

Neoliberalism, Oligarchy and Politics of the Event

*At the Edge
of Chaos*

Žarko Paić

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To my sons Vedran and Slaven

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The book I seek to capture as an understanding of politics and the political in the era of global entropy denotes in some ways a summary of my own thinking of contemporaneity. It is worth keeping in mind that a close connection should be maintained between the basic concepts of the ancient political thought of Plato and Aristotle, modern political philosophy, and Karl Marx, Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt and the metapolitics of nowadays. Unlike some of the intentionally related approaches to the diagnosis of the spirit of the times in philosophy, sociology, political science, I believe that readers will see that there is an attempt herein to establish a critical discourse beyond the traditional disciplinary boundaries.

The reason, from my point of view, is that nothing more now has its autonomy and its right to exist without a relationship with the new totality of economy-politics-culture. The problem is that this totality encompasses the construction of an uncanny reality that places hybrid systems of social relations at the centre, and only society breaks down into fragments by becoming a network of communication protocols. In this way, politics and the political are reduced to acting without subject, and their substance is thrown into the ether of post-imperial sovereignty. So, things today become incoherent, and this is also the case in politics, which, in the age of neoliberalism, fundamentalism, and populism, addressed the narcissistic individual, at the same time indifferent to the events of the turn or revolution and hyper-politicized. The passion for thinking of politics is irresistible in an age that no longer has the issue of social revolutions as in Marx and Weber's age of modernity, but only the question of national/cultural identity and the return of cultural wars (*Kulturkampf*) in the form of a society of the spectacle, as if stopping in front of a wall of inability to come to the other coast, beyond capitalism, which is completely like the eclectic "language games" of rationality and cruelty, fun and hedonism, the subjugation of human desire and the new occupation of territory without any social responsibility.

This book can mainly be considered as the result of my philosophical and political interventions in contemporary reality in the manner of a triad: (a) the new information economy, (b) a policy of neoliberal consensus, and (c) the powerless production of "events" in an era of populism and post-democracy with a new face of a society of spectacle in which culture becomes an organized set of "rational ecstasy", as Hermann Broch put it in

his analyses of the mass psychology of totalitarian movements on the rise. When this happens, it lacks the stimulus to change. The vicious cycle of violence and consumption lasts forever. To leave it means to think radically of the immanence of the political as an event, without which life falls into the abyss of mere duration.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dražen Katunarić, my closest friend and companion in our common contemplations on contemporaneity, for his support and trust, as we have spent many years together editing a lot of the thematic sections in the journal *European Messenger*, and this book's main theme emerged in this fruitful critical dialogue. Also, many thanks to Dario Vuger, PhD candidate at the University of Ljubljana, for reading the text carefully and providing useful language advice. My gratitude also extends to associate professor Marijan Krivak, University J. J. Strossmayer, Osijek, and assistant professor Tonči Valentić, University of Zagreb, who have been following and supporting my research at all levels of theoretical insight. I owe my thanks, also, to Miss Rebecca Gladders and Mr Adam Rummens for their kind invitation to submit this book to Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Finally, thanks to Mr Anthony Wright for his proofreading, and the Faculty of Textile Technology, University of Zagreb, for their support in the realization of this project.

INTRODUCTION

In this book, the main attempt is to perform an analysis of the actions of the global order that governs the environment by the logic of the *network*. The system is formally based on the framework of liberal democracy. But in reality, the ideas of freedom are transformed into their oppositions. Instead of establishing the power of a sovereign nation, the reign of corporate-formed elites is at work. Regardless of existing cultural differences, the total mobilization of capital goes beyond all real and symbolic boundaries. Jacques Derrida, in the book *The Politics of Friendship*, signified this age with the image of the “dehumanized desert”. It should be already clear in advance how the uniformity of a technically designed space implies the unambiguity of abstract time. Here, however, we might argue that the problem of the justification of the perverted structure is that even the mafia has become a real political subject. In this way, the class-social dynamics of capitalism collapsed in internal contradictions. What is left of it we can determine as the recuperation of different platforms of action without a subject. There is no credibility anymore because it lacks what the subject gives to the essence. A time without its own substance requires a frenetic quest for the logic of substitution in all areas of life from politics to religion, from art to architecture.

The problem is, therefore, that neoliberal capitalism marked the outcome of technological advances and the apparatus of liberated desire. And this means that the desire for wealth and power destroys all the spiritual virtues that modern humanity has set to the purpose of its own meaningful action. Nothing in this could be an exception any longer, though the logic of the exception henceforth creates a new rule.

This book discusses, in six overlapping chapters, what is going on with the mutual relationships between neoliberalism, oligarchy, and the politics of the event, the problem of constructing the war and total mobilization at the planetary level, Rancière’s thinking of politics as a disagreement, Badiou’s political antitheology and attempts to think of the event beyond the metaphysical “big narrative” concerning the philosophy of politics for the upcoming times, and relationships between corporate governance and freedom and equality in the close connection to the rise of oligarchy and populism today. Finally, the last two chapters are devoted to analyzing cognitive or information capitalism regarding the issue of social

transformation in the face of the extensive rise of the *technosphere*. The main assumption is that political revolutions at the time of the global order as entropy are reduced to:

- (1) civil revolutions against oligarchic governance, and
- (2) national-religious counter-revolutions which, instead of universal freedom, put the concept of organic cultural identity first.

The *Arab Spring* was a model for both paths. Politics as an event, paradoxically, becomes a powerless alternative to the subject of system combat. That is a reason why it has only the features of resistance to the struggle for the rights of various minorities and the subversion of the ruling culture.

Based on insight into Foucault's lectures on biopolitics, which consider the notion of neoliberalism for all future relationships between individuals and society, the state and the economy, I come to the conclusion that the oligarchic model of politics and culture management has now become a result of the rise and fall of mass political movements. The ideologies of the end of the 20th century with which neoliberalism established a perfect balance—neoconservatism and libertarianism—are reflected in the combination of technoscience, rational choice and individualism. In this way, the rule is reversed into a cybernetic market as a management model. Transnational corporations nowadays control the states and their political subjects. Sovereignty is thus becoming an illusion by the obsolescence of the modern project. Since post-imperial order in the 21st century requires the expansion of total power rather than the fragmentation of freedom, it comes down to the hybrid relationship between economics and politics. The corporate system of activities denotes a subject of all forms of organization of the state and society, from the trade unions to the universities, from institutionalized religion to social welfare and sport. The consequence of this we can designate by the disappearance of the essence of society. And, thus, in the fragments of decomposition, we witness the process of the fall in solidarity between social-class actors. This book clearly delineates what the logic might be of world-historical progress from the cybernetic governance system and the new way of legitimizing capitalism in the 21st century to all forms of suspension of fundamental ideas that have marked the politics of modernity such as freedom, equality, justice and solidarity. The issue of the necessity of different meanings for terms such as politics and *political* in the era of the *technosphere* has been determined from the beginning of the discomfort of the relationship between freedom and power. It is no longer sufficient to talk of a formal

defence of civil and human freedoms (*liberties*). On the contrary, it might be, in general, a possibility of thinking of openness of appearance at the end of the historically played social matrix. That is the point.

The event that we have philosophically and politically discussed in this book cannot be identified with the thinking of the “second beginning” in the words of the late Heidegger, nor with the new metaphysics of the event of Whitehead, nor with various attempts to make this crucial world after the end of metaphysics in technology open to opportunities in the sphere of the aesthetic, political and ethical (from Deleuze to Badiou). In my previous books, I tried to think of the singularity of the event from the autonomous “essence” of the openness of new perspectives. The event does not happen as fate, nor is it “owned” by the subject of a radical change of the world. It should be sufficient to point out that the event might be thought out beyond any mystical adventure in the future in terms of the hope and expectation of sustenance returning to its source. This is by no means the construction of a new platform that—in the will to power versus the *technosphere* duopoly—has a relative autonomy of decision-making concerning the social construction of worlds. There has been a time of great anticipation aimed at shedding the utopian visions of the future.

Therefore, the *political* does not signify the condition of the new theory of decisive action. After all, after the end of the sovereignty of European nation-states, which Carl Schmitt pronounced in the *Nomos of the Earth* after the end of the Second World War as the final verdict of his early decisional model of politics in the scientific and technical era, what remained in the rest of the politics apart from service to *God* and the *technosphere* in the large area (*Großraum*) without history? But neither *God* nor the machines of cognitive evolution promise unique happiness for man in the upcoming era. Moreover, it is politically concealed in the name of the first cause and ultimate purpose; in any case, it is unkind to cling to the jumble of the technical framework beyond the human dimension of action. The irreducibility of politics derives from the irreducibility of freedom, not from the supreme power that is already too close to the bare and even “divine violence”.

Perhaps it might only be important to consider the reasons why the thinking of the *political* “today” is relieved of the false faith in messianic salvation and of the autonomous action of the uncanny power of the *technosphere*, such that the rest of the “human” is reduced to the applications, functions and structures of the inhumane. The political determinedly relieved us from “life” as a compelling certainty, necessity, destiny. This is a true challenge of another possible history. When life has

turned into an immeasurable duration at the larger degree of strength intensity, it is worth once again devising the possibilities of freedom as the openness of a singular event. Walter Benjamin left an indelible trace on this. At the moment of the rise of the totalitarian machine of Nazism, he wrote:

Only for the sake of the hopeless is hope given to us.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PERMANENT CONDITION
OF WAR-AND-PEACE:
FROM TOTAL MOBILIZATION
TO THE ABSOLUTE CONSTRUCTION
OF THE EVENT

Introduction

If there is no war, there is no history. Has this premise not been given in advance to a mythical discourse that presupposes a triumph: the golden age—the fall of the obscurity of history—redemption? It is not necessary to emphasize specifically that there is something almost metaphysical inborn in different world civilizations regarding the thinking of the life of man on Earth. In addition, history has come to its perfection and fulfilment in its goals and purposes to the age that determines the unconditional rule of what Ernst Jünger named the *total mobilization* of planetary technology in the 1930s (Jünger 1931). This certainly does not mean that there was a state of “perpetual peace” in the sense of Kant’s postulate of a cosmopolitan order. The conjunction *if* that we use here does not mean a sophisticated figure of thought. It is not about questioning without a response to the principle of the un-knowledge of what might be the subject of discussion. Instead of such scepticism, full of arrogant scientific habits of processing data in the numerous services that expand the knowledge of the world, it must be recognized that the relationship between war and peace can no longer be adequately thought about from the very heart of metaphysics. Some of its core concepts, like cause/effect and determinations/consequences, do not seem to apply to a new set of relationships. Because if there is no longer history, as Alexandre Kojève, the most significant French interpreter in the 20th century, pointed out in his comments on Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* in his book *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, what is left? Thus, it seems very often that the footnotes of the most important philosophical books are even more significant than the main

text. In the case of this overwhelming book that aimed to understand the existential turn in contemporary thinking with all its far-reaching consequences according to a different notion of metaphysical questioning, we should remember that one footnote was so remarkable that it was a reason why Agamben, for instance, tried to answer the question of differentiation between animals and humans, the beginning of the *post-historical situation*. In it, technology determines the conditions for the further development of man. But this development goes beyond the boundaries of the human being and becomes the third concept on the path of the animal over man to the machine (Agamben 2003). Before we make a full note on this famous footnote on “the end of history”, it should be said that the echoes in the contemplation of contemporaneity are multifaceted. Well, they range from the notion of politics and technique to art and play, and they also cover the area of the psycho-technology of life itself in the difference between man and animal. Anyway, whoever tries to think of the difference between war and peace in the ontological sense of the word might want to clarify the reasons why, instead of binary oppositions, dialectical contradictions and negations on which the speculative thought of modernity was strongly built, what can come after history can no longer be preserved in this difference we are talking about. Why, instead of this important historical, epochal difference between two conditions, instead of its indefinable “being”, it should be easy to say that we live in an age without “time”, an age that in the planetary-global determination is being overseen by the logic *too-either*. And this only means that everything is not only possible but even necessary, and that reality is nothing but a constant and necessary transformation of potential and *vice versa*, with all the consequences of this thought and worldly chaos. So, if it is no longer a matter of the logic *either-or*, then everything must have been thought in that way since Nietzsche opened a new assemblage in the *context* of constant becoming (*Werden*), as well as in the processes of change without end and, finally, in the control of the spirit’s own life when post-humanism and cybernetics govern over uncertainty and the un-determination of the nature of the things to come. Thus, in this footnote, Kojève says the following:

The disappearance of Man at the end of History is not a cosmic catastrophe: the natural World remains what it has been from all eternity. And it is not a biological catastrophe either: Man remains alive as an animal in harmony with Nature or given Being. What disappears is Man properly so-called—that is, Action negating the given, and error, or, in general, the Subject opposed to the Object. In point of fact, the end of human time or history—that is, the definitive annihilation of Man properly

so-called or of the free and historical Individual—means quite simply the cessation of action in the strong sense of the term. Practically, this means the disappearance of wars and bloody revolutions. And the disappearance of Philosophy; for since Man no longer changes himself essentially, there is no longer any reason to change the (true) principles which are at the basis of his knowledge of the World and of himself. But all the rest can be preserved indefinitely; art, love, play, etc., etc.; in short, everything that makes Man happy. (Kojève 1980: 158-159)

What if, however, the history of the end of the era of “the disappearance of wars and bloody revolutions” leaves something else ultimately undefined and not just “everything that makes Man happy”, in which Kojève includes art, love, play, etc.? Can we remain undefined by what extends the agony of reality to an even greater extent than the creation of destruction in the times when “revolutions” and “civil wars” were in the service of the flywheels of historical “prosperity” and “development”? Both questions are basically the same, and can be formulated as follows: can something be defined at all if it is absent from a logic that allows it to be indelibly determined from something else rather than from itself? It is well-known that the most significant political theoreticians of the 20th century—Carl Schmitt, Hannah Arendt and Leo Strauss—sought to consolidate this indomitable and insignificant human Being. To him, however, belongs the possibility of a radical change of mind, starting from the relationship with the “being” of that political activity, not just of its metaphysically committed circumcision in the sense of enduring purpose in it, as it is understood in Aristotle. Wars and revolutions are nothing autonomous, irreducible in themselves and in anything running in from the outside. These are the events of the fallen state of Being. However, even in this existential interpretation of Hegel’s theory of history, the events are at the disposal of History as such. The reason why history is absolutized here lies on the border between a Being and the event. Being without history cannot be “more”, it is not one wherein we do not have each other as authentic words to explain what “is” and what is “going on”, but it might be necessary to establish clear criteria according to which the thinking *of* history as a Being and *to* history as the event takes place both outside and within the metaphysics itself. What does that really mean? Only that history, in the sense of its destiny and the unbending of insanity, cannot be “more” reasons for various “wars” and “revolutions”. Nor can it be what history has given the odds of absolutization, regardless of whether it is an idea, work, freedom, play, life, and so on. If there is nothing in it that is enough to serve anything else, and “it” is God, man, and the world in the sense of the metaphysical framework, everything slips into the abyss of

non-existence. All is thus doomed not to “be” for eternity. Also, the internal starter is missing in the direction of the unknown. Only then can we speak about the chaos of contingency instead of the meaning of history. Its last act would be exactly what Kojève so praiseworthy magnified—the transformation of history into a new “zoo” on Earth, in Hegelian terms. However, the consequence of this is the emergence of a techno-genetic park with an extremely dubious way of founding a “new man” (Sloterdijk 1999).

If we look more closely, we can only argue that the historicity of history cannot be reduced to war or the military in its two-directional movement: (1) a circle that corresponds to the artistic understanding of the meaning of Being on earth as opposed to what belongs to gods and animals; (2) which, in accordance with the modern Christian concept of “advancement” and “development”, is no longer related to the activities of human creativity (*creatio, poiesis*). Now it is all about getting into what goes beyond human projects. As a feature of the technical constellation of Being, it might be impossible to penetrate the moving of the humane to the inhumane, the earth to the universe, techniques and technology into the *technosphere*. In the first case, the mythical saying gives the narrative of “destiny”. And that means that human freedom has its limits in its finality and death. Hence, history is essentially confined to the sovereignty of the decision. Its peoples are everlasting from the territorial necessity of the displacement or settlement of a nation in brutal and dangerous conflicts. They originate from tribal wars for land until the occupation of the sovereign territory by the Other in the name of “natural law” and the will to power. The interruption of this “limited” function of the territory war in the circular movement of the old peoples emerged in Europe on the ruins of the Roman Empire. In this way, the age of the rule of the metaphysical subjectivity of nation-states was established. But war in this understanding can no longer be, as Hegel said, the heroic confrontation of man with nature in the struggle for dignity and power in the form of One or Multiple (monarchy, republic, democracy). Instead of this political-anthropological determination of war as the means/purposes of the will to power, as it was determined by thinkers from Machiavelli and Bodin to Hobbes, the word represents a technical turn in history. With it, the meaning of war can no longer be something that is only a function for other purposes and goals, whether we are faced with a war for freedom and a just war by an oppressed nation against an evil one lord/ruler in their midst and on the edge of the Empire (anticolonialism and post-colonialism), or, alternatively, with a civil war on a global scale between nation-states in

the form of imperialistic power-struggles, as it was in the First and Second World Wars in the 20th century.

In this regard, I will strive to show a fundamental turn in the way the dynamics of the binary oppositions of war and peace take place in the planetary-defined space of post-national sovereignty:

- (1) the transition from the metaphysics of modern history with its binary machine of the nation-state in the biopolitical production of power in a global-scale conflict between “empires” (the United States, Russia and China) and “rogue states”, which calls into question the ontological definition of modern wars as civil, religious or ethnic conflicts;
- (2) the conception of the world’s total mobilization (technoscience and capital), which necessarily leads to the possibility of total war as the absolute construction of events at the planetary level; and
- (3) re-examining the enlightenment idea of Kant’s “perpetual peace” in correlation with the permanent “state of exception” at a global level, leading to the fact that instead of the Manichean logic of “either war or peace”, we live in times characterized by the logic of “either war or peace at intervals of constructed crises of world security”.

For that reason, the question of “human nature” being evil or good does not seem decisive anymore in philosophical matters, nor in the theological problem, since the ethics of responsibility only becomes important with the appeal to preserve life on Earth, and the theology of salvation also presupposes the fight against evil in the form of negative theodicy. The question of rule thus becomes a question of the separation of power as *auctoritas* and *potestas* in the new era (politics and rights, in the narrow senses of the words). It is therefore obvious that the modern state seeks the unity of these powers. The reason lies in the fact that, without synthesis, it cannot achieve absolute authority over a territory in its struggles with other states. This is at the same time the reason why, after the Second World War, history in its political meaning should be understood through the attempt to fulfil a universal world state. It loses the feature of statehood because it no longer has the territorial sovereignty of a modern nation. Instead, its mission might be reduced to the regulation of the interest of anything that is no longer political, whether it be science, technology, demography, economics, or culture, in the wider sense of the word.

1.1 The chaos and logic of exception

Clausewitz's well-known and distinctive assumption that war denotes a continuation of politics by other means represents a perfectly clear metaphysical framework and understanding of Being as a will to power in modern times. In this way, Heidegger completely destroyed the meaning of that definition in his *Black Notebooks (Schwarze Hefte)*. For example, the definition neglects that the essence of the political cannot be independent of the outcome in modern times without the "legitimacy" and the "legality" of action that is the technique itself. In the second turn, Heidegger shows that the contradiction of so many repeated definitions of modern war derives from the impossibility of establishing the logic of the subject and object ("master" and "servant", "winner" and "defeated") at the end of the entire epoch of the modern era. If war became "total" in the 20th century, then politics could no longer be a subject-substance of warlike action against the Other as was customary in ancient, medieval and modern ways of occupying a country. What would change circumstances like the loss of political power? At first glance, not so much. Politics became a means of establishing a techno-scientific drive to global capitalism. After the horrific experiences of totalitarianism in the 20th century, the transition to one's own borders would follow. The mystery of the work of the "new" era as a performative event of liberty within the limits of the *technosphere* requires the overturning/reevaluation of the legacy of contemporary thinking on politics. This is primarily based on the assumptions of the leading theorists on the inscrutability of the political as a decision and as the theory of the exceptional state. But this is, of course, connected to Carl Schmitt. The guideline of his decisionism theory could be described in a way wherein the political must be separated from the assemblage of technology, science, society, economics, culture, and religion (Schmitt 1996). It is a binding thought that "total war" has taken the drive of "politics" to be more serious than what it looks like in reality because it will not result in the triumph of winners over the defeated:

Fighting like the war *it is not the* 'father' of all 'things' if this name covers anything that is not in the widest sense, it is *nothing*. He is never the creator and ruler of the *Seyn*, but only always *of the beings*—the *Seyn* don't designate pro-ductio and does not indicate any mastery. *Seyn* 'is' unchangeable and un-relational—because it is an event in the abyss. (Heidegger 2014, 152)

Keeping track of how the concept of war is derived from Clausewitz to Carl Schmitt should be something we are able to see, paradoxically. In the ancient Greek concept, war is determined by conflict between city-states (at the internal level of obtaining the freedom of community members) and the conflict between the *poleis* of the Greeks and the despotism of the Persians (at the external level of border protection). The mythical founding stories of the *poleis* as primordial communities of free and equal citizens are not devoid of the devastation of war and conquest by other territories both within and outside Greece. After all, the beginning of Western history is precisely in those exceptions as the law of exception. It affirms the “necessity” of colonialism by other means. Hence, this was, of course, the case of the war of the Achaeans with the Trojans. In Homer’s *Iliad*, this war becomes the mythical beginning of Western history. We must not forget that, in the *Republic* (*Πολιτεία*), Plato links the emergence of a democratic order with civil war between the *oligarchs* and the *demos*. In a more recent interpretation of the impacts of anger in the planetary period, the war against terrorism as the main phenomenon of the post-historical *ressentiment*, Sloterdijk introduces the term *thymos* into the discussion. What Hegel still calls the need of the subject for its own confession might be the minimal definition of that term. So, the struggle for recognition signifies the will to maintain a subject at the level of history. Hence, it is not accidental that Hegel, early on, held that war in its negativity determines the historical right to the emergence of the state as a confirmation of the objective spirit. The natural right, therefore, is the result of the war, not peace (Hegel 1974, 103-199). From that follows an assumption of how the war’s analysis should inevitably be directed in the political struggle towards the recognition of the oppressed subjects/actors, from states to ethnic groups.

Undoubtedly, that means that it cannot be politically understood in its democratic governmental structure without the insight into the psychological mechanisms of the creation of a new subject. In the assemblage of disagreement and emptiness, his identity could no longer be determined by the sphere of the mind. The turn appears long before the post-modern obsession with the ethics of psychoanalysis, which is the initiator’s right to desire, as Lacan most radically stated. The psychopolitics of affective anthropology can thus become a condition for understanding conflict with the tendency of transition to the state of war (Sloterdijk 2006). Obviously, the paradox is that policy has to precede politics, but not as a freedom that falls into the waste of power. In this case, the right to conquer other territories is uncannily established by the argument of natural law. This is done on behalf of the political goals of freedom, equality and justice.

Thus, it would not be difficult to conclude that the origin of the contemporary paradigm of the intervention of the West in wars in the global age (the United States and NATO) has been legitimated by *arché* of history. The Greeks, for instance, came to another conclusion: to enlighten the barbarians who inhabited the Arcadian wilderness, granting them further benefits of democratic legitimacy. In addition, it might be paradoxical, therefore, that the right to freedom appears in the sign of contesting the right to sovereignty of one who does not respect the fundamental “values” of universal meaning. Freedom hence arises as being formally opposed to the logic of power in the name of a request for more power that does not really belong to it. There are no significant differences between the ancient Greeks, imperial Rome, crusaders against the Arabs, modern colonialists from England, Spain and Portugal, or modern Americans. The political is also the essence of the fateful event without rational explanation. That is a reason why it necessarily splits between the requests of righteousness and the uncanny calls of the will to power, as Nietzsche argued in his writings (Meier 1973). What is the perversion of the so-called moral values in modern times in the ethics of duty? Only what Nietzsche has already clearly pointed out: that morality does not follow its own logic of the Crucified on the cross. On the contrary, moral instinct is rationalized as the power of the other nature of sinfulness. In the name of the will to power, one judges what “is” good, true and just, but not in the name of the good, the truth, and justice. For that reason, war of the modern era is no longer considered differently from the realism of the interest of the nation-state. Everything has since been measured by reference to which the means become a purpose, and the purpose is to reach the goal. The only exception to a series of thinkers from Hobbes to Hegel and Schmitt was undoubtedly Kant. His magnificent idea of “perpetual peace”, unfortunately, serves only as a regulatory scope of what the authentic faith of Christianity usually preaches. But as a matter of fact, it must remain essentially politically ineffective. The reason is that it would be a matter of acting in relations between states, bringing down order, politics, and internal security affairs in the modern cosmopolitan world. For our purpose of considering the relationship between a Being and the event that war becomes a permanent balance with intervals of peace, and beyond the dialectical scheme of negativity-positivity. So, let us go back to what Heidegger claims for the terms “totality” and “planetary” with regard to the modern age. Nobody wins in “total war”. And all others become “losers” too. What does this statement mean? It seems undeniable that “total war” is no longer just about occupying the territory of the Other (state/race/culture) in unconditional obedience; the

question of the “subject” of warfare in the planetary period of the world requires, first and foremost, a clarification before continuing with that concept by using what comes from the historical development of metaphysics itself. The answer cannot be found without attempting to overcome metaphysics. Within this framework, it appears that it is what Nietzsche named “Platonism for the masses”, referring to Christianity as an anthropomorphism of goals and purposes beyond “this world”. In other words, the principles of contingency and exception (singularity) give to the event the politically real possibility that war as “total mobilization” can be overcome, starting from the essence of technology. In Heidegger’s critical remarks, with the notions of “worker”, “totality”, “mobilization”, “planetary” and “world state”, in Ernst Jünger’s philosophical and literary reflections, this thought is constantly interwoven through the dense weavings of Nietzschean origin. In one place, we can see how this becomes the highest praise for Jünger’s achievement of thought:

What Jünger sees clearer than Nietzsche is what Nietzsche could not yet see in these phenomena since they were concealed in reality. In whole, these techniques appear as a fundamental way of directing and securing a reality as a will to power. (...) What Ernst Jünger, however, does not see because it cannot be seen because it is only available in the thinking is the essence of the will to power as the *reality*. It is the essence of ‘reality’ as the essence of being. This is, moreover, the definition of Being in a beingness that develops from its beginning as Being. (Heidegger 2004, 264)

Seeing and thinking obviously designate the same but essentially different things. If we are trying to understand why “total war” essentially goes beyond the historical sense of conflict between nations and states, becoming “more” than the war as such, then it must be noted that the difference between the end of history, what is still undefined in the remnant of the end of the history of Being and the beginning of an uncomplicated event is as wide as an abyss. The abyss is furthermore expanding into contemporaneity. When “wars” and “revolutions” lose the character of world events, this does not mean that their sense is below the level of the worldliness of the world. It is that the notion of “the world” after the experience of “total war” and the centuries of totalitarianism loses its metaphysical rank. This loss must somehow be compensated. And so, instead of world-historical events with the ideas of “progress” and the “development” of the freedom of consciousness, which is a clear Hegelian trace of speculative-dialectical thinking, the time of “globality” and “planetary” is finally born. Speculative dialectic concepts and ideas

replace techno-genesis and new worlds that are virtually designed. This does not mean that “wars” have been neutralized and suspended in the very core of what has a political and historical legacy of the transformation of the state. The difference between world history and the global-planetary state is determined by the difference in the way of thinking about the action of metaphysics and its shattered heritage. In this respect, it can be said that “wars” and “revolutions” today only serve to consolidate the geopolitical power of the new empires in the various techno-scientific constructions of artificial life. Instead of there being a space for the development of the idea of freedom, as there was from the Greeks and Romans through the Middle Ages to the ending of the history of totalitarian order in the 20th century, the daily struggle for post-imperial “sovereignty” has become a new task. So, that means that it might only be a question of what is left of the metaphysics of the history of the will to power and the nihilism of “total mobilization” in the essence of global capitalism (Paić 2011).

All terms with which Jünger sees what Nietzsche could not see because the matter was concealed relate, therefore, to the technical organization of Being as *will to power*. If it becomes technically complete, fertile soil is created for the Earth’s devastation. It is entirely wrong to declare this setting “reactionary” in relation to the unconditional right to perfect man in the horizon of the future. The problem should be considered in a radical way. The technique is not the result of the ontology of society and culture in the sense of derivation from an original set of directives. On the contrary, when Being is understood from the technical constellation of the world-historical path to the arrival event, it is only in the coming age that the time is reduced to “actualization” and consequently to “punctual momentum”. The loss of original time will now be compensated for by narrowing the spatiality in which events flow. The impossibility of information signifies a new concept of this complex reductiveness of Being. Its meaning is not just compression instead of stretching in all directions. The result should be that history, as an informational “black hole”, responds to the challenges of the oblivion of one’s own memory, so in contemporary societies, the main problem becomes the distinction between *memory* and *recollection*. First, memory belongs to the unconscious structure and refers to the loss of relation to the proxy because of the “present” rule in the form of virtual updating. Secondly, recollection makes a network of data controlling timing by means of a *technosphere* that “memorizes” every event by storing it in digital machine files. In the newer theories on the trajectory of *complexity*, *singularity* and *contingency*, time becomes a construct of reality.

Therefore, the modal category should be transformed into the virtualization process. The philosopher with whom we reach out to the digital age is surely Deleuze, and his distant predecessor was Leibniz (Zourabievilli 1994; van Tuinen and McDonnell 2004; Davis 2000). Hence, it is not the space of freedom, but the closeness of power within a technical way of thinking. Three major categories are represented here as follows:

- (a) calculation
- (b) planning
- (c) construction

The calculation determines the practical or pragmatic way of thinking; planning refers to the rational editing of the space and time within which life-control processes are being conducted; and construction, ultimately, assumes the act of creating a “new” based on a mechanically organized system and a method of producing new artificial worlds. These three categories are crucial to understanding Being as a technique that makes the condition of the “progress” and “development” of science possible. The emergence of the “new” cannot be described differently than the way Ernst Jünger did dramatically in the conclusion of his book *A Worker (Der Arbeiter)*:

Entrance to the imperial space precedes the temptation and determination of planned landscapes that cannot yet be imagined today. We are approaching astonishing things. On the other hand, the democracies of work that are being processed and transposing the content of the world known to us are the outlines of national arrangements beyond the possibility of comparison. Nevertheless, it can be predicted that there will be no more words about work or about democracy in our established sense. We are just about to discover the work as an element of fullness and freedom; it also changes the meaning of the word of democracy when the fatherland of the people appears as the bearer of a new race. (Jünger 1981, 153)

There is a need to distinguish three ways of historical “progress” and “development” techniques: (1) the *technique* as a means of exploiting the resources and potential of the Earth in industry, thus making human work a condition for the wealth of “people” and “states” (the national or political economy of capitalism); (2) modern *technology* as the purpose of the foundation of social “progress” and “development”, making history neutralized in the liberal-democratic understanding of man as “citizen” and “consumer”, while the “worker” is replaced by a machine; and (3) the contemporary *technosphere* that has emerged from cybernetics and

informatics as the reign of the inhumane in the form of *A-intelligence*, which goes beyond the causality and vigor of history and replaces interplanetary lurking with a singular “living machine” (Paić 2016, 126-148). By introducing this distinction, it would be possible to speak historically-epochally about “wars” and “revolutions” starting from the contemporary condition. Jünger calls it the most famous expression for the essence of what is “not” but is “happening” due to the way of the transformation of the being into the virtual update event. This term determines the demise of work and democracy in favour of the permanent process of “total mobilization” (labour, capital, information). In this respect, the “progress” and “development” of human history are identical to the technological-evolutionary path of the construction and disintegration of a living machine. If the technique belongs to nature and the technology to culture, then it is *technosphere* beyond all the differences between the earth and the sky, the struggle and being of God and man, creation and production. Since the *technosphere* can be understood only as *autopoiesis* in the self-confirmation of the life of “new nature”, it might be possible to assume that the time of “total mobilization” means war in the “big space” (*Großraum*). People and states are no longer fighting here (Schmitt 1997). The machines of destruction and demolition, referring to the logic of the *technosphere*, overwhelm inhumanity as far as being no other or different from mankind’s humanity. It might be the event of the apocalyptic openness of Nothing itself. In its two forms, devastating and creative potential, nothing completes the history of wars and the revolution of metaphysics that belongs to the West. The nihilism of world history after “total war” becomes a planetary destiny. With Schmitt and Jünger, this was the deepest thought made by Heidegger himself in the late 1930s.

