Article

"Second Moments" of Post-truth: On Tertiary Retention, Feminism, and Hegel

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Abstract: The essay tries to weave together three interlocking themes: feminism, Hegel, and tertiary retention, which pivot around the question posed by Bruno Latour in 2004: "Why has critique run out of steam?" In less than two decades since, the post-truth era magnifies Latour's question, aggravating the already complex challenge science faces in advancing the global climate change agenda. In this vein, the paper takes the feminist position of Donna Haraway and her engagement with Latour. This particular engagement necessarily escalates the issue of the post-factual era. Finally, this engagement, as the paper builds around the lesson of feminism and the paradoxical legacy of Hegel, gathers around the important concept of tertiary retention (developed by Bernard Stiegler) regarding the creation of historical memory amid the epochal loss of attention through the global infrastructures of digitizing human knowledge, desire, and experience.

Keywords: epokhal redoubling, falsehood, post-truth, second moment

Introduction: Truth and Speculation

In one of his early essays, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," published in 2004, Bruno Latour asks "What has become of the critical spirit?"[1] Latour worries that critique has missed its goal if not "aiming" at the wrong target. Truth becomes at stake against the background of public discourse that has inclined towards mistrust

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[1] Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," in *Critical Inquiry*, 30 (2004), 225–248, <https://doi.org/10.1086/421123>.

of statements claiming to be objective. Even statements of facts, such as scientific claims, are deemed mere articulations of "ideological biases."[2]

In 2016, more than a decade after Latour's essay came out, *Oxford Dictionaries* declared "post-truth" as the "word of the year" as the EU referendum and the US presidential elections (that Donald Trump won) loomed large on the geopolitical horizon, impacting world economies, and the global political climate.[3] *Oxford Dictionaries* cite two cultural contributions to this shape-shifting rhetorical terrain: 1) Ralph Keyes' *The Post-truth Era: Dishonesty and Deception in Contemporary Life,* released on the same year Latour published his essay and 2) the American comedian Stephen Colbert popularizing the word "truthiness" to mean "the quality of seeming or being felt to be true, even if not necessarily true."[4] In Colbert's use of truth, a certain *redoubling* occurs. It no longer stands for truth in the objective sense. Truth attracts suspicion, doubles itself to yield doubt, mistrust, and disbelief. But it does not stop there. Truth becomes the legitimacy of subjective agency, partially echoing the Kierkegaardian indexing of truth to subjectivity,[5] but a redoubled subjectivity (which no longer captures the true spirit of Kierkegaard's philosophy).[6] In truthiness, subjectivity is not only the starting point of reflection but also its endpoint.[7] This stands in marked contrast to the dialectical solution of Hegel, who happens to be Kierkegaard's nemesis. Only something that amounts to an objective totality can preempt the agency's trajectory from approaching the threshold of truthiness. In this context, Hegel would rather that reflective contradictions are mediated by speculative logic.[8] But speculative philosophy has had its own share of criticisms too.

From dialectical mediation to deconstruction, to the post-deconstructive renewal of critical strategies, the speculative direction of

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[2] *Ibid.*, 227.

[3] See Oxford Languages, "Word of the Year 2016," <https://languages.oup.com/word-of-the-year/2016>.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Kierkegaard writes: "[T]hat subjectivity is truth is expressed objectively by this, that the truth proclaims itself to be a paradox." Soren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, ed. and trans. by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1992), 50.

[6] From a Kierkegaardian point of view, truth has no endpoint in the epistemic sense. Truth remains paradoxical to the extent that it is always an object of faith, which is not necessarily the Christian faith. See *Ibid.*, 54.

[7] Hegel called this process the metaphysics of subjectivity. See G.W.F. Hegel, *Faith and Knowledge*, ed. and trans. by Walter Cerf and H.S. Harris (New York: State University of New York, 1977), 188.

[8] In fact, for Hegel, due to its capacity to 'transcend' its 'one-sided intellectual character', "speculation becomes a divine service." G.W.F. Hegel, *The Difference Between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, trans. by H.S. Harris and Walter Cerf (New York: State University of New York, Albany, 1977), 58.

textual interpretations prevalent in the humanities is perhaps one of the reasons why, in general, these disciplines are ill-prepared to pursue the path of revisions. Latour adds:

> Is it really our duty to add fresh ruins to fields of ruins? Is it really the task of the humanities to add deconstruction to destruction? More iconoclasm to iconoclasm? What has become of the critical spirit? Has it run out of steam?[9]

In Latour's sociological prism, the speculative kernel of the humanities is responsible for why it has been "fighting enemies long gone, conquering territories that no longer exist."[10] In light of the necessity to yield strategic results, "revision" becomes a crucial trope in Latour's essay:

> To remain in the metaphorical atmosphere of the time, military experts constantly revise their strategic doctrines, their contingency plans, the size, direction, and technology of their projectiles, their smart bombs, their missiles; I wonder why we, we alone, would be saved from those sorts of revisions.[11]

But aside from the masculine trajectory of militarism that Latour, unabashed by its semantic connotation, associated with the critical function of revision, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?" was criticized by progressive feminists for its lack of emphasis in the revision of the humanities on what should be the defining role of gender. Apparently, one reason why "critique has run out of steam" is the omission of this crucial intervention.

