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## Recognizing the Dualism to Overcome It: the Hybridization of Reality

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## Recognizing the Dualism to Overcome It: the Hybridization of Reality

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### Introduction – A Hybrid Life

Bruno Latour's project attempts to overcome the dualism between nature and culture that still persists in our world. My focus will reside on three of Latour's books, namely, *We Have Never Been Modern*, *Reassembling the Social*, and *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*. Since the way we live our lives greatly influences the way we think and, consequently, our philosophical positions, it is important to say something about Bruno Latour's biography. His life was extremely inter and transdisciplinary, a strong reason for his work to be so non-orthodox (Blok and Jensen 8).

Latour was born in 1947 in a small town called Beaune, in the Eastern part of France. He was first trained as a philosopher and then as an anthropologist. After field studies in Africa and California he specialized in the analysis of scientists and engineers at work, spending a little more time inside the laboratory walls. In addition to work in philosophy, history, sociology and the anthropology of science, he has collaborated on many studies in science policy and research management. This corroborates the importance of breaking the mold imposed by academia, in which two things rise to predominance, namely, *disciplinarization* and *specialization* (Blok and Jensen 131).

Latour rose in importance following the 1979 publication of *Laboratory Life: the Social Construction of Scientific Facts*. In the book, Latour undertakes an ethnographic

study of a neuroendocrinology research laboratory at the Salk Institute. This early work argued that naïve descriptions of the scientific method, in which theories stand or fall on the outcome of a single experiment, are inconsistent with actual laboratory practice. In the laboratory, Latour came to the conclusion that a large part of scientific training involves learning how to make the subjective decision of what data to keep and what data to discard. Moreover, Latour argued that the entire process resembles not an unbiased search for truth and accuracy but a mechanism for ignoring data that contradicts scientific orthodoxy. Drawing on the work of Gaston Bachelard, Latour advanced the notion that the objects of scientific study are *socially constructed* within the laboratory. Furthermore, they cannot be attributed with an existence outside of the instruments that measure them and the minds that interpret them. And that's probably one of the core ideas for Latour's concept of *hybrid* (Serres 183).

The redundancy of epistemology is well established by flourishing sociological, historical and (other) philosophical analyses of knowledge, despite its constant assertion (directed in particular at the work of Bachelard and his French followers) of the impossibility of these disciplines. It is not that we need to apportion subject matter between epistemology and naturalistic studies of science and technology; the work of the latter is a dissipation of the former. So *Laboratory Life* is neither an attempt to develop an alternative epistemology nor is it an attack on philosophy. Perhaps the best way to express our position is by proposing a ten-year moratorium on cognitive explanations of science (Latour and Woolgar 280).

In the late 1980s and 1990s, Latour was one of the main exponents of the actor-network theory. The actor-network theory maps relations that are simultaneously

material (between things) and semiotic (between concepts) –it’s a *hybrid theory*. It assumes that many relations are both material and semiotic. For example, the interactions in a school involve children, teachers, their ideas, and technologies (such as tables, chairs, computers and stationery). Together these form a single network – and we might say that this “network” would consist in a hybrid reality. There is no actor without a network where he could play and live, and there is no network without its components. Actor-network theory aims to explain how material-semiotic networks come together to act as a whole (for example, a school is both a network *and* an actor that hangs together, and for certain purposes acts as a single entity). Even though Latour is applying the same hybridity principle, we still can see that a hybrid always is formed by two things that *become* one. You cannot have a hybrid if you have only one element.

My aim here is to demonstrate that we must recognize the dualism between nature and culture in order to overcome it. We need to make it explicit to properly deal with it. It is important to notice, however, that this dichotomy would not involve a hierarchy –a mistake we usually make and that has caused us a lot of trouble. Latour and his concept of *hybrid* will provide the theoretical basis for this endeavor. Nature cannot be culture and culture cannot be nature, since they are not the same thing. Nevertheless, they share the same territory and they act as a unity – even though their essences come from a different place. After all, this is what a *hybrid* is, two (or more) things acting as one.

## After All, What Does it Mean to be Modern?

In his book *We Have Never Been Modern*, Latour takes aim at the very ‘essence’, if this concept can be used, of the modern Western human being. He attacks not just modernism, but anti-modernism and post-modernism at the same time. He tackles the underlying premises (as he perceives them) of the modernist world view. We no longer live in a Modern world *per se* –we are already one step ahead of it.

