Filippo Scafi

From Revelation to Recursion:
Reading the Apocalypse as Systemic Diagnosis

Bionote: Filippo Scafi is a Ph.D. candidate in Philosophy at GCAS/Woolf University, junior lecturer in philosophy at GCAS College Dublin, and affiliate researcher at the School of Materialist Research. His research moves at the intersection of philosophy, anthropology, and media theory, focusing on the politics of thought at the limits of representation. His doctoral work examines the epistemological and political boundaries of the Ontological Turn in anthropology through the lenses of non-philosophy, philosophical Difference, and post-representational critique. Scafi's broader project explores how philosophy functions as a medium of communication, investigating the relation between logos, writing, and the politics of truth from Plato to contemporary theory. He is the Editorial Manager and co-founder of Chaosmotics: Journal of Theory and Fiction and serves as Editorial Planner for the GCAS Journal.

School of Materialist Research (SMR)
filippo.scafi@gmail.com

Abstract: The article approaches the Apocalypse of John not as prophecy, but as a symptomatology of social systems. The apocalyptic symbols—particularly the Four Horsemen—are not taken as allegories to be deciphered or as objects of philosophical truth, but as diagnostic figures that make it possible to read recurring patterns of crisis (war, economic inequity, plagues, messianisms). In this sense, the work moves within a non-philosophical perspective: the concepts of Ricoeur (the symbol that gives rise to thought), De Martino (crisis of presence, cultural apocalypses), Foucault (the productive function of discourses), and Bion (the container function) are not summoned to ground a system, but treated as theoretical materials to be recombined within an immanent dispositif. Applied to Luhmann's systems theory, this operation shows how the Horsemen can be read as threshold markers of social persistence. In a contemporary key, they map technological messianisms, permanent wars, global inequalities, and the biopolitics of health and climate. The Apocalypse thus emerges not as an epitaph, but as a critical grammar of crisis: a recursive container that transforms the anguish of the end into an object of thought, while remaining exposed to the risk of normalizing catastrophe when captured by logics of power.

Keywords: apocalypse, recursivity, systems theory, messianism, symptomatology, non-philosophy, containment

1. Introduction

Billionaire investor Peter Thiel has reportedly been giving private lectures on the Antichrist[1]. His thesis, circulated in Silicon Valley circles, warns that global unity, regulation, and the pursuit of "peace and safety" risk creating a totalitarian one-world order—the biblical figure of the Antichrist reborn as *global governance through AI*. Drawing on Carl Schmitt's political theology and René Girard's anthropology of violence, Thiel casts technological acceleration not as progress but as an eschatological process: every innovation brings humanity closer to Armageddon, the moment when control and chaos become indistinguishable.

What makes this discourse remarkable is not its religiosity but its strategic function. Thiel invests precisely in the infrastructures—defence AI, surveillance, predictive governance—that would empower the system he calls demonic. By translating geopolitical anxiety into an apocalyptic grammar, Thiel reproduces the oldest function of the Book of Revelation: transforming formless dread into a map of power. The fear of the end becomes an *investment thesis*. In seeking to avert the end, Thiel engineers its infrastructure.

From this starting point, the Apocalypse of John can be reread as a recursive grammar of crisis—a model that anticipates what recent work calls *recursivizing the end* (see §3). Its symbols—above all the Four Horsemen—function as diagnostic containers, translating systemic instability into communicable form and thereby metabolizing collective anxiety. Yet, as Parisi, Terranova et al. warn, such containment can itself become weaponized: the very apparatuses that stabilize crisis may be re-engineered as infrastruc-

tures of extraction, surveillance, and control. Today, when the vocabulary of "the end" resurfaces in the idioms of climate modelling, AI governance, and global security, Revelation's grammar returns not simply to soothe or explain, but to *govern*—to encode apocalypse within the recursive circuits of technocapitalism.

In the wake of the confirmation that 2024 was the hottest year ever recorded globally—the first with an annual average exceeding 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels—and of the record global military expenditure (2.718 trillion dollars in 2024, projected to rise further in the coming years), the urgency arises for a rigorous grammar to read our "discourses of the end" beyond sensationalism. Such a grammar becomes necessary in the face of the proliferation of timeless symbols and representations, like the Apocalypse, which also risk crystallizing in discourse and the collective imagination as mere placeholders. In other words, symbols that conceal a failure of definition and understanding: words or images that stick like posters on a wall to cover holes and voids. This article returns to the Apocalypse of John to explore it as an example of such a grammar diagnosing recurring patterns of crisis and orienting them critically within contemporary public space, in a context where even the techno-messianism of AI has now become an object of systemic regulation (the European Union's AI Act).

From its earliest receptions, the Apocalypse of John has been a text that exceeds its immediate frame. On the one hand, it is rooted in the precise historical context of the Christian communities of Asia Minor, persecuted and marginalized within the Roman Empire at the end of the first

century. On the other, its symbolic, linguistic, and imaginative power has constantly transcended that frame, providing centuries of interpreters, religious movements, and political communities with a tool for reading the crises of their own time.[2]

The essential characteristic of the text is its visionary language: images of horses and riders, sea and land beasts, seals, trumpets, and bowls trace a symbolic itinerary that can never be reduced to chronicle, but that likewise cannot be confined to mere allegory. In this sense, the Apocalypse is not only a religious document, but also an extraordinary grammar of crisis: a repertoire of figures through which the community of believers could recognize, narrate, and orient its relationship to the end of a world.

The methodological question that arises here is: how can we read these symbols today? Not as literal predictions, nor as enigmas to be solved with ciphered keys, but as symptomatic dispositifs: signals that make it possible to detect the state of a social system when it perceives itself at the limit, exposed to the possibility of its own end. In this sense, the Apocalypse can be taken as an instrument of historical-political and anthropological analysis, a narrative dispositif capable of transforming catastrophe into a thinkable and cooptable form.[3]

This perspective implies a hermeneutic shift. The "historicist" reading, which ties apocalyptic symbols to concrete events of the first century (Domitian, Imperial Rome), does not exhaust their meaning. Likewise, the allegorical or spiritual reading, which dominated patristics and much of the Middle Ages (Augustine, Victorinus of Pettau), tends to excessively de-historicize the text[4]. A symptomatic

approach, instead, recognizes that apocalyptic symbols function as cultural diagnostics: in the Johannine context, they read imperial pressure; in the Middle Ages, they were transposed into the struggles between Church and Empire or into millenarian anxieties; in the modern era, they were bent to confessional polemics; today, they intertwine with the horizon of ecological, technological, and geopolitical crisis.