Challenging the Standpoint of Reflexivity

Donna Haraway already detected in Latour's early STS (Science, Technology and Society Studies) position a biased articulation of male reflexivity, the so-called "modest witnessing" of man "characterized by high status and disciplined, ethical restraint."[12] No matter how objective science is, it is never gender-neutral. Haraway's popular imagery of the cyborg was meant to challenge precisely that: the humanistic framework upon which, in

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[9] Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?," 225.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] Donna J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millenium. FemaleMan©_Meets_ OncoMouse™: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 31.

general, modern thinking is based, which, in particular, devolves into the distinction between humans and machines, notwithstanding their intersecting zones of contact. The cyborg is not just designed to prove that humans and machines were intersecting but also puts to question the humanist (masculine) paradigm based on binary oppositions upon which this material semiosis is premised (in light of today's gender-biased AIs). But it is more than the human–machine distinction:

> [B]inary oppositions entail an unjustified privileging of one aspect which is used to justify the actual repression of various non-privileged others, including animals, women, non-Westerners and so on. Criticising binary logic means that we have to re-think the political privilegings that arise from it.[13]

Haraway is particularly insightful in light of current feminist debates and attempts to mainstream feminist discourses, especially in technoscience that has increasingly shaped the material-semiotic landscape of recent century. However, some feminists have criticized Haraway for coming up short of a distinctive feminist method or feminist science to challenge the dominant masculine framework.[14] Counter-intuitively, Haraway and Sara Harding initiated this criticism of alternative feminist epistemologies, noting their patent *identitarian* trajectories toward the impulse to mimic "omnipotence" and "immortality,"[15] reminiscent of the masculine compulsion toward transcendence.[16] In this light, the argument of "situated knowledge" (which Haraway and Harding promoted) addresses the problematic of scientific objectivity in the manner of "unearthing the politics of positioning,"[17] but does not question the necessity of science. Rather, what is questionable is science's appeal to neutrality, and thus, universality.

In a Hegelian context, science is an enterprise of paradoxes. For Hegel, its subjective starting point must give way to sublation, the cancelation of subjectivity to arrive at "universal determination" from its "*determinate*

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[13] Gavin Rae, "The Philosophical Roots of Donna Haraway's Cyborg Imagery: Descartes and Heidegger through Latour, Derrida, and Agamben," in *Human Studies,* 37 (2014), 506 < https://doi.org/10.1007/s10746-014-9327-z>.

[14] See Anupam Yadav, "Epistemology Revisited: A Feminist Critique," in *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19: 6 (2018), 1–9, <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol19/iss6/24>.

[15] Donna J. Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives," in *Feminist Studies,* 14:3 (1988), 580, < https://doi.org/10.2307/3178066>.

[16] See Sandra Harding, "The Method Question," in *Feminism & Science*, 1 (1987), 19–35 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3810120>.

[17] Yadav, "Epistemology Revisited," 376.

existence in a subject."[18] Arguably, however, feminism is better positioned to pursue the path of revision (using Latour's idiom) to expose the "invisible" politics of negating subjectivity (in a way, revision is played out as a negation of Hegel's negation of the negation), such as in scientific discourses, which celebrates paradoxicality without the necessity of a dialectical closure.

We can see in this feminist position a full rendering of paradoxicality as a weapon of **c**hoice, **c**ombat, and **c**oherence. The three Cs I mentioned here pertain, more generally, to the feminist situatedness that pursues the path of epistemic revision in terms of "[constructing] a usable, but not an innocent doctrine of objectivity."[19] It is a paradoxical choice, echoing Haraway, which inevitably starts with a position of subjectivity and comes full circle as a nominated position of truth—one can say, in the correct manner of Kierkegaardian paradoxicality—within a *partially* circumscribed circle of epistemic competence.

This paradoxical positioning preempts a Hegelian sublation, refusing the resolution of conflicts in speculative totality whose dialectical intent is to sublate the standpoint of subjectivity to make the truth-process objective.[20] Situatedness nominates partiality as the "condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims,"[21] revealing no less the actual power dynamics surrounding the "sociality of knowledge."[22] Science is already biased in favor of male reflexivity in the sense that its quasi-Hegelianism is underscored by its claim to neutrality, even as it tactically effaces the male subjective standpoint (and in the process conceals the dominant framing of sociality that privileges it) in order to enforce its universal status.

The second C refers to the paradoxical terms of combat or resistance. It does not shy away from championing its bias, albeit a preference that does not aspire for transcendence. The objective is not to bury Hegel but to make him suffer interminably, in a manner of speaking. Hegel is not dead. One way to put it is that this undead phenomenon called "dialectic" strategically leaves us with an opportunity to pursue a nondialectical *elevation* (vis-à-vis *sublation*)

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[18] G.W.F. Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, trans. and ed. by George Di Giovanni (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 78.

