre-established totality of possibilities). In this world, time can produce new laws not potentially contained in some set of possibilities. Time brings up situations that were not included in previous situations.

We need to note that a "chaotic world" has the right to be indistinguishable from a "world of laws actually necessary" because a "world capable of anything" must also be capable of what we see on earth. The very concept of virtuality allows us to change the meaning of events such as the "birth of life" or "intelligence", making them no longer a "sign of God", a miracle, chance, etc., but a manifestation of time over which nothing is superior.

In a new sense, "intelligent life" cannot be considered as a necessary, or at least a possible, production of the inorganic, since in this case, it would be contained as a potentiality in dead matter, which would be, in a certain way, already living and intelligent.

Virtuality and the Concept of Two Deaths

Virtuality is the concept that closely connects Meillassoux's speculative materialism with Gilles Deleuze's schizoanalysis. For the latter, virtuality does not mean the unreal. (1) The virtual is definite, not formless. (2) The virtual is the opposite of the actual, but not the real. (3) The virtual is not a "double" (calculus) of the actual; the virtual and the actual are not in a simple relationship of "similarity". (4) Finally, the virtual is the ontological cause of real becoming and, therefore, of producing novelty.

Meillassoux undertakes a relatively breakneck interpretation of Deleuze, using a very "condensed" reading of Henri Bergson's *Matter and Memory* (Bergson, 1991). According to Meillassoux, within immanence, the dualism of freedom and matter, event and flow, must be a monism. The key equation for Deleuze is: "monism = pluralism", which means that the monism of heterogeneous matter assumes the pluralism of multiple events (Meillassoux, 2007b).

Understanding a living being is crucial in Deleuze's interpretation. A living being surrounded by an infinite number of connected images is a special case of the process of "becoming". A living being, for Meillassoux, is a local "selection" of images, a "place of indifference" to the excess of world-images. The body, like the mind, does not synthesize or "add" new features to the world but only selects and subtracts. But on the other hand, images do not flow freely through the body. Instead, the body is the site of interceptions of images and the "living thing" is a discontinuous loop of "captures" of images, the place where the "thinning" or "leaning" of flows takes place.

When asked how to think of a living being in a world where there is no "mystical fluid", no "will to power", no *élan vital*, nothing but the physics of matter itself, Meillassoux answers categorically—the emergence of a living being is becoming "centres of thinning" in a universally united and interconnected realm world of images. How can this happen? In order to become bodies, a "body without organs" is needed for the assembly of life (Deleuze & Guattari, 1988).

Meillassoux argues that two processes of becoming are possible: by "tightening", which contributes to "reactive becoming", which only increases the "power of indifference", and by "widening discontinuities", which contributes to becoming "active", which diminishes the "power of neutralization". What is "reactive becoming"? It is a reinforcement of the indifference characteristic of living beings. Indifference is "stupidity", which is the inability to react. What is active becoming? Active becoming is strengthening the number of connections with the world. Something happens to active becoming, and its body is never closed and insensitive.

Becoming reactive is what keeps life from becoming creative. The question arises: what kind of living being can indulge in reactivity? Are all forces doomed to reactivity? Because every being strives to stay alive, we expect every living being to increase the surface of its relationship with the world. That, however, a certain entity decreases its power. For Meillassoux, this is a mystery. Why is life virtually reactive? Are we doomed to the duality of two forms of life that do not communicate with each other?

Just as there are two kinds of life, there are also two kinds of death. First, reactive (spasmodic) death by final closure. It is the death of a "priest" withdrawn from life. Secondly, active, creative death through a complete opening to the world's chaos. If matter is a collection of images, and the body is a place of image selection, then death is not nothingness but insanity. Becoming matter is the disappearance of the selection of images (Meillassoux, 2007b).

Is this the "fair picture" of Deleuze, who turns out to be a strange fusion of Nietzsche, Bergson, and Kant? But what is Deleuze asking for? Does he ask for a bit of order to protect himself from chaos? For Deleuze to think is really to face the worst of two deaths and take the risk of becoming the chaos of life? Whether to think is to cross death twice? Is it to visit death and return from there? Does thinking and creating mean staying "alive" after having experienced flows of destruction? Does to think and create mean standing firm, being closed in front of the Chaos, and disciplining chaotic experiences in writing?

In his reading of Deleuze, Ray Brassier (2007) also returns to the idea of two deaths, but different from those characterized by Meillassoux. One death is external and extensive; the other is internal and intensive. The former is "the disappearance of the person and the cancellation of the difference represented by the I and the self" (Deleuze, 1994, p. 113). But the latter is:

> the state of individual differences when they are no longer subjected to the form imposed upon them by the I or self and when they develop in a figure which excludes my own coherence along with that of any identity whatsoever. (Deleuze 1994, p. 113)

This death is never "my" death but the anonymous experience of dying in which "one dies"; it is the death which is no-one's since it coincides with the surfacing of pre-individual singularities in the idea and impersonal individuations in intensity through the fracture of time within the psyche.