Latour explains his provocative title by claiming that the view we have of our Western culture is false; for while we think we have been modern, in reality, we have not. He begins by discussing Shapin and Shaffer’s book (*Leviathan and the Air-Pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the experimental life*) as a starting point. Latour admires Shapin and Shaffer’s work; however, he regards it as a somewhat flawed attempt. Unfortunately, they were not able to see it through and go further to reach the crucial point, the kernel of this issue, i.e., an examination of the basis of modernism. In a Cartesian sense, ‘the foundations of this building called Modernity.’

The question we should ask ourselves is “what does it mean to be modern, after all?” Latour claims that modernism is founded upon two key distinctions. One would be a separation of Nature (non-human) and Culture (human). The other would be a distinction between the ‘work of purification’ (the classic separation between Nature and Culture, where nature would be this impure substrate, dirty, confusing, chaotic and culture would be this ‘purifying angel’, bringing order to chaos) and the ‘work of translation’ (the creation of Nature/Culture and hybrids/networks systems). These two distinctions, he claims, are the cornerstones of *being modern*. This all makes sense since

we, as human beings, have a historical tendency to thinking in a dualistic way – even among Eastern traditions we would observe this fact (one good example is the *Yin and Yang*). Even though it is not deeply dualistic as our ontological division, the *Yin* and the *Yang* are two components of a whole. There is no harsh division between them, there is no hierarchy; nonetheless, they still are *two different* aspects of one reality.

That society stands in the way of sociology and of politics is not so surprising for those of us in science studies who saw earlier how nature, too, stood in the way. Both monsters are born in the same season and for the same reason: nature assembles non-humans apart from the humans; society collects humans apart from the non-humans. As I have shown elsewhere at length, both are twin freaks generated to stifle the very possibility of a rightful composition of the collective (Latour, “Reassembling the Social“ 164).

The basis for Latour’s claim that we have never been modern is that the work of translation is not really distinct from the work of purification, and that modernism has thrived due to the proliferation of hybrids (which will be non-explicit). And this seems to be a tricky part, since the separation and the hybridization would not be different from one another. They could be seen as two sides of a coin –or even as the *same side* of this coin.

Hence the final question, which is also the most difficult one: if we have stopped being modern, if we can no longer separate the work of proliferation from the work of purification, what are we going to become? Can we aspire to Enlightenment without modernity? My hypothesis – which, like the previous ones, is too coarse --is that we are going to have to slow down, reorient and regulate the proliferation of monsters by

representing their existence officially. Will a different democracy become necessary? A democracy extended to things? (Latour, "We Have Never Been Modern" 12).

From this question we are able to move towards another question: How is it possible to question modernism and see its weaknesses? Latour views modernism as having reached a point where it is collapsing under its own weight, like what once happened to the Roman Empire. The multiplication of hybrids results in the extension of the one-dimensional line between Nature and Subject/Society (or Culture) into a second dimension. This two-dimensional space is where 'quasi-objects' and 'quasi-subjects' exist. Therefore, my point is that we would not have objects and subjects, in this very distinct and clear way, but 'quasi-things.' These two instances are constantly creating one another. It is, in the way I see it, a very phenomenological approach. There is no subject and object, only the relation between the two.

Quasi-objects are in between and below the two poles, at the very place around which dualism and dialectics had turned endlessly without being able to come to terms with them. Quasi-objects are much more social, much more fabricated, much more collective than the 'hard' parts of nature, but they are in no way the arbitrary receptacles of a full-fledged society (Ibid. 55).

Latour questions the asymmetry of anthropologists who examine other cultures with a critical eye but then turn a blind to their own (Western) culture. Latour sees this Western view of itself as being different from other cultures, as being unique, as a result of the modernist separation of Nature and Culture. This internal divide, as he puts it, results in an external divide between 'Us' and 'Them' –we would be better, superior,

advanced, and they would be a primitive people. We are right and they are wrong. Our cultural bias needs to be fixed, and this could be achieved via the concept of networks.

In my opinion, we could use Latour's work to go beyond this dualism. For instance, environmental ethicists roughly divide themselves into two groups: anthropocentrists and ecocentrists. We all know that this division is much more complex, though. However, it will help us understand what is at stake here. We cannot say that culture equals nature; nevertheless, we can say that both work at the same time and on the same level. We cannot be completely anthropocentrists or completely ecocentrists. We are a product of nature and culture. We are their *hybrid*, if you will. Furthermore, it is not possible to have a *hybrid* if we only have one thing. That is why we, in order to overcome this dichotomy, must first recognize it. This is the reason why I chose Latour. My idea is that the concept of *hybrid* is a much better explanation than a strong separation between nature and culture, or the subsuming of them into this 'one thing.'