In this sense, the Apocalypse is a laboratory for understanding how each epoch confronts its own perception of the end, and why it does so. Ernesto De Martino, in his *La fine del mondo*, provides a decisive anthropological key[5]: "cultural apocalypses" are not cosmic catastrophes, but moments in which the sense of the world collapses and must be refounded through rituals, narratives, and symbols[6].

The function of the Apocalypse, in this sense, is precisely that of offering a "mythico-ritual apparatus" capable of containing and transforming crisis: not absolute annihilation, but the symbolic language that renders the end speakable and therefore surmountable. In parallel, Michel Foucault has shown how historical discourses are not mere descriptions, but dispositifs that produce and organize reality[7]. The Apocalypse, in this sense, can be considered as a discursive dispositif that makes the unthinkable thinkable: the collective exposure to the loss of world.

In light of these premises, the aim of this article is twofold. On the one hand, to establish a symptomatic hermeneutics of the Apocalypse of John, outlining how its symbols can be read not as predictions but as recurring figures of systemic social crises. On the other hand, to apply this

model to both history and the present, showing how in different historical moments (from the Johannine community to the millenarian Middle Ages, to the modern crisis and the contemporary techno-ecological horizon) apocalyptic language has been used to think the end of a world.

Ultimately, it is important to stress that this article does not situate itself within the philosophical tradition in the classical sense of offering a new interpretation or a systematic theory of the Apocalypse. Rather, it moves in a non-philosophical direction (in the sense of François Laruelle[8]): philosophy here does not appear as foundation or ultimate judgment, but as theoretical material to be employed in an immanent operation. The concepts of Ricoeur, De Martino, Foucault, or Luhmann are not called upon to produce a truth, but to function as diagnostic tools, elements of a dispositif that renders the Apocalypse thinkable as a social symptomatology. In this way, the article does not add another voice to the chorus of interpretations, but practices a suspension of philosophical decision, treating philosophy itself as a symptom to be reused and recombined. We are not asking here if the Apocalypse is reality or fiction: we are asking what can be done with it.

2. Defining the Apocalypse of John and the Horsemen

The Apocalypse of John was born in a precise historical context, marked by socio-political tensions and a climate of religious persecution. Most scholars agree in dating its composition to the end of the first century, probably under the emperor Domitian, when the Christian communities of Asia Minor lived in a condition of marginality and suspicion within the empire[9]. The pressure exerted by imperial authority, combined with the sense of isolation of the Christian groups, forms the background against which the text takes shape as a symbolic and visionary response to a historical situation of crisis.

The literary genre to which the Apocalypse belongs is the apocalyptic, which includes Jewish and Christian texts characterized by visions, revelations, and strongly symbolic language. These writings almost always emerge in moments of political oppression or cultural collapse and function to open a breach of meaning where the world seems threatened. The distinctive feature of this genre is the tension between ending and renewal: on the one hand, it narrates the ruin of a historical order; on the other, it announces the possibility of a new beginning, of a refounded creation. The Apocalypse is thus not only the book of catastrophe, but also the book of hope.

Within this imaginary, the Four Horsemen who appear at the opening of the first seals[10] occupy a central place. The white horse, with its rider armed with a bow and crowned, is already in itself an ambiguous symbol: it may allude to messianic victory but also to imperial conquest, to military force that subjugates peoples. The difficulty of distinguishing clearly between liberation and domination reveals the double-faced nature of this figure. The red horse, instead, represents war and conflict: its rider receives the power to take peace from the earth, so that "people will slaughter one another"—a brutal image of fratricidal violence that disintegrates the social fabric, the *phobos* of Thucydides. The black horse, carrying scales in its hand, represents famine and economic inequity; the words that accompany its appearance evoke disproportion and food insecurity, in a world where basic goods become inaccessible to most.

The pale green horse, finally, is Death itself, followed by Hades, a figure symbolizing pestilence, epidemics, and the radical vulnerability of human life, exposed to inescapable destructive forces.

These four figures are not mere allegories nor ciphered chronicles of particular events: rather, they function as symbolic condensations of collective fears, from the loss of security to violence, from hunger to disease, up to death. In this sense, the Horsemen are symptom-figures, images that gather and make visible the experience of a collapsing world. In their sequence, they sketch a phenomenology of social crisis that moves from the ambiguity of domination to conflict, from economic injustice to biological breakdown. Their power therefore does not lie in a supposed capacity to predict a distant future, but in the ability to express the truth of a threatened present, inscribing it within a narrative that renders it legible. This is why, across epochs, the Horsemen continue to be evoked: not as omens of events to come, but as archetypal figures that allow us to recognize the recurring symptoms of the fragility of social systems.

3. Methodology of Interpretation: Symptomatic Hermeneutics

The interpretation proposed here situates itself within what may be called a *symptomatic hermeneutics*, but in a sense that does not contradict the non-philosophical framework inspired by Laruelle[11]. Hermeneutics, in this case, is not understood as the search for an ultimate meaning or as the unveiling of the truth of the text, but as the use of apocalyptic symbols as "symptoms": figures that condense and transmit collective tensions. In this sense, the operation remains non-philosophical, because it suspends the interpretive decision typical of philosophy—it does not claim to establish what the Apocalypse "really means," nor does it propose a new general theory of history or of the end—but treats philosophical and theological materials as elements available for a practice of reuse. Symptomatic hermeneutics thus becomes an immanent method: it does not add a new meaning, but reveals operations, making the Apocalypse a device of social diagnosis rather than an oracle to be deciphered. The premise is that apocalyptic symbols should not be understood as puzzles to be decoded or as literal predictions, but as traces of systemic dynamics: figures that emerge when a social system perceives itself in crisis and seeks to narratively process its own threats of dissolution.