But, from Heidegger’s point of view, what here is controversial at the end of the metaphysics of subjectivity? With it, the history of wars between “nations”, “states”, “races” and “cultures” almost disappears. Why? Simply, it is because overcoming subjectivity signifies simultaneously overcoming the essence of modern society. It is happening in a way such that, in liberalism, a state has its last purposes/aims in the enterprise economy. So, these purposes categorically appear in the essence of planetary globality: *infinity, measureless, number, computation, flatness, homogeneity, emptiness*. It is not a “total war”, therefore, just the astonishment of the destruction and devastation of the Earth with the “progress” and “development” of planetary technology that switches the power of weapons into the space of heaven and the air, rocket systems and satellite control of systems of destruction. Far from it. Rather, it is

something more significant than leaving the Earth that is pervading Being as such. The transformation of the war from “global” into the post-human state of the “Star Wars” was announced in the works of two of the most significant representatives of the so-called German Conservative Revolution (in favour of the essence of the thing itself, we must also connect Martin Heidegger with this as well). In spite of this movement and of its special role in the closeness of and differences between Nazism and the 1930s, Heidegger’s analysis concerning the essence of technique and “total war” is still far-reaching and stimulating for the current discussion (Paić 2015, 135-206). There remains, however, a lack of clarification about the differences between world history and what is still undefined in terms of “planetary” and “global” concepts. It seems that in the “big space” (*Großraum*) we enter into what is *in-between*: on one side, there is Being and events; on the other side, the earth and of the sky. If the airstrikes of the Allies during the First and Second World Wars on German cities overruled any possibility of heroism and adventures in the realm of nihilism, because planes and megaton bombs do not embody the fight to the death between the living for recognition, then it should be clear that the notion of totality (mobilization, work, technique, capital, science) necessarily leads to the universal destruction of the planet and the globe. Apocalyptic literature that talks about this includes work by the German novelist and essayist Hans Erich Nossack and the literature written by W. G. Sebald in his wake (Nossack 2004). In a totally different meaning to that of Kojève, the end of history in the interpretation of Hegel is no longer related to the end of the possibility of fulfilling the idea of freedom. It is the end of the possibilities of any illusion of “naturalness”, “inborn purpose”, or performing the plan constructed in God’s mind (positive or negative theodicy):

The perfection of the technical means of power is in the ultimate state of purpose and the possibility of total destruction. (...) Already in the last war, there was a zone of destruction whose scene can only be described if compared to natural disasters. (...) The romantic thought is that social contracts can spit the rampage of these energies, their application in the struggle for life and death. The premise of these thoughts is that a man is good – but a man is not good, rather good and bad at the same time. In each budget that needs to be passed the test of reality, it must be included that there is nothing that man is not capable of. Indeed, it is not determined by moral regulations, it is governed by laws. (Jünger 1981, 99)

The war in the “planetary” age and the era of “globality” goes into a state between two equally indefinite events: the former might be the struggle for

post-imperial sovereignty, and the latter indicates a struggle for the establishment of the “world state” with terror and the state of exception. The transition from one form to another does not mean that the war should be considered differently than the way Clausewitz has defined it. Less important, however, is the continuation of imperial-totalitarian or imperial-liberal politics by other means.¹ What arouses special attention and thoughts of distress could be the definition of politics as something inexperienced yet close to war, military and warfare as such. So, Schmitt’s theory of partisan or guerrilla war against the world order as a “universal world state” denotes only a continuation of politics by other means (Schmitt 2006). In both cases, we encounter a negative definition of the concept of the political and concept of war. What gives the “world war” its worldliness? Nothing but the transitions in the form of the territorial sovereignty of the European nation-states, which Jünger has described as “the order of Baroque states” in the form of imperialism. It is, therefore, to be said that planetary nature determines a condition of globality. No doubt, the symbolism of planetary power loses the features of the grandeur of European sovereignty, which inherited it while retaining elements of Eastern despotism and theocracy. Those are, of course, the symbols of the sovereignty of power that are embodied in royal palaces, gold and silver, swords and a serpent in symbiosis with the prerogatives of the divine authority of ecclesiastical authority. When sovereignty breaks down and replaces the symbols of total control, in the foreground comes the picture of the globes, the abstract figures of the Earth’s territory and the celestial spheres.

Globality is signified as a world-historical event in the era of scientific-technological development. In fact, after the United Kingdom, the only two world-historical empires of the 20th century were America and Russia. What connects them despite their ideological-political differences is a “third” thing. Namely, the state as an empire at the end of modernity is exactly that which Kojève, in correspondence with Schmitt in 1955-1960, called a “universal and homogeneous state”. And that means that the differences in the mode of governance are only deployed into a space of culture that stores the idea of the speciality of “lifestyle” and the (national) identity. If we keep this in mind, then it is no longer acceptable to speak of “wars” and “revolutions” only in the meaning of political events that have a big opportunity to change the path of world history. World history, paradoxically, only became a union of concept and reality in the 20th century. Indeed, only with the effects of “total war” in the First and Second World Wars did it become possible to establish what links the centre and the edges. The world, as a nascent event of war, was elevated to

the spatial level, a check with matching processes that Deleuze and Guattari call *detrterritorialization/reterritorialization* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). We are not far from the truth, which is that all of these events have represented just a continuation of the technique by other means. Politics and economics, culture and science, even religion and art, cannot fulfil their mission unless they are faced with the aporias of the loss of the world and of history in the age of cybernetics, which controls the life itself. Instead of metaphysical illusions about the origins and purpose of the issue of the features of wars, it seems much more appropriate today to show why the world is being replaced by planetary movements, and history has lost its essence in the simultaneity of globality. Therefore, instead of asking the classical philosophical question of what something is (*quidditas*), in this case, war and peace, the issue is how to reverse the direction of the questions and explore how the being and beings are emerging (*quodditas*)? We can see that its assemblage has been transformed into a process of the destruction and creation of a “new” as a case, an indefinite and an exception. How, then, can we explain that the end of metaphysics represents the openness of a network of events that cause to be questioned the overall notion of the relationship between the political and politics with regard to the “phenomena” of war and peace?

In other words, the disappearance of history designates the time of permanent war and intermittent peace. But this is the uncanny assemblage of something that essentially changes the whole psychopolitical and geopolitical meaning of what we call the “world”, although it might be obvious that this term is no longer valid for what is happening. So, what should it be, and what is happening?

1.2 The end of sovereignty and the power of “big space” (*Großraum*): “wars” without “revolutions”?

The philosophical approach to “war” and “peace” must include what is metaphysically enduring and what is missing at the epochal finitude of Being. One cannot do without the other. That is why it is not about bare binary oppositions. This much was clear in the pre-Christian era of Greek philosophy. Already in the designation of what moves in space and time, there is the presence of action and non-action, the power of penetration, and the power to stop the entire process. Greeks used the word *polemos* (Πόλεμος) for the goddess of war, who, according to Pindar, was the daughter of the god Alala. In a relationship with other gods, her meaning becomes synonymous with that of the angry god of war, Ares. But polemic is not aggression in the sense of wanting to destroy an opponent by his

physical removal. From the polemical relation with the Other (ego) as a subject named, I get the recognition of my own power in that tendency-latency relationship, if we might be served by Bloch's terms, which is meant to provoke an unclear fear of the disintegration of order. Therefore, war encompasses a condition of peace, not *vice versa*. Paul Virilio is indeed right when, in one of the talks with Sylvère Lothringer in the book *Pure War*, he claims that "total war" did not stop even after the end of the Second World War. Its other forms have been very active even until nowadays. The transformation which took place in the "Cold War" between the US and the USSR and in anti-colonial and guerrilla wars, which, due to the progress of biotechnology, are becoming an "informatics bomb" or are being introduced into the planetary leadership of the global war, is basically a sign of the constant and permanent arming process. But instead of including nation-states, what is happening now might be determined by the non-reciprocal relations of the world's empire network, which is permanently in conflict with renegades (rogue states) from the "new world order" (Virilio and Lothringer 1988).

What comes out of it should be nothing but ambiguity and contingency. The inability to positively define war beyond the logic of the metaphysics of the eternal struggle for recognition against the Other, as Hegel did in *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, creates totally paradoxical relations. War is no longer the opposite of peace and *vice versa*. In the footsteps of Jünger and Heidegger, Paul Virilio, in his deliberations, articulated the essence of the contemporary *dromosphere*—the main term for the acceleration of civilization that cannot establish a distinction between "progress" and "development". That returns us to the starting point of the problem (Virilio 2000). Indeed, it seems that war in the state of peace within the technically marked spaces of the global-planetary system has its "pause" precisely because the machine of the techno-genetic constructions of the event requires a continuous production of the either-or in between Being and events. Therefore, it is thus possible to get between "totalitarian" and "globalitarian" war. Since globalization is enabled primarily by the development of telecommunication systems whose condition is based on the utilization of the internet, it becomes obvious that mere social phenomena such as *A-intelligence* strategies, artificial life, maps of the human genome and the post-human condition, as well as cloning projects in conjunction with the militaristic logic of the empire and the techno-scientific drive, speak of the essential inability of man and his freedom of disobedience. No doubt, we are faced with the conceptual turn and must say that we are no longer dealing with the opposition of war to peace and *vice versa*, but instead the permanent *war-and-peace* way of action of

global capitalism. The anthropic way that is going on in the reign of Being as an occurrence in the event of an absence of timelessness has far-reaching consequences.

Global capitalism is thus what Jünger named as the triad of the total mobilization of work, technology and industry. But even this analysis is today outdated by the nihilism of a famous thinker-writer because it is no longer a time of the absolute rule of the “worker” (*der Arbeiter*). This “figure” (*Gestalt*) does not belong to society or to the state but is produced from the very essence of modernity and capitalism. Here we can get a reminder of Marx’s analysis in the *Grundrisse* where he spoke about the process of automation and constant scientific-technological investment in making profits. The astonishment of “progress” and “development” has been, therefore, not the result of a social achievement of a human in the sense of the total rationalization of nature. From the logic of new technology, which precedes the scientific abandonment of things, the possibility exists that the features of “citizens” and “workers” in a developed modern (industrial) society will substitute for that “image”, which has no character of exaltation and anger, boredom and survival. In the place of these historically-played “characters” come what Heidegger in *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)* called “the They” (*das Man*). As we should be able to see, it is obviously the structure of the Being-in-the-World (*In-der-Welt-Sein*) in the process of the loss of projective selfhood. Therefore, we could not accidentally express that Heidegger’s comments regarding Junger’s *The Worker (Der Arbeiter)* show that all the characters/figures are actually transient and changeable. They reflected only the phenomenal “essence” of what Heidegger, in the late 1930s, called the “machination” (*Machenschaft*), and very soon he used the fundamental word, according to the end of metaphysics—“enframing” (*Gestell*), the main argument of which is that all forms of the political in the planetary world—whether democratic, fascist or Bolshevik—are merely “mixed forms and façades” (Heidegger 2004, 231).

War is challenging, and therefore the term “strategy” in the “total war” era has more than semantic meaning. The word is not related at all to the long-term implementation of action plans, unlike tactics, which is how this might at first glance seem. Although the notion of “strategy” has been taken from the Bolshevik discourse made by Lenin in the struggle for the political overthrow of the imperial order of imperial Russia, it seems to be something far more distant than “revolutionary methods and goals”. One is a violent struggle against a violent order. In it, the revolutionary methods before and after the takeover of political power translate into an open “civil war” between ideological-political opponents within a territorial

determination of a nation-state. Yet, something is completely different when Heidegger sees in the Leninist view of communism a metaphysical framework of one way of confronting the planetary fate of technical mobilization. It is precisely for this reason that it should be noted that weapons used in that assemblage have become “strategic”. A “total war” in general has become a strategic conflict on the planetary level between empires and their satellites. Interestingly, even in the political discourse of the “Cold War” of 1945-1989, all, including states, had to follow the lead of the USSR in declaring those included in the Warsaw alliance to be “satellite” countries, whereas the members of NATO were named “allies”. This suggests that the US had ideologically and politically “democratically constituted” imperial power for the performance of every future war as a “police intervention”. And since the permanent condition of war-and-peace shapes the forms of “pure war” as conflicts between the obsolete concept of nation-states, then the turn consists in the fact that the notions of terror and terrorism occupy a strategic place of settlement, with the “enemy” being “rogue states” that support the network of terror (Derrida 2005).

When the metaphysical notion of the world disappears on the horizon in the whole assemblage of Being-God-World-Man and becomes replaced by the techno-politics of “total mobilization”, then this situation can no longer be comprehended by the concept of the *intermezzo* of worlds, as Croatian philosopher Vanja Sutlić proposed in his search for an exit from metaphysics after Heidegger on his path of “historical thinking” (Sutlić 1988). It is the reign of frenzy between Being and event. From this bragging, the prosperity of freedom in the upcoming era does not seem possible from the uncompromising uncertainty of the future. Quite the contrary, we are faced with the construction of an absolute event as the emergence of something that cannot be taken in a causal-teleological way. What does not have its original beginning (*arché*), that has a lack of a meaningful end to all other odds? What is left? Before we come to the clarification of this issue, we must further describe why we can no longer go on with the illusion of war as still being like those between the nation-states that ruled in the 19th century, although the very order of the economy, politics and culture was already in essence on the path to the total mobilization of Europe beyond its own myths of “rootedness” and “homeland”, which was especially stated, and hence the paradox is complete, in the thinking of all three of the decisive German thinkers as the inventors of the planetary mobilization-enframed “world” (Schmitt, Jünger and Heidegger). In the above-mentioned commentary of Jünger and his work in the 1930s on the concepts of “nihilism”, “total mobilization”,

“worker” and “total war”, Heidegger demonstrates that war/the military and militaristic are not total mobilizations, which are often misunderstood by Jünger. Quite the contrary, the “essence” of planetary technology itself is that power should be serious in “total war”. Speaking in Zen-Buddhist terms, a lethal weapon in the hands of the samurai warrior might be just decoration in Japanese Shintoist pavilions. The beauty of the sword is immanent to its ultimate purpose: to serve as a weapon of war. So, it is clear why Heidegger’s analysis of modern techniques as the enframing (*Gestell*) presupposes the ability to increase power to an unprecedented scale. The thinking which holds in its essence techniques such as machinations, pragmatism, calculations, planning and construction necessarily appear, in the end, in the instincts and militaristic thinking of “total war”. That is what Heidegger calls “the danger” (*die Gefahr*). Power is, therefore, something outside the social framework of human relations. Of course, we are not faced with a question of the use of means in the world. It would be possible to find it in the beyond of social relations. In this regard, the signifier could always act behind the “facade” because it is neither total war nor unconditional peace; indeed, all could come to such a constellation of relations without those uncanny powers, which lie in the will to power as the rule of scientific-technological subjectivity (Heidegger 2004, 232).

In the posthumously published book *Besinnung*, which was written in 1938, Heidegger laid the most radical basis for understanding the end of metaphysics in the realm of Being. Even though he had fully developed the concept of enframing (*Gestell*) as well as insight into the essence of the art, it is thought about exactly on the level of the world-historical situation, which means entering into a completely new era. This applies to new “game rules”. Since we are talking about philosophical thinking, it cannot be meaningful to do anything but provide a clear-cut order of the categories and concepts with which contemporary science, politics and culture “nowadays” work self-explanatorily. Moreover, as we will proactively demonstrate, all the features of the metaphysical endowment are given in terms of order and rank at the same time, and the condition of opportunity for any future understanding of why each return “backwards” emits an illusion and, even more, a “reactionary” step in time relied on an attempt to stop the time of “progress” and “development”. This is, of course, an impossible mission. And in its essential features is the reason why the entire project of the German Conservative Revolution in the 1930s was ultimately a result of the failure to deal with the essence of modern technology. Heidegger, as part of the metaphysical discussion,

speaks of the five fundamental features of the period of the reign of “subjectivity”, what we call the “global order” today:

- (1) what is *dynamic* about power squeeze;
- (2) what is *totally* affecting the principle of power so that nothing outside of that environment can have its innocence and be regarded as “real” any longer;
- (3) the “*imperial*” that derives from the commanding character of power and invokes any possibility of exception and case in its own environment;
- (4) the *rationality* in which the calculating character of thinking is confined to the constrained power of execution; and
- (5) that “*planetary*” which shows that power is no longer just “total” and directed to one state and one nation, but its borders are only within the boundaries of earthly spheres like atmospheres and stratospheres, which means that the planet as a whole is a picture of power that can be overtaken by a “penetration”, thus neutralizing possible planetary opponents (Heidegger 1997, 18).

What is the decisive point of view in understanding how to perform a technical “world”? All that has already been said: *dynamics, totality, imperialism, rationality and planetary*. The rank of things is apparent from the logic that develops the world-historical thickening (implosion) of mass, energy, and speed. The link is between the physics of quantum particles and the metaphysical space in which time neutralizes in favour of the simultaneous flow of information, and in this Heidegger’s view is truly visible. First of all, must what is dynamic be final and planetary? Otherwise, there remains only the possibility of action, not the reality. The notion of the planetary-global condition cannot be identical to the Greek original (*planets*, travelling around, rocking, pervading into the spheres). The difference is that planetary can no longer have the self-defence of the Earth as in Ptolemy’s notion of the world (Sloterdijk 1986). The Earth does not assume the position of the centre of the universe. It is just one of the planets in the Sun’s system. Hence the notion of planetary movement must be understood from the essence of modern technology. It is about the construction of the movement as the acceleration of the energy flow required for the transition from the Earth’s orbit to the interplanetary order of the worlds. In addition, it might equally be the link between totality and imperialism (all-encompassing and entering into the space of the empire as “the world state”—the *Weltstaat*) mediated by the fourth member of this pentagram of absolute power. Rationality and rationalization, in fact,

derive from the essence of modern natural sciences: mathematics and physics. By the way, Max Weber tried to define the essence of modern society with this concept. Capitalism is impossible without the “prosperity” and “development” of science and technology. The rationalization process denotes the necessity of a bureaucratized life management system in the areas of economy, law, politics, and culture. But what is still here, but not expressed, is that the model for the end of metaphysics in the age of the globality-planetary system becomes indeed somewhat beyond any kind of disposition of nature in terms of subjectivity. Rational knowledge cannot be quite neutral. It invokes the second plan of the mosaic about the ethical thinking that makes things as they are. What inevitably follows from this total rationality of thought should be “demonic” with these causes and restraints, because totalitarian projects of government and control over human beings are simply the perverted “human nature” of demolishing democratic regimes. The matter is reversed. In essence, totalitarianism is uncannily inhumane. The way that ruling takes place is by turning a man into a *thing/creature*, lowering it to the lowest rank ever in the grid of concentration camps. That inhumanity made him, as Hermann Broch said it most precisely, “garbage that is just stinging”.

Death factories must be initiated by someone. Without any ethical relation to the dignity of the life of another man, every horrible way of genocide is unimaginable. If the banality of evil is “dwelling” as a routine of everyday life, we are faced with the toughest test of our own conscience. Between the human and the inhuman, the field of ethical-political demands for the defiance of the last forts of the undeniable contingent of humanity escaped. Nowhere else in the love of the neighbour regarding the face of a person is hiding the feeling of compassion. But the problem here lies in what goes beyond the limits of humanity and inhumanity. This is an essential difference between the comprehension of total mobilization and absolute construction. We will see that this is the first condition of the possibility of the Other, but that at the time of post-human control and biogenetics it could no longer maintain the legitimacy of the term. The reason for this is that it is no longer the result of industrialization (machinery) and the inherent “worker”. Quite the contrary, it is represented by the time that leaves behind all the figures of modern history and might be politically signified by entering into post-imperial sovereignty without a fixed subject and without the constant “being”. Those who say today that modern wars may allegedly have some kind of defensive character and satisfy the definitions of “justice” and “freedom” are only partially right. But the struggle against imperialism as colonialism does not seem to be credible if it is not the same as a

movement that carries only another form of “the same” in the ideological-political framework of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism. The problem is that today these concepts have completely lost their meaning. After the *Arab Spring* lost credibility, because the Islamic State, as a combination of monstrous “political theology” and global terrorism, took the lead instead of the civil revolutions against the autocratic political orders in the Middle East states, there has no longer been a matter of radical change in politics. In this respect, we might find interesting analyses in the works of Virilio and Baudrillard from the 1980s because both thinkers note that what “clean war” and “pure terror” transformed into, which was a hybrid of the state balance of power and counter-power, had not previously been emphasized. After it became obvious that the end of communism in 1989 marked the emergence in the world of a period of uncertainty, chaos and entropy, everything became directed to that balance (Virilio 2005).

Where does power come from in planetary technology? The answer is the following: from the techno-scientific logic of the absolute construction of the event. When all takes on the path of “smart” constructed apparatus, from cities to the economy and mobile phones, it is not difficult to conclude that the event designates the formation of “new” calculated plans, designed so that if one is in competition with another, they try to win with absolute superiority. It is not relevant here to mention any “market logic”. After all, the paradigm of global capitalism should be the right neoliberal order of “rational choice”. The markets are not always in space. They are constructed as a whole virtual reality. Neoliberalism with its ideological-political principles represents, therefore, an assemblage made by cybernetics and libertarians, absolute creativity and meritocracy as the rule of the “smart and capable”. The elite who run and drive global corporations might be all that makes the *technosphere* unique and create the singular appearance of power, interest, and desire to rule in the corporate governance system of the “world”. The term “war” has never been in circulation more than nowadays. However, it has a completely different meaning from the frontal conflicts between nation-states with their trench battles, negotiations and the conclusion of unjust peace treaties. This applies in particular to: (a) corporate “wars”; (b) wars against “terror”; (c) cultural or discursive “wars”; (d) cybernetic “wars”; (e) biological “wars”; and (f) interplanetary wars as an illustration of future “worlds” and their modes of visual communication. The inflation of “wars” is testament to the impossibility of war on the ontologically constant determination of the conflict for peace. Rather than making peace a way to the truth, as the pacifist and anticolonial indigenous Indian “militant” Mahatma Gandhi once said, the attitude is that the plan of

eternal technique is essentially to completely neutralize peace and suspend it. This drives so far that periods of peace should be used, in fact, in the service of programming for new wars. In all possible transformations of this state of affairs, the process of arming takes its place.

1.3 Why is Kant's postulate of "perpetual peace" ineffective?

The major contributions to the notion of war from philosophical discourse emerged in the aftermath of the First World War. Apart from the philosophical anthropologist Max Scheler, the work of the French thinker Henri Bergson is particularly worth mentioning. There is no doubt that this conceptual conflict between Germans and French responded to the real state of the horrors from which the leading European countries emerged deeply traumatized. After all, Ernst Jünger's most significant writings clearly show how much the "experience" and "accomplishment" of death are faced in the last moments of human heroism by the ecstasy of the nihilistic adventure (Jünger 1926). The whole "metaphysics of war", as Scheler explained, is not the mere destruction of nature and culture. It must not be remedied by something truly modern in the experience with which modernity leads to the ultimate consequences of the apocalyptic consciousness of the end of the ideas of "progress" and "development". The fundamental determinant of the industrial society of the world-historical adventure of capitalism is that it is a system in which everyday life is extradited to the grace and helplessness of repeating boredom, the routine of ordinary, the empire of banality. The machine in the mechanical part of the action cannot be without the human share. But what Freud calls "human prosthesis", which refers to the sublime object of culture, is turning to the ontological site of man and machine. Now human beings are being mechanized. That way, it becomes prosthesis of the inhuman. In the book entitled *Genius of War and the German War (Den Genius des Krieges und den Deutschen Krieg)*, first published in 1915, Scheler speaks of the war that allows the disillusionment of truth. Its "organization", "legal form", and "purposes" are essentially opposed to the daily flow of life as a normal course of work and leisure (Scheler 1982).

If we exclude the fact that the entirety of neo-Kantian philosophy has been ethically-aesthetically derived from so-called ethical values and the notion of aesthetic experience, it becomes clearer why Jünger's literary success with the record of war experiences on the front should be the result of a combination of Nietzsche's rhetoric of nihilism, superhuman and personal war adventures. After all, this way of speaking, outlining all

the terms of radical criticism of conditions that lead to war, is what links psychology and metaphysics to “border situations” and “extraordinary states”. The most important thing, however, is something else. War should be phenomenologically exposed as an event that does not arise in advance from the evil of human nature and cannot be removed by an ethical set of measures from the world’s historical destiny of Being itself. In this regard, Jan Patočka, a Czech phenomenologist and a famous dissident in the struggle against communist totalitarianism, represented the attitude of adopting further discussions on the relationship between techno-science, new ethics and politics to face total war “now” and “in the future”:

In the new relationship between atomic weapons and constant threats with total destruction, the glowing war may become cold or smoulder. The smoulder war is no less cruel, and it is often even crueller than the glowing one, in it the battles are lurking on continents. It has already been shown that war itself involves ‘peace’ in the form of demobilization. On the other hand, permanent mobilization represents *fatum that the world is severely endured*, hard to look at in the face... (Patočka 2015, 612)

The problem that arises from the exposure of war as an “event” in which the individual has to be exaggerated in the whirlwind of uncompromising events does not just affect the spheres of “values” and “experiences”. Since modernity in its “being” has the unsustainable movement of science and technology towards the future in the transformations of forms and characters, it is obvious that the war between nation-states must be transformed into the “total war” of the imperial order of states. There is no doubt that the type of “heroic realism” and nationalism-patriotism that German-French philosophers and writers paraded after the First World War has been lost in time. What, however, remains unclear to date is how the phenomenon of war in its “purity” can be philosophically comprehended if the first assumption of the end of metaphysics is that Clausewitz’s definition, as Heidegger has clearly shown, no longer applies to the totality and planetary of the 20th-century war? If it is no longer valid that war is a continuation of politics by other means, then it is clear that politics is not a continuation of the war by other means. Both war and politics come from something that allows them to coexist in their relationship. The political, as Carl Schmitt knew very well, cannot in any way be inseparable from the devastating influence of other spheres such as science, technology, society, economics, culture, or religion unless it is constituted as an exceptional event of “revolution” in the very world of modernity. Of course, the problem with such a “revolution” is not just that it is another face of violence that shook the world and caused the collapse of liberal-

democratic order in the 20th century with the arrival of Nazism in Germany, fascism in Italy, and Stalinist communism in Russia. What the political in itself holds as the bragging of the greatest freedom of opportunity denotes the existential project of overcoming death. The heroic act of a singular individual to oppose the order of organized evil in the form of the totalitarian state, as in the case of Patočka, is still a little more than the sacrificial act of his own life. As far as this impossibility is concerned, what emerges from this sacrifice of liberty shows that war and politics are only a continuation of planetary techniques by other means. Continuation does not mean a mere extension of the unbroken line. So-called “other means” are not mere instruments of performance. It is better to say that the political one simultaneously has “demonic” and “emancipatory” potential. So, therefore, the question of the essence of war in the era of the end of metaphysics might simultaneously be the question of being political at the time of the end of history. Nothing is more autonomous precisely because the singular event of the *technosphere* is one wherein every thought of autonomy of action without facing the conditions of a radical change of state is removed from the game as “naive”, “illusion”, “idealism”. Between the demands for absolute freedom and the net of total power, there is a gap, a deep abyss. Solely that testifies to the inability to act without a radical change of thinking. Heidegger was right, then, when thinking of the “second beginning” and the event (*Ereignis*), that

No ‘revolution’ is ‘revolutionary’ enough. (Heidegger 1998, 38)

What can stand against this normative delirium of political philosophy? Even today, there is considerable pathos in the theories of different currents, ranging from the neo-Marxism of Badiou and Rancière to Agamben’s criticism of the biopolitical production of power, following in the footsteps of Foucault, Benjamin and Schmitt. One of the reasons for the rise of the political concept in the contemporary debate over politics must be concealed in the fact that it is a controversy between the openness of freedom and the closeness of total power distributed over and beyond the global order of power. On the one hand, there is no political power to deal with the techno-scientific logic of the war crossing into the “state of emergency” of strategic armaments and threats against “weak states”, as we can see in the inability to radically calculate the global order of multipolarities (USA, Russia, China) with the nuclear power of North Korea. But, on the other hand, we are witnessing the fact that the so-called liberal-democratic order leads to constant “preventative-defensive” wars. A ruthless network of terror is embodied today in the Islamic State, against

which the NATO alliance and Russia are formally involved (however, in a conflict with a high level of involvement). Between norms and actions, there is a deeper gap than existed in the golden age of the “Baroque order of the states”. What is the reason for this? It seems to me that there is no longer any certainty about the political foundations of a “universal world state”, which would be a guarantee of the termination of wars and conflicts. Moreover, there is not even a willingness to give up on the remnant of sovereignty that belongs to the last settlements of international law, based on an understanding of the obsolete nation-state.

The question of the credibility of contemporary thinking about war is passing, or falls precisely in explaining why we can no longer speak about “eternal peace” which, with Kant’s postulate of the cosmopolitan order, enlightened the idea of perfecting the mind to the ethical obligation of removing the “eternal war”. Whenever a discussion is held about whether so-called “human nature” is always good or evil, the conclusion that surfaces is indefinite. This is nothing but a question of the ontological difference between animals, humans and machines. In other words, humanity becomes the fundamental criterion for evaluating the ability of an animal to be pitiful or wild, and the machine as inhumane in principle is understood to be ethically neutral. We see that this could be relevant to the emergence of cybernetics and informatics. Since then, the machine has *emerged* as “artificial intelligence” (AI) and has essentially changed the metaphysical order and the rank of Being, beings and being human. Some of the leading cosmological scholars, as well as theoretical physicists, predict that “total war” in the upcoming age of total planetary mobilization would be a kind of “inhuman rebellion” in the form of the government of the living machine. Therefore, it seems necessary to once more re-examine the reach of Kant’s postulate, without which every attempt at thoughts of “eternal peace” goes no further beyond being dead letters on paper.

As is well-known, in the 1795 book *Zum ewigen Frieden. Ein philosophischer Entwurf* (*Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay*), Kant’s thesis, within its political philosophy, is based on the fact that moral action signifies a condition of the possibility of politics. In one place in this famous essay, we find the following statement:

Politics in the real sense cannot take a step forward without first paying homage to the principles of morals. (Kant 1903, 182-183)

Though Kant constantly recalls the problem of the survival of evil and good in the notion of “human nature”, starting from the transcendental principles of the idea of man as an *animal rationale*, the intention of his thought project, in which the essence of the European Enlightenment

reached its peak, is at first glance primarily political-legal. So that the history of the world's wars and bloody revolutions could calm down within the space of mind, reason, and controlled passions, as well as that the idea of the providential God could find its true place in historical events, the "perpetual peace" between peoples and states really is, in the process of becoming the world order of the universal state, constructed on the fundamentals of the mind. In other words, Kant assumes that the only necessity is not the one in its nature as the empire of chaos and disorder, but rather in the culturally perfect cosmopolitan order of the "world". There is room here for all people—but only with the mutual recognition of the moral subjects of political suspension and the neutralization of the sovereignty of nation-states. This, of course, does not mean the end of the state in a political sense. It still has its own power and scope of protection of personal freedom and civil security. However, the problem is that the idea of a cosmopolitan order cannot be achieved without a parallel process, or, speaking with modern words, "depoliticizing and neutralizing" the state as an instrument of violence and power and, ultimately, those who run the war machine (Archibugi 2003). If we remove any implication of hopeless philanthropy standing in the throes of ideas of "perpetual peace", which is Kant's own criticism of his own political philosophy, then something much more complex still remains. It is about the right to *hospitality*, which includes hospitality towards the Other and the right to asylum for foreigners if the state—instead of expressing its affections and taking over the obligations of civic duties—becomes the object of endangering its institutions. It does not seem necessary to mention in particular how much this dossier is responsible for highlighting political federalism, the legal articulation of the law on hospitality, and asylum for foreigners and refugees today. In the contemporary philosophy of the late ethical-political turn of Lévinas and Derrida, the questions of sovereignty, foreigners and refugees, as well as the European constitution of citizenship, appear crucial for the future of Europe and the world at large (Paić 2016).