[19] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 582.

[20] Stanley Rosen sums up this point, referring to how the subjectivity of the concept is sublated to become a real concept: ""[A]s objective or real, it must regain subjectivity, that is, show itself as the identity within difference of internal and external or subject and object. It must show itself as the idea." [Stanley Rosen, *The Idea of Hegel's Science of Logic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 409]. Here, however, the recovery of subjectivity loses its immediate character and transforms into an abstract.

[21] Margaret Grebowicz and Helen Merrick, *Beyond Haraway: Adventures with Donna Haraway* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 64.

[22] Helen E. Longino, *Fate of Knowledge* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2002), 77.

in the non-Hegelian tradition, for example, of Schelling, who was Hegel's contemporary.

The crux of the matter is that, in Hegel, resistance is practically non-interventional, which reflects what he calls the silent negativity already implicit in the life of the spirit.[23] Reality is always already in motion, even without the *intervention* of the Subject (Hegel's replacement for Spinoza's substance[24]), which otherwise would amount to a bias in terms of intervening in the course of things. Biases must not be allowed to elevate their standpoints onto the discretionary level of "what is" and its opposite complement, or the business of addressing the contradictions of reality, which can only be achieved by objective, thus non-subjective *logical* means, or rather *speculative* means.

Meanwhile, in place of sublation, there is also a process of intervention called *elevation*, referring to a positional commitment, which in essence "cannot be sublated."[25] Schelling writes: "True progress, which is equivalent to an elevation, only takes place when something is posited ... and becomes the ground of elevation and progression."[26] Elevation *interrupts* the dialectical slide into the third moment, the negation of the negation. Instead, it decides to "stay with the trouble"[27] *a la* Haraway, intrinsic to the *second* moment, the *celebration of partiality*, without the guarantee of closure, echoing the Schellingian notion of un-sublated biases.[28]

Lastly, the third C designates the coherence of partiality constitutive of its integrity as an elevating act, a politics of positioning in the contested verticality of social power that, unfortunately, is no match to the post-truth politics of subjective agencies reducing positionalities to a skewed notion of horizontal dimension. Incidentally, Deleuze and Guattari offer the same description: the becoming-horizontal of skies.[29] (I will discuss this duo later).

"Skies" here mean the vertical aspiration for transcendence, only that the skies have become immanent. This somewhat echoes the position of *flat*

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[23] Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 559.

[24] G.W.F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. by A.V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 21.

[25] F.W.J. von Schelling, *Ages of the World*, in *The Abyss of Freedom/Ages of the World*, by Slavoj Zizek and F.W.J. von Schelling, trans. by Judith Norman (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 135. Quoted in Alistair Welchman and Judith Norman, "Creating the Past: Schelling's *Ages of the World*," in *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 4 (2010), 38, < https://doi.org/10.1163/187226310X490034>.

[26] *Ibid*.

[27] See Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015).

[28] *Ibid*., 25.

[29] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 97.

ontology (which, incidentally, Latour pioneered) in which nothing is *sui generis*; nothing is causally superior to another.[30] But, as in Nietzsche's criticism of the *equalization of agencies*, flat ontology produces its own reflexive monsters, speaking of its nihilistic tendencies.[31]

This is the same reflexivity that conveys the humanistic and conservative tendency of liberal humanism. Its conservatism lies in pursuing "non-partisan truths," a throwback of "classical objectivity and intellectual free play" where the "ideal of human truth," for instance, ought to "eclipse political commitments" and "ideological biases" in the service of understanding "the naked and [the] objective."[32] But here, genuine objectivity can only come to play if this liberal interpretation of things penetrates the realm of *matter*, the naked and the objective. Unfortunately, this penetration can also transform the interpretive field into the differentiality of epistemic positions, whereby matter becomes converted into a *potent* field where interpretive agents *create* their own values, otherwise, potencies. The whole interpretive landscape becomes dependent on who gets to have funding for laboratory experiments and access to information in order to "win" a value, a *potency*. As Latour, then an earlier proponent of flat ontology, argued, science "[creates] potencies" that necessarily "weaken all others."[33] This was once called the "science wars."[34]

And yet this kind of liberalism has an undeniable cost. Today, this cost redoubles in post-truth: truth is just truthiness, ideological, and partisan at large. Politics eclipses truth. Partisanship, not the *partial character* of knowledge, which constitutes the objectivity of science,[35] is the new objectivity.

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[30] Graham Harman, *Bruno Latour: Reassembling the Political* (London: PlutoPress, 2014), 18.

[31] *Ibid.*, 39.

[32] See Philip Goldstein, "Humanism and the Politics of Truth," in *boundary 2*, 12/13 (1984), 235, <https://doi.org/10.2307/302816>.

[33] Bruno Latour, *The Pasteurization of France*, trans. by Alan Sheridan and John Law (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 233.