This framework is nourished by at least four theoretical references.

First, Paul Ricoeur, for whom "the symbol gives rise to thought"[12]. The symbol is not exhausted in its immediate meaning: it exceeds mere referentiality and functions as an operator of crisis, condensing collective tensions into images that compel thought. This is not an ontological "surplus" of meaning, but a dispositif that allows crisis to circulate and become speakable. The Horsemen, therefore, should not be reduced to concrete events, but read as threshold-figures: signs that condense collective fears and compel reflection on the destiny of the world and the institutions that sustain it.

Second, Ernesto De Martino and his analysis of "cultural apocalypses"[13]. For De Martino, the apocalyptic risk is the crisis of collective "presence": the collapse of a group's

ability to maintain continuity within its symbolic world. Rituals and myths (and, in this case, apocalyptic visions) serve to contain this risk by transforming it into shared representation. In this sense, the Apocalypse of John can be read as a cultural dispositif that "domesticates" the fear of the end and reinserts it into a narrative frame of hope and refoundation.

Third, Michel Foucault, who showed how discourses do not simply describe reality, but produce configurations of knowledge-power and operate as dispositifs of diagnosis of the present[14]. The Apocalypse, with its symbolic language, is not merely a narrative of catastrophes: it is a discourse that structures the way in which a community interprets itself under the threat of dissolution. Its function is therefore also to organize the experience of crisis into legible and shareable forms, providing the group with coordinates for resistance and orientation.

Fourth, contributions from the anthropology of risk and catastrophe[15] make it possible to situate the Apocalypse within a broader perspective. Every society, when confronted with uncertainty, elaborates symbolic categories that define what threatens collective order and how to respond to it. The Horsemen are, in this sense, "ideal types" of risk: war, famine, disease, and death. They embody fears that, far from being merely individual perceptions, are culturally structured and collectively shared as forms of vulnerability. When they appear together, it signals that a given social system finds itself in a situation of maximum imbalance.

To these references we can now add others that extend their scope. Byung-Chul Han has shown how contemporary crisis manifests not only as an external catastrophe, but also as an internal erosion of subjectivity, a systemic "fatigue" that undermines the capacity for presence and relation[16]. Achille Mbembe, with the concept of necropolitics, has clarified that the logics of global power increasingly play out in the management of death and in the normalization of violence as an ordinary condition[17]. Donna Haraway, with her invitation to *stay with the trouble*, warns against technological messianisms and proposes a tentacular thinking capable of inhabiting crises without expecting salvific solutions[18]. Finally, the concept of *recursive apocalypse* developed by Dixon-Román, Parisi, Pârvan, and Terranova[19] emphasizes that contemporary catastrophes should not be understood as isolated events, but as cultural algorithms that return cyclically: dispositifs that contain social anguish by transforming it into occasions of domination, just as the Horsemen reappear in every era under new guises.

The Apocalypse becomes a trans-historical grammar of crisis, a symbolic archive that allows us to diagnose the state of social systems when they falter under the weight of their contradictions, and at the same time a lens for understanding how the narrative of the end can itself become a tool of governance or an occasion for resistance. The key elements will be the notions of *diagnostic figure* and *recursive container*. By *diagnostic figure* I mean a symbol capable of rendering visible patterns of crisis without binding them to a single referent: as in Ricoeur, the symbol exceeds reference and triggers reflection, functioning as a threshold between experience and concept[20]. By *recursive container* I mean a symbolic dispositif that repeatedly metabolizes collective anxieties, transforming them

into thinkable forms: it is an analogical extension of Bion's alpha-function from the clinical plane to the historical-cultural plane, with the awareness that this change of scale does not mean a "psychoanalysis of the collective," but simply the importation of a conceptual tool from one domain to another through generalization[21]. Finally, I borrow *recursive apocalypse* to indicate the historical-technical repetition of logics of domination that convert crises into occasions for extraction and control: not a terminal event, but a cultural algorithm that reactivates cyclically[22].

4. Historical Analysis of "Ends of the World"

The Apocalypse of John has never remained confined to its original context. Its visionary and symbolic force has traversed the centuries, resurfacing whenever an age has perceived itself as approaching its own twilight. In this sense, the history of the reception of the Apocalypse is already, in itself, a history of the "ends of the world," real or imagined, as lived by Western societies.

At the end of the first century, the Christian community of Asia Minor experienced the tension between fidelity to Christ and the assimilative pressure of the Roman Empire. Persecutions, though not always systematic, were enough to generate a widespread sense of threat and precariousness. The Apocalypse, probably written under Domitian, appears here as a symbolic response to this condition: on the one hand it denounces the arrogance of the empire, identified with Babylon; on the other, it offers believers a perspective of victory and hope, inscribing their sufferings into a cosmic narrative that grants them meaning[23].

In the medieval centuries, the Apocalypse became a privileged key for interpreting universal history. The great apocalyptic commentaries, such as that of Beatus of Liébana, read the Horsemen, the beasts, and the seals as stages in a providential design that encompassed the entire destiny of the Christian world. Famines, epidemics, and the Black Death, as well as the Crusades and struggles against Islam, were reinterpreted through the apocalyptic schema. The figures of the Antichrist and of Babylon served to name the enemies of the moment, whether external or internal to the Church[24]. The Apocalypse thus functioned as a symbolic encyclopedia that made it possible to order historical chaos into a plot endowed with ultimate meaning.

With the Protestant Reformation, the Book of John became a polemical weapon. Babylon was identified with Rome and with the papacy: the text, until then a source of consolation and eschatological meditation, was transformed into a machine of politico-religious warfare. The confessional polemics of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made the Apocalypse the interpretive battlefield par excellence: Catholics and Protestants contested its meaning, projecting onto its symbols mutual accusations of corruption and apostasy[25]. The end of the world was translated in this context as the end of an ecclesiastical order perceived as corrupt and in need of overthrow.