Brassier says that in Deleuze's ontology, the disintegration of the psyche is not only a mark of "the sovereignty of physical entropy" and the experience of dying defies the "law of entropic explication governing physio-biological extensity" and "marks the apex of psychic life as a vector of negentropic complexification." Brassier adds that "Deleuze explicitly identifies the act of thinking with the experience of intensive death or dying" (Brassier, 2007, p. 194).

Unlike Brassier, however, I would not make Deleuze an ecstatic philosopher of death; I would not succumb to the temptation to read the Difference and Repetition on the terms set by Martin Heidegger and Maurice Blanchot, who are certainly philosophers of death or dying. The experience of death is singled out, but only because dissolution is essential to any process of becoming, not because it is constitutive of subjectivity. Even if subjectivity is the subjectivity of Hamlet and his "time out of joint". We die not to experience our own finitude but to transform ourselves into something else—becoming-intense, becoming-animal, becoming-imperceptible.

Game of Dice or Becoming Without Time

Anna Longo rightly argues that the de-subjectivization, objectification, and devitalization of nature by speculative realists such as Meillassoux and Brassier equals and rivals Deleuze's process of subjectivization, empowerment, and vitalization of nature. According to Meillassoux, Deleuze's philosophy is a kind of vitalism or subjectivism since thought is supposed to be determined by the real as a production, which is part of a real process of differentiation and becoming. For Deleuze, thinking would be a way of taking part in the becoming of everything, and the real would be known as the variable condition for creating concepts in thought. For Meillassoux, Deleuze's transcendental empiricism is not a genuine form of materialism but a kind of idealism where the correlation between thought and things is determined by a necessary process that is the real being of becoming. No different for Brassier, for whom Deleuze palliates the Bergsonian dichotomy of space and time, quantity, and quality, at the cost of reabsorbing the former into the latter in what ultimately amounts to an idealist monism.

Deleuze did not accept the idea that possible experience could be determined a priori by a given unchanging a priori logical structure, for example, the assumption that reality must necessarily be rational and consistent. In other words, he believed that the transcendental structure is not eternal but changes according to the agitation of true irrational becoming.

But are these accusations of Deleuze's philosophy of idealism correct? Deleuze's starting point is actually the creativity of thought, and his goal is to explain the evidence for the historical becoming of philosophy. According to him, Kant's idea of an immutable transcendental subject makes philosophical creation impossible because it applies the same rules and excludes the possibility that the experience of reality can bring something new, forcing thought to change. According to Deleuze, the Kantian view of thought, similar to Meillassoux's in terms of stability, must be refuted because it fails to capture the fundamentally irrational becoming of reality and its productivity.

Moreover, Deleuze would see another problem in Meillassoux's materialism: it presupposes a knowledge of the inorganic as "dead independent externality" and as "dead axiomatics", but it is unable to understand life. In fact, Deleuze wants to question the separation between thought as a system of representation and being as a

represented object. Thus, the dispute between Meillassoux and Deleuze concerns the question of the origin of the transcendental and the meaning of "thinking". For Meillassoux, thinking follows "transcendental rationality" to arrive at the "absolute" by demonstrating that the logical principle of non-contradiction is an ontological principle and not just a logical one. For Deleuze, on the contrary, it is about extending the principle of reason and abolishing the logical principle of non-contradiction by showing that thinking means creating new concepts and inventing new rules according to the irrational process of becoming. For Deleuze, the existence of a contradictory being, which cannot be known as a fact independent of the subject, is a condition of thinking itself. Hypothetically, according to Deleuze, Meillassoux mistakenly believes that a rational principle such as non-contradiction is an ontological principle and thus prevents us from grasping the intrinsic creativity of reality and thought.

This opposition in the concept of the meaning of thinking results in the difference between Meilassoux's and Deleuze's concepts of virtuality. For Meilassoux, the virtual is like "a dice with an infinite number of faces" thrown in a time sequence: on each roll, a contingent fact is replaced by another, and each result is consistent and mathematically possible to represent. This dice game is governed by the rational principle of non-contradiction, according to which only random facts can happen for no reason, and every fact can be represented mathematically. On the contrary, for Deleuze, virtuality is eternal given time, Aion, which can be infinitely divisible, is a unique roll of the dice that divides into a non-summable set of rolls. Deleuze's virtuality is thus a "throw", confirming with a single gesture all the divergent series of contradictory consequences of a given case. As Anna Longo interestingly claims—it is rather "becoming without time" than "time without becoming."

Moreover, this way, disjunctive alternatives, which according to the principle of non-contradiction, cannot exist simultaneously, are confirmed in an irrational and chaotic disjunctive synthesis.

