

# **Parricide**

**Or how Holy Gilles rectifies Non-Philosophy with the Sword**

**François Laruelle (trans. pranav)**

The non-philosophers of ONPhi have read Gilles Grelet's introduction (Holy Gilles, obviously in memory of The Holy Family by Marx) to his thesis defense. Its posting on the site complies with ONPhi's statutes. As I will respond to his criticism of what I call "non-philosophy" (henceforth *NPh*), I want to testify to the objectivity and dedication with which he does his work in our organization and which cannot be called into question, while hoping, like all of us, to give it the right impetus. Likewise, it is as an ordinary member of ONPhi, not as its President, that I want to challenge with such vigor its orientation which seems to me problematic in its arguments, intentions, and effects. And first of all, we will gradually understand why, because it is an orientation and it is not sure that the problem of ONPhi is that of its orientation. How to orient in ONPhi? A dangerous recall, why not also how to occident in ONPhi? I will suggest schematically that one can divide the space of the material of ONPhi but not the undivided cause of its use and that there cannot exist several "non-philosophies" (in the literal sense of the word uni-lateral – UNI-LITERAL?). I will therefore criticize, in the case of Holy Gilles, the major confusion between the effecting and the interpretations of its axioms. We will look closely to see if this warning is a new orthodoxic closure, or if, on the contrary, strict respect for the style of *NPh* is not the way to free oneself as much as possible from the chains of this higher doxa in order to better detach oneself from the religious.

The context of the intervention evoked by Holy Gilles, not very metaphorical in his mind, is that of the war with and in favor of the University. It includes a war on the same model with and in favor of *NPh*. In what form? In the philosophical and psychoanalytic tradition, this type of gesture has no other name than that of "parricide". The term obviously suits a Platonist. Certainly for there to be parricide, there must be a father. But it is the parricide which in reality, in this tradition, makes the father or discovers one. Willy-nilly, I assume this function to which GG designates me, even if it means specifying later to what extent a proper name of an inventor can still be attached to *NPh*. A symbolic operation in all senses of the term, parricide has benefits, it leaves a doctrinal heritage that is reduced (only still worth the "discovery" of the Real) but usable and above all better usable than by the Father who did not know how to make it fruitful and, at least, a doctrinal authority left vacant which becomes possible to re-assume. Who will be the new head of the non-philosophical phratry, the one dedicated to theoretical tasks, of course, and even theorists - I'm not talking about ONPhi and I'm not confusing orders. But in this order he unites the horde of non-philosophical brothers (and sisters, I suppose?) by the war of all against all, or each against each. Hence his complaint against a certain pacifism and, even more detestable, a soft liberalism of *NPh*. The old dictatorship of the proletariat now assumed by

Christ with the Sword... Personally, apart from the unconditional (anti-Hegelian) rejection of war as located in the Real or the Last Instance, I see nothing of a liberal pacifism in NPh, that is to say in the subject defined especially as "in-struggle". What would be the use of the struggle if it were not for liberation rather than liberalism, for disalienation of the World? Holy Gilles pretends not to see the use that I also make of gnosis, which undoubtedly is not that of the New Philosophers and of what remains of it as "proletarian" in him. Par excellence, gnosis does not belong to a doctrine (hence the problematic nature of its use of unique material) and the heresy that it allows cannot be used to identify (in the ordinary sense of the word) a thought or an individual, a new holy family. Gnosis is rather a factor or an exponent of the philosophical material, the "leavening agent" or the "salt", the ferment which must "raise" the struggle and turn it into a rebellion. As for the conclusion of this discussion, it will be that non-philosophy cannot practice parricide which it considers in a certain way impossible or hallucinatory in its concept, knowing only the Father or the Peace of Man rather than God, and of Crime than that of the subject-in-the-world against another. With Holy Gilles we are here on a ground already known that I persist in calling "Platonic". There is a lot of Platonism in NPh too, perhaps no more than in any other philosophy, except that Plato is precisely the herald of divine philosophy or the main adversary, the first of a long theory of which Hegel and Nietzsche bring up the rear.

The argument of Holy Gilles can obviously be, given the circumstances, only polemical and strategic, it is not less theoretically very violent. It takes place in three stages, surprising no one.