Whence, however, the theoretical urge to build the cosmopolitan order of the "world" and the resulting necessity of "perpetual peace"? Kant must assume something simultaneously theologically defined and philosophically determined by the entire metaphysical tradition of thought. This is nothing but the idea of Christian theodicy. In the beginning was the innocence of nature, then original sin and falling into the state of evil, with which historical events take place in the conflicts and wars in recognition of the entity (individual, nation and state), and, finally, comes the exaltation of man's redemption and enlightenment to the highest possibilities that come

from his mind to create and perfect the moral order of good and righteousness. Kant's explanation of this necessity of the "progress" and "development" of history from the natural state to the social contract and the emergence of the republican order of the nation-state up to the "world state" that will be a guarantee of "religious peace" is quite a strange connection between the moral postulate of the demands of the mind and the grace of providence (nature). Namely, what is missing in this paradoxical connection between the rational order of the universality of rights—the "world state"—and religious nature in itself lies in the sphere of what Aristotle called friendship (*philia*) in the community. From the new era until today, life has kept the floor called solidarity in communion. In both cases, it is not about the right of the subject to their own impetus and aspirations. Instead, the republican political order needs a kind of "civil religion" of freedom. Its function must be integrative in creating a cosmopolitan order. But the problem is how effective this term is along the way. Certainly, because there is no solidarity between nations and states in the existing constellation of power, which only occurs in the afflictions and disadvantages of endangered humanity such as natural disasters and after the fatigue of "total war", Kant must, therefore, postulate communion, starting with the teleology of historical events:

The intercourse, more or less close, which has been everywhere steadily increasing between the nations of the earth, has now extended so enormously that a violation of right in one part of the world is felt all over it. Hence the idea of a cosmopolitan right is no fantastical, high-flown notion of right, but a complement of the unwritten code of law—constitutional as well as international law—necessary for the public rights of mankind in general and thus for the realisation of perpetual peace. For only by endeavoring to fulfill the conditions laid down by this cosmopolitan law can we flatter ourselves that we are gradually approaching that ideal. (Kant 1903, 142)

Conclusion

What happened to the idea of "perpetual peace", which does not move from a moral postulate to a condition of political-legal realization? We have seen that instead of the purpose and legitimacy of history, the contingency and singularity of what is indefinite after the "end of history" is at work here. If, therefore, Kant remains in his enlightenment programme with the indisputable proof that philosophy in relation to reality refers to a norm in relation to action, then the important turn in the permanent condition of war and peace represents a sort of defeat of the

Enlightenment in the face of the reign of planetary technology. The problem should not be obviously performed in moral postulates concerning the upcoming era as the absence of the results of God's providence, which was based on the idea of the mind's nature and its ultimate purpose. Conversely, the problem lies in the fact that the real "total war" is the paradoxical link between the total mobilization of techno-science and the absolute construction of the event, which changes Being from its very foundation. War as a synthesis of the modern impact scheme performed by *calculating-planning-construction* on the possibility of the total devastation and destruction of the human species on Earth, however, is active in itself. Hegel spoke—with inevitable cynicism—that we are faced with the cunning of the astonishing mind. What does that look like? Nothing other than the intimidation of the Other and the self-assertion that nation-states are still leading the post-imperial wars of oil, gas, water, faith, human rights, freedom of the people, etc. It was long ago that those matters were over. When the subject of outdated political and legal games in the will to power is cleansed of all traces of "patriotism" and "nationalism", what is left? Obviously, only naked power contained in the mood for the rule of the impersonal, of what contemporary philosophy after Heidegger and Deleuze exposes as self-posturing network relations that no longer have any centre, nor even an edge.

The replacement might be reduced only to a multitude of hubs in constant self-repair at a higher level of intensity than the destructive power. "Total war" knows no winners and losers, simply because it requires a constant capacity for renewal that is needed for the implosion of the entire core concerning the new planetary conflict. However, this is not the essence opposed to Kant's "perpetual peace", though now without any moral postulates, but a pragmatic solution to the ongoing negotiations at the end of the conflict. Instead, everything goes in the other direction, but no longer in the downward turn. Orientationally, the direction of transversal movements is like the wars that are currently ongoing between the decentralized network of empires and their non-counter-attacks of power. The rankings and structures in this order show that state terror in the form of "political action" towards the *rogue states* has its reaction in the form of terror of the Islamic State. It is a terror that is no longer a means for the purpose of building "new totalitarianism". The fundamental purpose of this terror is for the open societies of Western civilization to "obey" with regard to what is threatening each order of liberty and the republican values of democracy. But because absolute terror is undeniable to politics as a strategic power game that becomes the totalizing act in wars and threats to the Other, it is possible to ask a question of the

boundary between the end of the world-historical drama of the West and the beginning of the global-planetary agony of the empires and their satellites. Wars are not an extension of the technology that enables new ideas to emerge. In this regard, the end of metaphysics is at the same time the end of history as a meaningful flow of ideas from ancient Greece to cybernetics. Ernst Jünger, in the *World State (Der Weltstaat)*, revealingly points to the end of the epoch determined “world history”. Its flywheel was the freedom and will for the nascent spiritual world to shape the ideal figure of a civilization that unites Greek ideas of philosophy and art. History hence exemplifies the departure from mythical and chaotic nature into the formative structure of the development of spiritual powers. When they are no longer in the centre, the “remembrances and prostheses” of what was once authentic and alive are what is left of “world history”. What, then, is left of the idea not only of world history but also of the different versions of the “just war” in a time when terror, total control and biopolitics are decided by events in the world? The answer does not lie in the pseudo-humanization of the world and the inflation of ethical doctrines as a therapy for the frenzy of the technologically constructed apocalypse.

Instead of utopia and apocalypticism, the solution lies in contemplating the very constellation of techno-cybernetic thinking as the danger that this condition allows—between “total mobilization” and “absolute construction”. The thinking belongs to an event, without which it is in its technical destiny that it remains halfway between emptiness and nothingness. Do we still have a way of thinking that is appropriate for the controversy of “military thought” that has emerged from Western metaphysics and all of its sciences? It is not difficult to answer that question. We do, of course. But it is without power because thinking no longer decides the fate of the upcoming events. Instead, everything is in the hands of a techno-genetic, absolute construction. Everything is, ultimately, a question of a decision about the odds of a completely different path than the one which appears in the signs of an uncanny “necessity”. We do not choose “us” or “them” with this decision. Quite the contrary, the final decision belongs to “one” that is concealed in the “being” of *calculating-planning-construction*, but which is always of one and the same event. Can this decision be delayed or avoided in its “necessity” and “inevitability”?

CHAPTER TWO

AN-ARCHÉ AS THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE: JACQUES RANCIÈRE AND THE POLITICS OF DISAGREEMENT

2.1 The question of the method

Why do we have a certain kind of manner of very often saying that today everything has become political and that almost everything that is happening is viewed aesthetically? Do these two terms contradict each other? It may be, however, that behind Janus' face masks is concealed an abyss of other definitions, except what suspends any possible over-determination. It should be said that politics designates the power of ruling the people in the community (*politeia, civitas dei, republic, monarchy, democracy*). Aesthetics, in turn, signifies the area of pure bodily experience of what belongs to the language and the image in the experience of beauty. We are not talking about a feeling but about the experience. The difference is that feeling denotes a subject of psychology. In addition, the former and the latter show us the relationship between the work and the observer. We call a reflection of feelings at a higher level of perception an experience. Politics as power and aesthetics as experience are not in contradiction with the determination of what enables them. It is impossible to impart power without a sense of sensible experience. The relationship between the two should be causal and efficient. However, a problem arises when their connection is called into question. It no longer determines politics as power or aesthetics as a meaning of sensation in the world, but it surely comes with the emergence of a completely different "politics" and "aesthetics". On the other hand, the abodes of "power" and "sense" are changing. However, it seems very obvious that our daily experience is taking on a different relationship. We might call that situation an event of un-foundation action. Greeks named this phenomenon *an-arché*. One can thus call the thinking after Heidegger, beginning with the ethical revolution in the work of Emmanuel Levinas, post-foundational theory or the deconstruction of the unconditional principle of the "nature" of Being

as presence, the idea of God and all that had features of the onto-theological tradition (Marchart 2010).

An-arché in the thinking of politics and aesthetics beyond the tradition of “political philosophy” of Leo Strauss and Hannah Arendt in the 20th century—or in contact with the ideas of political emancipation of Joseph Jacotot, or of Karl Marx and anarchism—marks the theory of politics as disagreement (*mésentente*) in the writings of Jacques Rancière. What should be emphasized right there refers to equality, which in many respects belongs to the mainstream of the French political ontology of events, regardless of the differences between Derrida, Foucault, Deleuze, Lyotard, Badiou, Lefort, Nancy, and Lacoue-Labarthe. But the fact is that only Rancière has performed the most persistent criticism of the contemporary era of global politics as the oligarchic order of “police” rule. He gave a pretty convincing argument about that approach with a number of new concepts (Davis 2010; Marchart 2011, 129-131). If we wanted to perform a card experiment according to the thinking of politics today, we could show that the “poker aces” with regard to the issue of this post-foundation event, which opens up the possibilities of change in the world-historical revolution, that is, from the typical French tradition, are present in the following way. All the basic concepts with which the modern revolution started were the notions of the French Revolution. These are *equality*, *fraternity*, *freedom* (*égalité*, *fraternité*, *liberté*) and, last but not least, *justice*. The first term denotes the point of thinking of Jacques Rancière, the third is associated with Foucault and Deleuze, and the fourth with Lévinas, Derrida, Lyotard, and the media’s intervention in the new historical framework. One can even argue that the term might be a key for its maintenance. The reason is that the concepts of the upcoming community of equality, freedom and justice are constituted here. Fraternity denotes exactly what Plato called friendship (*philia*) and Aristotle the power of public action in the political struggle of equal and free citizens. One of Derrida’s recent writings on ethical-political deconstruction, *The Politics of Friendship*, develops that very notion of experience as a political sense of community or solidarity. Without it, the upcoming world would be reduced to mere survival in the “dehumanized desert” (Derrida 2005, 130).

What is left of contemporary thinking in this aspect of the disappearance of the metaphysical foundation of politics? We must not forget that Rancière’s intervention took place even before the “great turn”. This happened, of course, around the 1990s, and it had an impact on more recent texts on politics and aesthetics. Dealing with the neoliberal triumph of the global order, the euphoria of consumerism in the modern societies

of the West, and the end of communism and the “return of political philosophy” essentially determined the direction of his late theory. The issue that arises is even more paradoxical to the question of the “remaining” of the political one at the time of its transformation into the technical management of “crisis”. It comprehends a politics in the neoliberal reduction of its essence to the contents of the economy. The reading, therefore, sounds like this: why does politics in the age of scientific-technical nihilism become mystical in the following turn from the fact of the upcoming event? The backbone of all agendas to the concept of action and the possibility of changing the historical-metaphysical notion of the world is undoubtedly Martin Heidegger. His late thinking, in which the notion of the *event* (*Ereignis*) appears as a sort of attempt to overcome metaphysics and nihilism of technology, is by no means an unambiguous path to the *political* and politics at all. Although it has become impossible to differentiate his “ontology” from “politics” as many critical contributions have recently shown (cf. May 2008), it should be obvious that Heidegger did not form the concept of politics out of his own sense of meaning, irreducible to its relation to economics or science and culture, as Carl Schmit did, in particular, with his political theology (Meier 2006, 7-23). We know how devastating the end of Heidegger’s failed adventure with Nazism was as a political event able to establish a “second beginning” (Paić 2015, 135-206). If the metaphysical assemblage is at the same time determined to be an apparatus of *Gestell*, that is, from what is not an authentic way of living in the community, it denotes a vulgar way of showing the truth of Being. Therefore, we could see a paradoxical turn precisely in that which all the French followers of Heidegger, even those who explicitly refuse to think it, one of whom is certainly Rancière; their thinking is represented as a late political debate where politics determines the thinking of new authentic events. Access and differences are unquestioned. But the closeness to the search for a new concept of politics represents “faith” in the possibility of an internal turn of a complexity. This happens even when it seems clear that this faith is still the utopia of secular “political theology”. Undoubtedly, in this lies the impossibility of radical opportunities for action in the area of the existing real world of liberal democracy and global capitalism, which belongs equally to “believers” and “infidels”.

Instead of Heidegger’s “mysticism of Being”, we are faced with a new kind of *mysticism*, a mysticism of that which, according to Lévinas, cannot be an ontology. It might be entirely different, an attempt to think of the Other from a space-time of authenticity of the event. Rancière, thus, articulates a thinking of politics as a field of absolute equality, because just

equality as such constitutes the “essence” of democracy. For *an-arché* in a new context, there can only be “disagreement” and “dissensus” with respect to the ruling paradigm and the concepts of their policies. If the event of what is escaping the logic of founding a policy is related to the criticism of power and experience, or of politics and aesthetics as the relationship of something that is already essentially established in itself as a power-experience of naturalizing the order of leading ideas of history, then Rancière considers this thinking to concern the egalitarian turn of history. The West can be considered, thus, as a double operation of the categorial performing. It is above all the growth of the Platonic-Aristotelian logic of history in the field of politics as *power* and the modern science of beauty and excellence in the field of aesthetics as *experience*. But every activity of growth is already an attempt at “new foundations”. In the other horizon of history, the rules of the game might be different. The mysticism in the “essence” of this two-way event might be paradoxical and at the same time incomparable to the thinking of Jacques Rancière. The reason is that we might presuppose that what we call *an-arché* has no fundamentals either inside or outside. In this contingency, we are doomed to a constant struggle with the order of inequalities and chaos in its own vagueness. That must be a reason why we use the word “mysticism” for what comes out of the state in between two ways of comprehending a form of politics:

- (1) as the power of a hierarchically predicated society on which a state is constructed, and
- (2) as a spontaneous struggle for democracy.

This difference is “ontological” and continues Rancière’s distinction between two ways of conceptualizing a community’s essence. Without this, one cannot understand his thinking of the *political* and politics. Politics denotes the activity of an authentic struggle for freedom and equality in the community, and “police” denotes an order or regime as a form of state.² The principle of democracy cannot be governed here, but instead it concerns that which is completely opposed to it. How do we approach this almost “Manichean” dispute, this *an-archaic* conflict of an authentic event of freedom with a vulgar set of necessities of technocratic control in *democracies*, which Rancière calls oligarchies in his book *Hatred of Democracy*?

We do not live in democracies. Nor, as some authors argue – because they think we are subject to the biopolitical rule of exception law – do we live in camps. We live in States of oligarchic law, in other words, in States where

the power of the oligarchy is limited by a dual recognition of popular sovereignty and individual liberties. (Rancière 2014, 72-73)

We have already said that the approach to understanding Rancière's theory of politics represents, on the one hand, a critique of "political philosophy" and its return, and secondly, a re-definition of everything that is established by a categorical order precisely in this tradition. *An-arché* must not be taken as a quasi-transcendental principle like a weak signifier of a different historical course of politics and aesthetics. If oligarchy and order signify the real condition of the state, then it denotes the impossibility of fulfilling democratic principles in the line of liberal democracies. In other words, minority rule largely does not support the argument that democracy has become an undermining of its original "essence", so it might have been possible to fix some external measures, such as improving the electoral system, for example, by preferential voting within party lists in representative democracies of the West. Quite the contrary, there is no original "essence" of democracy, no eternal or unchangeable "nature" on which the rule of the people relies. The problem that follows, for Rancière, is of an ontological and political nature. If the subject of democracy should be a nation as *demos*, then its "general will" of equality can no longer be transferred to elected representatives or direct deciding by the people, as in ancient Athens or in medieval Italian towns and small Swiss cantons, where the citizens replaced the complex procedures of decision-making in the system of state government in referendums. Is there any alternative to these binary oppositions of the immediate and indirect government of the people? Do we always only choose the same thing with quite different features?

The problem is that democracy means the rule of all as most (*polloi*) equal and free. It is also a rule without a subject that determines what the sovereignty is of what is true without foundation. Why is democracy without a subject? It might be because the subject is constantly re-constituted by its political action. Therefore, a major problem in Rancière's thinking of politics is, it seems, that the basis of his theory of the political, called "disagreement" (*mésentente*), lies in the non-political notion of equality. In order to bring equality into reality in the state, it must be subjectively politically subjugated to acts of rebellion against the "police order". Barricades should not just be in the streets. They should also be the necessary boundary between two worlds that are not irreconcilable. Instead, we should always be talking from the perspective of the egalitarian policy of "disagreement" and "dissensus" as constitutive terms for politics within the limits of liberal democracy. Paradoxes and aporias of democracy arise from its irreducibility to "nature" and its

“laws”. If there is no first cause or ultimate purpose, then everything should seemingly be arbitrary, contingent and self-defining. *Demos* does not mean the abstraction of a particular subject or the arithmetical sum of adult people in the political community. Simply, it denotes a subject without substance, which should be constituted in part from the notion of natural necessity as postulated by the realms of the rule of one (monarchy) or the minority (aristocracy and oligarchy), according to the inherent features of the natural inequalities of people. Plato was still discussing those things in the *Republic* (Plato 2003). What is paradoxical and aporetic should be that democracy, according to Rancière in his critique of Plato’s “political philosophy”, in itself has represented an exception and a scandal. We know that this could only be possible when the notions of equality and freedom can no longer be founded on the basic assumptions of the self-governing of political people. Rancière must, therefore, foresee that *an-arché* represents another way of sovereignty and power from the historically established tradition of the value of “order”. Of course, it might be only in itself obvious that this second direction of thinking of politics must be towards both the aesthetic displacement of politics and the political displacement of aesthetics (Rancière 2000).

The body in freedom and equality with others in the community does not acquire subjectivity from the *a priori* rationality of political discourse. This type of thinking on the perspective of persuasion is Habermas’ communicative or deliberative democracy. It has the power of dialogue in parliament and society as a space for political decision-making. Rancière rejects this, of course, with the argument of the existence of “disagreement”. However, this denotes the way in which politics acts in democratic life because parliament and the public cannot be the exclusive areas of politics. The body of political life requires an attempt to overcome the abyss between social spheres of dissymmetry. The problem occurs whenever the market becomes the only place of mediation and the only measure of the democratic equality of opportunity in the modern ranking of political communication. If the state does not originate from a society, then neither does the nation create a state, as it is shaped by the tradition of German state law and the theory of sovereignty. Against the liberal and antiliberal ideas of the freedom of the individual and the sovereignty of the people, Rancière goes on to criticize the concept of politics as a “police”. By calling into question the republican *ethos* of the country as a “social contract” of Rousseau to the present contractualism, he also shows that both concepts are obsolete. In a confrontation with the challenges of the neoliberal globalization of the world, it is necessary to build new approaches. The sovereignty of the people no longer has its own signifier.

When the “people” are replaced by the rule of the oligarchic elite, the question of competences and knowledge for performing complex public affairs arises. Administrative management replaces the political participation of citizens. Individual liberties, though, are the basis of the market economy and the value of “democratic individualism”. But these values are equally nostalgic for the past. In the new ruling order, “freedoms” (*liberties*) are replaced by competencies of talents in the strict competitive struggle for social recognition. As politics in the sense of the order of the state and community management lost primacy in favour of economics, in the same way, aesthetics, at the end of the 20th century, has been placed in an uncomfortable situation. Searching for its ultimate “basis” in sensitivity instead of autonomy, it has gone into the service of the *technosphere*. Without absolute equality as the unconditional act of the democratic principle, *an-arché* politics becomes the politics of regimes and aesthetics in the encounter with regenerated art. During the rule of the image, it addresses the “emancipated observer”. So, a rebellion against the order of “beauty” and “sublime” with the subversion of “sense” rather than any new canon forms the aesthetic displacement of current contemporary art (Rancière 2011). Specifically, what the term *disagreement* (*mésentente*) denotes in politics should be *dissensus* in aesthetics. But with the addition of a political predecessor to aesthetics, the “dissensus” is, finally, a continuation of disparity with other means. In both cases, Rancière wants to cancel the trust of governing systems as a political agreement between the subjects/actors of neoliberal oligarchy and all that follows in the aesthetic field of perception, where rationality becomes a conceptual diagram of the *technosphere*, while pleasure in spending replaces the creative anxiety of producing.

In short, this premise seems to be appropriate. Rancière’s works devoted to politics and aesthetics can be understood from the perspective of critiquing the largest possible perversion of modernity: that, in fact, we do not live in democracies but in oligarchic states. If we truly can agree with this assumption, then neither “politics” nor “aesthetics” are valid answers to the problem of the end of the metaphysical image of the world, as well as that of the disintegration of the historical assemblage of Being-God-Human-World. These are just two expressions of the same discomfort. But what so dramatically affects the *an-arché* thinking of upcoming events beyond the ideas of “nature” and “order” in the political and aesthetic sense might be the inability to overcome the abyss. Because of this, the logic of the rebellion versus the political order of “oligarchic democracy” today is condemned to the childish illness of left-wing politics, and Rancière so radically calls that into question. These are

precisely the politics of sovereignty and the aesthetics of modern individualism. There is no return to the golden age of the *ancien régime* and lost innocence will not be revived anymore. When an entity is determined by an action or struggle for self-recognition as a *sans-part* or one that has no share in ownership, such as ancient slaves and modern proletarians, then the only solution to the dispute between universalism and particularism is to move to the other end of the scale. *Sans-part* must be eliminated or socialized in the process of a radical democratic revolution. Anything else is a vain effort to reach the “zero point” of radical thought. When it is assessed, the spontaneous anarchist revolt that does not know what to do with the state and is aesthetically “mystified” ends like the unrequited sexual desire for the impossible sublime object. Rancière, therefore, places the issue of the subject of the rule and its inability to establish itself at the centre of criticism of the oligarchy as a form of state in the global order of capitalism. It does that through what he called the institutional governance of the regime or the “police”.

Instead of a subject that is pre-constituted by the mind in “political philosophy” from Plato to Kant, we have a process of *subjectivization*. It is a process in the discourse-political event of emancipation. The alternative to the mind cannot be settled in passion and agonism. The subject, on the contrary, is politically constituted through the action of subversion of the existing order but not through the abolishment of state institutions in liberal democracies and its fundamental principles of civil liberty and equality before the law. The question of access to the thinking of politics seems to be the question of the method during the rule of the principle of *an-arché*. It might be significant to approach the thinking of the *anarchic* and *egalitarian turn* in an era no longer preceded by the continuation of history in the sense of ultimate purpose and meaning, as this was appropriate for Hegel’s speculative dialectics of the Absolute. The method is no longer a “royal way” of the subject to the truth. When the king’s head has been symbolically cut off, the return of politics can no longer be comprehended by the mere return of anything that was relevant to the modern notion of the state, politics and law. Without the sovereignty of the nation-state, there is no sovereignty of the real subject of politics. It needs to be re-created on other “foundations” or replaced by another “noble lie” about the emergence of the community like Plato’s well-known mythical story in the *Republic* of metal divisions as philosopher-kings, warrior-guards and farmers-tradesmen sought to strengthen an ideal community (*politics*). Gold (*theory*), silver (*praxis*) and iron (*poiesis*) are divided according to natural and other criteria of inequality and orders of rank in society. Quasi-fiction or myths about the political order on the basis of the

hierarchy of art in the human (political) community since then have had the goal of the metaphysical justification of inequality in the construction of the historical world. This is what Rancière believes is the political and aesthetic formation of illusion when the *dissensus* is debated through *archipolitics* and *parapolitics* (Rancière 2000; Žižek 2004, 69-79). Therefore, this political thinking also denotes methodically anarchic and systematic assemblages in its playful combination of new concepts. What and who is the subject of Rancière's politics of emancipation? Is it the *demos* in the meaning of a modern political nation as citizenship in existing political areas, or perhaps an emancipated class of unrecognizable people who ask for that which belongs to the contingency that becomes the universal necessity of the historical survival of mankind—*equality*? If it is the former, then why does Rancière not take into account its real qualities and defects but postulates the subject of a mystical rebellion against the “police order” of modern technology and its form of oligarchic rule with the rationality, competence and expertise of the meritocracy? If the latter might be right, how can this abstract totality of struggle for the particular recognition of the “class” of the *sans-part* truly be established without the simultaneous transformation of the Other, beyond the class-social hierarchy of society in the age of global capitalism? The question of the method, in this case, points to the issue of the relationship or contingent relationship between the politics and the aesthetics of the subject that in its mystic rebellion and subversion of value remains an empty marker if there is no criticism of the quality of its propulsion. Can such an understanding of politics and aesthetics actually respond to the real challenges we are faced with today in our complex daily practices?

2.2 Politics as a disagreement

What is politics? For Rancière, against the mainstream of political philosophy, the science of politics and the sociology of politics, it does not mean the “execution of power”, as we can read in the first of the *Ten Theses on Politics* (Rancière 1998, 223). Instead, politics needs to be understood from its irreducible “essence” as a “mode of specific action” by which the subject is left to mark its own aspirations, desires and feelings (Rancière 1998, 223). From Lacan's *Ethics of Psychoanalysis* through Althusser's *Reading Capital* to Foucault's lectures on the hermeneutics of the subject, a series of attempts have been made to arrive at a new notion of the subject. Rancière also rode on this wave. We can also add Badiou here because his way suggests that the subject considers the process and the event of the emergence of the new. So, the question of

a subject in this context might always be an issue of emancipation. And since it is a political category of establishing what has been neglected or what has appeared since the very beginning as a lacuna in the very concept of politics, then the relation between politics, emancipation and subject must be sought on other grounds than the “political philosophy” of thinkers from Plato to Leo Strauss. From this it might be obvious that politics does not belong to the second rank of terminology, even though—through the course of history, from the ancient Greeks through Rome and the modern world to the global order of the late 20th century—its own peculiarity has been suppressed to the benefit of other areas of human activity such as the economy, technology, science, and so on. The thesis that was proposed by Rancière has its origins in the political tradition of Carl Schmitt and Hannah Arendt. However, the obvious difference is that Rancière explicitly refuses to admit that the main concept of politics should be the concept of power (*pouvoir*). Undoubtedly, power denotes something that connects with politics, but it is not its “essence”. Why am I writing the word essence (or substance) in quotation marks? The reason lies in what Rancière as well as the whole stream of renewed thoughts on the notion of the idea of politics as an event of freedom, equality and justice—from the circle of French thinkers following Heidegger to phenomenology, post-structuralism and their related theories—base their assumptions on concerning the deconstruction and neutralization of classical or traditional metaphysics. From that framework, “essence” has been understood as the unchangeability of conditions and the permanency of relations. The stability of the category is no longer guaranteed. From Rancière’s perspective, it should be clear that this “way of specific action” of politics must be demonstrated as decisive to the signifier or subject of its performance. Politics hence implies the contingent nature of self-determination. In a situation that is not entirely free, it should be already defined as a set of relationships and different rules of the game within a single discourse; politics acts as an emancipatory activity on the subject of “people” (*demos*). In other words, acting cannot denote an “essence” of politics. It should only be subjectivization. How? Simple. It allows a specific mode of action to become political. Not all in that assemblage hence become politics, but all at once become immersed in the aesthetic and political assemblage, and, like a nation, a *demos* must continually re-constitute itself. This is, of course, a revolutionary task because it acts as a struggle for the equality of “conditions of the possibility of freedom” rather than for the “equality of chance” in the market. The concept of politics as emancipation and as an egalitarian political-aesthetic turn of the

notion of power to spontaneous rebellion versus the order—that is where its last limit lies.

That is, in fact, the specificity and difference between Rancière and other political theorists such as Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau. Thus, the effect cannot be explained by the existence of rational discourse nor by the agonistic passion in conflict with the order within the space of the public discourse of politics (Mouffe 2006; Laclau 1996). It is a pure contingency. In addition, in its unpredictability, it should be open to overcoming the binary oppositions of modern metaphysics such as the remains of Descartes' philosophy (the spiritual substance *vs.* the bodily substance). Relationship signifies what adds to the subjecting of the feature of the political into the process of emancipation from "nature" and "necessity" as always belonging to the existing order of social inequality and hierarchy. It created fertile ground for the rise of the oligarchy at the very beginning of Athenian democracy. Philosophy does not apply to politics as the mind does against the body in Plato's and Descartes' perspectives. Rancière starts from the fact that what is emerging in the world as political represents a unique contingent event. It follows that nothing is predetermined, nor can its ultimate purpose and goals be determined without the emergence of "nature" and its "laws". Politics can no longer be a means of increasing power or, indeed, something that is economically viable for the administrative management of the state and society of the new era. Its autonomy is by definition democratic. For this reason, equality in its universality and particularity denotes its condition for the emancipation of man in its present order. Let us consider more closely the notion of the "condition of possibility". Kant's three critiques—of the pure mind, the practical mind, and the power of judgement—appear to be familiar to the modern way of thinking. Undoubtedly, we have here modal categories. They are logical and directed towards the notion of time as a continuum of fragments of past, present and future: the possibility, the reality, and the necessity. When it comes to the "condition of possibilities" of emancipation—and Rancière used that expression synonymously with the concept of egalitarian policy—we are always dealing with a contingent condition. It is not the opposite of "necessity", but a specific possibility that belongs only to the *political* and politics in the meaning of the "police order". And since Rancière follows the logic of Marx's radical politics of emancipating a universal class, such as a working-class struggling for its own recognition as the universal recognition of man's equality, it is possible to say that the "empire of freedom" determines the existence of the "empire of necessity" only with the overlapping logical-historical order.

Freedom thus no longer appears in the anti-essentialist sense as the first assumption of the necessity of its seriousness in the real world. On the contrary, for Rancière, the “condition of possibility” of contingent freedom in the world of “police order” is precisely what makes “democracy”. So, that represents the concept of the absolute equality of every person with every other person and not, therefore, of the multitude (a people in terms of *polloi*, not *demos*) that governs the minority. Instead of quantitative or arithmetic definitions of the democratic order as a form of rule, it is a logical turn in the notion of the *political* as the “conditions of possibility” of politics. No contingent “cause” produces a secondary consequence except the efficient cause which comes from the fact that democracy as a scandal and an excess cannot establish anything else, especially in the notions of reign and power, because of the rule of the people as *demos*. Undoubtedly, the notion of *people* is not pre-determined by anyone, or by any cultural criteria. It denotes a subject who is constantly subjectively different. This means emancipating from incomplete and deficient emancipation:

So it is that scandalizing men of substance, the *demos*, that horde who have nothing, become the people, the political community of free Athenians, the community that speaks, is counted, and deliberates at the assembly, causing wordsmiths to write ... ‘it has pleased the people, the people have decided’. For Plato, the man who invented political philosophy for us, this formula easily translates into the equivalence of two terms: *demos* and *doxa*: it has pleased those who know only those illusions of more or less that are called pleasure and pain; there was simple *doxa*, ‘appearance’ for the people, appearance of the people. The people are the mere appearance produced by the sensations of pleasure and pain manipulated by rhetoricians and sophists to stroke or intimidate the great animal, the morass of folk who have nothing, gathered together at the assembly. (...) Politics begins with a major wrong: the gap created by the empty freedom of the people between the arithmetical order and the geometric order. It is not common usefulness that founds the political community any more than confrontation or the forming of interests. The wrong by which politics occurs is not some flaw calling for reparation. It is the introduction of an incommensurable at the heart of the distribution of speaking bodies. This incommensurable breaks not only with the equality of profits and losses; it also ruins in advance the project of the city ordered according to the proportion of the *cosmos* and based on the *arkhè* of the community. (Rancière 1999, 9-10, 19)

The problem faced in this set-up of the category is, of course, ontological-political, and not just the result of historical developments. Rancière must now, from the outset, turn off the action of ontology—the alliance of

philosophy and politics—as the power to rule the idea of the very reality of the event itself. In order to do so, it is necessary to have an *understanding* of Plato’s idea of community (*politeia*) and the modern turn in which the economy takes the place of politics by suppressing freedom and equality in the area of the capitalist ideology of the market, profits and “equality of chance”. Rancière, therefore, in his critical *accomplishments* of the term *an-arché* must reach the openness of the political phenomenon without any external purpose. The same applies to the aesthetic concept that is correlative to the political. It is a question of any future of politics, therefore, aesthetic and *vice versa*. The reason for that is the fact that the traditional categories of *theoria*, *praxis* and *poiesis* (knowledge, action, and production) have been greatly altered since the era of Plato and Aristotle. Marx is at the centre of a practical relationship with the world, which means that every practice is also a political act of change of an existing condition, and every production of life presupposes knowledge of the possibilities of change. Following this line of thought, as well as a series of related attempts from Deleuze to Badiou, Rancière considers politics as a practical-productive activity, or as a political-aesthetic subjecting of man within the limits of the human being at large.

In the writings of the 1990s, such as *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* and the article “Theses on Politics”, which is included in the book *At the Margins of Politics*, we can see a critical reading of the ideas of the “return to politics” and the “return of political philosophy” in the democratic approach to politics as the egalitarian action of people (*demos* and *people*), political subjectivization and, finally, the relationship of politics and aesthetics, which would be the particular subject of the book *Le Partage du sensible*, published in 2000. It might be evident that the relationship between philosophy and politics, for him, was no longer a matter of guiding the idea of reality because this is not feasible in terms of Platonic-Hegelian metaphysics. Politics for Rancière, however, cannot be the philosophical self-reflection of the event that is happening, as it is for Badiou (1998; 2008, 147-176). Simply, it is not the thinking of the event. The subtitle of Rancière’s most important book, *Disagreement*, sufficiently illustrates this relationship: *Politics and Philosophy*. The order has been changed. This means that politics can no longer be considered an issue as a signifier of the absolute requirement for infection with a “power” naming and legalization system of binary oppositions through history. Politics can only be conditioned by “philosophical” activity. The reason lies in the fact that it disqualifies every ranking and inequality. Its “essence” is placed in an unprecedented event. Thus, we are faced with an uncanny act of going beyond “nature” and the framework of “necessity”.

Politics appears in the world as well as in freedom in the sign of the power of that irreducible *an-arché*.