### **A Network of Hybrids and Modes of Existence**

In 2005, Latour shifted a little the focus of his work. He became more interested in relationships between actors and their respective networks. In *Reassembling the Social*, Latour developed what he calls a practical metaphysics, which calls real anything that an actor (any subject of our study) claims as a source of motivation for action. So if someone says, "I was inspired by God to be charitable to my neighbors," we are obliged to recognize the 'ontological weight' of their claim, rather than attempting to replace their belief in God's presence with "social stuff," like class, gender, imperialism, and so forth. Latour's nuanced metaphysics demands the existence of a plurality of worlds, and the



willingness of the researcher to chart ever more. Latour tries to build a bridge pervading hybrids as well as actor and networks. In this same book, he gives a very good example of what a hybrid would be.

Take, for instance, the case of the platinum kilogram maintained by the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (*Bureau International des Poids et Mesures*) in a deep vault inside the Breteuil Pavillon at the Sevres park outside of Paris. Is it a convention? Yes. Is it a material object? Yes. Is it an international institution? Once more, yes. Does it represent the head of a metrological chain, the ideal model to which all other inferior copies are compared in a solemn ceremony once every two years? Again, yes. There is no doubt that it is a hybrid (Latour, "Reassembling the Social" 228).

For Latour, there is a close relation between actors and hybrids. Actors, according to him, are not the source of an action but the moving target of a vast array of entities swarming towards it. To retrieve its multiplicity, the simplest solution is to reactivate the metaphors implied in the word *actor* that I have used so far as an unproblematic placeholder. It is not by accident that this expression is related to the term *stage*. An actor, therefore, is what is made to act by many others – whether they be humans or non-humans, it does not matter. That is precisely my point here. Therefore, an actor does not necessarily need to be a human subject. An actor is anything that has the power to transform and to provoke consequences upon our life –it could an instrument, or a structure, for instance.

Because it's not a tool, or rather, because tools are never 'mere' tools ready to be applied: they always modify the goals you had in mind. That's what 'actor' means. Actor Network (I agree the name is silly) allows you to produce some effects that you would not

have obtained by some other social theory. That's all that I can vouch for. It's a very common experience. Just try to draw with a lead pencil or with charcoal, you will feel the difference; and cooking tarts with a gas oven is not the same as with an electric one (Ibid. 143).

The Actor-Network Theory was a necessary step towards Latour's most ambitious movement, namely, to answer the question he made in his book *We Have Never Been Modern*. His latest book, called *An Inquiry into Modes of Existence*<sup>1</sup>, represents somewhat a shift from the thesis stressed in his book about the Actor-Network Theory. The book offers a positive version to the question raised, only negatively, with the publication of *We Have Never Been Modern*. The question is: if "we" have never been modern, then what have "we" been? From what sort of values should "we" inherit? In order to answer this question, a research protocol has been developed, which is very different from the Actor-Network Theory. The question is no longer only to define "associations" and to follow networks in order to redefine the notion of "society" and "social" (as in *Reassembling the Social*), but to follow the different types of connectors that provide those networks with their specific tonalities. Those modes of extension, or *modes of existence*, account for the many differences between law, science, politics, and so on. This systematic effort for building a new philosophical anthropology offers a completely different view of what the "Moderns" have been and thus a very different basis for opening a comparative anthropology with the other collectives –precisely at the time when they all have to cope with the inescapable ecological crisis.

What Latour is trying to create in his latest project is an anthropology of the Moderns. The history of modernity is based on the shared feeling that there exists an

arrow of time that moves forward (in a linear way), thus defining a front line that differentiates an archaic past from a more advanced future – good or bad depending on what versions we use (but usually we see the past as ‘primitive in a bad, almost inferior, way’). This moving frontier is largely based on a certain idea of scientific inquiry which may be summed up by the sentence: yesterday we were still mixing up our ideas about the world and what the world is really like, tomorrow we will no longer confuse these, and we will know for sure the difference between the two. The difficulty inherent to this conception of the modernist experience comes from the surprising fact that what happens in reality is exactly the opposite: the more we move on, the more entangled we become with a greater number of entities which cannot be neatly distinguished between what belongs to society and politics and what belongs to the ‘natural order’ of ‘matters of fact’. Thus, the arrow of time, instead of leading to emancipation, increasingly hinders and confuses our existence.