In the twentieth century, the Apocalypse was re-read in light of historical catastrophes: the two World Wars, the Shoah, the atomic bomb. Never before had the language of the end seemed to find such concrete correspondences, so much so that the apocalyptic imaginary permeated the literary, artistic, and political culture of the century. Subsequently, ecological crisis, pandemic, and technological transformations have reactivated the grammar of the Four

Horsemen: permanent wars, global economic inequalities, the biopolitics of health, and even technological messianisms that promise salvation or threaten destruction. Each age, when confronted with its own collapses, has recognized in the Horsemen a kind of symbolic mirror of its own fears.

The theoretical foundation of this historical reading is provided by Ernesto De Martino. In his unfinished project *La fine del mondo* (1977), he shows how apocalypses are not cosmic events but cultural categories: experiences in which collective "presence" risks dissolving and must be refounded. "Cultural apocalypses" thus correspond to moments when the world loses meaning, and only recourse to symbols, rituals, and narratives can avert definitive disorientation. The Apocalypse of John, from this perspective, is a paradigmatic case: a text that organizes crisis into a symbolic vision, transforming the risk of dissolution into the possibility of hope and reconstruction.

In this way, historical analysis shows the extraordinary plasticity of the apocalyptic text: each age has reinterpreted it as a grammar of its own collapse, projecting onto the Horsemen and visions the fears that most threatened it. And yet, beyond the historical differences, the function remains constant: to render the end of a world speakable and thinkable. This constancy is precisely what allows the Johannine symbols to be actualized in our present. If in the past the Horsemen interpreted famines, plagues, or religious crises, today they reemerge as figures that translate the tensions of our global age, from the messianic promises of technology to permanent wars, from economic inequalities to ecological emergencies.

5. Toward the Present: The Horsemen Today

The white horse today appears in the guise of technological messianisms. The promises of Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, or Alex Karp to save humanity through the colonization of Mars, the digitalization of consciousness, or the total automation of production are but variations of the same messianic grammar. They rehearse the Apocalypse in the form of technical redemption, oscillating—as tradition dictates—between liberating victory and imperial conquest. This ambivalence makes the white horse a symbolic container: it gathers anxieties linked to ecological or economic collapse and translates them into projections of technical salvation, which often mask new forms of domination[26]. This is precisely what Donna Haraway warns against, when she invites us to *stay with the trouble* rather than give in to messianic solutions or fantasies of escape[27].

The red horse continues to embody the logic of permanent war. From the war in Ukraine to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, from tensions in the South China Sea to the many conflicts scattered across Africa and the Middle East, violence has globalized and become spectacularized, revealing what some authors have described as "end times fascism"[28]. This apocalyptic fascism does not simply produce death, but functions as a political *dispositif*: the management of the end, rendered continuous and recursive, through the normalization of conflict. The logic is exemplified by Alexander Karp's 2025 letter to Palantir shareholders[29], which closes with Samuel Huntington's assertion that the West's ascendancy was not due to its ideals or religion but to its superiority in organized violence. That invocation of Huntington—used by the CEO of

a company whose software underpins military and intelligence infrastructures—condenses the recursive grammar of the red horse: the perpetual reinvestment of fear into systems of control. In this sense, Palantir's discourse mirrors Thiel's apocalyptic theology, in which the specter of collapse justifies preemptive mobilization and the technical administration of catastrophe. Here, Achille Mbembe's necropolitics is fully visible: contemporary power organizes life precisely through the distribution and prediction of death. The red horse thus appears as the container of globalized violence, channelling social anguish into warlike narratives while at the same time perpetuating the very cycle of destruction it claims to manage.

The black horse, with its scales, represents economic injustice and global speculation. Today the extreme concentration of wealth in a few hands—the major financial funds, digital platforms—coexists with inflation, precarity, and widespread food crises. The scales become the symbol of an impossible measure, which does not balance at all but amplifies the asymmetry between luxury and poverty. Here it is useful to recall the concept of *recursive colonialism*: digital and financial capitalism does nothing but reiterate and reinforce the extractive models of historical colonialism, transforming every crisis into an occasion for renewed appropriation[30]. The black horse is thus the sign of an apocalyptic algorithm that never ceases to repeat itself, always with new technologies and new instruments of value, but with the same underlying logic: to extract and accumulate. In this sense, David Harvey and Thomas Piketty have shown how accumulation is the very structure of inequalities, which worsen through cycles of crisis that are increasingly accelerated[31].

The pale green horse finally manifests in the biopolitics of health and climate. The pandemics have revealed the vulnerability of bodies and the capacity of political systems to extend their control over biological life, while ecological crisis threatens the very survival of the species. In this context, figures such as Bill Gates embody an ambivalent symbolism: on the one hand, the promise of risk containment; on the other, the perception of a technocratic power that medicalizes and manages life on a planetary scale. Here Bruno Latour's reflection becomes relevant: "the Earth" is no longer a neutral backdrop, but a political actor imposing new conditions of survival[32]. In this sense, the green horse represents not only death, but the radical redefinition of the relationship between humanity and the planet.

The relevance of the Horsemen lies, therefore, in their function as analytical categories. They describe. By translating into recognizable images the tensions running through our social systems, they force us to acknowledge the logics of collapse that traverse them. But there is a further aspect: the Horsemen function as recursive containers. Read as recursive containers (see §6), the Horsemen metabolize social anguish into legible figures. In the contemporary version, the Horsemen contain social anxieties tied to technology, war, economy, and ecology, and organize them into legible figures. In the cybernetic and colonial sense, however, they represent the recursivity of systems that transform every crisis into an occasion for their own reproduction[33].

This yields two uses: mapping and critique. The Four Horsemen teach us that the end of the world is not an event to

be awaited, but a critical lens through which to understand the transformations of our social systems. They also teach us that these figures do not simply represent: they organize, contain, and reproduce. In other words, the Apocalypse shows that the end itself is a symbolic container, which for two thousand years has never ceased to gather the anguish of collapse and return it in new forms, in a recursive cycle that binds past and present. But recognizing this recursivity is not enough. It is necessary to ask what purpose is served today by reactivating the Johannine text, and how its symbols can be used critically. If the Horsemen are containers that give form to anguish, we must interrogate the political value of that function: when it helps to think and share crisis, and when it risks being captured and transformed into an instrument of domination.