- a. The general apparent goal is to free ONPhi (which returns here as the cause and place of posting and as the addressee of the texts) from the risk of any official doctrine, NPh running the risk of being an "orthodoxy". For that he reduces it to the interest of a simple discovery, that of the Real, a discovery that is moreover innocent on my part, as if one fine morning I had got my hands on an unexpected treasure and, it must be admitted, a little undue. How lucky he was! A find made almost in spite of himself! Even the proper name of its "inventor", of the one who discovered it, is only pointed out to be put in parentheses. In this way, deprived of author, and more deeply of philosophical contingency, NPh is reducible to three relatively formal and neutralized axioms, like a management tool or a catch-all. Against the risk of the all too famous "orthodoxy" - a real head of Medusa, one with which non-philosophers play to frighten themselves and perhaps to assert their aspiration to replace one orthodoxy with another - GG poses the equivalence of interpretations on the basis of a Real that has become abstract, an empty shell and boilerplate, and for which, moreover, language has

become indifferent. If it is for the Real, it is not for its naming [nomination] in NPh, and if the Real is foreclosed in the name of "Laruelle", its naming, that is to say NPh itself, is not. And this is why I cannot be totally dumb and reduced to playing dead (I am not lacking in envy) when one speaks with... my language, as I speak with those of Plato, Kant, Nietzsche, etc. Even the discoveries of mathematicians and physicists, psychoanalysts too ("be Lacanians if you will, I am a Freudian"), have their own name, and not only the novels. Not to mention the philosophers since the System of Absolute Knowledge, who also, bear the name of Hegel. Needless to say that I hardly believe in the Idea of NPh as a neutral theoretical discipline opposed to the personal work, all this is imaginary, which does not mean that it does not have a theoretical-disciplinary aspect to it to be developed. I take this opportunity to greet Gilles Grelet, whose name I put very high, the author of non-religion... Now it is on the basis of this formalism that we allow ourselves to pose the equivalence of various possible "NPh" and in particular of the existing NPh and of non-religion.

- b. But this very formal peace was only a scrap of paper, because everything is turned upside down and this premium reduction of non-philosophical sufficiency was only the preparatory operation which allowed another interpretation to slip under the name of NPh, that of non-religion. I have sufficiently denounced in courses the politics of the cuckoo which is that of philosophy in relation to science not to be surprised by this last "cuckoo!" that non-religion does to me. Warning! Child "in the back" or substituted with child in the cradle, as we wish!<sup>1</sup> If a language is chosen as a function, despite everything as with Holy Gilles, of the criteria of sharpness and power of division, if it becomes determinant of the Real itself, then it is the Real which is surreptitiously engaged, involved and not neutral as it was supposed to be, it is the Real as "immanent division" - what this means, we see incessantly. Finally there is a hierarchy of vocabularies, and non-religion is opposed frontally (without therefore going through the work of a unified theory) to NPh, and as more effective in the fight against the World. The equivalence was a ruse to get rid of NPh and lay down the superiority of non-religion. This is the great theme of the "rectification" of NPh. Obviously it is not a rectification but a new overall interpretation of the axioms which allowed this substitution, a worrying rectification by the spear...

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<sup>1</sup> [trans.]: Readers may better recognize the phrase "Baby on board"

- c. Finally, what can come after this dyad of contradictory positions, making flat or in equivalence then valorization of religion? The third term obviously, the synthesis of the system. And it is, we will have understood, the very term of "NPh" which assumes this function, but a completely overdetermined and incoherent term which must keep the advantages of the NPh ("classic") and those of non-religion, thus united. Here we are again in the bosom of the system. To this ambiguity, combine the refusal to say "God" in place of "Real" but especially the concept of "Oriental philosophy" or religion which sometimes excludes Western philosophy and sometimes includes it as an incomplete moment. "Religion is more thought-world than philosophy" (Holy Gilles)? No, it is more threatening and more criminal (so gnosis is unchained too?) but it does not provide the adequate vocabulary or the critical technique that philosophy provides and which are necessary to be able to speak of non-religion in the name of the Real. It was therefore a philosophical operation. Its other names, "pick the chestnuts...", or "divide and conquer"... The "multiplicity of NPh", the "current" or the "Laruellian" mode, the "Laruelle variant" (formulations entered at random exchanges with various inter-nonphilosophers), these formulas have meaning, already approximate, only for the effecting and cannot signify interpretations. In particular, the vocabulary of non-religion will have to be clarified and the dazzling oriental lights must not be passed off as the blind night of non-knowledge. NPh is not "philosophy with eyes closed" or "blind" philosophy.