What does this mean, however, and what is meant by that concept? Is it fit for any radical democratic politics that will not remain at the level of utopia and the unrealistic expectations of the real possibilities of the political today when neoliberal global capitalism is realized in the world in the strategy, ideology, discourse and management of a “rational choice” without alternatives, from which it necessarily emerges, as Rancière explicitly claimed in his main statement in *Hatred of Democracy*, “that we do not live in *democracies*, but in oligarchic states”? *An-arché* might not merely be the suspense and neutralization of the notion of the foundation of politics in its philosophical source in Plato’s *Republic*, *Statesman* and *Laws*. If it were just that, we could only talk about a new reading or critique of Plato and the notion of the philosophy of politics. Such a reading may be closer to the intentions, for example, of what Hannah Arendt did in her demand for the theory of political irreducibility. Even the name and the notion of *un-foundation* refers to the act, not to the “nature” and the category of the “law” derived from it. And from them follows the ranking and social inequality justified by the metaphysical reasons for the existence of God and the necessity of the monarchy, the aristocracy and the oligarchy. *An-arché* hence cannot be by analogy the first activity, principle and category with which it begins to initiate a process of Being as becoming. What comes out of that notion might be mysterious and equally uncanny. It is the singularity of the event of the rule. Such reigns are neither determined nor limited, nor are they reduced to something beyond themselves. The only problem arising from that is that it can be neither a term, nor a principle of starting, but only a “condition of possibility”, that “way of specific action” which requires that the *demos* chooses itself for its vote, not some higher signifier. God no longer appears through someone or something. His voice directly becomes the voice of the people. So, instead of monophony, we can hear the echoes, a polyphony of voices, from the depths (*de profundis*).

Tragically, in the notion of democracy, it should stand, thus, that freedom denotes an irreversible destiny of man. It cannot be avoided. Sartre defined the freedom of metaphysics in the existentialist turn of liberty by means of a project and a contingency: it is simply the same and cannot be other than that! The paradox of freedom presupposes the necessity of its condition of possibility. That is a reason why a man is condemned to freedom, and existence is precisely that hole in Being through which the course of action goes (Sartre 1943). Nothing and event are correlative terms/words. Conversely, freedom as a project of the

upcoming presupposes determination and action in the direction of preserving its own “Being” that is not in what it should be but is completely different from the Being. This is that which might be determined as nothing and as a radical change in the condition of matters. Rancière, in his book *Disagreement* and all other related texts, does not endlessly vary the thought of the reversal between the ontology of politics and the political-aesthetic event beyond that of ontology at all. *An-arché* introduces us to the world of political contingency. Anyway, its main concern encompasses the issue of equality. Without it, democracy as the rule of the people (*demos*) falls into the abyss of the oligarchic “police” order.

In the “Afterword” of *Disagreement*, the question of whether or not the principle of politics leads us to a problem (*aporia*) is discussed. This is the first assumption of Aristotle in his famous *Politics* (Aristotle 2000). Since our era is characterized by the double return of both “political philosophy” and “politics”, we might pose the question of what really marks the return of philosophy and politics. If Marxism has understood politics as an expression of social relations between capitalism and class struggle, and if liberalism is an activity that must provide for the protection of the private property of an individual as well as his bodily pleasure in the sense of the good considered to be common, it should be obvious that this politics is overwhelmed with something inauthentic. Rancière believes that the roots of such a situation lie at the very beginning of political philosophy originating in Plato and Aristotle. Moreover, their notions of politics, in spite of the essential differences, derived from the core of the idea of Western metaphysics. And this is the idea of purpose (*telos*) and the goal of history. The eschatology of the idea of good in terms of the rule of freedom and justice, however, draws attention to the notion of equality. There is no doubt that it signifies just the thing which Aristotle determines as justice with the arithmetical concept of equality. Therefore, it is much “more” and much “simpler” than the order, the *taxis* and the hierarchical arrangement of the art and virtue of knowledge, action and production (*theoria, praxis, poiesis*). Instead of being an *a priori* setting, for Rancière, it is no longer a matter of first causes and the last intentions of an unknown starter of all action (God?). Everything lies in the contingency of what is happening in its irreducibility and indeterminacy with external ends and goals. When the idea of the purpose of “nature” is abandoned as the hidden foundation of all inequality between people, then we come to this axiom of democratic politics:

Politics is an activity based on the principle of equality. (Rancière 1995, 11)

But what about “equality” here? Is this equality in non-political or *political* terms? It seems that from Rancière’s perspective, we must move in the following way. In the book *At the Edges of Politics*, much more attention is devoted to the attempt at the exclusion of the concept of politics in its pure form from the logic of power. Anyway, it would be extremely difficult to say that Rancière in his intercession of the “mystic” of spontaneity rebelled against politics, as the institutional order of the oligarchy’s rule fails to see the extent of the action of dispositive power. His criticism of “political philosophy” with the terms of *disagreement* and *dissensus*, as we have already mentioned, is directed against the power of politics that in post-democracy rule today imposes itself as marketing mediation with the idea of market competition as a model for the policy of liberal “consensus” (Paić 2013, 20-62). In the *Ten Theses on Politics*, we are faced with an issue about the subject of power (*kratein*) and the reign of the multitude (*ohlo-kratein*) (Rancière 1998, 65, 225-226). If politics begins with the awakening of the subject of state and *an-arché* in the state of subjectivization using rational-discursive action against the agents or actors in the ruling order in the liberal-democratic system, the essence of democracy should be faced with the constant challenge of creating a “nation”. That might be a reason why the issue is not just what this word “equality” really denotes—arithmetical, symbolical or qualitative. The first notion denotes a mere sum of magnitudes divided between individuals as the collective body. The second notion relates to what Rancière says about the power of the people as *demos* in the struggle against the realms of inequality, unfreedom and injustice. Such regimes in neoliberal globalization are those in which democratic consensus moves into populism and autocratic forms of governance. Finally, the third notion determines the “essence” of the democratic government of the “people” as the subject to be constituted as a particular universal entity that is fighting for the truth. What is particularly significant is that the incompatibility of the communication strategy of negotiations between the two—the subjects of politics and the actors of “policies”—becomes the event of emancipation. The three concepts of equality correspond to what Rancière, in his historical-philosophical critique of Plato’s ideas of politics, called *archipolitics*, *parapolitics* and *metapolitics* (Rancière 1995, 93-131).

Demos is thus articulated in a contingent struggle. As a part of “people” in the meaning of gender/sex identity, nation, or class, only citizenship assumes the role of particular universality. The differences between human and civil rights are the differences between empty universality and content particularity. However, since Rousseau’s concept of the sovereignty of the people in the form of a republican community

(state) is crucial to distinguishing between *ethnicity* and *demos* in the modern meaning of these words, it is necessary to see the boundaries between the general will and the special right of those who are recognized by the law of birth or the “naturalization” of citizenship. Emancipation takes on a revolutionary meaning only when its “bottom” rises to the “top”. It also takes on a cultural (aesthetic) and political one because it signified a recognition of the one who is invisible, who is denied the possibility of speaking, and who is in the position of the Roman plebs or proletariat and capitalist. As for all French post-modernists, in Rancière’s case, we can talk about the anti-essentialist mode of thinking. By that, I am not talking of the dialectical method of thinking as much as the rejection of the logic of overcoming/abolition (*Aufhebung*) in the synthesis of contradiction at a higher level. When this is absent, then the interpretation of Marx always comes down to the politicized version of the event of a revolutionary subject. This is even a feature in the case of Althusser’s epistemological cut. Althusser, namely, used this concept—taken and derived from the works of Gaston Bachelard—to understand Marx as ideologue and philosopher with the notion of the alienation of labour in the period from 1842 to 1844, which ended with the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*, and with that of *German ideology* as scientist from 1845 in the form of a critique of the political economy and sociology (Althusser 1965). After the totalitarian experiment of the 20th century, in which Marxism served as the ideological cover for Stalinism and other related systems in the liquidation of freedom, we can no longer continue with the idea of linear history to the final arrival of communism as the ultimate salvation at the end of history. That is a reason why, in the case of Hegel, we always witness the actions of un-foundation concerning the new metaphysics and related thinking paths in contemporary philosophy. Thus, the idea of “the end of politics” comes from the Hegelian obsession with the distinction between the political state and the civil society. What remains of dialectics can only be the thought of a differently structured totality. Sartre, in the *Critique of the Dialectical Reason*, performed the concept of de-totalized totality. So, the origin of all the further accomplishments of the decay of the integrity of the whole of metaphysics can be found in his late thinking (Sartre 1960). The idea of dividing philosophy, as well as life itself, into the “sectors” of spirituality, politics and aesthetics represents a total error. Rancière, therefore, did not let go of the conception of revolutionary struggle in modern capitalism, nor did he agree to the “end of politics” in the neoliberal “deal” of the current left and right in Europe. Rancière articulated, for example, his early views on the trace of Althusser’s reading of Marx. But the direction changed towards

the policy of a radical egalitarian “mysticism” in the struggle for the subject. Concerning the mutual interests in the act of emancipation, it becomes a political entity or subject (Rancière 1974; 1987).

The question I ask here is the following. Is the notion of “equality”, as in all the other theories of post-foundationalist circles of politics, not left to the event of the non-political mystification of the riot? We know that it always ends in an unavailability to cross the vicious cycle of the neoliberal axiomatics of global capitalism. The thing we should know is that it cannot find a realistic alternative to oligarchic power politics. Therefore, it might be condemned to the powerlessness of inevitable consolation. When politics is no more a question of power, but rather one concerning the principles of equality, we have at work a leap into utopia. Instead of reconciliation with survival on the edges of a “joyful dystopia” without end, we have been extradited to the upcoming event of emancipation as the micropolitics of *anarchic* rebellion. What are the paradoxes and aporias of Rancière’s *politics of disagreement*? First of all, that term is not related to Lyotard’s term “drift” (*différend*) (Lyotard 1988). There is undoubtedly a close contact between the two thinkers in their understanding of aesthetics and politics. Moreover, many will find in their works two identical views on the political struggle against neoliberal capitalism and the oligarchic method of the rule of the rich elite of harnessing financial and political power. Methods of fighting should be related to the *anarchical* way in the finding of a “new subject”. The aesthetic line of politics in Lyotard and the political turnaround in Rancière speaks in affirmation of the fact that justice and equality are not merely correlative concepts of an upcoming community, but a specific way of asserting the truth in societies of absolute control. What determines the notion of disagreement is twofold: (a) *la méconnaissance* (ignorance or a lack of understanding of the subject of dispute) and (b) *malentendu* (misunderstanding arising from the lack of understanding) (Rancière 1995, 7-8). The conflict between these defective modes of discourse does not suggest that this denotes just the idea of politics as rationality and man as an *animal rationale* (*zoón logon echon*). The political self-determination of man assumes this Aristotelian definition from his *Politics*. The reason is that there is something “fateful” about human beings in the assemblage of the action—the concepts of community and the common good. It belongs to the “property” of that entity, which is called the people (*demos*). Rancière’s politics of disagreement is directed against any form of fake and vulgar consensus on politics as power and the rule of the oligarchy. From this, it necessarily follows that the political has ulterior primacy over the aesthetic (*aisthesis*) because the body is in its sensibility always

defined by a common body of politics. This is not done in the form of the equality of citizens before the law, but rather as free people without any *a priori* divisions based on natural inequalities and titles (Rancière 1995, 69-91).

Disagreement can, however, be read as a critical response to Habermas' public consensus policy with the idea of the universal mind as a discourse in the political community. At the time of the publication of this most significant book by Rancière, Jürgen Habermas and the American philosopher John Rawls had already noted an attempt at the last defence of the liberal-democratic order when it had already been almost dogmatically established in the world. The doubts about its achievements had already been seen, as both Habermas and Rawls wanted to "establish" the political philosophy of liberalism "from below" by introducing those concepts with which contemporary politics and culture sought to overcome their results. This is primarily according to Habermas and his concept of communicative rationality, while Rawls is concerned with the concept of justice as "fairness" (McCarthy 1994, 44-63). In the situation of the multitude of cultural and life worlds of media formation, a new minimum consensus of subjects/actors in the space of political liberalism is needed. Without this, democracy is left to the grace and failure of decay not only in all forms of *anomie* and oligarchic rule, but also in the anarchy of the religious-cultural renewal of tradition. Instead of universality, the power of particular interest, especially in the US, brought into question the constitutional definition of the ruling culture on which the idea of *democracy* is based. In all those matters, multiculturalism was only an agreement—a "deal"—between the liberal state and cultural communities (minorities) as *ethnos* in the plural societies of Western democracy. The crisis occurred immediately after the start of the era of neoliberalism in the United States and Europe through the institutions of the state and the corporate-formed society. Rancière's response to the crisis of political liberalism—and his dilemma also—was that, instead of the metaphysics of justice and public consensus, from the politics of today we need exactly the opposite—*disagreement*. That notion seeks to open the problem of constituting a different opinion without referring to the fact that the arguments of "common sense" and *fairness* in the sense of a highly unfair game of plural participants with different worlds and cultures present the state of *in-between* rational discourse (Habermas) and a pragmatic-idealistic appeal for justice (Rawls). Why did Rancière also open the real problem of the contemporary age with his theory of the emancipation politics of equality and remain without solutions to his paradoxes and aporias?

It seems that the answer might be simple and therefore, in its simplicity, extremely complex. If in its analysis of the *political* and the political-structural analysis of the notion of power in all aspects of its manifestation the solution remains absent, it is comprehensible that the only true political strategy of emancipation will have to look for its answer outside the context of its own notion. Emancipation denotes the process of a release from one's bonds, whether they are real or symbolic, no matter whether it is gender/sex discrimination, class oppression, the intolerance of the nation, or even the subjectivization process in which an individual liberates himself as an individual from all authoritarian family spells, his own anxieties, and frustration. The act of emancipation always denotes a confirmation of freedom. However, it encompasses the condition of any revolutionary policy. Hence the concept of emancipation, with which Rancière completes his analysis of the notion of disagreement and dissensus, is heading for the radical space of the conquest of what has no foundation (Hewlett 2007, 84-115). Freedom *is* without grounding, as Schelling has already shown in his work entitled *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*. It is neither Being nor the will, but the uncanny openness of possibilities of existence in the world. If emancipation is the "essence" of the political process of the realization of freedom, of liberty, then what about the preoccupation with the concept of equality through the suspense of the concept of power, as in Rancière's approach to politics?

The reason might be even more complicated because Rancière opens up the problem of a new notion of politics after the collapse of real socialism in Eastern Europe and the world in 1989 with the fall of the Berlin Wall. It does not seem necessary to emphasize that all the types of totalitarian rule after the October Revolution of 1917 had the concept of equality for their legitimacy. Of course, this legacy follows the defeat of all left-wing projects in the world since 1989 like a dark shadow. In relation to the neoliberal strategy of economy-politics-culture as a rational consensus on the market, any egalitarian policy must first be deduced from two ideological reductions. The first is, as we have already said, the legacy of totalitarianism and dogmatic Marxism, and the latter is the rule of the oligarchic order in countries with a liberal notion of politics as representative democracy (freedom of choice, economic competition in the market, freedom of trade, and freedom of the press). With this in mind, Rancière's venture is in a proper way a search for a path between the two cuts, a "subversive" as much as a futile effort to create an alternative to neoliberalism without reviving outdated paradigms of political thinking. But Marx, as the most important theoretician of capitalism and politics in

modern times, cannot be thrown into the rubbish of history, mainly because his analysis of the concept of capital as a substance-subject of history represents a condition of the development of an egalitarian politics without which contemporary democracy remains empty and formal. Hence, for Rancière, the notion of equality in its “essence” becomes the decisive one for any future emancipation of man. This “egalitarian paradox” consists of the fact that it seems obvious in advance how any request for political equality would be meaningless if there was absolute social equality (Rancière 1998, 157-158).

The condition of the possibility of any opportunities for radical political equality is economic inequality in society and its structural consequences. Rancière, in *Disagreement* and other texts on this issue, always takes his thoughts on the contemporary state of things in an analogy with the original Greek notions in Plato and Aristotle. However, his readings of ancient texts cannot be hermeneutic, because it serves the function of forming the setting of the historical-structural relationship of strength. What Plato postulates in his *Republic* is no “ideal” state of relations between state and society. It is also the narrative of the ancient world and its ideological justification in its epochal capabilities. Equality, thus, cannot be derived from the idyllic consensus policy of the liberal democracies if, simultaneously, it does not pose what scandal exists in the real order, which Rancière calls by the term “police”. Why? Simply because political equality, on the contrary, might be a condition for emancipation in the area of what he called the aesthetic distribution of the common good (*communauté*), and from which historically—from antiquity to nowadays—we have ruled out the class without ownership, the *sans-part* (slaves, serfs, proletarians). This assumption should be the *credo* of the entire post-foundational theory of politics. Badiou named this assemblage the *metapolitics of the event*. If we were to translate that complete expression into the language of political struggle, then it would be a “communist hypothesis” without the pernicious legacy of Stalinist totalitarianism (Badiou 2010). Concerning Rancière, however, the notion of politics as equality that determines the “essence” of democracy has its disengagement in the “mysticism” of *anarchic* rebellion against inequality, injustice and the ultimate line of the non-freedom of man in the oligarchic states of the current global order. Hence, speaking of “the end of politics” and “the return of political philosophy” might be just another way of making the same apology: that, of course, equality cannot be discussed without the *political re-articulation of power*. There we also find the hidden place where politics finally no longer has its own origin in Marx’s heritage, nor in the anarchist movements. Its place (*topos*) should be right

there beyond the real power of politics. And therefore, in its “heroic” reaches, it is just another utopia of egalitarian powerlessness.

There are two perspectives on the “end of politics” as well as on the “end of history”. The former belongs to Marxist issues. It postulates communism as a future community of absolute equality. Politics, thus, loses the cause of its existence. The latter belongs to the liberal worldview. It aims to turn politics into a form of management or control of social relationships based on the economy and the rationality of the market. Both are paradoxically close and yet at the same time significantly opposed to each other. In addition, both concepts of politics cannot be understood other than as a means of establishing power beyond the reach of politics. That is a reason why Rancière, in his late thinking, became one who moves “on the edges” and showed us that the essence of politics must be equality and that equality becomes *an-arché* as the determinant of democracy. However, it denotes a step in the impossible demand for politics. But that impossibility does not arise from the inertia of demands in the contemporary constellation of political forces. On the contrary, impossibility designates the step inside the very core of this requirement, because it requires the unavoidable, what precedes “nature” and “culture”. The *a priori* must now become an axiom. This axiom will shake the whole order on which the understanding of politics as power is based. But the “egalitarian paradox” also should be aporetic. A just society—which must be based on inequalities—cannot be established, not because inequalities are natural, but because the difference might be the identity of a person in a more profound sense of blindness to society and culture unless the first assumption of emancipation is fulfilled. It is, of course, political, and only with this is true history born. In Greece, politics has always been considered to be the highest practical activity. Its aspiration was to adhere to the ideas of good and justice. We know that none of them can exist without freedom and equality. Emancipation, therefore, must necessarily be political. The reason for this is that only in this way is its subject—the people (*demos*)—constituted. But since Rancière regards civil society and the political state as an outdated way of functioning in the modern Western way of life, in the neoliberal concept of ruling, that divide is overtaken in such a way that politics and culture become the means of a power to regulate social relations and, of course, a new information economy, with the focus moving from industry to the financial-speculative area of capital. With this epochal turn in mind, it might be clear why this intervention in the theory of politics today attempts to open the question of the true subject of upcoming politics that arises from all the noble dogmas of “political philosophy” from Plato to Leo Strauss. Although Rancière

wisely despises being a prophet or repeating the gestures of his predecessors—from the egalitarian utopia of Jacotot to Marx’s vision of communism—what is undeniably him and what cannot be deconstructed—using the Derridean vocabulary—must be the idea of the common good (*communauté*). To whom does “it” belong, however, and what even is such a “good” if, beyond the economic-political reduction of corporate capital management, the idea of a true community (*politeia*) cannot be founded on anything else, or on itself, because it encompasses the uncanny power of *an-arché*?

2.3 The community of equality vs. the nihilism of the oligarchy

Some commentators on Rancière’s viewpoints of politics argue that his thoughts are very provocative (Chambers 2011, 18). However, the provocation is not that we are confronted with familiar concepts from Plato to Hannah Arendt for reaching the “being” in the community. On the contrary, the provocation lies in what Rancière demonstrates: that the reason for today’s “inflation” of the notion of the political and politics in all areas of society, culture, and art is due to living in an era of the total nihilism of the oligarchy as the order of discourse and of the image. Such an order inevitably raises rebellion versus consent as an activity within the jurisdiction of the crushed political people. We do not, therefore, use the word “people” for *people* but for the people as *demos*, for which no definitions in modern political history really exist. Since the people are derived from the modern theory of the sovereignty of the power of the overwhelmed king, whose ritual murder represents the beginning of what Claude Lefort calls “the empty place of power”, and with which every new beginning of democracy must be faced, it might accordingly be clear that the very category of “people” has remained without substance (Lefort 1981). A nation without sovereignty marks an age in which, instead of the state being the place of political decision-making, the corporate governance of the global order occupies a real and symbolic place in the *political* and in politics. If there is no sovereignty, then the “people” are overwhelmed in the political meaning of the word. Or, in other words, people with no democratic legitimacy in the internal self-determination of the nation-state become a “multitude” (*ohlos*). They do not rule. In their place, the rule is in the hands of the financial-political oligarchy. In the previous order, the “multitude” were at least protected by the illusion of a powerful state and its principles of renunciation, and now the ground under their feet is lost as well as all illusions about the purpose and goals

of history. Politicians will say that this is happening because of the fall of the *welfare state* or the social state crisis of the end of the 20th century. The triumph of neoliberalism is mostly reflected in the fact that every account of the “golden age” of the ruling of this model of managing the social relationships of late capitalism is considered nostalgic with no account for the time frozen in the past. Now is the time of social mobility, market competitiveness and innovative corporatism.

What can our thought do—descending from the heights of metaphysics to the ground of politics—in this nexus of problems? It can provide either new false hopes—reasons for fleeing into new utopias with the new discourse of the modernized building of oriental gardens—or face the underlying paradoxes and aporias of the present in a sign of blind nihilism. The last chapter of Rancière’s book *Disagreement* is titled “Politics and its nihilistic age”. It deals with the performance of politics as equality in a democratic attempt to sift through all those terms that have today become the new rhetoric of the European liberal consensus: communion, differences, the universality of human rights. Rhetoric does not exhaust itself in proving one’s own triumph, because the space of this policy is bounded by contradictions in real life such as non-communion, homogeneity, or the particularity of civil rights within a nation-state. So, what Rancière considers most relevant to the true politics of disagreement as a politics of a communion of differences might be the absence of radical equality. Those who have been expelled from this “consensus” are *sans-part*. This is particularly noticeable in France. Moreover, it can be called paradigmatic to the problems facing the current condition concerning the European Union. As a matter of fact, the migrant population that is in the fringes of towns, which, moreover, does not enjoy the same civic rights because it does not exist politically (existing as *sans-papiers* or *stateless people*), undermines the big neoliberal consensus. So, the logical consequence of the loss of political rights in the modern meaning of democracy denotes a disappearance of humanity as the ethical voice of universal conscience. Instead of humanity and humanism on which the modern project of the universality of human freedom is based, the age in which we live has become a time of *humanitarianism*. This goes so far that the wars of America and the West have become “police interventions” in the global order, while the problem of refugees and displaced persons in the war zones is now called by the name “humanitarian issue”. Changing the discourse should always be accompanied by a change of the actual state. Thus, politics in the time of nihilism is not limited to *humanitarianism*. Its “policing” feature of the neoliberal “new world order” can be understood as a perversion of politics to ethics and the perversion of policy to

constitutional law, and that, in turn, decadently enjoys its own delirium of normativism without any cover in reality (Rancière 1995, 167-187).

What can actually oppose that? Rancière tries to comprehend politics as a matter of equality. The provocation is that democratic politics does not hold power as a means of government, but has in its hands the government as the means of another worthy power. That power is related to democracy, and it always happens as a struggle for ideas that—because they do not have a foundation in the “nature”—require rebellion against “nature” even when such a “nature” appears as fiction and the result of natural sciences. *An-arché* leads politics to the achievement of what has traditionally metaphysically been named from Plato and Aristotle to Rousseau and Marx as the highest good in the community. It is not a concept of good as being opposed to the political community (*politeia, civitas dei, republic, democracy*). This is what has value in itself because it allows the freedom of all as individuals. No one rises to that as a member of the atomized society, but only as a political citizen and an essential member of a democratic assembly of power that we call “people” (*demos*). Whoever nowadays would like to speak of a common good (*communauté*) knows very well that we are talking about something that is “privatized” and thus subdued in its “essence”. All the newness of Rancière’s notion of politics can be reduced to two opposites. Moreover, separation cannot be completely overcome by the revolutionary-emancipatory politics of radical democracy. On the one hand, we have the concept of politics as equality and, on the other, the term “police” as the order (regime).³

Hence, it might be clear that democracy cannot be the form of a state, as an oligarchy necessarily becomes the rule of law of this order. However, the problem arises when the state gets suspended or is overcome by something that has the features of post-imperial sovereignty without political people (*demos*). Understanding the police as a state policy, and politics as a subversive-emancipatory activity of a democratic struggle for equality, takes on the feature of a hybrid idea of leftist history. Here is the meeting point of the anarchism of Bakunin/Proudhon and Marx’s critique of the limits of formal democracy of the bourgeois order in the capitalist society of the 19th century. Moreover, Rancière redefines virtually all concepts from the tradition of “political philosophy”. The situation of today is changed inasmuch as states at the level of territorial sovereignty no longer have factual power. This power has been deferred to supra-nation-state institutions such as the European Union. The corporate power of “democratic oligarchies” is not represented in the form of a state, as it follows from Rancière’s analysis in the book *Hatred of Democracy* (Rancière 2014, 71-97). It is absolute power beyond that of the sovereign

state. What would be the consequences of such a “post-national constellation”, if we use Habermas’ expression, the purpose (*telos*) and the objective of the egalitarian politics of emancipation of the people (*demos*) as a subject without the substance of this whole process of the defence of the dignity of politics? Rancière defines politics as a polemical achievement. He does so because the “essence” of equality does not occur from and out of “nature”. “Essence” is creatively developed in a contingent struggle against the hierarchical order of social privileges. When politics is determined as such, then it is obvious that it must have its craving (*orexis*), the driving mechanism, which what makes politics an autonomous activity of subjectivity. In the texts, we do not encounter the elaboration of an idea that reminds us of the rehabilitation of the concept of practice in another meaning. This also applies to *theory* and *poiesis*. The reason lies in the fact that Rancière rejects these ontological-political categories created from “above” in Plato’s and Aristotle’s thinking. Instead, he advocates against any “naturalization” of social injustice and inequalities.

Therefore, it seems appropriate to point to another paradox in his notion of the classic terms of “political philosophy”. Namely, equality would not make sense if this term were not a *partage* of a particular entity in a “just” or “unfair” way. Every distribution, as already demonstrated in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, designates a contingent act of decision on the governance within a political community (Aristotle 2012). We could mention here the different tribal societies of those who rise above the immediate “primitivism” of nature. So, distributive justice rests on the sharing of the common good. But the notion of the common good (*communauté*) to which Rancière refers represents a significant political concept of communion. The origins go back to Rousseau’s thinking of the republican creation of the state. However, the republic always protects the public good of its citizens by all available means of social order (police and army). On the other hand, Hobbes’ theory of the state places the emphasis on authoritarian power that protects the private property of individuals. The difference is that the notion of the common good as a public good and authoritarian state (*Leviathan*) that controls conflicting individuals on the market denotes the difference between revolutionary “etatism” and enlightened “liberalism”. Of course, it is the French tradition that presumes the sovereignty of people born in the native nation as *the nation*, while the English tradition of constitutional monarchy is expressed by the term “depoliticized politics”. Between the republic and the monarchy, there are several different theories as well as practical relationships. In short, the common good is firmly defined by the boundary between what is neither the matter of the state nor the

individual's possession. It actually allows a distinction between state and society (politics and economics). And the reason is that the sacrifice of the nation as *demos* and as *ethnos* (*people*) can never be a sacrifice for the corporate power for particular interests. The victim is offered to the altar of a politically articulated community (republics, nation-states). Therefore, the issue of the sense of secularized deity within Jacques Rancière's theory of politics is deployed in the sphere of the aesthetic policy of events. It could be named as an event of the emancipation of a collective subject ("observer"). In addition, like the subjecting of the "people" in the struggle versus the order of hegemony and the domination of the oligarchy, as well as the struggle for that which is "nobody's" because it is "everyone's", it passes into the request for the qualitative distribution of the common good (*communauté*).

Conclusion

When does politics really start? For Rancière, the answer is simple. Politics always starts when the public or common good is called into question by the fact that its "privatization" or division is becoming a part of the oligarchic rule. Are we talking about the historical continuity of such a type of rule (police order) in the Western societies of antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the new era of neoliberal globalization as a destiny, or some kind of necessity? The answer might be both yes and no. Yes, because politics in Greece appears in the sense of the defence of communion and cannot be in a subordinate position to ethics and economics. No, because the idea of the common good does not mean a vision of the egalitarian communism of poverty or some terrible version of totalitarianism like that of the *Red Khmer*. History, for Rancière, is represented as a continuous discontinuity of events. All this triggers the conflict between what belongs to the logic of *an-arché* and *arché*. Instead of the linearity and necessity of moving "higher" in terms of historical "progress" from antiquity to the global order of the information age, contingent interdependence and an emerging network of events reign (Thomson 2011, 200-211). Let us repeat: politics begins by a crack or by subjugating of the logic of oligarchic power placed in the alliance of the financial and political elites of society. For this reason, the argument of *disagreement* has been extended to the *Edge of Politics* and the *Hatred of Democracy*. And it should be as follows: *democracy refers to politics as a form of emancipation, and the social order of power derives from the economy*. The result of this is the inequality in the capitalist mode of production. Social relations, therefore, are not the fatalities of history. The ability to

change the relationship circuit exists only if at the same time there is a subject “powerful” enough to perform a radical change of state. In this respect, it is obvious that the policy of emancipation cannot be “revolutionary” unless it overturns the foundations of the structural perversion of relations from which the “iron law” of the oligarchy inevitably emerges. The latter concept was used by sociologist Robert Michels in a completely different context to the emergence of party bureaucracy within the framework of modern representative democracy. But what is true for parties, without which there would exist no liberal democracy, also applies to the complete transformation of social relations in global capitalism. The struggle around the “empty centre of power” becomes continuous and ever-new. So, the shadow of politics and economics of the new era takes a perverted turn. Montesquieu, in *The Spirit of the Laws*, already saw that the spoilage of democracy begins when politicians begin to speak in the language of traders, and traders get used to justifying their power in the language of politicians.

Therefore, if communion, community, and the communal good (*communauté*) bring us to the purity of what constitutes the “essence” of politics, then it is no longer possible to pledge for any half-way solution. The “police order” of the necessity of managing complicated systems of technocratic oligarchic rule requires much more than cosmetic repair. But the problem with Rancière’s metapolitics in their view of politics has been seen from the beginning to be a problem of the impossibility of the political without the articulation of power. Equality without power remains unfulfilled by the demands of the “people” as temporary *demos*. Since the subject without substance in global capitalism cannot be constituted by any means other than a subjection to combat and action, all that remains important is to see what kind of fight and action is at work. The right question of any post-foundationalist policy is no longer what the essence of such a policy “is”, but which direction such a policy is taking. It is obvious that the meaning of its rhetoric and performative discourse derives from what is upcoming (*l’avenir*). But in contrast to Derrida, Lyotard, Deleuze and Badiou, in the thinking of Rancière, the utopian field of expectation has no mention of the messianic appeal. Moreover, his demand for the absolute equality of all and for all is in the nearness of Foucault’s politics of resistance. Due to the intervention in the practical field which exhausts in “actuality” and is repeated in that timing swirl, the present has the status of the event and not the empty time of the future. What is actually “happening” with the politics of emancipation is nothing other than an attempt to establish that which has not existed in its real size and dignity other than as *an-arché* in the frame of every future form of

democratic politics. That which has never existed and has, since the beginning, been the subject of human aspirations—Aristotle, in his *Politics*, says that people in communities always strive for the highest good—might be precisely what in the age of the rule of the neoliberal oligarchy is fragmented, as its pieces have become corporately owned in the hands of a few individuals.