[34] Bruno Latour, "The Science Wars: A Dialogue," trans. by Ashraf Noor in *Common Knowledge*, 8: 1 (2002), 701–779, <http://www.bruno-latour.fr/sites/default/files/P-87-DIALOG-GB-COMMON-KNOWLEDGE.pdf>.

[35] See Helen E. Longino, *Science as Social Knowledge: Values and Objectivity in Scientific Inquiry* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1990), 212. It should be noted that Longino, Haraway, and Harding had contentious claims against one another on the aspect of feminist science or method, but also agreed on the general orientation of feminist situatedness (which we are broadening in this paper, but specific to the tertiary retention angle that we will discuss later). See John H. Zammito, *Nice Derangement of Epistemes: Post-positivism in the Study of Science from Quine to Latour* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 214–217.

However, in line with their recent scholarly commitments, Haraway and Latour (especially Latour before he passed away in 2022)[36] are far from embracing this skewed but typical conception of flat ontology. It should be noted that "Haraway's cyborg metaphor is built upon Latour's hybrid vision,"[37] which, despite its oblique connotation, is originally framed within a paradigmatic orientation favoring non-hierarchy and horizontal ethics. Non-hierarchy is the opposite of the fetishization of the master concept of scale, implying a verticality of transcendence in the partisan game of power.[38] Latour shifted his early position, leaning toward flat ontology, to what Graham Harman—by far the most astute expositor of Latour's intellectual legacy—describes as the "careful fabrication of fragile networks in the name of civil peace."[39] This indicates that Latour is already avoiding the monsters of flat ontology in the face of the worsening post-truth condition and the pressing issue of climate change.

For post-truth, statements/standpoints are always power-laden. Nonetheless, the dynamics of power in post-truth still lean on the side of *power as truth*, not power as the creative process of securing the continuity of the false.

The Power of the False

One can look at post-truth in terms of the obscurantism of power to the extent that the distinction between *powers* becomes consistently blurred. On the one hand, there is a power that enables truth without falsehood (dogmatism); on the other hand, that which allows falsehood to enrich the search for truth (critical realism). In Deleuze's designation of the latter as the power of the false, derived from Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, science is invoked, in the last instance, as a "paradigmatic example."[40]

It pays to note, however, that science enters into the false only after it is rid of the ascetic ideal founded on the "[denial] of difference … a part of a more general enterprise of denying life," which, for Nietzsche, reveals a

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[36] Since the early 2000s, Latour had abandoned his former view of scientific objectivity, or at least, its solid political connotation. See Jop De Vrieze, "Bruno Latour, A Veteran of the 'Science Wars', Has a New Mission," in *Science Insider* (10 October 2017), <https://www.science.org/content/article/bruno-latour-veteran-science-wars-has-new-mission>.

[37] Zammito, *Nice Derangement*, 214.

[38] See Sallie A. Marston, "The Social Construction of Scale," in *Progress in Human Geography*, 24: 2 (2000), 219–242, <https://doi.org/10.1191/030913200674086272>.

[39] Harman, *Bruno Latour: Reassembling the Political*, 14.

[40] Daniel W. Smith, "The Pure Form of Time and the Power of the False," in *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie*, 81 (2019), 48, <https://doi.org/10.2143/TVF.81.1.3286543>.

nihilistic compulsion, whereby the world "sinks into the undifferentiated."[41] In this light, the asceticism of science lies in its pursuit of balance.

For Nietzsche, the power of the false is first an artistic impulse. It is alone capable of "competing" and "opposing" the ascetic ideal of which science has become its modern proponent after the eclipse of religion. It is the power of the false of the artistic *partiality for truth* that exposes reality as a mere *appearance* resulting from the superimposition of artificial balance on natural differentiation of things, against which Nietzsche proposed a threefold critique of 1) "logical identity," 2) "mathematical equality," and 3) "physical equilibrium."[42] But reality as a mere appearance does not suggest that the real in the world is negated. Rather, reality is the outcome of a process of "selection, correction, redoubling, and affirmation."[43] Still, aren't these what science strictly performs on things, natural and man-made?

Daniel W. Smith sumps up this point as follows: 1) the nature of science is "an asymptotic progress toward an ideal, and that ideal is the 'Form of the True,' even if in fact science may never reach this ideal," and 2) "[f]ar from progressing toward the 'form of the true,' science is itself the movement that embodies the powers of the false as a power of metamorphosis and becoming, a series of falsities (which does not mean 'untruths'), a multiplicity of powers."[44] Suffice it to say that there have been reactionary and conservative treatments of flat ontologizing of things recently, deriving their public appeal from a one-sided direction of horizontality, that is, the negation of objectivity (scientific objectivity still appeals to verticality as a justification of competence) wherever it is claimed.[45] Truth positionings have become seemingly anachronistic, and doing so has its cost: "Attempting to expose facts as results of power-laden processes of social construction [can play] into the hands of anti-scientific obscurantists."[46]

This type of obscurantism is expressed in the form of questioning the actual, albeit, understated value of the false behind truth-making, not truth

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[41] Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), 45.