The sudden irruption of the word *anthropocene* in public discourse could serve as an emblem of this contradiction: just at the time when scholars were talking of ‘post-humanism’, humans make a surprising comeback but in a totally different role, as a geological force equivalent to those of plate tectonics.<sup>1</sup> Hence the choice summarized and expressed by the phrase “between modernizing and ecologizing, one has to choose”. Such a complete disconnect between two totally opposite versions of the modernist's arrows of time would not be of much consequence if it had not rendered it impossible to understand the other collectives encountered in the course of history.

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<sup>1</sup>“Anthropocene” is used to define, similar to the geological eras, a period of time in which the human being is the predominant force in our planet.

The “others” are of course a very different type of “other”, and they would depend on which version of modernity one chooses to stress. If it is the emancipatory moving forward, the others appear necessarily archaic since they keep confusing the order of the world with their set of social values –they would be the “primitive ones”. In other words, they appear to those who conquer them as multiple *cultures* while the conquerors have a *culture*, to be sure, but also an access to one unified *nature*. But the baseline for such a comparative anthropology is entirely different if, instead of the emancipatory master narrative, one were to choose the alternative telling that stresses a history of implication and attachment around multiplied matters of concern: then the “others” stop being totally other and begin to appear as companions in a long history that has collected humans and nonhumans in various assemblages and at various scales.

The odd notion of multiple cultures disappears along with that of ‘one nature’. A very different past, a very different future, and a very different comparison between collectives become possible. While the first ideal of modernization is not sustainable because of the denial of entanglement it implies and this strange exoticism it generates on the others as well as on itself, another project becomes at least thinkable if a more realistic narrative of the modernist project is offered. But in order to fight all exoticisms, including Occidentalism, one cannot be satisfied with the negative conclusion that “we have never been modern”. Even though such a slogan might be liberating at first, it quickly leads to the question: “then, what, after all, have we been?” And this other question raised everywhere by those we have attempted to modernize: “What have you been doing instead?”

In order to answer those queries positively and not only negatively, it is necessary to start, as already have been stressed here, an anthropology of the Moderns. Such an inquiry was started a quarter of a century ago with a dual research program the two lines of which have run in parallel. The first one, known by the label of Actor-Network Theory, has tried to redescribe each of the central institutions of contemporary societies by following the heterogeneous network of associations that make them up. The successful development of science and technology studies has provided us with a totally different version of what was described before as 'the advance of reason'. In each case, it has been shown that the grand narrative of modernization does not do justice to the very institutions developed by the Moderns. And yet, no matter how rewarding has been the following of those heterogeneous networks of associations, no matter how fecund has been the redescription of the central domains of modern societies in term of actor-networks, they have not been able to offer the positive version of modernism that we were looking for.

Networks are great to break down the artificial boundaries established between domains, but they fail to qualify adequately what the differences are between different sets of values that could account for the originality of the modernist adventure. Such an inquiry into modes of existence feeds on the research on networks, but tries to qualify the mode in which those networks expand. Even though, to take an example, legal practice is made of many ingredients that come from all sorts of extralegal sources, there is nonetheless a legal way to attach them to one another, and it is this peculiar way that legists will try to define when they search for the difference between a 'good' and a 'bad'

judgment. It is the search for those connectors that are called modes of extension or 'modes of existence'.

It seems that those who define themselves as possessed by rationality have defined reason in the worst possible way: a transport without transformation, a direct access to truth without any mediation. As a consequence, every practice, by comparison with this ill-adjusted standard, becomes a lie: religion, law, fiction, but also, strangely enough, science and technology as well. The paradox is that by considering knowledge as the supreme value, the Moderns have rendered the production of this "unknowable thing", hence the deep obscurity that the Moderns have generated about themselves. Those who constantly speak of enlightenment have obscured the many sources of reason. Things begin to change, however, as soon as each set of practices is interpreted in its own language and allowed to define truth and falsity according to its own touchstone.

The past was a barbarian medley; the future, a civilizing distinction. To be sure, the moderns have always recognized that they too had blended objects and societies, cosmologies and sociologies. But this was in the past, while they were still only pre-modern. By increasingly terrifying revolutions, they have been able to tear themselves away from that past. Since other cultures still mix the constraints of rationality with the needs of their societies, they have to be helped to emerge from that confusion by annihilating their past (Latour, "We Have Never Been Modern" 130).