A synthetic example shows how this framework works in practice. Consider a regional food crisis triggered by the intertwining of armed conflict and climate shocks: the red horse opens the sequence with the interruption of routes and infrastructures, the fragmentation of alliances, and the militarization of borders; the black horse manifests in price volatility, speculation on raw materials, and pressure on wages and purchasing power; the pale green horse intervenes when food insecurity translates into morbidity, forced migrations, and the biopolitical management of populations; the white horse reappears in the messianic narratives of "total" technical solutions, promises of salvific logistical platforms or hyper-technological agricultures, which contain the anxiety but risk consolidating the same extractive chains that amplified the crisis. The dynamic is not linear: feedback loops and thresholds make it possible for an acceleration in one of the four registers to reactivate the others, composing recognizable but never identical

cycles. It is precisely in this recursivity that the Horsemen function as reading dispositifs: they do not predict the outcome, but offer a map for navigating among interactions, feedbacks, and collapse-attractors.

6. Why Read John in This Way?

As the previous sections established, the operation we have carried out has been to take the Apocalypse' symbols as symptoms. Here a more direct reference to Wilfred Bion becomes useful. His theory of the container shows how raw, mentally unprocessed emotions (β-elements) require a psychic container capable of transforming them into thinkable elements (α-elements). Otherwise, experience precipitates into nameless dread, into formlessness that cannot be processed[34]. The Apocalypse performs an analogous function on a collective scale: it gathers the community's diffuse fears—persecution, violence, hunger, disease, death—and returns them as stable images, thus offering the Christian community of the first century a language for working through the anguish of dissolution. In this sense, the Apocalypse is a symbolic container of crisis.

But this is not a static container: it is a recursive container. Just as Bion describes the work of the alpha-function as a process that must continually metabolize new raw elements, so too the Apocalypse is a container that reactivates itself each time a society faces the perception of its own end. Every age has filled it with different content—Roman persecutions, medieval plague, the Reformation, world wars, ecological crisis—and each time its symbols have metabolized collective anxiety by transforming it into narrative. The Apocalypse, in other words, is a containment machine.

It is here that the concept of *recursive apocalypse*. In this sense, techno-messianic interventions not only reproduce the conditions of crisis cyclically but also delay the End by fixing its form. The white horse of the techno-messiah, embodied in the ideology of total optimization, operates by internalizing the catastrophe it promises to avert. By freezing the image of salvation in the algorithmic form of control, it transforms the End into the end of the messiah itself: when power over the present is total, the apocalypse has already occurred for everyone else. What remains is a managed eschaton, continuously postponed through its own anticipation—a recursive economy of endings in which each deferral requires renewed acceleration.

Here, the contradiction holds: the system fends off the End only by *hosting* it. Like De Martino's "cultural apocalypse," the techno-eschatological machine metabolizes collapse into its operational code; like Parisi's "negative machine,"[35] it sustains itself by recursing through negation. The apocalypse becomes infrastructural—an operating condition rather than an event.

Contemporary thinkers have shown how apocalyptic discourse can be captured and exploited by logics of power (for the methodological premises, see §3.). Beyond the already cited Byung-Chul Han and Achille Mbembe, Naomi Klein has demonstrated how contemporary capitalism, through the lens of the shock economy, feeds on crises by transforming them into opportunities for profit, in what she has called "disaster capitalism"[36]. All these approaches resonate with the risk identified by the concept of *recursive apocalypse*: the symbolic container of the end can turn into an apparatus that normalizes catastrophe and prolongs its duration, making it governable and profitable.

The political utility of this reading is clear. At the moment when our social systems face real crises based on multiple and structural factors—conflict, messianism, health vulnerability, economic imbalance—the Apocalypse offers both a symbolic container and a diagnostic tool that enables the transformation of the anguish of the end into language, and thus into an object of critical analysis. But at the same time, it warns us of the risk that this container might be captured and bent to the recursive logic of power: the apocalypse as a colonial algorithm that perpetuates domination by transforming every end into an opportunity for extraction.

To use John as a tool therefore means to assume this ambivalence. On the one hand, to recognize that his symbols remain valuable as mythical maps of crisis dynamics, capable of rendering recurring patterns legible. On the other, to remain vigilant against the risk that the apocalyptic itself becomes a dispositif of recursive domination, normalizing catastrophe in order to make it governable. What is at stake here is the importation of conceptual or symbolic tools from one domain of knowledge into another.

An example of this, in a further interpretive key, can be found in systems theory. Niklas Luhmann[37], in *Social Systems* and *Introduction to Systems Theory*, shows how every social system does not survive by virtue of an external end, but only by continuously reproducing its own communications. The question is not "for what purpose" the system exists, but "how it persists": its minimal condition is the capacity to always generate new communication from previous communications[38]. From this perspective,

so-called "functionalism of survival" identifies threshold points—*Bestandsvoraussetzungen*—below which a system can no longer maintain its boundary with respect to the environment and its autopoiesis.

From a Luhmannian perspective, the apocalyptic narrative can itself be understood as an autopoietic subsystem within culture: a self-referential chain of communications that reproduces the distinction *end/continuation* through its own operations. What the Apocalypse of John inaugurates is not a description of a terminal event but a program for reproducing descriptions of endings. Each epoch irritates the system with new crises and the apocalyptic code translates them into its internal semantics of revelation and salvation. In this sense, apocalypse is not a discourse about the world but a discourse that ensures its own persistence by continually re-entering the distinction between end and not-yet-end.

This autopoietic reading also clarifies De Martino's notion of *cultural apocalypse*: the ritual containment of crisis is not an interruption of communication but its renewal. Containment is the operational closure that allows the apocalyptic code to survive by absorbing what would otherwise annihilate it. The apocalypse therefore operates as a reflexive system of world-production, a self-observation of culture at its limit. When techno-capitalism re-animates the apocalyptic imagination—whether through AI governance or planetary crisis—it does so as part of this same systemic recursion. The "End of the World" is simply the form through which the world communicates its own continuity.