Let's get to the bottom of the problem. What is the main affect, the pathos of Holy Gilles? This is the Platonic chorismos (to separate and place) and what has happened in gnosis. Now NPh is only to radically distinguish the chorismos, which implies the contemplative survey of the division, and the immanent being-separated or without-separation. Uni-laterality is, if you will, a chorismos "become" radically immanent, or precisely a being-separate-without-chorismos (it therefore escapes Aristotle's anti-Platonic objection) and which demands a severe reduction of Platonism and gnosis. GG's argumentative technique is that of sharing overflow, of division against fetishized identity, but a division that he contemplates as immanent. Qua Real, the division is immanent, he knows it very well and says it, but it is then a question of half immanence. The ultimate essence of the philosopher is recognized by the fact that, speaking immanence, he continues to contemplate it in the manner of the Logos, instead of practicing it in an immanent manner. Hence theorism and a final exteriority of division. It is with him the source 1. of his pathos of cutting and rigor, 2. of his critique of the identity (?) of the transcendent and of the subject, 3. of his call to the unilateral trinity and to four terms separated. It

is as if he had once again sliced one last time in radical immanence itself and had made it into detached or semi-detached pieces. Everything then becomes clear in another way, less formal and subjective but more Platonic, namely that the parricide bears less on the non-philosopher "discoverer" than on the Real or the One. NPh is not the philosophy of Parmenides despite Radical Identity, which is no longer that of Being-One and which opens, without transcending, as Uni-laterality. But here too he had to kill the Real in order to be able to articulate a trinity or a quaternary of instances and put them in NPh, if not the life that Plato wanted to put in Parmenides, at least the sharpness or the edge of the spear. When, on the contrary, radical immanence is no longer overviewable or an object of contemplation, whether it is the blind or ignorant [indocte] determinant of practice, there is a strict identity between it and not its division (a property still apprehended by the outside) but Uni-laterality which takes on its true meaning and is no longer itself contemplated. We must stop surreptitiously representing the One and division one last time, it is the One who is separated by its immanence or who is Other-than... transcendence, or Uni-lateral by immanence and no longer by transcendence. In other words, Holy Gilles, like all the philosophers who appeal to immanence, contemplates one last time, but still contemplates separation, being-separated as division. Hence the Maoist formulas, criticized by him but only halfway, One divides into Two, Two unites into One. It is with these type of formulas that philosophy is simply opposed to Hegel, instead of establishing itself in an immanence which can be said to be radical, that is to say to be radically said, in the sense in which the said itself is immanent while using the transcendence of the Logos. I therefore hold that this Platonic reference, far from being erroneous, and even, not coming from an anti-Platonist, insulting, is the key which makes it possible to understand the nostalgic project of Holy Gilles.

This identity (of) immanence is divided neither externally nor internally, it excludes in any case amphibology of the interior and the exterior. It is in this way that NPh came, not without difficulty or hesitation, to unilateral duality as immanent and not as contemplated duality. The distinction here? No just, the unilateral duality of the knotting (explicitly, Nietzsche, Lacan, Badiou) and cloning, as fundamental operators, one of philosophy and the other of NPh. Knotting renders the parts transcendent or in the process of division and ties them with a knot itself transcendent although included as a part in the knot. Cloning is only the respect of the "law" of radical immanence for any instance in relation, rather in non-relation, with the Real. Cloning is not placed on instances that are double transcendent (in themselves and according to their relations), but on instances that it has already transformed into once-each-time transcendent, therefore related to the radical immanence which distributes this "once each time".

In turn, the unilateral duality of cloning (itself such a duality) and of the philosophical-worldly knotting is not the knot of philosophy and NPh. This is the clone of that. NPh is dedicated to producing clones in its own way, this is its "rebellion".

Since there is a lot of question of ownership and non-ownership, a few clarifications. Anyway, I did not invent the "Real", neither the One, nor Man (all the philosophers...), nor even the idea and the ready-made expression of "radical immanence" (Mr. Henry and perhaps others, Maine de Biran? Marx?). Not even the Idea of a tripod structure (Marx and Lacan, after all, they too, already...). On the other hand, I invented several things which from my point of view are characteristic of NPh and really distinguish it from philosophy. These are the eight ways of reducing radicality or radicalization to the Radical, of placing the primacy of the Radical over radicalization, or of the One over unilaterality, what one might too quickly call the logic of radicality or of unilaterality, but which are the instances of its practice, its conditions of reality rather than of existence. These are 1. the full sense of immanence as only real and not transcendental, 2. the need to treat immanence by immanence, in an immanent way, as not being overflowed by a philosopher, therefore the full sense of its radical and not absolute nature, 3. the already-being-given of philosophy in-One, its contribution or its unilation, 4. the structure of real immanence as Uni-laterality or Other-than..., 5. the couple of determination and determination-in-last-instance (cloning) and the identification of this last with the concept of Marx, 6. the unilateral duality of Man and the subject, the dissolution of their confusion, 7. radical immanence or Uni-laterality as human messianity or immanent future, as being-turned-towards-the-World, the vocation of NPh to utopia and fiction, 8. discourse or the non-philosophical subject as a unified theory of a mathematical aspect (axiomatic) and a philosophical or oracular aspect. The set of these features draws a utopia of Man as a negative *tabula rasa* (to oppose it to utopias as positive and murderous *tabula rasas*) which takes the form of human mathematics (to oppose it to a "divine mathematics", Leibniz, and to all mathematics philosophizable as Platonist).