Rancière's rebellion within the limits of the democratic emancipation of the "people" as *demos* is directed against the "liberal-democratic consensus". The people are, therefore, subjectivized through cultural-political struggles and the actions of the oppressed and humiliated, of all those thrown out of the game of the networked machine of capitalist globalization and states with limited sovereignty. But what if, in this new uncanny framework, any so-called revolution or emancipatory policy is already very restricted because it lives from the "mysticism" of the event of the egalitarian rebellion, and the absolute power of oligarchic rule in "the new world order" states cannot be hurt at all precisely because it is no longer a problem to reach the heights of democratic politics but to preserve the mystical common good that is relentlessly absorbed under the excitement of the effectiveness of governance for the benefit of the community of "democratic individualism"? Rancière's response, through a series of paradoxes and aporias with a multitude of redefined concepts from the "political philosophy" tradition, remains within yet further irreducible confines of the impossible. This is the area of self-limitation and self-founding in something that is without foundation. With that, its non-limitation is ultimately inoperable. Any policy of disagreement with its origins in the blemishes of human freedom and with that which creates a scandal by the very act of its existence is limited by the fact that equality, without the power of one's own performance, will ultimately remain what the notion is and points out. Emancipatory politics is—as is paradigmatically stipulated by Marx in his early text *On the Jewish Question*—a certain kind of reduction (Marx 1976, 347-377). When the "people" (*demos*) are relieved of one form of discipline, when the Jews—within the limits of national emancipation—are freed from the oppressive politics that does not recognize Jewishness on national-religious grounds within the German nation-state, then this kind of political or civil emancipation is incomplete with regard to human completeness. This is particularly the case in relation to the universality of what belongs to the notion of humanity. Emancipation presents the notion of the incompleteness of freedom as a condition of the equality of opportunity. But if emancipation does not have the power of freedom in its bare reality as its purpose is only to fight "against" the political order of inequality, then its actual reach remains on

the level of weak struggles for this or that kind of already obsolete right within the boundaries of the long-established and outdated God of the nation-state.

The problem is that the rule of oligarchy in real-world states possesses the structure of the network. This was best described by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). That is where the uncanny problem with politics at the age of nihilism arises. It is no longer credible if it invokes the unfulfilled principles of the democratic utopia of the world. The true politics of equality must face what lies in its own bargain. And that is the powerful and chaotic *an-arché*. The paradox and aporia are not that democracy and freedom are derived from this principle *without* principles. So, the scandal that rules in neoliberal oligarchy represents a confirmation of the same *an-arché*. For this reason, its *archipolitics*, *parapolitics* and *metapolitics* are “the cunning of reason” of a perverted order of the world where the power of the “police” sets limits on the “politics” of freedom and not *vice versa*. Contemporary oligarchy is based on this *an-arché-ic* model of chaos and ambiguity in all its visible and invisible areas of action, from the management of the economy to marketing policy. Its aesthetics is exactly that which requires an “emancipated observer”, all that (un)controlled fury of the re-politicized art of which nothing remains other than the media drive of the *technosphere* in museums that no longer preserve this majestic common good (*communauté*). Instead, they are dealing with screams of the policy of performative events and the protection of the conceptual property rights of those who no longer “produce”, as the aesthetical spacing of politics does not reach the threshold of the nihilistic collapsed world of “illusion”, “experience” and “look”. When *an-arché* as the voice of the people becomes a trademark of “revolution” and of the “subversion” of the ruling discourse, that sublime thing remains absent. What is absent, with no utopias and without big words, is that which is expressed in a strikingly poetic manner by Pier Paolo Pasolini in his poem *To the Red Flag (Alla Bandiera Rossa)*:

For he who only knows your colour, red flag,
 you must really exist, so that he can exist:
 he who was covered with scabs is covered with wounds,
 the labourer becomes a beggar,
 the Neapolitan a Calabrese, the Calabrese an African,
 the illiterate a buffalo or dog.
 He who hardly knows your colour, red flag,
 won't know you much longer, not even with his senses:
 you who already boast so many bourgeois and working-class glories,
 you become a rag again, and the poorest wave you. (Pasolini 1986)

CHAPTER THREE

THE ANTI-THEOLOGY OF THE NEW EVENT: ALAIN BADIOU AND THE CONTINGENCY OF POLITICS

3.1 Intervention: politics as thinking

The languages in which the word “new” is synonymous with an unconditional termination concerning a tradition in its metaphysical foundations are sufficiently “old” to have the possibilities of a true telling of this imperative of time as, instead of them, the inhumane derived from cybernetic technology speaks about our time better. Programming languages based on binary code have become superior to the symbolic force of “natural” languages. Moreover, they seem to be in their obsolescence, condemned to what the contemporary French philosopher Alain Badiou intended for philosophy: that its destiny becomes that of an exhibition “object” in a museum if it fails to open up the possibility of overcoming this age. The key concepts of this age were established in the 19th century as the age of science, politics and art. Can philosophy, then, survive modernity with its cult of “new” without being lost in the rising of the three previously mentioned essential powers of the *legein*:

- (a) scientific procedures of the generic production of truth;
- (b) the political creation of a new event, from revolutions to complex transformations of social order; and
- (c) the poetic transferring of the meaning of Being, in which the language and the image experience are combined?

It is a question of the future of thought from the beginning of that which marks the essence of Western metaphysics. But it is no longer just talk about the future of the West as the world in terms of the Eurocentrism of the modern world’s image. Instead, we are talking about the future of the world with regard to the universality of science, politics and art (Bensaid 2004, 94-95). For Badiou, therefore, philosophy can be preserved from the

threat of self-negation in these three forms of “new” rule only if it, paradoxically, takes on the features with which the 19th century truly became paradigmatic to modernity at all. This figure denotes a shape of opposing, a kind of rebellion against the Other in itself, and is expressed by the concept of anti-philosophy (Badiou 2005; 2011).

If this marks the starting point of the breaking down of the entire onto-theological metaphysics of the West, then it is obvious that this process has to happen in parallel with the language and the image of the scientific truth of the world, political events in the reality of global capitalism and in the essence of contemporary art. The main feature of this art without work is that it enters into the area of *inaesthetics*; it no longer “conceives” and does not “represent” a Being. Rather, it simply creates it from a multitude of pure contingents. When new situations and contexts emerge in the performative-conceptual turn, we no longer have to deal with Being as a work. Instead, we are confronted with the contingency and singularity of the event. In short, the truth, the event, and Being, at a time of the rule of the “new”, require a philosophical attempt to make “new” sense of it and to do it in a “new” way. Moreover, simultaneously, this means that in its epochal “newness”, it must open the possibility of an upcoming thought that will only be possible if it does not become reducible to the philosophy of science, political philosophy and philosophical aesthetics. We might call the fourth criterion of philosophy in its contemporary determination—which is precisely this anti-philosophical rebellion—the *antitheology of love* (Phelps 2013). In that regard, it should be comprehensible why Badiou, in his materialistic-atheistic turn, draws Being as the multitude as well as why has returned to the Christian concept of love and the community of universalism in St. Paul (Badiou 1989; 2003).

Badiou has set for himself the task of restoring the lost dignity of philosophy after Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, and by doing so he does not resort to nostalgia for the past, an obsession with scientific ideas and aestheticism, or with anything that appears to be a feverish danger of our time. He is devoted to politics as thinking. Politics is once again giving in to the royal leadership of the metaphysics of fiction and false axioms in the service of the ideology of liberalism and the rule of global capitalism. Anti-philosophy can no longer be founded in the same way as was the case with philosophy as metaphysics. Rather, it is its own aim to find the possibilities of reaching in a pure contingency that uncannily “new”, which has been following it from the beginning as something unknown and almost indefinite. The question of the truth, the event, and the subject Badiou represents, in the light of the “new”, the transformation of traditional metaphors of metaphysics as ontology. The truth, therefore,

represents a “practical” field, and the concepts of theory and philosophy are governed by it. The event is determined by what is politically understood as the reversal of the notion of Being and situation because it is contingent and unpredictable. Ultimately, the subject might be nothing but the process of creating the truth as an event of a change of thought in the fullness of the sensitive production of life itself. *Theory, praxis* and *poiesis* are in a “new” way derived from the “ontology of the event”. The truth, therefore, cannot be just “objective” if it is not also a major change within the position of the “subject”. But the apparent contradiction in the conceptual pairs of Being and event, philosophy and politics, and theory and practice cannot be proof of their irreducibility. Equally, the demand for dialectical materialism and mathematics as ontology does not mean a decline to the level of “enlightened scientificity”. Since Badiou in his thought is directly linked to Marx, Heidegger, Lacan, Althusser and Deleuze, it would be impossible to deny that his great contribution to contemporary philosophy could be reduced to the rebuilding of the pre-Hegelian metaphysics of the subject only because he hypostasizes the political role of the subject in the emancipatory-revolutionary mission of communism today. The “new” language must be credible even when it repeats what is already known in the new context (Badiou 1988).

It is therefore comprehensible why modern philosophers have to lay down an account of the conditions of their own thinking. The same applies to the choice of language used in the argumentation. The first is traditionally related to the notion of ontology, and the latter to the question of the conditions of the possibility of knowledge. Looking from the inside, the analytical philosophy of Wittgenstein’s trajectory has built on this its own credibility of new scepticism according to the dogma of the strict procedures of truth. Of course, it did not have predecessors only in British empiricism from Hume and Locke or in representatives of contemporary cognitivism. Undoubtedly, Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* already provided a starting point in view of his exploration of the conditions of the possibility of transcendental knowledge *a priori*. The language spoken by a certain age is also influential in its philosophy. But the relationship spoken of here is not a relationship between Being and thinking from the perspective of the reign of the unthinkable Being. Quite the contrary, philosophy is, as Hegel said, its own time recollected in thought. The following supplement should be introduced—and in language. Let us recall, for example, that Leibniz differentiated in his metaphysics two kinds of knowledge and hence two modes of exposing the very essence of thinking Being and thinking of Being, namely intuitive knowledge means immediate insight. By means of this, God should see all things at once and

without mediation. Rational knowledge, in turn, requires a method to exhibit sufficient reason by means of logic. Therefore, the former notion of knowledge corresponds to a metaphysical point, and a latter to a mathematical one. The distinction between theology and science comes from that, of course, because both God and nature are perceived within the causal-teleological model (cause-purpose).

When this is the case, it is always the rule of tradition over the “new”, no matter the thinking of this original and singular “new”. Does this mean, however, that any attempt at anti-philosophy in the sense of opposing the “history of philosophy” as a method and system implies a radical separation from the main point of the philosophical path in seeking the truth and subject? If anti-philosophy were just the opposite of philosophy as such, then Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and Marx would have to be understood “philosophically”, and certainly without their underlying intentions at the shift of metaphysics and the setting of new rules for the game of thought itself. The problem that Badiou establishes with this concept of anti-philosophy is philosophical, but it also goes beyond its historical-epochal boundaries (Groys 2012). We know that Heidegger, contrary to the metaphysics of subjectivity, which from Descartes to Hegel was concerned with the notion of infinity, brought into thought a notion of finality. As a primary dimension of the temporality of Being, finality/finitude allows us to distinguish between history and un-historicity. The beginning and the end are not just what is understood by the term *horismos*. It is the hermeneutics of the circle. Only within it, thought and meaning has to be understood as an itineration from something to something else. It was endemic even in the beginning. But the distinction between the finality of being (a man) and the infinity of Being is no longer possible within metaphysics as ontology. Heidegger was, therefore—from the period of *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)*—, in search of historical thinking in an attempt to understand the historical significance of Being as an event. Without the primary dimension of the finality of this Being in its existence as Being-to-Death (*Sein-zum-Tode*), it is not possible to grasp the concept of infinity as well as that of over-temporality either in terms of eternity or as the presence of the moment raised to the point of the “eternal now” (Heidegger 1976). Badiou admits at the beginning of his main work *Being and Event* that “Heidegger is the last philosopher of universal recognition”, while

contemporary ‘philosophical ontology’ is entirely determined by the rule of Heidegger’s name. (Badiou 1988, 7, 15)

In the case of French post-structuralism and its traces of neo-Marxism, Deleuze and Badiou reintroduce the term infinity into circulation. But they have done that with significant changes in its fundamental sense. It is no longer a Cartesian impossibility of thought of the boundary between God and the human comprehension of the boundary of that finality from the point of view of the subject (*res cogitans*). Now, infinity should be understood from the ontology of the multitude and the mathematical set theory in Cantor and Cohen (Badiou 2008, 93-112; 2004, 3-96). In short, anti-philosophy represents a “new philosophy” of the difference between the system and its dissolution. Figures of anti-philosophy, for example, include Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and Lacan. In the case of Lacan, at the beginning of Badiou’s reflection on antiphilosophy, it is said that philosophy represented the ruling discourse of the Master. Contrary to this lies the discourse of psychoanalysis. Its starting point we can find in the desire of the subject for truth. The discursive style of “great philosophy” has an alternative to language versus the idea (Badiou 2008, 228-247). But antiphilosophy does not advocate old terms in a new garment. Instead, it denotes a radical turn in the concept of the “new” in itself. However, this means that Badiou tries to think of the difference between science as a procedure of truth, politics as an event of an equality of thought, and art as a process of subjecting to the ruin of pure contingency. What about the latter statement? Pure contingencies are the term that has for its own correlation in Being that which is impossible to think from the standing point of traditional ontology. Namely, it cannot think explicitly of coincidences in some situation without a little help from God or substances. They are by no means the opposite of necessity. On the contrary, necessity does not determine coincidence by means of the principle of sufficient reason (Kant-Schopenhauer). Now a series of events within the abyss of Being—which can be determined by means of mathematical terms of indefiniteness—retroactively point to the cause and the emergence of something as something. Contemporary science already operates with the cybernetic concept of *feedback* (Badiou 2009b). When all things become at the same time the object of scientific thinking and the artistic event of changing the world, then we can say that everything has become an objective verification and subjective evaluation of Being.

But what is medially moving denotes a practical field of politics. Where politics starts, an event is being created. We should mention that there is no persistent “human nature” before the event. As a matter of fact, there is no significant difference in that consideration between, for example, Badiou and Derrida as well as other French contemporary philosophers. The relationship between Aristotle’s definition of man as a

living being who possesses speech (*zoon logon echon*) and a political being (*zoon politikon*) with the sharp cut of anti-humanism—as Badiou shows at the end of the discussion about the relationship between philosophy and politics—becomes more than contingent. Furthermore, it is in relation to Sartre’s notion and understanding of existentialist humanism. With this distinction, Badiou, unlike Sartre, explicitly shows that man’s existence cannot be a single act of individuation, but rather a universal project of life-worlds creation in community with others. Politics is, speaking in Kant’s manner, the transcendental condition of the event. It is only thanks to him that philosophy becomes the thinking of (politics) and that politics becomes the irreducible intervention of the subject in the constellations of Being as that which is always mathematically determined (Badiou 2004, 175-176). In any case, the difference between the “event” and the event (*événement*) lies in that which gives the event its singularity and unpredictability as a creative-destructive Nothing in Being itself. The abyss is not something *in-between* Being. Rather, it is the space for the realization of something that is the opposite of the classical metaphysical category of possibility from Aristotle to Hegel. In this process, it should be quite obvious that anti-philosophy cannot avoid the question of its own way of thinking. Furthermore, it no longer starts “from above” but “from below”, and instead of pure theory advocates pure practice in the production of its substance. This means that the thinking of truth, event, and subject places the political and politics at the centre. The new ontology does not start from Being as One. The multitude, singularity and variety within the assemblage show how the event essentially changes the structure (of Being). In addition, the event changes the understanding of the subject. Now the subject triggers a series of events in their inability of the possible and the “necessity of coincidence”. This ontology in its essence becomes necessarily a *political ontology*. Why? Precisely because of this anti-philosophical approach to the problem of the end of philosophy, which is at the same time criticism of the renewal of “political philosophy” as well as the main premise in the neoliberal worldview of the “end of politics”. Badiou’s interventions in the contemporary thought of politics should be regarded as innovative, albeit undoubtedly controversial in its complexity, and so they pose a challenge to any further interpretation (Bosteels 2011).

Badiou’s early political thinking dates back to 1985 when he published the book *Can Politics be Thought?* (Badiou 1985). The basic assumptions of this turn from the Maoist understanding of politics in 1968 towards a more complex configuration of new concepts and approaches start from the next axiom. Thinking and action can no longer be separated as they are

in Plato's metaphysics. So, politics—in the entire construction of onto-theology up to Marx—was reduced to what the mind determines of the reality, but in doing so assuming that the reality itself always acts irrationally. The antinomies of reason have their correlates in the contradictions of reality. Let us remember that Marx in *Capital* does not only postulate communism as a “future society” of joint producers but also as a community that rationally regulates its relationship with nature and the environment. The notion of rationality here is synonymous with the reign of the mind over the chaos of “nature” and the blind necessity beyond human powers. Political philosophy, therefore, must have been part of the idea of “human nature” since the very beginning. For Rousseau it is good, and for Hobbes, for example, it is evil (*homo homini lupus*). However, the problem with which Badiou is confronted is not just philosophical. The problem is much more “political” because the politics of the modern world is instrumentally understood, which resulted in separating thinking from the action in two ways. First, that thinking stands over of the body and the senses at all, and second, that action in its causes and ultimate goals cannot be rational, because it precedes the mind. The false alternative is the question of whether the essence precedes thought (materialism) or whether thought precedes Being (idealism) (Tarby 2005). What Badiou's notion has in common with other contemporary thinkers such as Deleuze and Derrida is an aspiration to set free the philosophy and politics from the bonds imposed on them in the tradition of dualistic metaphysics. Almost any disjunction also denotes a way of social ranking based on economic and political power (hierarchy). Badiou's thinking of politics is somewhat specific. Irreducible in its contingency, it is marked by thinking of equality and freedom. The difference between the political and politics should be regarded as follows. The political marks the condition of the possibility of freedom of choice. The reason for that is that the political is placed in the event of democracy in the community, while, in turn, the policy appears as an institutional order of democracy or as a form of the state (Marchart 2010, 152-157).⁴ The relation of the freedom of political power and politics has represented, thus, a fundamental problem in contemporary thought.

Badiou further represented this “ontological difference” in his main study on the political and politics entitled *Metapolitics* (Badiou 2005c). Such a premise is radical in two ways: first, because it renounces the “political illusion” that politics prescribes recipes for action externally and neutrally like some kind of “royal science”—as defined by Aristotle—and secondly, because politics determines precisely the features of the greatest possible reach of events in its contingency and singularity. Politics is not

“the art of the possible”, as French liberal and democratic politicians said in the 1980s and 1990s, but the *art of the impossible*. That is the “essence” of Badiou’s entire intervention in the *political* and politics. If that is so, then it becomes obvious that politics does not just establish what is always possible and necessary in the sense of the linear order of cause and effect. Instead of this calm flow of things, everything changes when a radical and revolutionary event breaks with the previous assemblage of things. This means only one thing: politics denotes the production of the event, not the science of the event. Truth (Being), event (politics), and subject (art) are not separated as theory, practice and production (science, ethics, politics and economics). Instead of as their instrumental function, politics is now realized as an event that surpasses all previous attempts to set politics free from philosophy, even within contemporary achievements of thinking, such as those that have been done by Hannah Arendt and Jean-François Lyotard. The reason might be obvious. Badiou argues that the aesthetic is not enclosed in the notion of judgement and thought that reflect “about” the event which is independently happening in reality. Politics represents the thought in itself as an event of a break with the logic of Being in the mathematical definition of the infinite set theory. Consequently, politics signifies an aesthetic event of the impossibility of the real, because the reality does not really exist without that which Lacan calls symbolic. That is the “crack” in the real (Lacan 1986). For this reason, the politics of truth or the event must necessarily be “utopian”. Its non-reality denotes a paradoxical possibility of the impossible. However, instead of the famous slogan of the student rebellion in 1968, which came from surrealist imagery—*be realistic, demand the impossible*—, Badiou, in his critique of traditional ontology—and particularly of the concept of potentiality—, suggests a solution to this difficulty (aporia) between real policy and politics of the impossible event. Only the solution to the problem should necessarily be “philosophical” because it presupposes the reconciliation of the idea with reality, of possibilities with necessities. These necessities do not arise from the economic and technical need for the end of capitalism, but from the political intervention of the subject of “new event”. That might be the reason why “political ontology” in the wake of Badiou and Žižek ends up falling into the embrace of the mysticism of subject without substance. Moreover, it is the reason for the philosophical apology of Lenin and Mao Zedong, which greatly impedes the acceptance of this political thinking without considering the limits of totalitarian rule with the legitimacy of “Marxism-Leninism” and “Dialectical Materialism” in the 20th century (Žižek 2000; 2006). I will discuss this further at the end of this analysis.

When we keep this in mind, it should be obvious why Badiou—like Rancière—introduces politics that truly changes the order of the world and its logic into the area of aesthetics, and why its “logic” is based on the irreducibility of the event on the grounds of the logic of Being. To any possible ethics, and above all, to the multicultural and liberal ethics of the Other and of (cultural) differences, it denounces any trust. Badiou—in the most radical contemporary book targeted against the ethics of the post-modern condition and its cult of differences—simply argues that the inflation of ethical discourse in the era of the neoliberal economy-politics-culture of globalization speaks of the new ideology of particular interests (Badiou 2013). It not only conceals the naked truth of the world of inequality and the loss of freedom, but even reinforces it by giving it a false ethical glow. It is not difficult to explain why the ethics of the unconditional Other in the writings of Emmanuel Lévinas shows us the other side of the political re-articulation of the neoliberal ideology of power. It is exactly because it shifts responsibility to the lonely and anxiously decentred subject—in his “rational choice” of success or death—that it takes on the features of love-thy-neighbour in the request for tolerance (Lévinas 1998). That which is impossible turns into its opposite only with another sign. We can detect now an unlimited number of possibilities that are available to the subject. Almost all are doomed to failure. The choice is never a thing of the consumer society’s ontology, but a sovereign decision of a rational subject to lead a life sacrificed for the truth or for the nihilism of the society of the spectacle. In both cases, “sovereignty” has its own price. The price is paid by falling victim to the indifference of post-modern media cynicism; all the while, nihilism varies from a mere trifle up to a luxury with a limited duration.

The primacy of *politics* over ethics in this regard does not mean the return of politics from the field of “political philosophy”. On the contrary, there is no indication of any return after its withdrawal into the zone of privacy and indifference towards the dominant spirit of the culturalization of politics in neoliberal capitalism. The important thing comes down to the event of that which must occur because in its arrival lies the truth of the subject itself: the community that determines it knows only knowledge, acting and producing new-in-the-world. The last truth of the event makes a sort of anti-theology of the new in the very mystery of the event as such. This is what Badiou has called the fourth condition of philosophy. From it comes the feature of a contingent and uncanny indetermination concerning the assemblage between the truth, the event, and the subject. Yes, the latter is actually the metaphysical openness of the first in its infinite power of giving Being an emptiness. The latter denotes the actuator of all that is

going on. It is called the love that stands at the very beginning of philosophy. A love of wisdom becomes a desire for truth. The truth cannot, therefore, be something else beyond the human corporeality. Undoubtedly, it does not live in some ether of energy-conscious thought without the real life of the subject. Desire comes from the conditions of human existence. Without desire, the event of the new would not have a driving ability. This thought also determines the metaphysics of Gilles Deleuze. The corporeal turn does not only refer to the return to the body after its suspension throughout the entire history of philosophy from Spinoza to Nietzsche. On the contrary, the finding of an event of corporeality out of a body's physical confinement frees up the aesthetics and its kingdom of sensibility/sensitivity. Desire, unlike the metaphysical will of the subject, is again shown in her immanent worldly clothing. When immanence becomes a new principle of philosophy, the body returns its lost dignity. The difference between Deleuze and Badiou lies in the fact that, for the latter, immanence is not exposed as the anti-philosophical new *credo* of a rebellion resembling hermetic neo-gnostic materialism (Ramey 2012). Instead, we encounter the problem of transcendence and infinity as an anti-theology of the events of one strange synthesis of the mind and desire without the primacy of a decentred subject set by Lacan in the *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. Truth, therefore, is enabled only by the struggle and the absolute inability of the event. Badiou—following Marx—calls this event the emancipation-revolutionary activity of the new community that must come—*communism* (Badiou 2010).

Let us go back to the axiom of Badiou about the political and politics. In order to reach the definition of what politics is in general—in the contemporary situation of the rule of the liberal consensus in global capitalism—he had to preventively suspend the notion that tradition was established as the ruling discourse of “political philosophy”, as well as of politics from antiquity until the present. This is the meaning contained in the concept of the purpose of securing the highest good in the community. If the logic of cause-effect is in question, then the agent might always be marked by an efficient cause that brings the expected consequences. In other words, politics can be nothing other but the thinking within the metaphysical framework of the causal-teleological model. Each curve of this scheme assumes: (1) that politics is immanence, and then it follows that outside of its active dimension of practical relations to the world there could be nothing but the regulative God of ethics, in accordance with the Kantian perspective; and (2) that politics is transcendence, but this time aside from the action of human laws and order, so in its primary dimension

of decision-making on sovereignty it becomes a secularized theology, as paradigmatically determined by Carl Schmitt in his notion of politics that would put all further attempts at thinking on that trajectory, regardless of whether they are “right” or “left” (Schmitt 1963, 52). But what if politics has its place and time, its very own and very different *nomos* that is not only unlike all other activities, both theoretical and *poietical* (productive), but also very different from the fields of ethics and the economy?

In the search for the “founding-foundation” of politics beyond the logic of means-purpose and cause-effect, Badiou undertook a twofold operation of liberation from tradition, but he did not crush it into the abyss. Quite the contrary, he reinterpreted it in a specific way. One might almost say in a Platonistic way without the reign of the idea over reality, or of the reality over ideas. It was a turning point in both metaphysics and its fundamental direction. Politics is, for Badiou, primarily the event. We can argue that it is such an event that we primarily read about and understand retroactively by its possible causes. In other words, politics represents an event of pure singularity and contingent history as an authentic way of thinking. Politics is not that which can only be thought of through philosophy in the sense of its particular subject, as is the case for law, religion, and art. That would only be a continuation of Hegel by other means. Instead, the first act of liberation from the legacy of “political philosophy” should be at the same time a step towards another. So, politics cannot be subsumed under other events as well as into a series of potentialities, which—in the metaphysical sense of the word—contributed to this achievement. Badiou, therefore, in his critique of “political philosophy” takes a step back to Plato and a step forward from Marx’s dialectical and historical materialism in which politics is primarily a means for other goals. Undoubtedly, these are the greatest and ultimate goals associated with the idea of communism as a community of freedom, equality, solidarity and justice. To sum up, Badiou’s politics signified the event of the revolutionary emancipation of history. Therefore, history holds primacy over all other areas or activities such as science, art and love. However, it cannot be said that love itself is a “political thing”. In any case, whether politics without love for the event of an unpredictable contingency of the community cannot fulfil its historical task, we might say that it should not be like Breton’s “crazy love” with no boundaries, nor fanaticism in the service of non-political goals, which arise from a religious admiration of the ethical commitment to the law of God’s truth. Kierkegaard’s concept of love established an existential project for his three ecstasies: aesthetic, ethical and religious. There, love goes beyond the threshold of friendship (*philia*) and desire (*eros*). Truth as an event of politics requires a commitment that comes out

of nowhere and goes into the emptiness of Being when love ceases to be the sole drive of life. But since the “essence” of the event lies in its infinitude of singular contingency, which means that it does not repeat but always becomes new in a new situation and assemblage, then love in the philosophical sense must be understood essentially politically. This means that the event of love is the procedure of truth. By using it, the subject establishes himself as the subject in the acts of emancipation and revolution. These are ways to maturity and common will in the convolution of freedom, equality and justice. Platonism in Badiou’s thinking is not determined just as a philosophical addition to an understanding of politics. Rather, we should be aware that the “necessity of coincidence” exists between the Being and the event. Without that connection, no Being and no event can be the object of thinking (Badiou 2009a).

In the chapter “Against political philosophy” in *Metapolitics*, Badiou directs his thinking—through the critical considerations of Hannah Arendt and her premise that politics denotes a special form of what Kant in his third critique (faculty of judgement) called the possibility of reflection on the activities within the boundaries of the mind, therefore, the plurality of views on politics—to the attempt at reading the “essence” of politics from the *event*. In this way, he might perform the deconstruction of “political philosophy” as a whole (Badiou 2005c, 10-25). Instead of its categories, we see here in action the categories that belong to a single and singular act of the *political*. In it, we see risk and determination combined. And here we find included everything that Carl Schmitt himself considered as the qualities of the sovereignty of politics over other areas of life such as science, technology, and culture. But Badiou adds something new to that assemblage. Knowledge about politics is always retroactive. With that, knowledge as science is not the same as political thinking and not that of politics itself. This is an important “ontological difference”. Only through the event can the possibilities of its interpretation be open to us. This is very close to the early philosophical position of Derrida from *Of Grammatology* (Derrida 1967). There, Derrida emphasizes that the event of the letter as a *writing/text* precedes speech. Moreover, in order to make the event as such thinkable in its singularity and contingency, it might be necessary to establish new relationships between the terms “object” and “subject”. Certainly, this means, primarily, to fence off the critique of the fall in the “subject-object” dialectics of dogmatic dialectic materialism, even in Ernst Bloch’s version of the philosophy of hope. Events, thus, always occur in a particular universality, that is, in a specific *situation* (Bosteels 2011, 242-249). It is not possible to apply the same rules for one

situation as for another. The examples that Badiou gives in his works are always the same—the civil and political revolutions of the modern age: the Paris Commune of 1871, Lenin’s October Revolution in 1917, Mao’s “Long March” in China in 1935, and the 1968 revolt in Paris. From this, we can see that politics cannot be universalized starting from the notion of the situation as something that has an “objective” predication so that it could then be applied in the same way in some other situation. The event is not politically dependent on the situation in terms of what Lenin calls “objective circumstances”. So, we must talk about the possibility of changing the conditions of Being or a situation which is a complex structure of Being and that which is “happening” when a radical change occurs. In all, the essence of the political and politics are not in the thinking of the ideas or forms that transcendently act in reality, but rather in the form of thought as an irreducible event of a contingency:

Every consensual vision of politics will be opposed. An event is never shared, even if the truth we gather from it is universal, because its recognition *as event* is simply at one with the political decision. A politics is a hazardous, militant and always partially undivided fidelity to eventual singularity under a solely self-authorising prescription. The universality of political truth that results from such a fidelity is itself legible, like all truth, only retroactively, in the form of a knowledge. Of course, the point from which a politics can be thought – which permits, even after the event, the seizure of its truth – is that of its actors, and not its spectators. It is through Saint-Just and Robespierre that you enter into this singular truth unleashed by the French Revolution, and on the basis of which you form a knowledge, and not through Kant or François Furet. (Badiou 2005c, 23)

The criticism of “political philosophy”, however, would be incomplete if Badiou merely made the assertion of questioning Plato’s political thinking and Kant’s aesthetics of the peaceful contemplation of indifferent observers. We have already seen that philosophy in modern times, particularly in the 20th century where we encounter its paradoxical flourishing—ah, never has there ever been so much “philosophy”!—, is characterized by an attempt at releasing itself from the powerful grip of the scientific procedures of generic truths and of the political transformation of the subject in its aesthetic horizon of events. Everything that in Badiou’s definition of *metapolitics* stands for the field of *political* as an emancipatory project is—to complete the paradox—also true for philosophy. What is “contemporary philosophy” if not a multitude of paths of theoretical solutions to the main problem of thought? Since Heidegger, it has been an issue of overcoming metaphysics (*Überwindung der Metaphysik*) as the technical destiny of the Western history of Being. The

event belongs, in this case, to something totally unique, singular and unrepeatable in the world. Moreover, the event of political intervention changes the situation. This happens by changing the position of the subject from the condition of a mere observer to the state of a participant in the event, whether he or she wants it or not. Philosophy in the form of Harlequin's new suit of antiphilosophy—and the best witness of this in the 20th century was Lacan with his “ethics of psychoanalysis”—appears to us as an *event of thought*. Without this event, it would not be possible to perform any kind of spontaneous event in history by political intervention. The reason is that all the political revolutions and all the revolutionary shifts have been (un)predictable in their intentions. Moreover, they are announced with the thought of emancipation and revolution. This was, for example, obvious in the French and the October Revolutions. Rousseau and various encyclopaedists have, however, prepared the spiritual ground for political fights over the radical change of society and politics in France. They introduced modernity before its actual event, while Lenin was the original creator of Revised Marxism with the idea of a unique revolution in one country. Badiou has appealed to that in his new reading of Marx and the ideas of communism, especially in an attempt to offer an alternative to the neoliberal rule of the oligarchy of the contemporary era, of the pervasive indifference and “policy” of neutrality as a technology of power. That is a reason why politics should always make unpredictable adventures and break with the existing situation of Being. In this way, the foundation of “political philosophy” is undermined. The thinking of politics in its openness of the event might be regarded as the thinking of a specific and authentic event. With it, we are engaged in a position of creating the “human situation”.