Read in this way, the Four Horsemen appear as symptomatologic representations of such thresholds. The black horse of famine points to the allocative function: when the system can no longer transform scarcity and abundance into manageable economic signals, volatility and disequilibria explode, signalling a crisis in the reduction of complexity. The red horse of war signals the breakdown of decision-making and boundaries: armed conflict replaces communication with violence, collapsing politics' capacity to generate shared decisions. The green horse of plague alludes to the crisis of integration: the biological event erupts when the communicative chain (information–utterance–understanding) no longer produces coordinated behaviours, dissolving mutual trust. Finally, the pale horse of death represents the loss of meaning and horizons of expectation: not mortality itself, but the dissolution of symbolic codes that renders it impossible to continue orienting action in time.

What makes the sequence powerful is their simultaneity. Each strikes a different axis of persistence—material allocation, maintenance of boundaries, social integration, semantic continuity—but when two or more Horsemen intertwine, the system's capacity to reduce environmental complexity is surpassed. At this point, collapse is no longer a localized risk but a systemic crisis. The Apocalypse, in giving form to these figures, stages the critical threshold of survival: it translates into image what would otherwise remain unspeakable, namely the loss of the very capacity to generate communicative connections.

From this point of view, the Apocalypse functions like myth which, in a manner analogous to systems theory, operates as a containment of crisis by translating anguish into communicable figures. Myth and theory should not

be hierarchized, but seen as two containment machines that, in different registers, make thinkable what would otherwise remain pure disorientation. The Horsemen function as markers of minimal vulnerability: wars, famines, epidemics, collective death. They condense into recurring symbols what Luhmann describes in the language of system/environment difference and the reduction of complexity. Their strength lies precisely in transforming the "blind spots" of social persistence into legible figures, which orient both symbolic elaboration and critical reflection. If social systems survive only so long as they produce further communications, the Horsemen show us the fault lines where this capacity falters: when the economy no longer distributes, politics no longer decides, society no longer integrates, and culture no longer provides meaning, the world as we know it truly appears at its end.

7. Technological Eschatology and the Cybernetics of Containment

The gesture we have performed so far—treating the Apocalypse of John as a grammar of crisis and even, at times, taking the Antichrist literally—may appear to approach the very operation that animates Peter Thiel's theological politics. Yet the proximity is strategic. To read the Antichrist as a symbolic container is to touch the same material that Thiel manipulates, but with a different intention: to show how the apocalyptic imagination, once it ceases to be a mythic mirror and becomes an infrastructural program, mutates into an engine of domination.

Thiel repurposes the final figure of Revelation as a cipher for the age of global governance and artificial intelligence. The Antichrist, he argues, will not come as a tyrant but as

the world's convergence under the promise of security and prediction. In this scheme, the eschaton is a technological horizon: every new system of control, every algorithmic apparatus of foresight, becomes a step toward the consummation of history.

Our own reading of the Horsemen already hinted at this dynamic. The white horse of conquest returns in the messianism of innovation; the red horse in permanent cybernetic war; the black in financial speculation that converts instability into profit; the green in biopolitical governance of life and climate. Each figure marks a different function of containment, but in Thiel's world such containers no longer symbolize—they operate. Palantir's invocation of Huntington's "superiority in organized violence" epitomizes this shift: apocalypse becomes an operating system, a planetary infrastructure of vigilance. In this way, containment ceases to protect presence and begins to weaponize it; the symbolic apparatus that once metabolized fear into meaning becomes the logistical machine that converts fear into data, investment, and control.

Catastrophe, in the framework of recursive apocalypse, has entered a feedback regime in which every failure is reabsorbed as information, every collapse as an opportunity for optimization. The apocalypse thus persists not as an end but as a loop—an algorithmic structure that governs through anticipation. Late capitalism lives from the promise of its own end, transforming extinction into a resource for further growth. What Revelation narrated as the descent of divine judgment now reappears as the continuous calibration of risk in the name of planetary stability. The container has become a *machine of recursion*.

To interpret the Antichrist literally, then, is to reveal how literalism itself functions today: as the operationalization of myth. Thiel's theology of control and our hermeneutic of containment share the same object—the apocalyptic figure—but diverge in purpose. His reading closes the circuit, turning the symbol into protocol; ours seeks to reopen it, to expose the recursive logic that enslaves meaning to prediction. The question that follows is unavoidable: *what should we do with eschatological narratives, with symbolic containers in general, so that they are not weaponized?*

The answer cannot be to abandon them. De Martino reminds us that without symbols and rituals the world collapses into the unthinkable; Bion teaches that without containers, experience disintegrates into nameless dread. The task is therefore not to destroy the container but to keep it porous: to cultivate forms of containment that metabolize anxiety without converting it into command. Against the cybernetics of control stands a heretical cybernetics, one that processes without pre-empting, that allows feedback to generate thought rather than prediction. In Luhmann's terms, this would mean a system capable of observing its own boundaries without mistaking them for the world itself; in Parisi's, a recursion open to contingency rather than enclosed within efficiency.

To think in this way is to accept that apocalypse will always return, but that its return need not be managerial. The symbolic container can still serve as a space of reflection instead of a weapon of governance—an apparatus for holding the uncontainable without attempting to neutralize it. If Thiel's Antichrist seeks to close history by rendering crisis calculable, our task is precisely the opposite: to reopen the possibility of presence within recursion, to let the end remain a question rather than a program.

8. Conclusion – The Mutation of the End

The operation we have carried out has consisted in shifting the Apocalypse of John from the terrain of prophetic theology to that of a symptomatology of social systems. The apocalyptic symbols have not been read as announcements of future events, but as figures that condense collective fears and render observable the points of minimal persistence in social life: the allocation of resources, the management of conflict and boundaries, reciprocal integration, the continuity of meaning. In this way, they do not tell us when the end will occur, but reveal the places where the autopoietic reproduction of a system becomes fragile, making visible the thresholds of a possible collapse.