If in Meillassoux's "game of dice" thinking means representing rationally representable outcomes, Deleuze's thinking means throwing the dice again to complicate the series and make a new rule come true. For Deleuze, thinking finds its condition of being in the series of all previous throws. In Meillassoux's game, a thought is one of the possible outcomes of a virtual and rational dice, where each throw updates a fact completely independent of a series of previous outcomes. In Meillassoux, a thought is an outcome that can represent all other possible non-contradictory outcomes because the whole game has a rule that turns out to be a rule of thought. For Deleuze, the thinker takes part in an irrational game whose rules are constantly changing. His intellectual intervention brings a new change, contributing to another branching series. Meillassoux's time is more like Chronos, who devours his children and is capable of any but uncontradictory action. Deleuze's time is Aion understood as infinite time, infinitely divisible, generous god of creation, *durée créatrice*.

The Possibility of Transformation Into Computational Capitalism

The new quality of our times has become what Thomas Berns and Antoinette Rouvroy are trying to think about today with the concept of "algorithmic governmentality" (Rouvroy & Berns, 2013). What is new in this governmentality is the systematic exploitation and physical reticulation of interindividual and transindividual relations—serving what is referred to today as the "data economy", itself based on data-intensive computing, or "big data", which has been presented as the "end of theory".

This "algorithmic governmentality" is based on smartphones and other embedded mobile devices (chips, sensors, GPS tags, cars, televisions, watches, clothing, and other prostheses) but also on new fixed and mobile terminals (urban territory becoming the infrastructure and architecture of constant mobility and constant connectivity). As such, it contains unprecedented powers of automation and computation: digital information

circulates on fiber-optic cables at up to two-thirds of light speed. Automatic and reticulated society, thereby, becomes the global cause of a loss of autonomy, individuality, and plasticity.

According to Bernard Stiegler, the automatic power of reticulated disintegration extends across Earth through a process that has recently become known as disruption. Digital reticulation penetrates, invades and ultimately destroys social relations at lightning speed and, in so doing, neutralizes and annihilates them from within by outstripping, overtaking, and engulfing them. Systemically exploiting the network effect, this "automatic nihilism" sterilizes and destroys local culture and social life like a neutron bomb (Stiegler, 2019).

"Lifestyles" refer to long-term behavioral expectations imposed by the system on individuals and groups, which are set independently of the actors' will. Once we enter the twenty-first century, these expectations come to be generated by processes that automatically capture retentions in the form of data and processes that computationally produce the expectations deduced from this data by systems of intensive computing. The "tyranny of lifestyles" thereby turns into the tyranny of the data economy, and it is precisely in so doing that it becomes disruptive.

For us, however, the problem is not the "tyranny of specific lifestyles", the "tyranny of data", or a "new kind of barbarism", but the possibility of further thinking, the very capacity for intellectual transformation in the age of algorithmic governmentality. Have we still praised enough freedom and plasticity, contingency and virtuality, allowing us to create novelties, thinking beyond the provided information, thinking that would be something other than just the integration of the "information given"?

Let us make a provisional summary of our considerations. Malabou urges us to abandon the distinction between reflective intelligence and the automatic mechanism of the puppet. However, does not the very blurring of divisions suggest some new, higher stage of algorithmic automatism and the total conquest of the brain by artificial intelligence systems? Meillassoux calls us to stop the "metaphysical machine" used for the production of necessary beings and to finally say goodbye to the principle of sufficient reason. But the same Meillassoux does not give up the principle of non-contradiction, reclaiming it to the position not only of the logical law but also of the ontological law. However, a "world capable of everything" is not capable of contradiction. Finally, Deleuze challenges us to discover paths of becoming that are not only non-algorithmic, not only beyond the calculus of probabilities, but themselves constantly create new and unpredictable possibilities of thought and existence. In this sense, Deleuze's thought and his concept of virtuality are the most promising and immune to corruption and the "capture" of algorithms by soft power. Is there some hidden weakness in this concept?

Perhaps this weakness is the attribution of creative abilities to the world. In this sense, Ray Brassier (2007) is perhaps correct when he writes that matter in Deleuze's ontology is relegated to "a dream of the mind" whose representation in extensity presupposes its animation by a temporal difference that generates inanimate extensity as its blockage. The empiricist premise that the life of thought must already be implicated in insensate matter, insofar as the latter is experienced, underlies Deleuze's vitalist claim that physical space-time harbors an impetus towards complexification belying the reign of entropy in actuality.

It's not just that, as Anna Longo rightly points out that we still miss a philosophical system capable of explaining, at the same time, why "scientific knowledge is possible" and why "thought is able to re-create its own rules under the stimulation of the real" (Longo, 2014). The problem seems to be more complex. We do not know how to meet the requirement of materialism and realism, which makes the world the cause of thought independent of this thought, without giving up the postulate of vitalism that recognizes in the world something more than just a "dead, insensitive lump of matter" and in philosophy itself something more than just "the organon

of extinction" but rather "a medium of affirmation" and self-stimulation to think even more intensively. How to think precisely so that the price of thinking is not the need to recognize oneself as a subject "already dead"?

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