[42] *Ibid.*, 47.

[43] *Ibid.*, 103.

[44] Smith, "Pure Form of Time," 48–49.

[45] For a brief history of neoconservative movement, at least in the US (written by a neocon), see Michael Lind, "The Strange Path of 'Neoconservatism,'" *The Globalist* (20 June 2003), <https://www.theglobalist.com/the-strange-path-of-neoconservatism>. For an interesting contemporary discussion on the so-called overlap of truth and post-truth, see Vittorio Bufacci, "Truth, Lies and Tweets: A Consensus Theory of Post-truth," in *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, 47: 3 (2020), 347–361, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0191453719896382>.

[46] Matthias Flatscher and Seitz Sergej, "Latour, Foucault, and Post-Truth: The Role and Function of Critique in the Era of the Truth Crisis," in *Le foucaldien*, 6: 1 (2020), 1. <https://doi.org/10.14718/SoftPower.2019.6.2.8>.

itself understood as that which emerges triumphant over the skeptical challenge of falsehood. In this context, falsehood is the midwifery of truth-making. This concept of truth by obscuring its correlation to falsity (what obtains in post-truth) is a far cry from Nietzsche's original, anti-dialectical rendition of the concept of the power of the false, that is, to "question truth … undertaken from the viewpoint of the false."[47] Smith, once again, carefully unpacks this point regarding scientific knowledge:

> [M]any of the propositions now taken to be true in science are most certainly false, and the propositions and hypotheses that will replace them in the future will also turn out to be false. In this view, the supposed 'progress' of science is in fact a movement from falsity to falsity.[48]

Thus, what is at stake in the post-factual era is not the integrity of truth but falsity itself. In Deleuze's Nietzscheanism, overlapping with Popper's thesis, "the true is secondary to the false" (recall that truth is simply an ideal form), "and that the false … is a far more important concept in philosophy than the concept of truth."[49]

The Postcritical Turn

Latour, Haraway, and (much earlier) Deleuze and Guattari criticized what we may designate here by the subjective commitments of human agency for their failure to break free of the notion of truth that relies on the *privileging* of the reflexive standpoint and, by extension, the ironic non-standpoint of neutrality, *a la* Hegel (at least in the sense we discussed Hegel concerning the cancellation of subjectivity). Breaking free of this privileging, in contrast, provides a starting point for the elevation of acts to what Latour calls the "agonistic field,"[50] whereby truth-structures and edifices can be unsettled to give way to *intensive modulation* in the manner of Deleuzean rhizomatics. These *de-privileging* maneuvers can render the dominant epistemic centers irrelevant by preempting a feedback loop to complete the self-centering of power.

Notwithstanding the criticism of male reflexivity, at least from the perspective of the cyborg vis-à-vis Latour, the concept of the agonistic field where scientific knowledge is gained not by some recourse to truth, but rather

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[47] Smith, "Pure Form of Time," 50.

[48] *Ibid.*, 49.

[49] *Ibid.*, 51.

[50] See Zammito, *Nice Derangement*, 191.

by political contentions, seeking the "attention of the research community"[51] with prospects of funding, is music to the radical constructivist's ears—a position not entirely disjunctive of Haraway's early and later commitments. Truth, even scientific truth, is rhetorical in nature.[52] Science "never [bows] to reason, but to force."[53]

Nonetheless, it does not mean truth is rhetorical at large. Science is still a circumscribed field of competency. But the concept of agonistic contestation strikes at the heart of the objectivity of science. In its public face, science appears almost immaculate, shorn of the inner workings of advancing its subjective commitments (in the sense that they are, in appearance, negated), which are martial in scope and purpose. The objective is to win: "The agonistic field…is all about winning and losing (credibility)."[54]

Interestingly, as Deleuze and Guattari argue, while there seems to be no longer the illusion of an external obstacle that the search for truth has to overcome metaphysically, which gives the impression that science has won its old-age contest with religion by successfully unlocking the secrets of reality with evidentiary functional results, the fact is "[e]xternal obstacles are now only technological, [but] internal rivalries remain."[55] Unfortunately, these rivalries could also be repurposed for other ends, which are complementary to winning battles (further aggravating Latour's postcritical condition) as in the case of *simulation* in relation to philosophical criticisms. Deleuze and Guattari liken these criticisms to *sales promotion* amid the accelerating automation of thinking, converting thoughts into goods and commodities against the background of competing for marketability:

> The simulacrum, the simulation of a packet of noodles, has become the true concept; and the one who packages the product, commodity, or work of art has become the philosopher, conceptual persona, or artist. How could philosophy, an old person, compete against young executives in a race for the universals of communication for determining the marketable form of the concept.[56]

In *What Is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari's alternative to the postcritical exhaustion of concepts by simulation is to "go beyond [images],"[57]

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[51] *Ibid.*, 153.

[52] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 577.