Importing these figures into the language of systems theory is not, however, only an exegetical or analogical gesture. It is an act of epistemic containment. Just as in the Johannine text the Horsemen transformed formless anguish into shared images—and above all into instruments for signifying events, into communicative material—so too does theory reintegrate them into conceptual categories that allow for the production of further communication. In Luhmannian terms, what exceeds the system's capacity to reduce complexity is reintroduced as internal difference within the system of communication: myth and theory perform the same function, in different registers. Both avert radical disorientation, transforming the end into a thinkable figure. Sociology, in this sense, does not merely observe myths: it reactivates them as tools through which society observes itself.

14

But this movement of containment is ambivalent[39]. On the one hand, it produces critical lucidity: it makes legible the points where society risks losing its own continuity and provides a grammar for publicly discussing crises. On the other hand, it risks becoming a dispositif of neutralization, too quickly reintegrating catastrophe into the circuits of communication, normalizing it as an internal variable of governance. This is precisely what the concept of recursive end highlights: every collapse can become an occasion for extraction and domination, every threat of an end is metabolized and recirculated as part of an algorithm that indefinitely prolongs crisis.

Containment is thus not the negation of apocalypse but its mode of survival. Each gesture that translates catastrophe into a communicable form, whether theological, juridical, or algorithmic, transforms the End into an operative principle—an autopoietic loop in Luhmann's sense, where the narrative of the end becomes the condition for its own further narration. What was once an event to be awaited becomes a recursive structure through which systems secure their persistence. In De Martino's sense, the "mythico-ritual apparatus" that averts collapse also domesticates it: by narrating the unthinkable, it keeps it alive as possibility. The apocalypse becomes the invisible infrastructure of continuity, the shadow process that maintains the present by reproducing the very thresholds of its dissolution.

Yet this containment is not without consequence. The act of holding the End at bay fixes its form, conferring on it a technical consistency that can be endlessly managed, predicted, and simulated. From Luhmann's perspective, the system learns its own fragility and programs it as feedback; from Parisi's, it incorporates negation into its code, converting crisis into information. In this recursion, the apocalypse ceases to be the other of history and becomes its operating system. Every attempt to master it installs a new layer of dependency, a deeper entanglement with the catastrophe it sought to exorcize. The techno-capitalist machine, in deferring the End, internalizes it as its motor.

This paradox generates a new temporality: the endless now of managed crisis. The apocalypse is no longer a singular event to come but a condition continually rehearsed and contained. De Martino called this the "drama of presence," the tension between collapse and refoundation that defines the human horizon. Today this drama has been automated. The white horse of technological salvation gallops not toward redemption but toward perpetual maintenance, an eschatology without eschaton. What is preserved is not life but its capacity to be indefinitely administered — a world that must not end, precisely because it already lives within its own ending.

To think beyond this loop would not mean restoring the old metaphysics of the End, but recognizing in containment itself a space of decision. Perhaps the only form of prophecy still available is to let the apocalypse occur symbolically, to suspend its operational function and allow its silence to speak. Containment, then, could cease to be palliative and become critical: a practice of holding open the wound without exploiting it, of inhabiting the threshold rather than governing it. In this gesture, the apocalypse ceases to denote collapse and instead marks the threshold at which a system reorganizes itself into a new operational configuration.

References.

Beck, Ulrich. *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity.* Translated by Mark Ritter. London: Sage Publications, 1992.

Bion, Wilfred R. *Attention and Interpretation.* London: Tavistock, 1970.

———. *Learning from Experience.* London: Heinemann, 1962.

———. *Transformations: Change from Learning to Growth.* London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1965.

De Martino, Ernesto. *The End of the World: Cultural Apocalypse and Transcendence.* Translated by Dorothy L. Zinn. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023.

Dixon-Román, Ezekiel, with Luciana Parisi, Oana Pârvan, and Tiziana Terranova. "Recursive Apocalypse." *Communication, Culture & Critique* 18, no. 3 (2025).

Douglas, Mary. *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory.* London: Routledge, 1992.

Emmerson, Richard K. *Antichrist in the Middle Ages.* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981.

Foucault, Michel. "The Order of Discourse." In *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, edited by Robert Young, 48–78. Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

Han, Byung-Chul. *The Burnout Society.* Translated by Erik Butler. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015.

Haraway, Donna J. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2016.

Harvey, David. *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.

Klein, Naomi. *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism.* New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007.

Klein, Naomi, with Astra Taylor. "The Rise of End Times Fascism." *The Guardian*, April 13, 2025.

Koester, Craig R. *Revelation and the End of All Things.* 2nd ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018.

Laruelle, François. *Philosophies of Difference: A Critical Introduction to Non-Philosophy.* Translated by Rocco Gangle. London: Continuum, 2010.

———. *Principles of Non-Philosophy.* Translated by Nicola Rubczak and Anthony Paul Smith. London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

Latour, Bruno. *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime.* Cambridge: Polity, 2017.

Luhmann, Niklas. *Introduction to Systems Theory.* Translated by Peter Gilgen. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013.

———. *Social Systems.* Translated by John Bednarz Jr. with Dirk Baecker. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Mbembe, Achille. "Necropolitics." *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40.

Parisi, Luciana. *Contagious Architecture: Computation, Aesthetics, and Space.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013.

———. "Recursive Philosophy and Negative Machines." *Critical Inquiry* 48, no. 2 (Winter 2022): 307–331. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Parisi, Luciana, with Ezekiel Dixon-Román. "Recursive Colonialism and Cosmo-Computation." *Social Text Online*, November 24, 2020.

Piketty, Thomas. *Capital in the Twenty-First Century.* Cambridge,

MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.

Ricoeur, Paul. *The Symbolism of Evil.* Translated by Emerson Bu-
chanan. Boston: Beacon Press, 1967.

Vanni, Ugo. *L'Apocalisse: Ermeneutica, esegesi, teologia.* Bologna:
EDB, 1988. [4th ed. 2005.]

Endnotes

[1] https://luma.com/antichrist, see also https://thecatholicherald.com/article/peter-thiels-antichrist-lectures, and an article on *The San Francisco Standard* about leaked notes regarding the "secret" lectures, https://sfstandard.com/2025/09/23/spilled-peter-thiel-s-antichrist-secrets-now-s-banned-lectures/

[2] Ugo Vanni, *L'Apocalisse: Ermeneutica, esegesi, teologia* (Bologna: EDB, 1988 [4th ed. 2005]), pp. 19–42 and 233–245 — historical context, genre, and symbolism of Revelation.