This is true first of science, once it is freed from the odd epistemology that had disguised for so long its peculiar set of conditions. As the inquiry progresses, the view of the modernist project becomes more and more different from the official version offered by this form of exoticism, Occidentalism, that has made impossible until now any

comparison with the other collectives because of the lack of an acceptable baseline. As long as the Moderns are not able to provide a realistic description of themselves and what their values are, no comparative anthropology is possible. Once they enter into this soul searching effort, it is possible to think of comparative anthropology as a diplomatic enterprise where the former Moderns, to the relief of all the former “others”, are no longer cheating about who they are, what they come from and what they want to achieve. A welcomed change of behavior just at the moment when they have lost to other collectives the race for modernization and at the very point when the irruption of the ‘anthropocene’, since the lack of other planets to spare, renders all the modernizing projects irrelevant anyway. Thus, Earth seems to be already occupied by another entirely different project that some have named Gaia and that no one, so far, seems able to reconcile with the plans made by those who are no longer exactly humans but rather Earthlings.

We could relate Latour’s argument to Aldo Leopold’s Land Ethic. Leopold believed that we are a part of a larger community – the biotic community (Leopold, “A Sand County Almanac”). However, we may say that the biotic community is a *hybrid* in a Latourian sense. We have the human community and the non-human community, and both would be equally important to said community. Therefore, there would be separate entities acting together as one, in which no one is better than the other. The hierarchy does not exist, but nature and culture cannot be subsumed into just one thing. J. Baird Callicott, drawing from Leopold’s work, proposes an updated Land Ethic, which he called ‘Earth Ethic’. (Callicott, “Thinking Like a Planet: The Land Ethic and the Earth Ethic”). Callicott thinks that the Land Ethic was a necessary step towards the creation of

an ecological conscience. However, we need to make it more encompassing –from a land ethic (regional or local) to an earth ethic (global in scale). As I perceive it, the Earth Ethic would not rely solely on a natural or a cultural aspect, but on both. That is precisely the point I am trying to make here. The hybridization would lead to the overcoming of this dichotomy between nature and culture. There would not be this anthropocentrism *versus* ecocentrism scenario.

### **Concluding Remarks: Hybridization as Ontology**

It seems we have an insurmountable problem in our hands. Even when we are able to clearly perceive that nature and culture are not separated, that they should be one and the same, something gets in our way. This could be seen in the work of the Italian philosopher Giambattista Vico. Even though he was living during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, he had a very good glimpse at this nature/culture division. One of Vico's projects was the attempt to find a *necessary* starting point to this dichotomy (or dualism) between nature and culture/society. He had a very integrated project, which covered basically almost all ontological aspects from the early to the later man –from the state of nature to the social contract, and how they are related to nature. However, the most important thing for us, since we are focusing on this nature and culture (society) separation, is that, once we unveil Vico's intentions, we acquire a new perspective towards this dichotomy.

For him, since we are human beings, we would not have a 'choice' (whether rational or not) about choosing to overcome this apparent inherent dualism. We become separated from our natural world for one simple, yet very strong reason; it was because



this was printed into our metaphysical DNA. Our very ontology would be based in this dualism –we are beings-in-the-world only because we segregate nature and are segregated by it.

Hence poetic wisdom, the first wisdom of the gentile world, must have begun in a metaphysics which was not rational and abstract, like that of the learned today, but sensed imagined, as that of these first men, devoid of reason and wholly composed of powerful senses and vigorous imaginations must have been. This metaphysics was their own poetry, a faculty which, since they were provided naturally with such senses and imaginations, was innate in them” (Vico 374).

To overcome this problem, the usual mechanism employed is to deny that we have any kind of division whatsoever. This would consist of the recognition of the non-separability between nature and culture. But two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Perhaps, then, we have, besides a traditional position in which Nature is objective and a Society is subjective, an objective Society and a subjective Nature. This change will result in the explicit (no longer hidden) production and reproduction of hybrids at a slower pace than in modernism. When things are hidden, they can control us more easily –but when they become explicit, then we can finally stand up and fight them.

So these operations of analysis and synthesis always had three aspects: a preliminary purification, a divided separation, and a progressive reblending. The critical explanation always began from the poles and headed toward the middle, which was first the separation point and then the conjunction point for opposing resources - the place of phenomena in Kant's great narrative. In this way the middle was simultaneously maintained and abolished, recognized and denied, specified and silenced. This is why I

can say without contradicting myself that no one has ever been modern, and that we have to stop being so (Latour, “We Have Never Been Modern” 78).