In other words, that which Badiou calls *metapolitics* can be considered as the event of the politics of truth or an assemblage in which the knowledge of the event (*theoria*), the event itself in its openness (*praxis*) and the way of its sense of articulation (*poiesis* and *aisthesis*) are brought to identity. What constitutes the subject as subjectivity? Nothing other than participation in an event with which the human world of communion begins. This risk and the unpredictability of freedom is no dazzling adventurism of the subject in the sense of fanatic voluntarism, which Marx and Lenin attributed to the Blanquists and the terror of Termidor in the French Revolution. On the contrary, the subject must be reconstructed by political interventions. What arises from that assemblage? Only the fact that Badiou must—in his Platonistic antiphilosophy—once again create a specific system of thought. In it, however, there are no more imperatives of “political philosophy”. And so “political ontology” appears as the anti-

theology of a new event. This is the paradox and the aporia of his *metapolitics*. It postulates the upcoming community of absurd justice because justice must associate *politics* (*la politique*) with the form of the state. In global neoliberal capitalism, this has become an extended form of democracy. If therefore, politics is a true event, then its “essence”, being radically alien, which means emancipatory-revolutionary, changes the whole historical framework. Of course, though, Badiou reconfigures his ontology according to this uncanny event. However, there is always a problem with the relationship between thinking of Being (mathematics) and the thinking of events of politics. The solution, of course, anticipates a peculiar Platonism without the first principle. Badiou does not admit the action of the principle of immanence or the principles of transcendence for what we would call the “first beginning”. Analogous to Heidegger’s “second beginning” of thinking—which could be synonymous with Badiou’s thinking of the anti-theology of a new event—there are infinite opportunities for the multitude to become an event. Indeed, there is always such contingency, uniqueness and singularity of events as such. To think politics means to think of what a possible non-possibility of the event is. We can add that this assumes that the term politics is ultimately released of any *a priori* and *a posteriori* logic of events in the world. In the dispute about the relationship between philosophy and politics as thinking, Badiou says that which is decisive to the understanding of the concepts *political* and *politics* as an event. Namely, for him

A politics (of ‘emancipation’ or of ‘justice’, which are philosophical names; or ‘in interiority’, which is a name that Sylvain Lazarus would assign to politics itself) is a singularity in situation, dependent on an event affecting the collective, of which, in sequential fashion, it presents the truth (but ‘truth’ remains a philosophical name, since the effectuation of the procedure does not name itself as such). Politics disposes its own operators, which are operators of thought and enquiry. Philosophy (or a philosophy) endeavours to seize this truth and therefore to anticipate its being, which, as generic, *has on principle not yet taken place*: what exists is its (finite) subject, not its (eternal) being. To perform this seizing, philosophy will dispose its own names and its own operations. In particular, every philosophy, in having to compossibilize the various disparate truths in its seizing of them, must *distinguish* the political procedure from the other procedures. It fixes the given of the situation (the collective as infinite), the numericity the specific unnameable, and so on. This is to say that the approach by which philosophy is placed under the condition of politics *necessarily involves giving a philosophical definition of politics*. (Badiou 2009a, 154)

Politics represents a contingent event. This is a feature of a man without a “human nature”, which certainly does not exist in advance. On the contrary, Badiou has shown that the ideas of nature, as well as the ideas of a man on the outcome of the modern age, have reached their own end. They are involved in a science about something that no longer has direct contact with nature and man. The theoretical anti-humanism which marked Althusser’s relationship with Marxism here becomes similar to the impossibility of defining a man from an anthropological horizon. If Derrida—following Heidegger—questioned the idea of a man at all, speaking of a few of his “ends”, from philosophy and science to technology, then there is something undeniable for Badiou: man does not appear in the ontological sense as the created being with the corresponding “essence” as the irreducible structure of human Being. Thanks to the work of the circuits or the generic procedures of science, politics, art and love, man *becomes* in its openness to the future. It emerges as a new “human nature”, contrary to the closedness of the technical circuit (Badiou 2005a, 250). The event that has political significance for change, turnaround, transformation, the revolution of the Being as such, directs its multitude to other goals and purposes than that of instrumental doing. Capitalism is—for Badiou as well as for Marx—the alienated/postponed state, and not the event; it is an objective situation of history and not the impossible possibility of appearing the community based on the politics of truth. That is a reason why the only idea that remains is the only true idea of politics from its beginning to its end. For Rancière, it is *democracy*, and for Badiou—the *communist condition*. For both of them, the idea of rulership and power over history cannot be founded. That is a reason why *an-arché* is, in that case, only another name for the absences of the first cause and of the final purpose. The apriorism of democracy now becomes the axiom of communism. In both cases, we are talking about the idea of community (*politeia, civitas dei, republic*). However, the difference between “democracy” and “communism” cannot be defined as just the result of the idea of a dispute between the same. The difference lies in the fact that, for Badiou, communism as an upcoming community represents the condition of the possibility of democracy. Is this “communism” from Marx’s perspective as the “empire of freedom”, derived in the dialectical turn of Hegel, or perhaps what appears to be simply necessary for the further development of this profoundly compromised idea in the 20th century due to the lack of Leninism, Stalinism and Maoism? Badiou is extremely controversial here, but just as consistent. This might be a “communism” without Marxism in the sense of the ideology of the “dictatorship of the proletariat”. But let us remember that even at the beginning of Marx and

Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, there was the pronounced and crucial thought that a condition of freedom for individuals represented a condition of freedom for all. Liberal maxims designate a necessity of a democratic policy in recognition of the freedom of the individual, and anything else is just an issue of ontological rank. Anything else falls below the level of history. That is, *metapolitics* denotes precisely the way of thinking of politics in its essential openness of the event, not the one overarching policy of the existing real world of liberal-democratic capitalism:

What is important to note here is that an event is not the realization of a possibility that resides within the situation or that is dependent on the transcendental laws of the world. An event is the creation of new possibilities. It is located not merely at the level of objective possibilities but at the level of the possibility of possibilities. Another way of putting this is: with respect to a situation or a world, an event paves the way for the possibility of what – from the limited perspective of the make-up of this situation or the legality of this world – is strictly impossible. If we keep in mind here that, for Lacan, the real = the impossible, the intrinsically real aspect of the event will be readily seen. We might also say that an event is the occurrence of the real as its own future possibility. (Badiou 2010, 242-243)

3.2 Intervention: politics as an event

Can we think of an event without thinking about politics? We have seen the connection between philosophy and politics in the notion of “thinking”. Unlike the metaphysical tradition of “political philosophy”, Badiou does not give the concept of politics only a common term, such as (practical) action. This is a special way of action that differs from an ethical or religious standpoint since it is not just judging public affairs in the community. It is an authentic way of thinking. Theoretical practice becomes a practical theory. Politics, in terms of ethics and economics, has a new primacy in entirely different conditions than in the age of ancient Greek democracy and its ideas of equality and justice. Political thinking should not be, therefore, thinking about “politics” in the sense of mere reflections on an intentional subject. With politics, everything can change under the condition of a radical change of subject and its world. The thinking does not come later, although retroactive knowledge of (political) events denotes a sign of the primacy of theoretical practice. What Badiou emphasizes might be a completely different way of establishing the bond between philosophy and politics. If it is no longer in the way of “a political philosophy”, it might be obvious that there it is the sharing of anti-

philosophy and its pathos of the discovery of what opposes the system and methods of philosophy from Plato and Aristotle to Hegel and Schelling. In general, Badiou's opinions are constantly expressed by dualisms, separations, binary oppositions, dialectical contradictions. A new approach to philosophy and politics does not seem to imply that the introduction of the term antiphilosophy to this policy would make it become anti-politics. Quite the opposite, true politics is always the *target of politics* because its contents are un-political in the real world of the global governance of liberal democracy.

The economy in the sense of corporate governance takes up the place of politics, while ethics comes to the forefront of new ideology as a sign of the "culturalism" of politics. Specifically, the idea of profits replaces the idea of a common good (*communauté*), and the idea of tolerance of the Other and its cultural differences becomes the ideology of separating "us" from "them". So, instead of the community of the different, we have a paradox that the real politics of the same is at work, that is, the rule of the neoliberal oligarchy in the states of the "new world order". And there is a strange closeness in the notions of politics in Rancière and Badiou. The issue that is inevitable in Badiou's analysis of politics is a "philosophical" question: what makes it possible to question the relationship between philosophy and politics? Is such a question a sign that the political has lost its credibility, and philosophy its legitimacy, so that both terms frantically require the fresh fixtures without which the theoretical mind would be left truly blank, and practical thinking more than blind? Basically, Badiou starts from the fact that the task of philosophy is to think of politics as an event of a pure contingency. What does that really mean? The thought on politics should be possible from above as it is from below, as we have already shown. If the policy is "thinking", as Badiou repeatedly demonstrated in *Metapolitics*, then it denotes the articulation of the procedure of truth. This "thinking" follows its own "logic" and "aesthetics". This should be a reason why he claims that an inevitable condition of politics stands beyond *realpolitik*. Instead of the safety and luxury of the liberal worldview, which is guaranteed by an authoritarian rule or the state of control, all are brought to the edge when a democratic game of the change of government no longer achieves anything but the legitimization of the state of the rule of oligarchy without borders. The risk represents the mother of the event. The unpredictability of a sovereign decision to launch a chain of effects is never just a voluntaristic play of mass events. At one point of the discussion on the conditions under which and when an event can be called "political", Badiou points out that this requires that the politics possesses the features of a joint decision, or that the conditions to which politics

belongs to a series of infinite—concerned with that which is possible—, and that politics should be in a relation with the condition of the situation as the production of generic procedures of truth. In other words, politics as “thinking” leads to a close connection with Being as a situation and subject as a possibility of the emergence of a new one. In the traditional concept of the category of possibility, we have an absolute break with the cause-effect order right there. The linear sequence of history loses its continuity. Instead, the game goes on in an endless array of singular potentials (Badiou 2005c, 141-150). So, the transcendence and immanence of politics did not solve the problem of the weakness of the political today to open up opportunities of emancipating-revolutionary times in the new world order.

What remains? There is nothing other than that which makes possible a more profound and retroactive way of giving knowledge of the “present” as being a different subject in the upcoming time. This is a pure event in its “necessity”. We talk about political intervention in a mathematical array of clusters of the Being itself as a configuration of the condition (State) and the situation (Society). Badiou discusses this alliance between philosophy and politics by way of introducing a concept of the event into the game. This is not only changing the Being, but also the structure of time and the event. It is a work on the theory of the subject as political thinking beyond the existing “subjectivisms” of modern philosophy from Descartes to Sartre. The subject cannot be denoted only as a matter of knowledge and desires (philosophy and psychoanalysis), but also as that which stands in their un-thematized connection and at the same time eliminates the immanence of the body and the bodily possibility of thinking about it, as in Deleuze’s ontology of becoming (Deleuze 1994; Badiou 1999). However, the proximity between Deleuze and Badiou on ontological issues does not extend to the closeness of political solutions. While in Deleuze we are faced with politics becoming the utopian event of creating a “new people and Earth” in the timely dimension of the future, Badiou begins with the fact that infinity in an ontological sense—which means that it is mathematical above all else—is also feedback for the introduction of the term “infinity” in the area of the political (event). For Deleuze, the notion of Being is suspended by the Nietzschean will to power or becoming (*Werden, devenir*) so that the leading principle of the “Big Other” or God/Law/Nature as a transcendence would take away the power of creation. Instead, the notion of immanence becomes the creative principle of infinity in the ever-new creation of a multitude of worlds.

Of course, this other way of transforming philosophy into its own autonomy of artistic demiurge is not what Badiou advocates in his “political

ontology". We have seen that the notion of the event "politicizes" not because Being in its multitude has become the driving principle of change, but because the world in its worldliness cannot be historical and human in a fatal movement towards the inhuman. The event denotes a term that lies at the centre of Badiou's materialistic turn to the dialectics of Marx, Cantor, Heidegger, Althusser and Lacan, and has the attributes of that which is in between Being and time, not as their subsequent bond, but rather as a contingent and singular twist and a flywheel of dynamic infinity. Therefore, Badiou, unlike Heidegger, is no longer a thinker of the theological structure of metaphysics, since God's question in his openness presupposes his "realization" precisely in the thinking of the event as "radical desacralization". Being and God are neutralized by the idea of the infinity of events. But it is not the neo-gnostic, hermetic materialism of immanence as in Deleuze. It should be regarded as another way of thinking about the event. It has not become synonymous with the eternity of creation in it. On the contrary, everything happens in the way that the sciences of the Being, the political event and the aesthetic configuration of the subject make up what enables the new historical framework to be in the extreme instance platonic, or philosophically legitimate. The philosophy, in the end, appears in the idea of love and no longer in that of Being as knowledge (*logos*). Instead of *logos* and *mythos*, its own destiny has historically been determined by becoming the thinking of the event. To say that the event is happening, or to say that politics takes place in the space-time of history, means to show that in both cases that which is "the case" encompasses the sense of rarity, something extraordinary, which deserves to be universal in the rare exemplarity of its special "nature". But can the term event (*événement*) be reduced to the concept of the political (*le politique*) as a condition of the possibility to suspend anything from the authentic present action and become a policy as an instrumental lever of action related to the State (*l'État*), synonyms for the entire history of the alienation and total management of human fate (Badiou 2010, 229-260)?

The event is political in its "essence" because politics denotes a thought of truth. However, it works only in terms of procedures and science whose essence exists in terms of the procedures of art. Philosophy is the only one that has the possibility of thinking of events because the political appears outside the scope of "political philosophy". Is this yet another paradox? Yes, but it is easy to handle. Philosophy allows anti-philosophy to perpetuate its life on the edges and beyond the system. So, politics can only think philosophically because it is a specific form of thought. The *political* should be the event itself. In it, the truth and the subject are assembled as the truth of the event and as the subject's doing.

That is a reason why this conjunction—in the most significant piece of Alain Badiou’s *Being and Event*—cannot be relieved of the temporal perspective of the coming future as utopias, expectations, hopes and other related messianic words of the Saviour’s second advent/coming, nor from the apocalyptic discourse of dogmatic Marxism that perceives communism in the postponement of the immediate future. The God of metaphysics is suspended when there is no distinction between “bad infinity” and “empty finality” when the event itself entails thinking of the openness of infinite possibilities. Being as a multitude and an event as a contingent singularity are mutually connected, because without Being as a multitude there is no event as an interruption within the logic of “state” and “situation” in objectified scientific verification. On the other hand, without the Being and the event, there is no possibility of subjecting a subject, which always constitutes a struggle against what acts as a systematic logic of nihilism (Badiou 2005).

Is Badiou’s notion of the event not therefore just another name for the mysticism of the political revolution? All the examples mentioned in its analysis of the term “policy” would be proof of this. The ontology proposed in place of Heidegger’s destruction of the traditional ontology derived in *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*) has its limitations because it is ultimately reduced to mathematics, and the notion of the event cannot be synonymous with the openness of time in the historical sense of the “second/other beginning” beyond metaphysics; indeed, it is just the opposite. Infinity, the multitude, and the event seem to suspend all history, and this is why the idea of communism has an excess of Platonism in the roots of its “dialectical materialism” and the lack of Marx’s radical critique of the reality of the capitalist order of the absolute science of modernity, a method which is, of course, a hybrid of algebra and arithmetic, that is, mathematical—a *political economy*. All this is a reason why Badiou—in his sharp split of what the term “reality” denotes, what Lacan calls “Real”, which we know to be a fracture or a hole in Being, to use a term from Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness* (*L’Être et le Néant*), which, in the ultimate consequence, could be comprehended in a way as the absence of events or a pure contingency of the non-existent, as in Althusser—must come to the eventuality that the event has a precedent (*a priori*) and a consequence (*a posteriori*). In other words, science as a generic production of truth begins only after pre-existing things and matters, which means that it belongs to the mystery of the *post-event*. What does that mean? First of all, as exemplified extremely curiously and critically by Daniel Bensaid, there is a dimension of miracles in the event in spite of the demands for “radical desacralization”. Therefore, different

political revolutions can be compared in the history of mankind with the events of birth, death, and the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ. The miracle assumes unpredictability, singularity, contingency. It cannot be reduced to a rational-irrational way of thinking, but it also cannot be, on the other hand, understood from the $A=A$ logic of identity. That is the reason why the *eventness* of the event has completely new and different conceptual outlines from the principle with which all things begin—*arché*.

For Badiou, the relation between this event and the ontology of the multiple constitutes the central problem for contemporary philosophy. What exactly is an event? Aleatory by nature, the event cannot be predicted outside a singular situation, nor even deduced from that situation without some unpredictable chance operation. In this way the Mallarméan dice-throw illustrates the ‘pure thought of the event’, which bears no relation to leaden structural determination. This event is characterized by the unpredictability of what might just as well not have occurred. This is what lends it an aura of ‘secularized grace’ (*SP*, 89). It comes about retroactively through the sovereign naming of its existence and the fidelity to the truth which comes to light in it. Thus, according to Péguy, the uncountable zero of the French Revolution’s ‘nought anniversary’ merely pays witness to what can be done in its name through the imperious duty to carry on its legacy. (Bensaid 2004, 97)

Unlike Heidegger’s thought in which Being in its purity or truth has been manifested as an event of epochal historicity, and hence in the primary dimension of finality, which enables its timing from the ecstatic future of what has already been but becomes significantly different in the upcoming, Badiou eliminated the historical from his notion of events, and with it the ecstatic timing of Being. All objections to his Platonic “dialectical materialism” originate from that axiom. In Badiou, therefore, history faded in three major concerns: science, politics and art. The history of science belongs to generic procedures of truths as theoretical insights into eternal axioms and sets (mathematics); the history of politics is the history of the differences between the condition-situation and the leading concept of the State and what is opposed to it as *political* without a subject; and the history of art takes on the features of man’s subject from his primary desire for the sensitive image of truth. All three are not historically identified by events as a condition for their subsequent foundation in the concepts of knowledge (theory), action (practice) and production (art). Instead, their deduction is derived from the perpetuation of the infinitude of the production of the “new” as the creation of a new condition and a situation in which the need for revolution is again emerging. In other words, the history of the notion of eternity as infinity

requires that the multitude (as Being) does not determine its history. It is elevated by a series of dialectical operations to one version of time that has its origins in the concept of a deterministic “case”. It directly borders on the theological concept of the mystery of the emergence and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The secular version in the form of the materialistic “metanarrative” can become the politics “without parties” and “without a state”, but then its legitimacy comes out of the impossibility of “realistic alternatives” to what Badiou calls “capital-parliamentarism”, which stems from its faith in the subject that creates the event from the cliché and the gaps of Being. In addition, it is neither predicated by nor comparable to previous history. The possibility of such an event arises from its impossibility. That is a reason why Badiou, unlike all neo-Marxists, seems to be the closest to the attempts at a contemporary theology of events (Critchley 2012, 93-102).⁵ The event is, at the same time, a purely political mystery. So, the participants in it are not observers. They are active entities fighting for it on what may come as a “must be” within the meaning of regulative claims of history. But it can also happen that it remains absent. That what “must” be but “cannot” come into the present state of the situation makes Badiou’s notion of politics some kind of an antithesis of a new event, similar to the philosophical politics of the militant sect. It was not, however, any kind of Blanquist terror, or anarchism of the new blade, which would be more acceptable to Rancière’s ideas. There is no doubt that here we have the hybrid case of Maoism by other means since faith in a subject built in the struggle against the condition of the State in “capital-parliamentarism” ultimately ends up as a constant expectation of a new event (*événement*). As a witness to that stands the politically intoned record of “events” that triggered the *Arab Spring*. A stew of ideas of the civil and political reach of liberal democracy has been transformed today in the reign of the cruellest form of political Islam. The turning event of the “revolution” came when it turned into its opposite—a controversial event with far-reaching consequences for the future of Europe and the Western model of politics as a whole. Badiou’s analysis was, as always, philosophically precise and strongly grounded in the critique of the State as such. But it was also wrong in predicting its possible consequences. The uncritical enthusiasm for an unpredictable turnaround in the Middle East shook rational judgements about the outcome of protests in Egypt, Libya, and Syria (Badiou 2012, 106-115).

There is a difference between his “Platonism” and dialectical materialism and Marx’s anti-Hegel’s historical materialism. Marx’s *18th Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* is not talking about the “coincidence” of the events of the

revolution and its brutal contrast with the emergence of autocratic dictatorship. On the contrary, it clearly shows what will evolve if A does not become B and B does not become A. Absence as an event is not just the history of the particularity of universality (class struggles). It denotes a history that in its “essence” has the structure of the development of what constitutes the reign of inhumanity over the human, the thing over nature, the structure and function of the simple relation between the subjects of the universe as a whole. And this “essence” is found in what goes beyond the idea of the subject, and at the same time paradoxically enables it in another way of its being. It is not a matter of self-consciousness in the form of the Absolute Spirit (Hegel’s system), but of the capital in the form of scientific and technological power. For such total power, any previous political order is not appropriate. It is questionable whether democracy can fulfil this role, as Martin Heidegger suggested at the end of his life in an interview he gave to *Der Spiegel* under the emblematic title “Only God can save us” (Heidegger 1976b). What does that mean? Simply, the subject in any of his newer forms—which the master-thinkers of French Heideggerian thought have been trying to produce, starting from Sartre, through Foucault and Nancy to Badiou—can no longer be understood ontologically or deontologically. The problem of the subject in contemporary philosophy is the problem of its disappearance as well as the disappearance of the substance. This is best evidenced by the fact that Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* aimed criticism at Lacanian psychoanalysis, creating a concept that demonstrates the paradoxical weakness of the subject itself to reach that which constitutes the “essence” of the modern technical circuit. The notion in question is their concept of “desiring machines” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983).

If the subject is no longer based on the notions of consciousness (Kant), spirit (Hegel) or desire (Freud-Lacan), then Badiou had to look for his return from the treasury of modern philosophy by returning to Marx, but with the aspiration to redefine his idea of communism. Instead of faith in scientific-technical progress, or, in Marx’s term, “productive forces”, Badiou neutralized the faith in the mission of *technosphere*. He did this by returning to the political dimension of the relationship between science, technology, and society. His concept of the subject is derived from politics as an event. However, this is precisely the subject “buried” in the infinity of its own pseudo-resurrection in a new event without a subject. The consequences were to be expected: the voluntarism of Maoist ideology with the idea of “cultural revolution” as the last authentic political event (Badiou 2010, 101-167). This only means that Badiou, in his great return to the subject, failed to prove why the political event would have given the

subject his power of emancipation if our era of unfinished (political) revolution became the age of counter-Enlightenment and counter-Revolution. This goes from neoliberalism to Islamism and beyond. Is not the problem with the subject only in that it can no longer be founded in consciousness, neither in spirit nor in desire, and especially in that the work itself has become immaterial in the digital age? Hence, the subjectivity no longer has its “essence” as there is no place or time in which it may have a justification. The question of “subject theory” is, in the end, also an ontological question about the essence of politics as an event. Badiou’s subjectivity is derived from a conflict within the field of action as a multitude. And that means that this subject is ultimately determined by the impossibility of subjecting, except in a political-aesthetic sense, as it was in the case demonstrated by Rancière.

Anti-philosophical *anarchy* and philosophical *communitas* lead to close-knit democratic anarchism and revolutionary communism. The closed circle of the subject’s possibilities ends in the reverse order. Now the truth has the feature of the artistic or aesthetic production of the sense of events. Of course, in the repoliticization of contemporary art, Badiou and Rancière have the leading roles. The only problem is that art has become non-autonomous, and politics has become non-political. Namely, the event in its essential aspects always occurs in the political sphere of enumeration of a multitude of meanings, rather than in that which has the features of irreducibility to anything beyond its own dignity. In this way, contemporary art becomes a hostage of “bad politics”, and “bad politics” turns into a hostage of non-autonomous “bad art”.

Randomness and unpredictability, however, are not possible from the perspective of political action in pursuit of the politics of truth if the subject does not “revolutionarily” rise in the struggle for emancipation to the creator of his own destiny. This Sartrean project of extending “nature” and proclaiming history as the only dimension of freedom ended in *Critique of the Dialectical Reason* with the defeat of the possibility of a radical change of the condition-situation of the real history of alienation in the capitalist world (Sartre 1960). Badiou “repeats” this in a different way. He does so because the concept of the subject is projected as in Sartre. Of course, it had the addition that the essence of this project is generating genuinely truthful procedures as a political event *par excellence* (Badiou 2009a). The subject can only be realized in the collective practice of political action against the ruling order. The event, therefore, raises the question of the subject’s un-historicity. The reason should be seen in the fact that in its exceptionality and rarity it is assumed that the conditions for the “new” are created. To put it another way, the post-eventuality of the

event represents an infinite field for the inscription of meaning. That is what Lacan calls the symbolic. It articulates the real as the empty place of the event of the subject. Without the history of Being, the event must only become a contingent and singular political project in the face of the “violent” violence of reality. The reason, then, lies therein, because it excludes the determination of what legitimate politics is at all and of what Walter Benjamin, appropriating the thesis of Carl Schmitt, proclaims as “divine violence”, or the last act of revolutionary violence (Benjamin 1991). A sovereign decision is not grounded in advance of something that is already being set. Anything could happen in the name of freedom. Therefore, freedom itself happens without naming. Badiou, thus, on Lazarus’ path, determines a true politics or the politics of truth (Badiou 2005c, 26-57). Infinity presupposes the repetition of events only in the way that its singularity in the unpredictability of the “second coming” is shown in the full news. But this news is not what “actuality” should be like. Anyway, it is not the same as the primordial dimension of time through which Heidegger thinks of the event (*Ereignis*) in the identities and differences of Being and time. This was largely witnessed in his texts of the late 1930s such as *Besinnung* and *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* (Heidegger 1997; 2003).

In general, Badiou has a dual approach to the *political* and politics. It is an attempt to understand the ontology of the event on the one hand, and on the other it is a theory of the subject. In both cases, we are faced with the theoretical “grounding” of the *metapolitics* as thinking beyond the reach of the tradition of “political philosophy” and beyond the scope of the tradition of the “modern philosophy of consciousness”. *Metapolitics* denotes a subjective event without a subject known to modern politics, such as the sovereignty of the people in the liberal-democratic form of the state. What Badiou rejects in *Metapolitics* might be extremely significant for the further course of our interpretation. Those are all forms of dialectical thinking that cannot capture the complexity of the irreducible essence of politics (Bosteels 2011, 7-8).⁶

Why did politics, for Badiou, become something of a new “absolute” that almost everything depends on, every possible event in the relationship between humans and even the way of shaping the space between the Being as a multitude and the event as a condition for the emergence of a new condition and situation? Undoubtedly, throughout his work from the early 1960s to today, the fact that such a high place is devoted to politics stems from his belief that a change in life is possible only if it also means a change in thought. We cannot change the world without changing our thinking or our interpretation of the world. This “re-philosophizing” of

Marx, however, does not mean much more than an attempt at getting rid of the traces of scientificity and at freeing the world of the deposition of pseudo-humanism. All of this marked the reading of Marx in France of the 1960s and beyond. If politics indicates neither the field of moral inscription, nor the scientific verification of what is happening in the world, it is because of Badiou's intervention in the area of the irreducibility of the political, which he performed together with Rancière in contemporary philosophy—an original intervention in the way it was released from the stranglehold of the economy and culture, rights and morals, sciences and cultures. We know that the beginning of this process is signified by Schmitt's notion of the *political* as polemic struggles and the understanding of politics in the conflicts of friends against enemies. Badiou does not even deal with the question of so-called *realpolitik*. True to the will, this is a cancer of almost the entire normative theory of politics and the political by thinkers from Habermas and Rawls, the most significant representatives of the so-called liberal consensus, to Deleuze, Lyotard, and Rancière. Because of this, the *nomos of the political* is exposed to him as being beyond the obsession with the idea of the sovereignty of the people in the modern form of the rule of a democratic or totalitarian state. There remains an important question, however: can politics be thought of as thinking? The answer to that question is affirmative. Yes, for Badiou, politics denotes a singular and contingent form of thinking. The creation of the generic procedures of truth no longer comes out of the theory of the multitude (ontology as mathematics). Instead, everything is now deployed into the ambiguity and unpredictability of the event. Practice in the overarching meaning of this concept becomes political practice. There are already ethical norms and cultural values included in it. This, of course, does not testify to any form of essentialism, but just the opposite. Ethics and culture in their abilities become norms and values only from the perspective of political events. There is no ethics based on the idea of "human nature" or culture based on the idea of the eternity of human civilization. Instead, the idea of infinity comes from the open ontology as a being and a political event that changes the structure of the subject's Being and thinking.

From all that has been said, it might be obvious why Badiou is so radically motivated by the inflation of ethical "humanitarianism" and similar strategies of the culturalization of politics in the 1990s. In 1998, he published his most significant theoretical book: *Metapolitics*. The same applies to his book on ethics. In it, he summarized all the paradoxes and aporias of the contemporary ideology of "ethical relativism". This broke the post-modern idolatry of the Other in the function of the neoliberal

march of globalization (Badiou 1993; Laclau 2004, 120-137). The event as an “essence” of politics is by no means something “objective”. In a Kierkegaardian manner, what belongs to the subject as a process of subjectivization decides on the truth, and it belongs to him because only the subject in his new meaning of body and language as the materiality of the world is a true participant, not an observer of events. When we keep this in mind, then the difference between participation and observation represents a major difference between politics and aesthetics. However, these are two old-fashioned paths in the attempt to reckon with the technical fate of thought in the 20th century. In our contemporary times, we are witnessing the process of the re-politicization and re-aestheticization of contemporary art. The first process is related to social participation and the critical engagement of the artist, and the second is revealed in a dedication to the cult of the artist’s autonomy and his works. Kant’s aesthetics is based on the model of the indifference of the universal observer and the object of the beauty and the sublime. Nietzsche’s intervention, in turn, comes from the power of the struggle as a living force. The subject of art can no longer be a passive observer of the work. Onto the scene, with great style, comes the active artist. What makes Badiou decisive in determining the relationship between participation and the observation of events is that truth should always be on the side of an active participant, in an individual, not the collective mode of Being, while the act of observation belongs to the scientific or theoretical act of retroactive thinking. Politics has, thus, represented, the form of thinking that makes it possible for thinking to become the truth of Being. That is a reason why Badiou’s final intention is to derive the basic elements of the politics of truth. Nothing more and nothing less.

3.3 Intervention: politics without a subject?

Who should be the true subject of the emancipation-revolutionary policy of events today? This question can be answered by summarizing the result of what has been said so far in the interpretation of the concepts of the political and politics in Badiou. If the event itself as the underlying concept of contemporary philosophy—from Heidegger to the French post-structuralists and the neo-Marxists—experienced a multitude of receptionist dislocations to this or that version of the politics and voluntarism of the subject, then it becomes apparent that the issue of the event goes beyond ontology and leads to the question of the “new” subject. At first glance, this great return to the core of modern philosophy begins again with Sartre and Levinas, who first faced the problem of

ontology and action. With Sartre, we are faced with the unmanaged *Ethics* after his main work *Being and Nothingness (L'Être et le Néant)*, while in Lévinas this problem is open to the unconditional ethics of the Other, demonstrated in his main work *Totality and Infinity (Totalité et Infini)*. In both cases, there was an attempt to replenish Heidegger because of the fact that in *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)*, there was no thematizing of humans' common Being (*Mit-Sein*) or community and sociability. Lévinas' ethical turn was, hence, the first attempt to overcome the ontology, so its main question about the end of the Being became the question of the infinite human relationship with the Other. The atheistic humanism of existentialism (Sartre) and the atheistic ethics of the Other "founded" in the compassion of the sufferings of the neighbour (Lévinas) opened up the possibilities of a new reflection on a subject beyond traditional metaphysics. But it was clear that Sartre's dualism of Being and nothing goes back to the subject's act by way of its existential decisions and the project of a frustrated individual in networks of an ever-merciless social community governed by "other nature" laws such as the capitalist market and the absence of empathy. Thus, in fact, the subjectivism of the existential project and the ethical turn towards the faces of the unconditional Other signified the entry of problems of the subject's activity into the community in a specific way of "lacking". The subject is constituted by the lack of one's own position in the world by being thrown into the shelter of the Being-in-the-world by way of existential nausea and the ethical tolerance of violence.

Instead of the metaphysical-historical manifestation of Being in its meaningful articulation in time, we have a path to the interior of the Fichtean subject and a departure to the heavenly heights of the ethical theodicy without the metaphysically and theologically understood God. The problem is not how to overcome Heidegger's notion of the event (*Ereignis*), but how to deal with the basic notion of his thinking after *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)*. Heidegger first named it *Machenschaft*, and very soon after—*Gestell (enframing)*. Let us remember that this means the following: the *essence of technology is by no means anything technological* (Heidegger 2000, 7-36). No existing political order or policy and no existing form of state can be effective in dealing with the unconditional nihilism of technology. The reason for that lies in the fact that the action itself is fundamentally determined from the standpoint of technical thinking. The problem is in determining the "essence" of thought, not of Being. But one is impossible without the other. Being and subject can be thought of in their ontological-political irreducibility only from the contingency of events. If Badiou's politics of event (*événement*)

were to be understood through the mystery of creating a “new” state of affairs and a new situation, then the fundamental question to which we do not have a credible answer is the following: can politics—as a form of thinking, and if so then under what conditions—counteract the “essence” of technology if we are always and already dealing with what Heidegger in 1938 in *Besinnung* called the concept of absolute power? And this presupposes the following:

- (1) that which is *dynamic* about the realization of power;
- (2) that which is as a *totality* affecting the principle of power so that nothing outside of that environment can have its innocence and be regarded as “real” any longer;
- (3) the “*imperial*” that derives from the commanding character of power and invokes any possibility of exception and case in its own environment;
- (4) the *rationality* in which the calculating character of thinking is confined to the constrained power of execution; and
- (5) that “*planetary*” which shows us that power is no longer just “total” and directed to one nation and one community of people, but instead that its borders are only within the boundaries of earthly spheres like atmospheres and stratospheres, which means that the planet as a whole in its relations and images of power can be overtaken by a “penetration”, thus neutralizing possible planetary opponents (Heidegger 1997, 18).