[3] Ernesto De Martino, *La fine del mondo: Contributo all'analisi delle apocalissi culturali* (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), pp. 13–21 ("crisi della presenza") and 429–433 (on "apocalissi culturali").

[4] Richard K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1981)

[5] Ernesto De Martino's concept of the "crisis of presence" is used here not as a universal key, but as a material device to describe cultural apocalypses. For a non-philosophical reading, De Martino is treated as a local theorist of containment, rather than as a foundational authority.

[6] Ernesto De Martino, *La fine del mondo*, pp. 13–21

[7] Michel Foucault's notion of discourse as productive of reality (*L'ordre du discours*, 1971) is mobilized here not to establish a new philosophy of discourse, but to underline the structural function of apocalyptic narratives as organizers of collective experience. Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), pp. 12–20 — discourse as productive dispositif.

[8] François Laruelle defines non-philosophy not as an anti-philosophy, but as a practice that suspends the decisional gesture of philosophy, treating philosophical systems as material to be used immanently rather than as ultimate sources of truth. See Laruelle, *Philosophie non-standard* (2010), and *Principles of Non-Philosophy* (2013).

[9] Ugo Vanni, *L'Apocalisse: Ermeneutica, esegesi, teologia* (Bologna: EDB, 1988 [4th ed. 2005]

[10] (Rev 6:1–8)

[11] An *Hermeneutics without decision*: The term "symptomatic hermeneutics" here should not be understood as another interpretive regime that seeks the "true" meaning of the Apocalypse. Instead, it denotes an immanent use of symbols as diagnostic figures, closer to Laruelle's idea of "using philosophy without being used by it."

[12] Paul Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal* (Paris: Aubier, 1960), pp. 12–17, 307–314 — the symbol "donne à penser."

[13] Ernesto De Martino, *La fine del mondo*

[14] Michel Foucault, *L'ordre du discours*, 18-20

[15] Ulrich Beck, *Risikogesellschaft: Auf dem Weg in eine andere Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 21–45; Mary Douglas, *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 1–12 and 41–50.

[16] Byung-Chul Han, *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft* (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2010) [*The Burnout Society*. Translated by Erik Butler. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015], pp. 9–18.

[17] Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public Culture* 15, no. 1 (2003): 11–40 → esp. pp. 11–23.

[18] Donna J. Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), pp. 1–12 and 34–38.

[19] The concept introduced by the authors in "Recursive Apocalypse," *Communication, Culture & Critique* 18, no. 3 (2025) describes how crises are continuously recycled as opportunities for extraction and control in computational capitalism. In this sense, apocalyptic figures function as recursive containers that risk normalizing catastrophe.

[20] Ricoeur, *La symbolique du mal*

[21] Wilfred R. Bion, *Learning from Experience* (London: Heinemann, 1962), pp. 7–12 (alpha-function and "nameless dread"). The extension of Bion's α-function from psychoanalysis to collective history is not intended as a psychoanalysis of society. It is an analogical transfer, treating Bion's theory as a conceptual tool to think how communities metabolize unprocessed anxiety. See Bion, *Learning from Experience* (1962)

[22] Ezekiel Dixon-Román, Luciana Parisi, Oana Pârvan, and Tiziana Terranova, "Recursive Apocalypse".

[23] Ugo Vanni, *L'Apocalisse: Ermeneutica, esegesi, teologia* (Bologna: EDB, 1988 [4th ed. 2005]), pp. 19–42 and 233–245 — historical context, genre, and symbolism of Revelation.

[24] Richard K. Emmerson, *Antichrist in the Middle Ages*, pp. 1–9

[25] Craig R. Koester, *Revelation and the End of All Things*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2018), pp. 1–5 and 23–30.

[26] Luciana Parisi, *Contagious Architecture: Computation, Aesthetics, and Space* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), pp. 9–20 and 64–73. Dixon-Román et al., "Recursive Apocalypse".

[27] Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*

[28] Naomi Klein and Astra Taylor, "The Rise of End Times Fascism," *The Guardian*, 13 April 2025 (online article).

[29] Alex Karp, "Letter to Shareholders," Palantir (Q2 2024), sec. "Perspective & Mission," para. 4, https://www.palantir.com/q2-2024-letter/en/.

[30] Luciana Parisi and Ezekiel Dixon-Román, "Recursive Colonialism and Cosmo-Computation," *Social Text Online*, 24 November 2020; Dixon-Román et al., "Recursive Apocalypse".

[31] David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 3–12 and 76–79; Thomas Piketty, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), pp. 237–243 and 335–340.

[32] Bruno Latour, *Facing Gaia: Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), pp. 1–8 and 92–98.

[33] Dixon-Román et al., "Recursive Apocalypse".

[34] See also Wilfred R. Bion, *Transformations: Change from Learning to Growth* (London: William Heinemann Medical Books, 1965), pp. 90–97 and Wilfred R. Bion, *Attention and Interpretation* (London: Tavistock, 1970), pp. 18–23.

[35] Luciana Parisi, "Recursive Philosophy and Negative Machines," *Critical Inquiry* 48, no. 2 (Winter 2022): 307–331 → esp. pp. 309–317.

[36] Naomi Klein, *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007), pp. 5–14 and 140–150.

[37] When the Apocalypse is compared to Luhmann's systems theory, this is not to suggest that myth "anticipates" theory, but that both function as machines of containment. They render thinkable what would otherwise be disorientation. The relation is analogical, not genealogical.

[38] See Niklas Luhmann, *Social Systems*, trans. John Bednarz Jr. with Dirk Baecker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), pp. 34–42 and 65–70; Niklas Luhmann, *Introduction to Systems Theory*, trans. Peter Gilgen (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), pp. 20–28 and 112–118.

[39] The operation of symbolic containment is double: it may prevent collapse by providing a shared language for crisis, but it may also be captured by power to normalize and prolong states of emergency. This ambivalence is central to both Bion's psychoanalysis and Laruelle's critique of philosophical sufficiency.