The point which concentrates the resistances is undoubtedly the invention of Man as Name-of-Man, first name for the cause of thought. And the one which concentrates the differences is the style of NPh as identity of style, which has a double aspect, of discipline and work, of theorem and oracle. But the real difficulty in hearing non-philosophy is very deeply hidden in the depths of philosophy itself. It is because it does not cease, from Parmenides to Derrida, even to Levinas, to transform its thematic content of transcendence while forgetting to also transform the operational or formal transcendence, sometimes topological sometimes logical, in which it deploys its operations and weaves its tradition.

Philosophy, too, is at two levels, its conditions of gesture and the superficial theme, it too has a presupposition but ignores it or erases it in the unity of appearance which is called the Logos. Non-philosophy risks taking the same path and being content to work on the thematic level of philosophy, not its surface objects and its chatter (we haven't talked about it for a long time, and these are anyway simple materials to induce a work of transformation), but the transcendence-form of its objects. In the end, it runs the risk of collecting the bad heritage of philosophy, that of its presupposition even deeper than the game of transcendences. That was what the imperative of the radicality of immanence meant, to treat immanence in an immanent way, not to make it a new object. Hence the non-(philosophy) and the rejection of the Platonic chorismos, the symbol of all philosophical abstraction.

You are all in the right (i.e., "empowered") to withdraw from me the illusions which I had granted myself by excessive narcissism. Until my name, which I remark is here and there more and more detached from NPh, becomes an accident in its history. It is true that I had baptized "NPh" with this term to free it from me and free myself from it, but we should not forget that there was at least a baptismal operation and that willy-nilly I am "father" and "priest" of a confession without-God, and not a simple bearer of axioms in this human affair. No illusions, the legacy will part into pieces and interpretations. But it is difficult not to point out, for the first time, the heart of the dispute. We have confused, and Holy Gilles more than any other but also with more decision than the others, the multiple effectuations of NPh, possible and necessary, with its interpretations. The non-philosophical freedom of the effectuation and the philosophical freedom of the interpretation. The effectuations insist on starting NPh again from zero from the point of view of the philosophical material and therefore also, but in these limits, the formulation of its axioms, but in no way to straight away give divergent interpretations of its axioms. Divergent because they do not take into account the material from which these axioms come from in NPh, and because they do not themselves see that they are the symptoms of another vision of the World. However I must also plead guilty for lack of precision, the statements of non-philosophy are not pure axioms and mathematical theorems, they have only a mathematical aspect. They are, by their extraction or their origin, mathematical and transcendent. And by their functioning determined in-Real, in non-philosophy, they are identically in-last-humanity entities which have an aspect of axiomatics and an aspect of interpretation (or of an oracle, like I like to say now) that it is tempting, myself providing the temptation, to isolate and transform into full freedom of interpretation.



I repeat that Holy Gilles unambiguously distinguishes his work as the organizing head of ONPhi and his personal position in theory, and it is only on this last point that I am answering him. But this conflict engages anyway the fate of ONPhi, he cannot but hope to orient it by and on the theoretical mode (by theorism). What authoritarian Platonic idealism in this ambition, is this the city of Laws reviewed by gnosis? All of this is obviously consistent in its own way. I see a lot of talent in this attempt and I admire the audacity of such a decision. But it seems to me foreign to the "spirit" and especially to the fecundity of NPh. Finally, parricide, although forming a tradition, takes place only once or only in one direction. It was possible for Plato and represented a possible enrichment of Parmenides by introducing the Other into it as non-being and language, but is it still possible with the same fecundity on non-philosophy, this time by introducing, always mixing them, (non-) religion, if not as a philosophical and religious resentment? If philosophy begins with a crime, undoubtedly it is obliged to continue by the same lanes, as what the crimes of philosophy, once committed the founding crime of Plato, are of reaction and self-defense. Not doubting Marx, history begins with a tragedy, repeats itself or ends with a comedy.

Finally, I would make a request for the non-philosophical ethics of discussion. What tires me, I admit, is the permanent use as an argument for what is called retort (you are the sufficient one, the orthodox is always you, worldly yourself, you are another master). It was necessary to invent this genre of retort which is based on the confusion of the operations of NPh and its global interpretations! Retort is the law but like any too-human law, it must acquire a dimension which displaces it, or rather which replaces it and takes away its authority but not all effectiveness. If the non-philosopher authorizes himself on his own but near the Real-of-the-last-instance, let him remember that his criticism of other non-philosophers can also use retortion only under the same conditions, near that of the Real in-last-instance.