[53] Latour, *Pasteurization of France*, 233.

[54] *Ibid.*, 153

[55] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 97.

[56] *Ibid.,* 10–11.

[57] *Ibid.*, 207.

hence, the caveat against too much speculation (restricted to image-consumption). But going beyond images must also "[crosscut] the chaotic variability" of things, actants, or entities to "give [reality its] consistency," which is to say, "[r]eason shows us its true face only when it 'thunders in its craters'."[58] This alternative implies the acting out of the "chaoid state" of concepts,[59] or, in the Foucauldian sense, the critical ontology of the self.[60]

Eventually, Haraway would abandon her early constructivist position; in place of agonism, she would champion the iterability of "contact zones" in terms of "solidarity and shared conversations in epistemology,"[61] which is premised simultaneously on the paradoxicality of situatedness. As Haraway argues, a "[partial] perspective can be held accountable for both its promising and destructive monsters."[62] This new concept is a unique form of reflexivity compared to the masculine. This time reflection does not invoke transcendence. It is rather stuck in its partial objectivity; neither aspiring to break free of the subjective kernel of science nor attain its closure, belying the universality of truth, including scientific truth, which, despite or because of its partiality, secures the practice of science.

The Second Moment of Post-truth

From the standpoint of truthiness, history is a power continuum fueled by truth contests that overlook the vital force that inspires them, the power of the false that exposes at the same time the oblivious nature of history as truth. Truthiness forgets history is never complete. Only its undead reverberations flourish through the violent inversion of history from forgetting to remembrance (everything is recalled back to the motivations of power). But remembrance ignores the fact that this power is powerless to remember, vis-à-vis the proliferation of traces,[63] in the Derridean sense, which explains the contemporary adherence to the authority of "fictions and abstractions," without getting to "a plane" where one can proceed "from real being to real being and advance through the construction of concepts."[64]

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[58] *Ibid.*, 208.

[59] *Ibid.*, 207.

[60] See Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1985).

[61] Haraway, "Situated Knowledges," 584.

[62] Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 190.

[63] The Derridean concept of trace signifies that 'something' always eludes genetic analysis. See Paola Marrati, *Genesis and Trace: Derrida Reading Husserl and Heidegger* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

[64] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, 207.

In this section, I will try to address the question of the post-factual era (viewed from the perspective of historical progress) that does not seem to offer a way out in the guise of a "second moment," which Bernard Stiegler assigns to the production of new knowledge, referring to the function of "tertiary retentions."[65]

In the following, Stiegler sums up the overarching concept of "*epokhal redoubling*" under which the promise of the second moment can ideally operate: 1) "an *epokhē* in the philosophical sense…is an interruption of belief and knowledge … that had hitherto constituted the previous era, which is also what, in historical terms, we call an 'epoch'," and 2) "the reconstitution of new knowledge, new forms of behaviour, new culture, new circuits of transindividuation—and then new social systems … constituting a new society."[66] Since the last two centuries, technological progress has laid down the epochal template for historical transformation, altering the face of the planet at the same time. Stiegler's Heideggerian background with respect to the concept of *Gestell*, for instance, plays its part too well in this respect.[67]

But it was Nietzsche, at the turn of the preceding two centuries, who anticipated the corporeal implications of genealogical histories and how these histories, which are tied with the general economy of labor and human and natural resources, create new body assemblages that form into and constitute a new epoch. Foucault would describe the same thing as creating the body-self, "adopting the illusion of substantial unity."[68] He writes of this Nietzschean diagnosis: "Genealogy, as an analysis of descent, is … situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and process of history's destruction of the body."[69] In Stiegler's idiom, what amounts to the genealogical discovery of the contemporary effects of technics from the last two hundred years is the "generalized proletarianization"[70] of the bulk of the human species. This "inherently entropic"[71] process has led to today's epochal experience of post-truth in the guise of "resignation, denial, cowardice, compromise, and complicity, and the anxieties that all this causes."[72] To this extent, the realization of historical memory, which can only be attained through

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[65] Bernard Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures (2016–2019)*, trans. by Daniel Ross (London: Open Humanities Press, 2020).

[66] *Ibid.*, 31.

[67] *Ibid.*, 261.

[68] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, trans. by Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 148.

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures*, 32, 263.

[71] *Ibid.*, 32.

[72] *Ibid.*, 282.

attention, is blocked.[73] Thus, post-truth is characterized by an epochal loss of attention already overwhelmed by data algorithms' hyper-intensive modulation of human experience.

The second moment is nowhere within grasp. As Stiegler argues, it is supposed to create the conditions for externalizing "that which it has internalized" as a critical component of historical memory and "individuating it by individuating itself."[74] Externalization enables the drives to be collectively shared as an object-investment, for instance, between mother and child forming the bond of the "psychic apparatus," a kind of "tertiary retention" through which each "shares the exteriorization of the drives."[75] In the case of mother and child, the exchange of drives "exceeds all calculation,"[76] which is love that ceases to be an oedipal fetish, as we are told by Freud, or starts to become an internal need, according to which, as society expands, education, which is the equivalent of the collective exteriorization of the social drive that stemmed from the mother–child exchange, becomes an essential component of human survival.