If the alternative to this thinking for Heidegger was a withdrawal to the thought of tracing the “second beginnings” in Hölderlin’s poetical language and the problem of what Nietzsche did in his own way of thinking of metaphysics as nihilism—which Badiou immensely respects because he opened entirely different paths of anti-philosophy in search of the salvific exit from the one-way street of modernity—then the second or alternative way that Badiou most strongly advocates in contemporary philosophy is the one which dispenses with ethical responses and puts everything at stake. A third way does not exist. Except, of course, through an attempt to dis-found and break down the technical into a new mythopoetic *technosphere*, as Simondon and Deleuze attempted (Simondon 2012; Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Badiou’s thinking of a return to “dialectical materialism” and the idea of the subject—which represents a hybrid between Sartre’s projective self and Lacan’s decentered articulation of symbolic cracks in the real—is deduced from a critique of all the paradigms of “capital-parliamentarism” and by setting politics as

the institutional power of the nation-state—a struggle on the platforms of a liberal notion of democracy. Indeed, it is therefore not accidental that he even ironically refers to the different leftist ontologies of politics. He named them with the inappropriate label of “democratic materialism”. In its foundations, it assumes the logic of the plurality of Being and various post-modern ideas of difference and the Other. The paradox is the following: Badiou, as well as Deleuze, performed a kind of turn of metaphysics as an ontology. Deleuze, through Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, Whitehead, and Simondon, dissolved Being in the idea of multitude and difference, while Badiou’s ontology in his main work *Being Event*, in a critical dialogue with Heidegger, addressed the issues of the mathematical set theory. This was specially worked out by Cantor and Cohen in the 20th century (Badiou 2004).

His philosophical critique of “antiphilosophy”—without which he could not reach the major discoveries through figures such as Heidegger and Lacan—in essence denotes a critique of post-modernism and its fundamental notions of difference, multiculturalism, tolerance, etc. Secondly, it would not be possible to construct a new theory of the subject beforehand. It is—like ontology (Being as a multitude) and the thought of the event as a politics of truth—not based on the old notions of metaphysics, but on those that criticize them most radically. Badiou is a materialistic post-modern Platonist. In that, he is closest to Deleuze’s position, but with a difference in that his notion of infinity might be mathematically political. Is this not something impossible and really absurd? How could it be possible that the science of numbers is connected with politics? We have already seen that this is not only possible but in its “necessity” has represented a path to pure contingency. The uncertainty, the risk, the unpredictability, the impossibility of the possible as real, the absence, which is not the absence of the existing but the structure of potentiality in the real—all these are the concepts we constantly encounter in the *complexity theory*, deterministic chaos and the emergence theory. A contingency is the “essence” of events, and therefore it denotes the main concept of Badiou’s “political ontology”. So, the subject thereby emerging as the holder of emancipation-revolutionary ideas such as communism might be determined as the multitude of particular universality. However, it should be noted that we cannot make a close connection between Badiou’s thinking and the concept of the multitude in the manner of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt’s naming of the new subject of a total revolution of global capitalism (Hardt and Negri 2004).

In Badiou, the subject must be contingent. It is always a product of a specific event. This event is happening in a concrete initial and singular

situation. But this situation cannot be transferred to another; it could not happen without violence over reality. Therefore, it should be not hard to explain why the neo-Marxian critiques of neoliberal capitalism and the hegemony of the US in the political articulation of power concerning the “new world order” are always also regarded as criticisms of the so-called export of democracy to Third World countries. Obviously, the problem is that behind the fake universality of ideas of human rights and democratic ideology we find the rule of the brutal power of neo-colonialism. Badiou takes the standpoint which has its origin in Marx, though it is, in fact, a complete revision of Marx, as is evident in the case of Slavoj Žižek. Of course, we can find the origin of such a position in Althusser’s reading of Lenin (Althusser 1982). The main ideas are not more articulated in their reception by Marx, but they are undoubtedly Leninist and Maoist. They appear in new criticisms of post-modernism and post-Marxism against the “liberal consensus”. What is the very core of this revision? Simply, the fact that Badiou tried to establish the political ontology of the event in the manner of attributing to the subject almost mystical features of the new absolute. After Lukacs’ *History and Class Consciousness* in which, in the footsteps of Hegel, the Stalinist understanding of the Communist Party gained the ontological foundation of the subject of the revolution, *an-sich* and *für-sich*, that is, at the end of history as the absolute spirit, now history should be suspended and neutralized. Instead of the historic dimensions of Marx’s historical materialism, Badiou tries to revive “dialectical materialism”. From that very point, we should now—instead of Engels’ dialectics of nature and the concept of “necessity”, according to which communism must come after capitalism—postulate that the upcoming community is saturated on the logic of multitude and contingency. Nothing is already predetermined. In place of Being, now all might be at the event of a metapolitical subject without a name. Why can we no longer name this subject? Why is it not the working class, just like it was for Marx, but now gains tones of ambiguity and of the singularity of creation from the situation? For example, the subject of revolutionary events in the *Arab Spring* was neither class nor nation in its essential difference. Its political determination can be made only from the logic of confrontation between:

- (a) the autocratic and despotic order of local-regional oligarchies, and
- (b) the neo-colonial order, based on a democratic consensus on the rule of Western civilization, which—in place of political goals—

now shifts the centre of gravity to the economic and social methods of enslavement.

In this way, the subject matter might be reduced to the abolition of what Marx in *Capital* set as the issue of the substance-subject of the entire historical process. Like all other French thinkers on the trajectory of Heidegger, Badiou is trying to demonstrate an alternative to finding a new political subject. In a situation where work and capital are no longer set in the way of the industrial paradigm of the relationship as it was in Marx's time, nor does the subject carry the features of a particular universality any longer. With the introduction of computer technology, the definition of the concept of work has led to substantial changes in the definition of what we call materiality. The immateriality of work in the digital economy creates an emerging network of the "subject". On the other side of the binary opposites of work and freedom lies their "subjectivity". Work goes beyond the concept of class, just as the neo-imperial regimes of politics go beyond the notion of the sovereignty of the nation-state. The voluntarism of the politics of the truth of the new subject, however, consists in the fact that its emergence should be extremely questionable in the political meaning, as well as ethically scandalous. This also applies to Žižek's political position (Žižek 2000, 171-244; 2006, 272-330). Without leaving Lenin and Mao, and without the self-criticism of Maoism in what is not the only legacy of 1968 in Badiou's political ontology, whose centre is empty—to paraphrase the subtitle of Žižek's most significant book after *Sublime Object of Ideology*—and a subject without events such as the lost and abandoned collective individuum wandering of the desert of *realpolitik*, remains only an unsuccessful adventure of political thinking. Nevertheless, politics can only be thought of if it opens the way for the event that does not fall into the unconditional will of action versus "capital-parliamentarism" and if that will and that action do not end up in empty barricades. Finally, they mean nothing to anyone.

The reason lies in the structural "nature" of things. The new ontology of the *technosphere* is crucial. However, Badiou did not devote much attention to this, as Deleuze did in *A Thousand Plateaus* and related writings that marked the end of the 1980s and early 1990s, like the famous "Postscript on the Society of the Control" (Deleuze 1992). This is a problem, because Being as becoming—as Deleuze argued, with its consequences on the conceptions of work in a cybernetic model of global capitalism—has far-reaching impacts on the process of the formation of these relations in light of the rule of networked "societies of control". So, science and technology in their generic truth-creating procedures

completely change the position of a subject. And that means they are moving it out of the work process and placing it in the centre of cognitive capitalism as the apparatus or the dispositif of power based on rational management and the logic of total subjectivity “from within”. In his lectures on biopolitics, Michel Foucault specifically analyzed the paradigm of neoliberalism as a new discourse of power, ideology and strategy—a way of transforming capitalism from the logic of production to the logic of speculative financial management (Foucault 2004, 325-329). What happens to the subject next? It is no longer consciousness, nor spirit or work, nor is it desire or the so-called rebellious body in the political action of subjectivization. The subject, thus, becomes a cybernetic circuit of new relationships. All this is done in the same way in which the notion of actors in social psychology is replaced by the notion of *inter-actors*, which has been used in recent investigations by the sociologist and anthropologist Bruno Latour. Instead of intersubjectivity in action, we have interobjectivity (Latour 1996, 228-245). This means that the question of the subject, regardless of what “now” and “there” it is trying to enumerate, or—speaking the language of ontology—what its “essence” is, can no longer be performed with any reference to a radical change in the conditions of the possibilities of political action.

Heidegger was right. The problem is not in social relations or in the political articulation of power in the era of the *technosphere*. The attempts to return to politics its “lost dignity”, from Schmitt and Benjamin to Badiou and Agamben, include the “surplus” of what belongs to the divine and theology. Alain Badiou started first with his anti-theology of the new event as a political re-articulation of the thought of St. Paul for the upcoming era of the disappearance of equality and justice from the world of the global civilization of nihilism. Politics without the sacred seems to lose that trace of mystery and mysticism, just as materialism—in its new garment—loses something mysterious and indeterminable. The “Big Other” disappears in the absolute immanence of the world, just as we can detect the disappearance of emancipation and the revolution of the “being” of such a world. So, it is necessary to redirect the search for a “different” politics than one which no longer poses a question of the subject in advance on the constant creation of action, like the staging of events. On the contrary, there is only the question of what gives the event—in its absence or expectation—a different meaning from mere impulse, even if it is also a militant step to “divine violence”. In the end, it turned out that the last step of this turn from the sovereignty of politics to the politics of truth is the turn to “political theology”. Instead of the capitalistic revolution at the core of its artificial life (*AL*) and artificial intelligence (*AI*) today, the

time has come for the last turn. This is the one that leads to the “revolution” of the subject in itself. It might be a turning point that is in the wake of politics as the theology of events. Even when, as in the case of Badiou, we have a formally atheistic approach to the world, the essence of things is the same. God, for Deleuze, has become an immanent system of control, a kind of the hermetic techno-genetic process of creation into the finality of the art model and creating *ex nihilo*. For Badiou, however, “secular mysticism” of the event requires a militant political subject. Without it, no expectation of salvation makes any sense. As was effectively said by Žižek in *Parallax View* in opposition to Heidegger’s strategy of relaxation: “*Gelassenheit*? No, thanks!” (Žižek 2006, 278-288).

What are we to do with this return to the Christian heritage of emancipation-revolutionary thinking? (Hribar 2002, 215-295). Almost nothing. The omission of the figure of the universality of faith in the upcoming community of equality and justice connects messianic hope in the event with the apocalyptic scenario of the fall of the old world. Within the thought of Badiou, Žižek and Agamben, as well as within their search for traces of upcoming community from the spirit of the politics of truth, do we not encounter just another spin within the same assumptions with which contemporary philosophy after Heidegger finds itself in the wilderness? We are consequently left with only two paths to the same impossible point. One is marked by the signs of politics, and the other by aesthetic attempts. But both paths should be determined as colossal failures of thinking. It is precisely from the inability to calculate the “Being” of that technical framework which is so uncanny and yet so simple—and, precisely because of that, also impenetrable—that all these violent radicalisms of philosophy, politics, and democracy come. Anyway, the right to miss is still and only the right of those who think a great deal. Badiou is certainly one of them.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE RISE OF OLIGARCHY: NEOLIBERALISM AND THE POLITICS OF THE EVENT

4.1 Mass without power? On the paradox of democracy

The arrival of Hitler to power in 1933 was accompanied by the following prophetic words of the Austrian writer Franz Werfel: “The future belongs to the corporal.” In this statement, the irony was not just directed at the miserable position of the future totalitarian leader in the military hierarchy, which would sweep across Europe and push the world into the abyss of crime and barbarism, but at that which was almost ineffable—the coming of the retaliation of mass society against high culture. To hold the masses in contempt does not seem to be an inventive thought activity. Moreover, that is not even a feature of aristocratic behaviour in modern times. However, it is the time of the dying God who disappeared along with all of the features of sovereign power from the crown to the throne, both in a symbolic sense and in reality. If contempt belongs in the effects of resentment towards everyday life as a sign of the rejection of all values, then we might speak about a weakening of power. Nietzsche discussed these matters in that manner in his own writings such as *Antichrist* and *Twilight of the Idols*. The making of life as a mass phenomenon becomes, thus, a crucial determinant of modernity. It is interesting that no great poets like Baudelaire or Rimbaud sing about it. Poetry does not even speak of the masses, except for that of Vladimir Mayakovsky, because language cannot show what is behind the masses. With the emergence of avant-garde film in the Soviet Union and Germany, the time of the masses really began. And we can recognize that in the aesthetic figure of ornaments (Kracauer 1995). The visual code era of technical equipment, namely, corresponds to mass culture, especially to film as a mass (cultural) industry.

But what or how can we really think about the masses? The answer to this issue can be found in Heidegger's *Introduction to Metaphysics*—a diagnosis of modernity as such—as one of the most radical critiques of the modern age. Even if we leave out what is most scandalous in the book of 1935—the statement on “the inner truth and greatness” of the Nazi order—we are still left somewhat far-sighted. Among the modern ideologies that conduct the unconditional nihilism of Western metaphysics, Heidegger names German Nazism, Soviet/Russian communism and American liberalism. All of them are characterized by *Machenschaft*—the thinking of rational-pragmatic usability, that is, the instrumentalities of Being. This means, above all, that thinking becomes a means of increasing power, quantification and exorbitance (Heidegger 1983). Anything loses substances. Therefore, when the demonic and uncanny are at work, power becomes total. The number is understood by the logic of multiplication and enlargement, and the measure that disappears is excessive (*hyper*) and essentially unimaginable. The reason for that lies in that the term “size” is missing. The quantization at the site of the qualitative breaks down all the previous marks of measure.

Instead of the modern subject and substance, mass society as a consequence of the unconditional rule of these terms leads to the total impersonality of life. The mass does not only indicate the physical size of the substance. In Einstein's theory of relativity, besides the notion of speed, this concept appears crucial to the understanding of the mystery of the universe. The transformation of the Being in mass at the same time signified the transformation of the relationship between man and nature (Sloterdijk 2000). Even when, in the post-modern turn, we should speak about a “personalized relation to spending facilities” (Lipovetsky 2009), we are still talking of the same discomfort. There is an intriguing thought in it as an awareness of the Being. Ideologies, therefore, are nothing other than systems of thought embedded in organized propaganda. This turns the man into the object of the amorphous mass. But in the same way, the mass in its “development” tends to the larger intensity of power and the establishment of absolute power, and all the while the calculative realization of all that is grows to unimaginable proportions. In mass society, therefore, there is no civil society because there is no political state in the classical notion of liberalism. What remains might be the total mobilization of the power of all existing forces such as economic, political, and cultural into a new modality of planetary nihilism. Heidegger, in his lectures on metaphysics of 1935, introduces very up-to-date illustrations to substantiate what is happening to the spirit at a time when political assassinations, the radio transmissions of a spectacular

boxing match and news reports about the fall or rise of the stock market take on the same rank. Media cynicism in a mass society has become the dictate of our time. The problem is that the extinction of each rank between sizes creates an opportunity for surrogates. The most disastrous thing is what can be derived from the “democratic despotism of equality”. The totalitarian political regimes of the 20th century governed in the name of equality, not of liberty. Italian fascism was propagated by the deception of the mythical nation, German Nazism used the term of the Aryan race, and Stalinist communism was based on the rule of the working class. Any absolutization of the principle of equality is at the same time the real implementation of inequality. It is not a consideration on the collectivism of people, but mass individualism without personality, without which there is no mutual recognition among individuals. Instead of this principle of equality, inequality manifests itself in differentiating between the identity of an individual as a member of a nation, a race, or a class.

Can we still speak about democratic rule without its paradox? In simple terms, the paradox consists of that which, in their studies on the relationship between political (democracy) and policy as “police” (the governance of oligarchy), is mostly argued by Jacques Rancière and Chantal Mouffe in their criticism of the depoliticization and indifference of contemporary society in the era of global capitalism. In order for the rule of equal and free to function in the modern society of mass consumption (consumerism), it is necessary for the democratic institutions of the state to protect the common good (*communauté*). And since global capitalism—in which this “consensus” operates between nations as a *demos* and a state as a machine of government—goes beyond the borders of modern nation-states, then the expected impact not only denotes the crisis of democracy. Corporate governance as a “rational consensus” between individuals, groups and subjects/policy actors cannot be possible without “disagreement” or dissensus between actors in a pluralistic game of attitudes. Consequences of democracy presuppose rationality and argumentation in the discussion between the various participants in public disputes and deliberations (Habermas 1992). But we cannot determine disagreement as just the opposite of consensus and the understanding of political communication. This could be a way of deconstructing rational procedures of political decision-making. Because abaf of every rationality there stands an ideological reason for the legitimization of injustice and inequality, and therefore it might be necessary to reach the very source of the political as such. Like freedom, the political has no foundation (*an-arché*).

The confrontation between rationality and passion as sensuousness determines, therefore, contemporary politics. It has remained without its last cause in the notions of good, purpose, and meaning. Such a situation testifies to what Plato already considered as a perilous state of matters. The democratic regime of governance slides into the tyranny of the usurping of governments, while Rancière believes that this—in the environment of Europe and Western modernity—occurs as a rule of oligarchy (Rancière 2005, 167-168; 2014). The paradox also denotes a way of acting of representative democracy at the end of the epoch of the sovereignty of nation-states. Rather than equality and freedom, corporate governance is in the hands of the society and the democratically elected elite of technology. They rise above the general interest, and the principles of equality and freedom are “privatized” for themselves. Is it possible to “privatize” the fundamental principles of the rule of the people? Obviously in a just manner wherein the concepts of the reign (*kratein*) and the people (*demos*) that arise from the directness of decision-making move to the mediation of management. In this way, all contemporary models of the political representation of the people lie in the area of total *disjunction*. There is no longer anything that is too stable or too firmly rooted. This also applies to the traditional notion of democracy. So, that disjunction not only affects the internal stability of the democratic order in the face of civil war challenges. It might primarily be a question about the underlying principles and categories of what we call a good life in the community. From the start of the New Era, there has been a double bond of freedom and equality. One thing has represented the sovereign rule of a nation-state with the idea of a constitutional monarchy, republic or empire, and the second one must be a way of governance. The legitimacy of the law determines the legality of enforcing the norm. The institutional order of government is always a rational and efficient activity of state administration. And it turns politics into administrative technology (Foucault 1997). However, it can even be said that the activity of deployment on other “bases” leads to the same old dispute over honest and good rule and its corruption in modern times. But the problem is so much greater, as all that has happened after the experience of the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century and after entering in the global order of post-imperial sovereignty. The paradox even goes beyond Rancière’s theory of the political and has since moved to the *aporia*.

The mass consumer society is based on the equality of citizens as consumers. Thus, participatory and deliberative democracy is therefore reduced to market principles of the equality of conditions. Alexis de Tocqueville spoke more of them as suppositions of the *fairness* rule. But

the problem is that we are dealing with two notions of equality. The first concept is political. It makes the underlying assumption of freedom of expression in the state (*politeia, republic, nation-state, cosmopolis*). All people as citizens are equal. Their rights are equal regardless of gender, race, nation, or class. Equality in a political sense will assume that the existence of differences in a society cannot be decisive for the freedom of the citizen to decide about the common good. The private sphere was already second-class at the time of ancient Greek democracy. *Oikonomia* belongs to the production of the things necessary for survival (*bios*). But it cannot become the highest level of human purpose. In other words, it cannot become a matter of political activity (*bios politikos*). The private sphere in the classical liberal notion of politics is determined by the non-political activity of social relations. Without this, it would not even be possible to have any constitutional state or the notion of universal justice. Secondly, the concept of equality is reduced to economic categories of the incommensurability of property or to those of private property. The neoliberal logic of the capitalist world market puts the notion of market equality as the structural equality of the chances of corporate governance into dissymmetry. Equality refers to setting the rules for Others as unequal. We are all equal to the laws of the market and are subject to compliance with monopolies and oligopolies. It equally applies to things as objects and people as things (labour force). The fetishism of commodity in Marx's understanding of the fundamental perversion of capitalism as the ideology of the best of all worlds goes back to the fetishism of the commodity without a subject (Klossowski 1986).

In this semiosphere, current politics should necessarily be transformed into *marketing*. The essential capabilities of the political are shown in the disjunct areas of freedom, at the edges of the corporate totality of the world beyond the differences of state and society. It is not, therefore, a problem of Althusser's determination of the ideological apparatus of the state that inscribes repression into the body of the community (Althusser 1971, 121-178). What is much more dangerous and almost completely adopted is corporate governance over individuals and societies as a risk to the market business. When society is being pacified, solidarity between classes disappears, and politics is shifted from the irreducible sphere of action and decision-making into the moral-law categories of a constitutional right. The delirium of normativism acts like a virus of the contagious disease of democracy. Instead of agonism and the conflict between the political opponents in action, we have the mortification of the struggle. Decisions are shifted to other areas such as rights, morals, and cultures. Politics is thus reduced to the technical question of the effectiveness of the

constitutional law. However, this is just another way of performing an ideology without a visible political subject (Mouffe 2006; 2009). European policy in the global order after the end of communism in 1989 determines what Carl Schmitt did precisely in his work on the end of the sense of civic and state rights (Schmitt 1997). Entering the post-national constellation without sovereignty designates the abolition of the uncanny nature of politics and the politicization of life at large. Instead of the nation-state, the “empty space of power” is now centred in the global order of corporate capitalism. With the neoliberal ideology of the devastation of society and of the shifting of the focus of politics to rational management technology, the possibility of the surveillance of these processes disappears. All just becomes flexible, reversible and fluid as the post-human condition of information entropy.

We are entering the time of the total control of social processes. And they are no longer controlled by real people, but bio-cybernetical code. This change is reflected in all the levels of the relationship between man and the environment in the capitalist drive of total mobilization. Politics is no exception. Whoever wants action and decides to exempt themselves from the power of the *technosphere* could only come to the ethical-political noise around the “revolution” as the cultural turn of the concepts of technology and society. However, this is a dangerous misapprehension, albeit one with good intentions. Technology should not be absolute over history. It represents only the historically-shaped transformation of Being in the becoming of information, and when this might be the case, the event replaces ontology in the traditional sense of the word. The virtual actualization becomes the place of the difference between necessity and contingency. This might be called the state of *in-between* that now conditions all the social processes. Politics does not just mean making and deciding about a public good or a common good. Its place occupies a performative event in freedom in the global networks of power. Anything else is a drop below this attained level. That must be a reason why there is no prospect for the future. What determines the category of political equality? Obviously, what precedes this order as the emergence of the new world. Greeks saw themselves as equal and free, as opposed to other “barbaric” peoples. Rising up to the divine endowment of the greatest value of all, which is, of course, freedom, politics without it loses its meaning, and democracy its foundation.

From there, Marx’s critique of representative democracy and its fundamental ideas of free elections and the rights of the press in a formal democracy without fundamental economic and legal equality in the area of ownership over the means of production signified a criticism of politics as

a critique of the conditions of the possibility of the rule of capital in the form of the political democracy. When this latter understanding becomes a condition of the possibility of the first in the act, it is a negative turn. It is not just the necessity for a new class of logocrats, highly educated elites, to emerge in the global world of political-economic power as a new form of plutocracy and oligarchy in a representative democracy for much more efficiency in work. Such a case of the triumph of “global governance” or the management of political elites over participatory forms of governance by the people not only endangers the essence of democracy—political equality and freedom—in the mass society of consumption but, much worse, it also puts us in danger of creating a “consensual disorder” on a global scale. The oligarchic elites cooperate perfectly well in liberal democracies, dictatorships and autocratic tyrannies (Paić 2013, 20-62). What connects them are not, of course, flags or coats of arms. Fidelity to the homeland and cults of ancestors have an almost mythical sense of belonging in the post-national constellation. A specific European case is that of the Russian oligarchs, especially in relation to the US policy of the open alliance of transnational corporations and the state in the 21st century (Suarez-Villa 2015).

Therefore, the European exception applies only to what happened after the Second World War. As a political project of creating a supranational organization of political power, the European Union seems to represent only the idea of creating some kind of weak empire without sovereignty. The member states of the European Union—by joining it—have turned over their sovereignty to the organism, which only formally holds some features of the federation. It is, in fact, a quasi-sovereignty with the intention to rule on the principle of democratic-representational management without the possibility of executive governance at a supranational level. Europe, in the structure of the institutional creation of the EU, only resembles an empire by form. But, in relation to the United States and Russia, its “colonialism from a European perspective”—as Alexandre Kojève showed in 1957—is an economic-cultural project. It is far from being able to be the decisive political power and have the largest influence on world security (Kojève 2001, 115-128). Oligarchies arise within the democratic order. They are marked by the connection or concentration of economic and political power in the hands of the minority elite. Inequality in the societies of the mass equality of citizens as consumers and as formal subjects/actors of deliberative democracy is created primarily by the fusion of transnational corporations and political powers at the level of imperial sovereignty. So, it is not by chance that the term “oligarchy” is fully associated with American capitalism and plutocracy as well as with

the Russian autocratic order of imperial hegemony on the borders of the former Stalinist empire—the USSR.⁷

Before we determine what the basic features of oligarchic rule are in Europe and the world today, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between the masses and the emergence of new elites of governance in democratic regimes more precisely. We have already said that the democratic paradox exceeds aporias. This happens when, instead of the principle of equality derived from freedom as groundless (*an-arché*), the rule of knowledge or expertise as the highest value of life, in general, governs over modern democracies. Thus, the notion of knowledge is no longer considered in the sense of the classical republican tradition of distinguishing virtues (*areté*) in the humanistic meaning of the art. This elitist criterion of validation, which was the subject of the philosophy of politics in the 20th century, from Leo Strauss to Hannah Arendt and Allan Bloom, was replaced in the 1970s with the changed function of knowledge and education (Bloom 2012; Paic 2006b, 117-193). Instead of the universality of knowledge with the leading roles played by philosophy, art, linguistics and literature, the new order of the emerging information age requires pragmatism and particularity. The rise of new techno-science created by the introduction of computer technology into the everyday life of the production and consumption of objects is based on the concept of *know-how* practice. If Being becomes information, then the rest of the historical body of Being and being human is determined by communication networks. These changes are of far-reaching significance for the structure of power in contemporaneity. Now the leading categories become “usefulness” and “applicability”. Everything useful should be applied in practice. Semiotics and performative studies in the corpus of cognitive capitalism are spreading, so the speed of change must also have its consequences on the status of knowledge as such. The fundamental sciences have not, of course, disappeared. They are still decisive, but only as technological constructions of the world of new applications. Science is no longer considered from the viewpoint of pure theory. It has the primary technological task of creating the new. And the information model of science essentially reverses the metaphysical order of categories. In a philosophical sense, we are faced with a turn that leads from Wittgenstein’s theory of language games. From the digital age to cybernetics, computing and the pragmatics of knowledge should be the decisive factors of success and advancement in the globally networked economy (Lyotard 1992).

The model of education that emerged in Europe at the beginning of the 21st century corresponds to this cognitive shift from the paradigm of language to the paradigm of the image. While the former places emphasis

on the imagination, in the latter, imagery governs imagology as the template of the “true reality”. The Bologna reform of higher education fits perfectly into the project of the radical transformation of the world from the perspective of understanding to the drive of the pragmatics of meaning. Needless to say, we are faced with a neoliberal model of *rational choice*. Here, science denotes the result of technological advancement in the global network of *know-how* innovations. Depoliticized systems of points (ECTS), competencies and learning outcomes replace the universality of public knowledge with the particularity of corporate knowledge (Munch 2009). The dichotomy of freedom and capital with which every remaining form of the world of life enters the mobilization of “human and natural resources” necessarily leads to contradictions or, better said, to the binary oppositions of “public” and “corporate”. Why avoid the word “private” as the mark of global capitalism? The reason lies in the fact that the corporation appears beyond all of today’s distinctions between private and public in modern world history. Because it goes beyond the distinction between civic society (private interests and non-political forms of human relationships) and political states (life-management institutions in the biopolitical state), corporate governance has a network structure. So, this means that it is deterritorialized/reterritorialized under the imperial sovereignty of the global order. The result should be the total privatization of anything that once belonged to the field of the public or common good. The American “case” of capitalist initiatives in all areas of society, from education to culture and sports, moved and was transmitted to Europe. And so, the space of a common world of civic responsibility for genuine politics in Europe turned into a game of thrones of the oligarchic elites. The cooperation of public banking influences and secret political alliances works flawlessly. It is only in itself clear that, instead of the notion of the traditional conservative elite, here we have an emphasis on the mass mediation of knowledge. The rule of the media and financial brands assumes the changing role of the masses. It is no longer a “revolutionary power” capable of radical changes of society in global capitalism as Marx thought, along with many theoreticians from Pareto to Bourdieu who followed in his footsteps. The masses, on the contrary, have a completely different function in the age of information or cognitive capitalism. Without its new media interactivity, paradoxically, the oligarchy could not take up the place of the substituted structure of governance or pseudo-fiction democracy in the global world. How does that happen? Is it not evident that oligarchy should still be a concept that comprises the inequality and absolute power of the new elites?

Let us go back briefly to the analysis of Jacques Rancière with respect to the issue of distinguishing between the concepts of politics and “police”, of that issue which refers to the process of political subjectivization in conflict with the apparatus of the state and which obviously poses the problems arising from the “democratic oligarchy” regarding the control mechanisms of the technology of power. We have seen in this analysis that paradoxes turn to the aporias. How can a democratic order work at all if there is no “consensus” between politics and the “police” about the essential issues of the state and society? For Rancière, this is not just about conflict and/or consensus right there. This is a ferocious question of great importance. Namely, a corporation has the mission to abolish the essence of the condition of the possibility of politics as such. It is a matter of equality as a political category with which the ideas of contemporary democracy go further or fall into the abyss. So, Rancière is right when he says that the so-called return of “political philosophy” is merely the other side of the suppression of politics into a state of frozenness because what it seeks is to frame the norms and rules on what is happening from this or that philosophical viewpoint, be it Plato’s or Aristotle’s. Finally, this “big return” should always be the doing of one of three policies: *archipolitics*, *parapolitics* and *metapolitics*.

- (1) *Archipolitics* is derived from Plato’s efforts to establish a community (*politeia*) based on an integral manifesting of its *axis* in *logos* as a material form. Individuals in such a community act everywhere so that their place is already predetermined by their position in the political order. The order is decorated strictly with archaic colours. In it, the citizen has his place and function in accordance with the social position. We know that rank is crucial to determining activities. Plato calls them theory (*theoria*), practice (*praxis*) and production (*poiesis*). The first class is that of the philosophers, whose appropriate power and reputation derives from their knowledge of the essence of the world; the second class is all of that which belongs to the action in the narrower and wider political sense; and the third class is that of workers or tradesmen, because they belong to the preservation and care of the material struggle of the community. The *nomos* of the community does not, therefore, allow equality between different social groups. Politics is thus replaced by the hierarchy of the social classes and the exclusive distribution of power. According to Rancière, its metaphysical justification cannot be necessary, but only contingent.

- (2) *Parapolitics* (*para-politique*) denotes the result of Aristotle's intention to bring the egalitarian anarchy of the rule of the people (*demos*) into the constitutional order of the "police". Rancière thinks not only of the repressive apparatus of state power but of a whole range of administrative measures, rules, and norms. That series of measures makes politics the institutional order of representations and dealerships, in other words, an activity that presupposes action to the norm. In that sense, the principle of equality in democratic regimes is at the same time formally protected by laws, but in such a way that laws are in the service of a ruling class or ideology based on the distinction between law and fact, norm and substance. What is parapolitical can be seen in modern theories of the sovereignty of the people, in so-called contractualism or social contract theories. There is no expression of the full equality of citizens in all aspects of this concept, from economic to political and cultural. To that end, parapolitics just looks like the right policy, but in reality it is not, because it does not fulfil its principles and classifies citizens as those who are more deserving than others who are exempt from some form of public recognition, regardless of the reasons for this exclusion.
- (3) *Metapolitics* (*meta-politique*) lies between two oppositions: on the one hand, the parapolitical view of equality in the form of constitutional-legal norms or ideologies of the ruling class, as Marx radically claimed in his critique of political emancipation, and on the other hand, in condemning that which belongs to the area of *archipolitics*. The reason is that the political is a plane or an event beyond the foundations (*an-arché*). And since the foundations are "rotten", or are built on false assumptions, it is only possible to conditionally talk of "the return of politics" to its original definition.