The problem with a ‘complete hybridization’ resides, in my opinion, in the fact that we would reduce everything to this “One Thing” –and, thus, there would be no culture and no nature whatsoever, since each one has its ontological region within our reality. However, the very concept of hybrid is telling us something. According to its etymology, *hybrid* comes from the Latin word *hybrida*, meaning the “offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar”, or the “child of a freeman and a slave” (“Hybrid”). The term entered into popular use in English in the 19th century, though examples of its use have been found from the early 17th century. These are perfect analogies to represent hybridization. There can be no “One Thing” when we talk about hybrids. *The child of a freeman and a slave* – this fits perfectly our situation, unfortunately. We tend to regard nature as our slave, especially after Bacon and the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions. However, I do not see a major setback if we recognize this dualism. The problem is not the dualism *per se*, but the way we fail to reconcile our social nature and our natural society.

Yet this is precisely the amalgam I am looking for: *to retain the production of a nature and of a society that allow changes in size through the creation of an external truth and a subject of law, but without neglecting the co-production of sciences and societies*. The amalgam consists in using the pre-modern categories to conceptualize the hybrids, while retaining the moderns' final outcome of the work of purification – that is, an external Nature distinct from subjects (Latour, “We Have Never Been Modern” 134).

Nature would also be social, and culture would also be natural. We could, perhaps, talk about a Nature and a Culture (with capital letters), but they would probably be just misleading concepts. It would be better if we used nature and culture (without capital letters) as open concepts. It would be some sort of bi-implication –but then again, between *two different things*. What we would need is a non-hierarchical dualism, since it seems we cannot completely escape the influence of a dualistic thinking. Maybe there is no way to escape this dualism, but there is a way to escape this hierarchy. A garden, for instance, is a socio-ecological system, is a construct between these two dimensions – nature and culture (not Nature and Culture). Therefore, gardens only exist due to an anthropogenic element. Again, the problem is not the *division*, but the hierarchy. There is an interdependency between nature and culture, and for something to be interdependent there must be at least two elements, which would be dependent upon one another. There can be no interdependent “whole”.

Even once we have recognized the falseness of the dichotomy between nature and culture, it is hard to break its hold on our minds and our language; look how often I fall back on its terms. Our alienation from nature runs deep. Yet even to speak in terms of a compromise between nature and culture is not quite right either, since it implies a distance between the two –implies that we are not part of nature. So many of our metaphors depend on this rift, on a too-easy sense of what is nature and what is “a color of the spirit”. What we need is to confound our metaphors, and the rose can help us do this better than the swamp (Pollan, “Second Nature” 97).

Latour once said that networks are great to break down the artificial boundaries established between domains. We need to bring those barriers down. On one side, there

is nature; on the other, there is culture. They are like two countries which borders are constantly causing problems between them. One wants to invade the other and completely erase the national identity of the other. Barriers between neighbors are not a good thing to have, since they exchange everything –one country cannot live without the other. Thus, the very existence of one relies on the existence of the other. If we destroy one country, the other will perish. However, why do we insist that they are one and the same? Probably the citizens of “Natureland” are not very happy with that, in much the same way as the people living in the “Kingdom of Culture” are grumbling about it. They do not want to be assimilated by the other.

We saw earlier that one of the key concepts for Latour is the one which stresses the existence of “quasi-things” –a hybrid being a quasi-thing. I propose, thus, that nature and culture, from now on, acquire this “quasi” characteristic. They are not separated realms of existence, and they ontologically depend upon the other in order to become “alive”. Therefore, we must open the borders between these two countries and allow a free flow of its citizens. And if, one day, they become united under the same banner, for instance, “The Glorious Republic of the Hybrids” –we will still have different identities inside this nation. They could share the same territory, have the same limits, and completely overlap one another. You cannot divide them anymore. However, the people who once belonged to Natureland will always have their idiosyncrasies, their traditions, and so on and so forth. The same thing will happen to the people from the Kingdom of Culture. We must overcome the boundaries between them, since this harsh division brought us nothing but trouble until now. We always have been on the brink of a terrible war. If we want to end this conflict once and for all, we should recognize that each one of

them has its particular ontological reality. Let them be what they are, we should not impose anything upon them. When we become capable of living within a reality where *dualism does not mean hierarchy* anymore, in that particular day, we will finally overcome this dreary division between nature and culture.

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