It is in this sense that exteriorization/exosomatization, as Stiegler defined it, is a crucial element of human evolution. The human body is composed of tissues, limbs, and organs that are not the products of biological evolution alone but also co-constitutive of the psychosomatic, artificial, and technical evolution of social organizations that began millions of years ago. Evolution could not have happened without starting with the crudest of tools, adaptive and mnemonic, necessary for survival, which is not without the multispecies transformation of organic life and material encounters in the background.[77] Recall here Latour's hybrid and Haraway's cyborg, in addition to Derrida's concept of grammatology.[78] These nonstandard perspectives on human evolution and progress resonate with Leroi-Gourhan's anthropological studies concerning the co-defining evolutionary routes responsible for creating three types of memory: 1) species memory, 2) ethnic

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[73] *Ibid.*, 17.

[74] *Ibid.*, 214.

[75] *Ibid.*, 239.

[76] *Ibid*, 13.

[77] Andre Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, trans. by Anna Bostock Berger (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1993), 413, n. 14.

[78] Acknowledging his intellectual debt to Leroi-Gourhan, Derrida argues that human evolution is not the result of intentional consciousness, invoking the interplay of co-constitutive evolutionary factors whose origin can only leave traces, but which also enables the "possibility of putting it in reserve: it is at once and in the same movement constitutes and effaces so-called conscious subjectivity, its logos, and theological attributes." [Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravortry Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 84.] Derrida also calls this double movement concerning the 'trace' the "double movement of retention and protention" (*ibid*.). See also Yuk Hui, *Archive of the Future: Remarks on the Concept of Tertiary Protention* (Gutenberg: Landsarkivet i Göteborg, 2018).

memory, and 3) artificial memory.[79] Stiegler would add *tertiary retention* to these mnemonic overlaps, which means the *enlivening of the second moment* of exteriorization capable of engendering new forms of society and culture.

Meanwhile, the postfactual era is threatening to overtake this critical exteriorization of historical memory. Building on Stiegler and Derrida, Yuk Hui calls this archival metaphysics, otherwise, the memory of the future, which is already here.[80] The archive/memory is supposed to be the tertiary retention willed by conscious or noetic agents but is now prearranged by data algorithms whose primary subjects are no less already proletarianized (as to their interior drives, sensibilities, object-investments, and desires). In this context, the present has lost its memory, which is the precondition for post-truth and fodder to a total algorithmic governmentality.

Conclusion: Deferring the Third Moment

The externalization of the drives, we learned from Stiegler, serves a social purpose. Nonetheless, as he would engage Hegel in the conclusion of the third installment of his *Nanjing Lectures*, the sociality of the drives is not enough. It has to submit to a master code: the absolute Spirit. All forms of externality brought about by the socialization process—the exosomatization of the human species to the extent that humans could not flourish outside of organizations—must attend to objective memory, hence, the necessity of the master code (for tertiary retention). The master code, for Hegel, is "universal recognition," defined as the "[direct] element of existence," stemming from "knowing one's purpose."[81]

Accordingly, one acquires a *reality* upon being *recognized* by others who are also supposed to be active subjects. The *social* recognition of this active universality constitutes the temporal structure of objective memory. The recognition of active universality reflects the active universality of *otherness*, which, for Hegel, "is the ground or soil of Science or *knowledge in general*."[82] Nonetheless, Stiegler argues:

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[79] Leroi-Gourhan, *Gesture and Speech*, 413, n. 14.

[80] See Yuk Hui, *Archive of the Future*. From a Derridean (and Stieglerian) standpoint, an archive is a form of tertiary retention, a memory geared toward anticipating the future. Its metaphysical character is implied, involving two mutually contradictory terms forming a paradox: memory and future. With data algorithms, the future is already pre-willed, so to speak, by machines that reduce 'wills' to proletarianized wills, forced into willing 'it', the future. In a sense: willing is futuring; pre-willing is presencing, thus what is already in the present. The future becomes, therefore, an empty form of will.

[81] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 388.

[82] *Ibid.*, 14.

> Hegel saw and showed that the development of mind and spirit, of what in German is called *Geist*, is a process of exteriorization of the mind, externalized in what he called 'objective spirit', based on objective memory ... But for Hegel, this 'moment' of externalization was only a moment, which could be overcome by the dialectic as the moment of *Aufhebung*, which Hegel understood as the moment of re-interiorization of the exteriority, dissolving this exteriority into what Hegel called 'absolute spirit'.[83]

It is arguable that Hegel failed to remain within the second moment of *epokhal* redoubling and gave up protecting the exteriority of the drives from synthetic appropriations by markets and economies (otherwise, synthetic exteriority), or, in Deleuzean lingo, "dogmatic images of thought."[84] The ambivalence of Hegelian legacy, as Marx had demonstrated, helped economize these images and drives into the logical series of exchanging their indeterminate and determinate values, their analytical mediations, and finally sublation into the Spirit, otherwise, a self-sufficient economy of the Idea in favor of a more abstract form of tertiary retention. In Hegelian terms, tertiary retention transforms into a kind of "complete otherness"[85] to the extent that the Subject, the "True Substance," can finally "reassert itself as the negation of all such otherness."[86] The subject masters the code, the negativity of the Spirit as the final third moment, becomes itself the *personality* of tertiary retention (with a civic duty to sustain the morality of retention). Meanwhile, this subject is no less the empirical (existing) philosopher who is always a male figure.

As I briefly draw my conclusion, I take it that the feminist position, at least, in the form it has taken throughout our discussions, is already the outcome of the masculine sublation of knowledge, or the binary thinking that precedes the subject positioning of the feminine but can refuse to extend the universal applicability of what Hegel called "negation of the negation." Here, the feminist assumes the position of non-philosophy, the nonreflexive that refuses to embrace the third moment, the universal We/Memory as tertiary retention. Nonetheless, in its refusal, the feminist position must also deny a sublation of Hegel, which, incidentally, many feminists enamored of Hegel's

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[83] Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures*, 25.

[84] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 103.

[85] Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 23.

[86] *Ibid.*, 497.

Antigone, for instance, overlooked. It, therefore, pays to revisit Hegel's *Antigone* in this context.

In a nutshell, Antigone remained confined in the logical clutches of the dialectic. Her rejection of Creon's law is the ethical pursuit of heteronomy within an abstract universal, represented by the family and society, which is another designation for serializing the morphologies of the law established through the male authority, thus, unable to go beyond Hegel's self-serving sublation of patriarchy (of which *Antigone* is a tragic example).[87] But this may also be true to feminism in general (or at least, Western feminism) vis-à-vis the task of tertiary retention.

Needless to say, Hegel, a particularly resonant model of male reflexivity, is not dead. Hegel must continue to occupy a position in the tertiary retention of the West. The criticism of Hegel, and the paradigmatic serializations inspired by his dialectical model, consciously or unconsciously, *pace* Latour, must not run out of steam, not that we fear a final sublation, *which must be prevented*. The point is feminism must remain at the limit of the second moment, never wanting to step beyond, even short of imagining doing it in Antigone's case.

Grabbing the third moment is equivalent to being swept by the "future tide," the archival metaphysics. Perhaps, it will be its most significant contribution to tertiary retention, the historical memory of the future that must be consciously decided, which, as emphasized, is unfortunately already being written in the present, the "archivization of the now,"[88] bypassing the temporality of human freedom, and already further aggravated, in the sense that the awareness of the future is preempted, by the post-factual ideology of "everything-else-is-power." (This is what Antigone did, contesting Creon's law with the power of self-infliction. Other forms of resistance are less desirable: the positivism of identitarian ideologies, militant, and nationalist exclusivism, and the neoconservative wave of today's post-truth).

This is another crucial point. Post-truth blocks our vision of the alien organology of the future, the inhumanism of the perfection of algorithmic governmentality that has already shaped its own reality amid the present (which is not the consciously decided present).[89] Already this means we are unable to determine our future. (In the case of Antigone, this decision is rather re-interiorized into the law. Unfortunately, the law will always be masculine). We have given so much of the future of tertiary retention to an alien third

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[87] *Ibid.*, 284.

[88] Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures*, 238.

[89] Thomas Berns and Antoinette Rouvroy, "Algorithmic Governmentality and Prospects of Emancipation: Disparateness as a Precondition for Individuation through Relationships?," trans. by Elizabeth Libbrecht, in *Réseaux*, 177: 1 (2013), 163–196, <https://doi.org/10.3917/res.177.0163>.

moment (the Hegelian has secured this future, so to speak) by our indecision or wrong decision in the face of power, if not the willful ignorance of it (by the many).

All this at a time when this decline also casts a long shadow in the guise of the non-West (as a geopolitical figure) snatching the third moment. China is a significant example. (And if "criticism" now stands at the threshold of the decline of the West, must we also speak of the decline of Western feminism?). In hindsight, Haraway warned us that partial perspectives could produce destructive monsters compared to promising ones. This is not an indictment of the other. But nothing in reality guarantees that the dehumanized, sexed, racialized, or proletarianized other is completely beyond the "politics of positioning" and its destructive monsters, simply on account of their being victimized by machinations, gender, and colonial violence, racism, mass deception, etc.

Notwithstanding its desirability, emancipation is still a tricky venture. The other can potentially mimic immortality and omnipotence (resulting from the flawed reflexive model perfected by the male figure). Even the "other" position has its own monsters. As Stiegler argues, with which I wish to conclude this essay, "the realization of noetic dreams can always turn into a nightmare, and always assumes the possibility of madness."[90]

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[90] Stiegler, *Nanjing Lectures*, 369, n. 307.

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