The key term for all three of these concepts of political philosophy, according to Rancière, is the lack of thematization of the concept of universal or absolute equality. It therefore seems that the meta-political event of equality signifies the disposition of all traditionally understood categories of politics from antiquity, the Middle Ages and the New Era to the universality of what goes beyond the modern age as such. Keeping this in mind, it will become clearer why the emergence of an oligarchy in the very heart of the democratic order can be understood as a critique of the liberal understanding of politics. The oligarchy, in fact, presupposes in advance the reduction of a political event on something outside of it. This

is something that has its foundation in itself. It might be a perverted turn to find that all of modernity is marked by losing the political as anarchic. Its transformation into the service of the capitalist economy and technology marks the end of the political in general. For Carl Schmitt, the notions of the “neutralizing and depoliticizing” denote the technical terms of the triumph of liberalism in world history. Accordingly, the oligarchy is not just the mode of corrupt rule in the global order since 1989. Without being compelled by technological advances, the requirements of the new elites for expertise and competence in dealing with complex public policy networks, and without the unlimited power of the financial sector in today’s technological capital, it is impossible to talk about the demise of democracy and the accompanying psychopolitics of neoliberalism in the state of the general indifference towards politics as a whole (Rancière 1995, 93-131; Bosteels 2010, 80-92; Bjung 2014).

There are three ways in which the masses of the modern age appear on the world-historical stage of the ecstasy of corporeality and the mystique of violence. At the same time, ideological-political systems of thought are harnessed into the yoke of the ultimate aim. The difference is that the first two are messianic-apocalyptic, and the third has the features of post-modern nihilism. Inasmuch, the discourse of mass psychology becomes a true bond of liberated corporeality and the cult of violence. The first form of this discursive formation is related to the totalitarian movements of the 20th century: Italian fascism, German Nazism, and Soviet communism. All three are marked by the event of an irreducible contingency because these movements/regimes have been based on the massive support of “the people” as ethnicity, race and class, not as civil *demos*. This support is necessary for the turnover from the spontaneity of the common movement towards the goal—of the total state and the new empire of absolute power—shared by the masses, the charismatic leader, and the party as the embodiment of “modern political religion”. However, the paradox of every mass movement which holds the democratic legitimacy of the quantitative “majority” is that it passes from the state of the immediate movement to the stage of the indirect medieval rule over the masses by the party and the secret police. In any case, the public activity of the constructed enemy becomes a subject of research by the secret police (Gestapo, NKVD, Stasi). The masses in this form of totalitarian rule show what Peter Sloterdijk calls a “reflection of the subjectivism” in his consideration of this phenomenon in the traces of Hegel (Sloterdijk 2000, 12).

That which belongs to the techniques of propaganda manipulation is completely excluded because the masses are not a bunch of idiots. They are aggregates of conscious individuals as subjects of the unconditional

will to power in the form of dictatorship or tyranny. Nothing changes in things that are “drowning” in the crowd. In this way, the organized mass of followers of the new cult of “modern tradition” is created. The masses in totalitarian movements exist as long as there is the madness of the goal, whether or not this is paid for by the collective guilt of invading wars in the name of the nation/race/class or the loss of dignity of warriors without arms and workers without factories. The second way is related to the capitalist “culture industry”. Here, masses no longer serve the leaders and parties as the elite representatives of the “general will”. They are transformed into the *entertainment world* as a spectacle. Liberal democracy does not come down, of course, to any consumer dizziness of a social need for luxury and material alliances. It denotes a culture of late capitalism that was developed much earlier—after the First World War—in the US and Europe by the flourishing of technology and design. But the problem is that the masses in the industrial economy of culture at the same time have only one choice. It ranges between the towers of the economic and political power of the corporation and the caves of the unconscious in the culture of the mass ecstasy of the body. In this way, economy and libido, as Lyotard demonstrated, are linked to the single order of desire in which the system of repression is ideally matched with the depression of life itself (Lyotard 1993). Capital does not seduce the Other with the fetish character of goods. It creates a productive illusion that desire can be realized in an infinite sequence of objects. This *ready-made* ideology ultimately ends with even greater progress in violence, dullness and void. Finally, we might call the third form the post-modern stage in which the masses enter into history. Sloterdijk named it ironically, and completely correctly, disorientation in the very concept of masses as the link between ideology-politics and the psychology of the crowd:

Postmodern mass is mass without potential, the sum of micro-anarchism and singularity, which can barely remember a time in which such a strong collective (...) could still want and have the ability of battlefield history... (Sloterdijk 2000, 18)

However, there is something even more important in this historical genealogy of the concept of the masses at the outset of the modern age. This is undoubtedly its role in a secret agreement with the new and unobtrusive master of the social universe in global capitalism. Mass in the emptiness of the post-modern nihilism truly has no goals, and its methods are clumsy in relation to those used by totalitarian movements. The defeat of the masses in our age comes from its main ally in democratic nihilism. It is no longer a psychopathological narcissist that will become a crazy

dictator such as Hitler or Stalin. Now, we are faced with a turn in the construction of the mass with its loss of orientation at the end of history. Something which is born like a swamp monster has neither a heroic nor an apocalyptic figure of human-more-than-human. The insanity of this new elite stems from the simulacrum and the substitutability of its subjects/actors. The reason is that the oligarchy as the new elite in the societies of the control, as defined by Gilles Deleuze, might be based on the fake, disembodied mass as a virtual social network of users and on the new *know-how* for which special competencies are necessarily needed. Specialized knowledge, the heterogeneity of goals, flexible networks of corporate governance in a global world—these are all concepts that connect the seemingly incompatible. Elites of power today, thus, are no longer the opposites of masses as an object. On the contrary, we have an encounter with a new subject of a network of intertwined interests of transnational corporations and other social actors in the global order. The *credo* of that elite was perfectly embodied by Kevin Spacey in the television series *House of Cards*—absolute power without the ultimate goal, without messianism and apocalypics, governance as *experimentum mundi* of a policy of self-preservation in the pyramid of bare power.

The oligarchy has no foundation in anything other than the democratic nihilism of the world. Shameless wealth acquired by machinations in the legally established framework of financial and political power determines its social position of “exception”. Being at the top of the charts of the richest and most powerful people in the world inevitably presupposes only what comes from the essence of an oligarchic elite. Is it really something other than holding onto power and constantly increasing wealth? The problem is that the oligarchy is not just a defeat of the democratic order of value with equality as a *credo*. The thing might be even worse because the inequality—which defends the interests of the capitalist development of the fittest “predators” of corporations in the global market—can never settle down to the level of tolerable measures of greed and corruption. In the case of the essence of capitalism—visible in that condition which Heidegger has defined by the occurrence and spread of modern *machination* (*Machenschaft*), or, at a later period of his thinking, as *enframing* (*Gestell*), as well as through the terms of *computation*, *planning* and *construction*—anything moves to un-measure and, moreover, things go into total mobilization, as all finally reach out to the highest possible perversion of value. The era of oligarchy has represented, as Jorge-Luis Borges once perfectly said, a new decadent epoch of the *universal history of dishonour*.

4.2 Psycho-technology as control of desire: From economic management to political marketing

In the lectures on biopolitics that he held at the Collège de France in Paris in the late 1970s, Michel Foucault finally made one of the greatest praises of political liberalism in the 20th century. His analysis, of course, did not have an uncritical enthusiasm for this ideological project of freedom at the very core of modern Western civilization, within which capitalism came to the highest peaks of its power. On the contrary, Foucault was active in opposing the basic ideas of two economic schools: the German *Ordoliberal* school of the 1920s to the 1950s and the neoliberal theory of “rational choice” in the allocation of *human capital* in the 1970s. So, he came to the axiomatic political assemblage between left and right at the end of the 20th century. The Left invokes the *New Deal* or the larger role of the disappeared social or welfare state, and the Right demands the *New Management* or corporate governance of the public good as an entrepreneurial achievement based on the principles of *cost-benefit analyses*. The balance of political forces in the framework of liberal democracy proves that ideological struggles are, however, still necessary because of the apparent conflicts with and the formation of the “enemy”. However, they have the sole function of the undisturbed rule of the economy of global capitalism. Instead of ending ideology as post-politics, this consensus at a time of the neoliberal march of capitalism in the world points to a much deeper problem in the current articulation of society, politics and culture. Namely, we should talk about the problem of the construction and surveillance of the very creation of life.

The regulation of life processes within the space of sovereign nation-states by means of new technology represents the peak of biopolitical control. How are we to interpret this seemingly strange epistemological-ethical turn of Foucault’s at the end of his life? How are we to understand that the neo-Marxist theorist of discourse and dispositif finally agreed to the “defeat of utopia” or, in his words, the inability that heterotopias realize a new world of freedom, equality and justice? In this case, we are not interested in an extensive analysis of Foucault’s notions. Something else is much more important. If, in fact, neoliberalism is not old wine in new bottles but something uncannily “new” that is brought forth in the global order of economy, politics and culture, we must ask ourselves why this term is framed in all critical accounts around the realities of capitalism today and why, on the other hand, it compiles in itself the impossibility of any radical change, revolution, or transformation of the “new world order”. There is no doubt that Foucault realized how much this term is, at

the same time, both Manichean and apocalyptic precisely because it ends the era of modernity. In other words, neoliberalism is not just a new ideology for late capitalism with its focus on rationality, the rule of technocracy, and cybernetic control, from which necessarily emerge phenomena of the destruction of democratic rule in favour of oligarchic rule. What comes to the wall of historical time with neoliberalism is the end of meaningful politics, history, and man. Foucault, in the aforementioned lectures on biopolitics, constantly talked about the age of *homo oeconomicus*:

This problem of *homo oeconomicus* and its applicability seems to me to be interesting because I think there are important stakes in the generalization of the grid of *homo oeconomicus* to domains that are not immediately and directly economic. The most important stake is no doubt the problem of the identification of the object of economic analysis with any conduct whatsoever entailing an optimal allocation of scarce resources to alternative ends, which is the most general definition of the object of economic analysis as defined, roughly, by the neo-classical school. But behind this identification of the object of economic analysis with conducts involving an optimal allocation of scarce resources to alternative ends we find the possibility of a generalization of the economic object to any conduct which employs limited means to one end among others. And we reach the point at which maybe the object of economic analysis should be identified with any purposeful conduct which involves, broadly speaking, a strategic choice of means, ways, and instruments: in short, the identification of the object of economic analysis with any rational conduct. (Foucault 2008, 268-269)

If neoliberalism creates a new “culture” of the specific rationality of the subject in the economic relations of late capitalism, and the whole spectrum of relationships between the market and the state takes on the essence of this variable nature of the system that can be influenced by individual actions, then it might be quite comprehensible that what was opened to Foucault was the fundamental problem of the deconstruction of the entire Western tradition of the “philosophy of politics”. Instead of the freedom, equality and justice associated with the French model of governance for the benefit of the common good (*communauté*)—which, from Rousseau to the 20th century led to the strong role of the state in defining what a good life in the community is—a radical turn has occurred. It started in the political economy of the 18th century with physiocrats. In the second half of the 20th century, the “materialistic turn” of the *Chicago school* charted the way to a new definition of man. He is no longer comprehended from the perspective of philosophical anthropology. The rationality of science on the movement of human and inhuman capital

becomes the starting point for the turn. Freedom, equality and justice are not, therefore, devastated in neoliberalism as fundamental ideas and principles of conduct in the liberal democracies of the West. On the contrary, it seems that we are faced with a new attempt to reconstruct them on different grounds. So, Foucault is indeed right when he claims that neoliberalism is not a *revival* of old ideologies of the free market and human rights. Instead, we are confronted with a change in the notion of man as a practical being. What has been missing in the historical context of republicanism and political democracy from the French Revolution to nowadays is a truly “new” neoliberal intervention in economics, politics and culture. Freedom is understood as quite libertarian. Equality, however, only applies to equality before the law and the equality of the conditions of possibilities on the market, which is, after all—as the conservative-liberal Alexis de Tocqueville also regarded—crucial to the survival of American democracy. Justice, on the other hand, is related to the concept of community as the *fairness* of a political community. But ultimate differences, moral positions, and religious worldviews by definition do not lead to rifts in the postulated universality.

Homo oeconomicus, however, in its rational ecstasy of private initiatives, governs all areas of society and the state. In other words, the policy of governance becomes a form of management technology. It combines power and ideology, as it no longer deals with consciousness in society. Total rationalization leads the economy to the top of the pyramid. The modern world represents a hyper-rational system of needs. It is regulated by economic sciences, mathematics, computer science and cybernetics. What Foucault sees in neoliberalism denotes, therefore, not a petty ideology of the privatization of the public with the *triomphe* and delirium of market logic. It is, above all, an introduction into a world without solidarity, without the guarding supervision of the state as the Father/Law. It lacks and misses that which, in the historical part of the French Revolution or the law of modernity, is always in last place, but without it, there is no freedom, equality or justice. Solidarity between people across social roles and figurations of lifestyles has gone irreversibly. The man as *homo oeconomicus* climbed to the throne of one of the new ways of governing and managing life, and everything should be newly re-created in a different way. That is why biopolitics links at the same time what emerged in the early 19th century with the end of man in new-born discourses of work (economics), language (linguistics) and life (biology).

The end of man in the neoliberal axiomatic of power in the global order of government signifies the end of solidarity (friendship, as defined

by Derrida in his analysis of the political by Plato). Finally, in Foucault's lectures at the Collège de France, the (ontological-political) term "solidarity" was replaced by the ethics of the "care of the self" (Foucault 1997). Without entering into a critical reading of late Foucault in the light of the redefinition of ethics in the traces of the late antique Stoa, it is important to say that this turn to the "self" or to oneness of the self is interpreted from the horizon of the hermeneutics of the subject. Of course, it is not a subject like in Kant's notion. With it, as we know, begins modern metaphysics which has distinguished between the transcendental subject in the conditions of the possibility of Being and the empirical world of phenomena. Foucault's subject is decentred and is trying to fulfil the project of the desire or will to power.

But the return of the "care of the self" and the ethics of a differently structured subject implies at the same time a path to the unity of something that was left hanging in the air. Foucault recognizes what is "positive" and "negative" in neoliberalism. The first is progress in individualizing the subject as the bearer of all his will and the will to master the world without a pre-modern idyll of solidarity. The second is what happens when the economy establishes its absolute rule of government as a whole set of discursive governance and governance practices (*gouvernementalité*) (Bröckling, Krasmann and Lemke 2000). Neoliberalism thus denied the possibility of radical changes that could occur in the area of politics as such, with regard to fundamental changes in the assemblage of emotional relationships.

Karl Marx and Gary S. Becker—a critic of the political economy, a revolutionary thinker of modern capitalism, and the paradigmatic theorist of the *Chicago school* who advocated the "rational choice theory" related to *homo oeconomicus*—are comparable in exactly one case. The capital they are contemplating cannot be just human capital if it is not previously in the state of primary inhumanity. And if its concept does not already hold that what determines the progress and development of mankind and something uncanny—that which Marx considered in Hegelian terms as the alienation and establishment of the capitalist order and what Nietzsche named with the term "nihilism"—then there could be no way to reach the human being in terms of rationality (*animal rationale* = *homo oeconomicus*). The end of solidarity signifies the end of society in a classical liberal notion. This is the main problem with the entire debate about the doom of the world of global capitalism. All this was best testified by the main political star of this turn in world politics in 1981, British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, with her controversial statement: *There is no such thing as society*. The place of mediation between the state (politics) and

the individual (the economy) no longer exists. The culprit of this relationship, which has been found primarily in the sphere of sociality since the period of the golden age and early political economy of Adam Smith and David Ricardo, is just being replaced by the rational axiomatic of the new technology of ruling. They are important, but not as a matter of consciousness or manipulation. Whoever holds power manipulates the consciousness. Without power, there is no place for ideology. It is a condition of the possibility of the rule of neoliberalism and of the inability of a radical alternative that will not be in the past of the 20th century, but worthy of what Foucault admitted and inspected in the works of Becker and other representatives of neoliberalism.

Some theorists have tried to supplement or correct Foucault's analyses. But very often they have performed hasty and mute statements. For example, that he allegedly did not sufficiently comprehend—in his notion of biopolitics—the impact of mass media psychology and various newer technologies of propaganda in cognitive capitalism on the rational behaviour of individuals. This criticism neglected the fact of what had already been said at the beginning of his lecture on biopolitics and “governmentality” about the neoliberal definition of man in the works of the aforementioned Gary S. Becker, an American Nobel Prize winner and the key author of the theory of “rational choice”, who successfully combined the economy, demography, sociology and criminology in his investigations (Becker 1975). Foucault did indeed realize how much mass propaganda, as well as the various psychological forms of “training of the will”, affects the mass behaviours of an individual in the mass society of cognitive capitalism. Moreover, with no mass psychology involved in the ideas of management and marketing (economics and psychopolitics), neoliberalism would be an outdated ideology from the imaginary museum of modernity. What is at work here theoretically should be visible exactly from that which Foucault explicitly argues:

Becker says: Basically, economic analysis can perfectly well find its points of anchorage and effectiveness if an individual's conduct answers to the single clause that the conduct in question reacts to reality in a non-random way. That is to say, any conduct which responds systematically to modifications in the variables of the environment, in other words, any conduct, as Becker says, which “accepts reality,” must be susceptible to economic analysis. *Homo oeconomicus* is someone who accepts reality. Rational conduct is any conduct which is sensitive to modifications in the variables of the environment and which responds to this in a non-random way, in a systematic way, and economics can therefore be defined as the science of the systematic nature of responses to environmental variables. This is a colossal definition, which obviously economists are far from

endorsing, but it has a certain interest. It has a practical interest, if you like, inasmuch as if you define the object of economic analysis as the set of systematic responses to the variables of the environment, then you can see the possibility of integrating within economics a set of techniques, those called behavioral techniques, which are currently in fashion in the United States. You find these methods in their purest, most rigorous, strictest or aberrant forms, as you wish, in Skinner, and precisely they do not consist in analyzing the meaning of different kinds of conduct, but simply in seeing how, through mechanisms of reinforcement, a given play of stimuli entail responses whose systematic nature can be observed and on the basis of which other variables of behavior can be introduced. In fact, all these behavioral techniques show how psychology understood in these terms can enter the definition of economics given by Becker. (Foucault 2008, 269-270)

The power of the economy in neoliberal *agendas* becomes a new power of the global neoliberal economy. If we are to understand this whole turn as a structural event of epochal significance for the development of the capitalist mode of production, then we have to conclude that it is no longer possible to speak of the limitation of the notion to the economy as such. Unlike politics, the economy has a foundation in the material care of a man. Nothing happens by blind necessity. Even so, the contemporary economy—which many theoreticians call cognitive, post-modern, information capitalism—no longer relies on physical labour. The foundation, therefore, of the whole process of creating commodity-money-capital—that famous three-dimensional form of the capitalist process of Marx's *Capital*—can no longer be found in so-called physical labour. It was replaced in the 20th century by culture in the broadest sense of the word. Withal, that is a reason why Becker also uses the term *human capital* and American social scientists like Craig Calhoun and the neo-Marxist French theorist Pierre Bourdieu use the term *cultural capital* (Bourdieu 1979, 3-7). In the 21st century, culture enters into all areas of life. It is already a matter of combining science and culture through biogenetic research of the artificial mind and artificial life. That, however, only means that the materiality of the structure of capitalism is largely changed. Immaterial work becomes the basis of a new kind of exploitation. The reason is that the working time now expands indefinitely through subtle methods of penetrating the space of men's intimacy and desire. Computerization accelerated the work process. At the same time, it was perfected by replacing the relationship between man and nature with the relationship between man and machine. The interactivity of that which is inhumane at the highest level of abstraction, the digital economy, becomes a condition of the possibility of all other economic activities.⁸

Indeed, neoliberalism cannot be understood as the “new culture of rationality” without the desire to perfect the spirit of bodily substance. This can particularly be seen today in the various paradigms of post-humanism and transhumanism. The disappearance of man—of which Heidegger and Foucault gave philosophical accounts, and in the field of media discourse, Vilém Flusser and Friedrich Kittler—is happening through an intensified raid of the inhumane in bio-cybernetics and robotics. But the right question is still that which has hindered us from the very beginning of neoliberalism. Why is the disappearance of elemental solidarity in the process of the elevation of corporate capitalism to the throne of the global order happening at the same time as something paradoxical and aporetic: that oligarchies reign instead of democracy, and in the place of equality as one of the fundamental ideas of Western history of politics comes knowledge/power in the form of competence and skills? Let us remember that even Rousseau hyperbolically expressed the rage against the condition in which knowledge of the truth of the world will not be available to everyone by saying that then all the libraries and academies should be preventively burned. If at the same time the disappearance of the concept of “public knowledge” (the universality of the mind) is replaced by privatized “corporate knowledge” (the particularity of information), then the inevitable consequence is the cynical attitude that knowledge is today, above all, a commodity and that higher education is necessary for a specialized information system which initiates the process of creating capital that must be “flexible, fluid and commercialized”.

The consequences are oddly uncanny. Witnesses to this are the frequent conferences, roundtables and lectures on privatization and entrepreneurship within the “autonomous” oasis of the old universities, such as Cambridge and Oxford, where the ideas of necessity arise wherein even socio-humanities should be involved in this process of the joyous apocalypse of the contemporary world. The university, of course, cannot remain immune to the demands for its reformation or adaptation to the so-called reality. But the problem is that the neoliberal concept of society is no longer directed to the market as a “natural necessity” of regulating people’s needs. Instead of the old-fashioned ideas of nature from the time of the Newton paradigm, today we are encountered by the idea of social constructivism, so the market is perceived by the “cultural” features of mediation and contingency. Everything is engineered and mobile, fluid and flexible, including new scientific approaches to nature as chaos and entropy, as it can no longer be perceived as the perpetual and permanent place of sacred necessity.

Neoliberalism, therefore, does not signify a separation of economy and politics. On the contrary, now the economy as the power of techno-politics of global capitalism persistently erases the background of everything that has any connotation in close connection with republican, anarchist, leftist politics of nostalgia for the golden age of consensus on public or shared goods (*communauté, commons*), and it proclaims it—so the paradox could be complete—as “conservative and reactionary” politics.⁹ What other thing is to be considered “progressive” than the faith in the *homo oeconomicus*, which—in the name of the modern fiction of the free subject—assumes upon himself the risk of starting a business. It elevates the idea of private property, capital and banks to the level of the last theological secret of the Holy Trinity in this world. Yes, neoliberalism really does not have any alternative because capitalism has become the only world-historical system—even in the time of Marx—which also means a global-planetary system of the production of life itself. This should be the main formula for the turn of classical liberalism of the golden age to this extremely radical one, a post-human system of rationality and flexibility in the neoliberal worldview of *new management* (economics) and *marketing* (psychopolitics). Combining these concepts in everyday practice leads to capital as an economic value also becoming a question of a new desire policy, a true libidinal policy. The most difficult problem might be that the differences between previously existing autonomous areas are shattered. Among them, politics held the formally highest place. But as Foucault demonstrated by reinterpreting Marx’s critique of the political economy (capitalism), the whole operation of reduction is carried out by acquiring an ideological character of knowledge/power on the processes of production of life. It means only one thing: the economy occupies the life-world in the same way as necessity occupies freedom.

That is a reason why neoliberalism, in its essence, designates a contingent process of overcoming/abolishing all the obstacles that stand in the way of the undisturbed development of the *homo oeconomicus*. Its truth is in overcoming the classical liberal paradigm of the separation of the economy and politics. Instead, it is all replaced by *management-marketing* which represents a new power of capitalism as “the best of all possible worlds”. If the individual achieves his natural potentials and is rationally using them, he may become the subject of his own desires. Auto-reflection of the rationalization process takes place at all levels. The consequences of this process of the development of self-awareness about the nature of social relations in cognitive capitalism can be seen primarily in the changed meaning of the ideology. The truth procedure, the doctrine

as the “new faith”, and the discourse of reflexive power with which the economy enters the darkness of the unconscious are all intended to the loss of distance between the subject and object. Consciousness cannot be endlessly subjugated to the techniques of manipulation that dominated the society of discipline. Now everything is up to how to control the processes of the biogenetic management of the society/state on the basis of new information and communication technologies. Nevermore as today are we witnessing spectacular conferences on the benefits of investment in spaces that, by the conceptual analysis of Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, are already deterritorialized/reterritorialized, ready to be preformed in surplus-value and profit rate (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). This means that they are ready for “progress” and “development” in an industrialized economy on the one hand and for the unscrupulous corruption of the state and all the institutions of what is left of society on the other. All that, along with the addition of increasing impoverishment of the majority of the population in Third World countries and the emergence of the uncanny phenomenon of globalization at large—the urbanistic chaos of *slums*, *favelas*, suburbs—, convincingly bear witness to this assemblage of matters (Davis 2007).

In other words, the political harness of global capitalism appears in the economy as a technology of desire-to-power to rule without limits. The unconditional will to the will, as Heidegger determined the essence of a modern subject, becomes a nihilism at the moment when the subject in its becoming (as the Other) alternates the stability of one system in the balance of chaotic metastability. This is how neoliberalism in its threefold image transforms capital as a subject-substance in the process of becoming the purpose of the entire historical process in consumption and consumer productivity that synthesizes the idea and reality as:

- (1) the libidinal or information economy of objects as signs of changeable reality (*semiosphere*);
- (2) the psychopolitical order of elite rule or *logocracy* in which the equality of *all* is replaced by the competence of *some* and their special knowledge necessary for making decisions (*oligarchy* and *meritocracy*); and
- (3) the transformation of language into the image of a society of spectacle, resulting in the immediate relationship between the user and the subject/actor of the circulation of capital becoming a form of culture in the global information market (*mediasphere*).

Economy, politics and culture in the neoliberal notion become metastable. There are always plenty of events on the edge of chaos. The reason lies in how the global economy functions as a network of fractal relations within a corporately regulated world, whether it is a formally democratic set of values with the protection of private property, the freedom of the press and constitutionally guaranteed human and civil rights, or it is all suspended in an autocratic rule, or perhaps, in the end, there are hybrid systems of governance which oscillate between despotism and tyranny. How are we to grasp the meaning of the concept of metastable balance? It is not a matter of the structural crises of capitalism. Rather than the periodic stagnation in investing and achieving the profits of transnational corporations, given the steady progress of technological research with which capital in its metamorphoses of commodities, through money to capital, raises the total mobilization of human cognitive capacities as *animal rationale*, now the turning point is that chaos and entropy represent a new balance of the system. Is that not paradoxical and aporetic in its effectiveness? Does it mean that the success of neoliberalism in the global order is dependent on an unavoidable alliance of three manifestations in which contingent power is going to exist? These are primarily the development of *technosphere* and its resulting *semiosphere* or the organization of the economy as the management of human desire, and then, the political system on the edge of democracy which, instead of the rule of equality, promotes the plutocratic oligarchy of elites highly customized to dizzying changes in technology and society, and finally that which is the visible result of our information age—the *mediasphere* as a machine for the production of pseudo-realities (so-called fake news). All aspects of the life-world reflect the power of neoliberalism, even where it is not expected at first sight. The concept of the political leader was replaced by the marketing of the leadership of economic gurus, similar to the most popular television fundamentalist preachers in the US. But messianism and apocalypse are moving from heaven to the real world. The spaces of free time, as Adorno and Horkheimer have described, through the activity of “cultural industry”, are completely captivated by *entertainment*. This is, anyway, the ideal model of psychopolitics for the success of neoliberal propaganda. What a contemporary politician must do to be credible is nothing more than a combination of *new age* spirituality and celebrity-figure from sport and show business. Since Ronald Reagan, previously a Hollywood actor, became the US president for two terms (1981-1989), a desirable feature of politicians has dramatically changed from techno-politics to being the star of absolute power. Language has since been replaced by the power of the image.

Metastable balance refers to the changes in the structures and hybrid circuits of power with which the *new management economy* operates. In any case, one thing is undeniable. The oligarchic power of the elite has become almost uniformly distributed throughout the global order, regardless of political differences and cultural values. With the increase in the metastability of the system, “crisis management” achieves more profit. It should be enough to say that in the language of the economic and political logic of neoliberalism, the expression “crisis management” has been established and expanded to many fields of life practices. The meta-language of the information economy penetrated deeply under the skin of the daily lives of all participants in the global-planetary interactions. The victory of neoliberalism over life reaches its peak when the mind becomes the desire for the nothingness and emptiness of Being itself. It is not surprising, therefore, that the phenomenon of the contemporary *new age* as “spiritual turn” becomes the top cynicism of neoliberal psychopolitical tourism: bankers book trips to Tibet as their main destination! To reach the climax of the *geoeconomics* that comes means to conquer the world in the space-time of spiritual-material extasy. The body no longer has limits, just as capital no longer has a physical or corporeal determination. Everything has been moved to the universe and the information implosion of the world. Nothing is no longer “nothing”, as it does not express what it is. Like the main items of complexity theory, emergencies and contingency no longer wonder about the “essence” of things (*quiddittas*) but about the manner of creating something as something (*quoddittas*), so neoliberal global capitalism in its existential structure appears in the form of the metastable realities of life itself. And this life in all its transformations—like Kafka’s insect—reveals itself only from one of a whole set of perspectives. It is the total mobilization of the cognitive economy and the desire to reach the entropy of the omega-point: from nothing through the quantitatively infinite something up to absolute *emptiness*. Let us see how this is done in the spectacular event of economic management and political marketing. Why is the neoliberal culture of radical individualism also the utmost wasteful and un-rational choice if, in its last justification, it reaches for the “political theology” of messianic psychopolitical *leadership*?

David Cameron, the then British Prime Minister, at a Conservative party conference in March 2013 said that the United Kingdom was building itself in the direction of the “aspiration nation”, a country where it would no longer be important to have a deal with prominent officials or relatives with social and national origins, but only to be smart, talented and successful. In short, the new conservative policy of the second decade of the 21st century shows the utopia of early liberalism known in the United

States as “equality of chance”. But unlike these ideological mantras that were, as we have already pointed out, considered by Alexis de Tocqueville to contain opportunities for true democracy but at the same time also hidden dangers of reduced freedom and equality in the consumerist worldview, now all has been displaced in the power of total control of the liberated individual. Moreover, the neo-conservative notion of society, if it can still be called that at all, is determined from the perspective of the success of individuals who in their corporate organizations replenish the welfare state with the idea of the “aspiration nation”. No doubt, this is a matter of the concept of the new meritocracy or the rule of the minority as the elite of the most successful who lead “society” in the direction of domination over world markets. Egalitarianism is critically deconstructed in such a way that it is ideologically reduced to the main culprit of economic backwardness in relation to other competitive spaces of capitalist investment. Meritocracy is not just a synonym for oligarchic rule. It is also its practical result. In this concept, we can see that it combines economic management and political marketing. Its three fundamental principles or conceptual initiators are (1) economic growth, (2) capitalist competition and (3) equality of chance. All three fit in with the neoliberal model of world management as the unification of market logic and the logic of political decision-making (marketization = meritocracy) (Littler 2013, 52-72).

What is a meritocracy? British sociologist Michael Young in his work *The Rise of Meritocracy* as well as the American sociologist Daniel Bell in the seminal book *The Coming of Post-industrial Society* showed that economic, political and cultural assumptions for the transition to a state of individualistic sentiment—in which the desire for success and the motivation of the system of rewards on the market become crucial—are created within the various forms of late capitalism (Young 2004; Bell 1973). Meritocracy is thus becoming a new way of experiencing one’s own initiative and talent in the competitive nature of the capitalist economy. Neoliberalism relies on ideological and cultural discourses such as “social mobility”, “competitive stimulus”, and “singularity of success”. Obviously, this is psychopolitics or marketing of the navigation through social processes based on market success strategies. Contemporary patterns of such marketing are found in various aggressive advertising about one’s own initiative and risk that always brings success. And, of course, success can only be measured quantitatively, by profit and long-term investment in one’s own “creativity”. And this investment means the development of contemporary “creative industries” because mediation in communication has become more important than physical work.

Television shows that stimulate this talent-building competition are based on a new approach to the psychology of a self-conscious individual, such as in *America's Got Talent* or *The Voice*. Their strategy denotes a blend of manipulation with the sense of recognition and commandment of a control mechanism of interaction between the individual and the community. The control of mass audiences or real subjects-objects of the consumer society appears on two levels: economic and psychological. The product or facility of consumption is not just a material object. Much more important is what—in praise of the booming of aesthetics and design in the late 20th century—is written into the very unconscious structure itself. The desire for success must have its correlate in the material character of the entity of high social status as well as in recognition in the social hierarchy. The symbolic capital of the meritocracy signifies its true rule in all the institutions of the global order today. Of course, education must be at the very top. But only that education which is developed today as a standard of success in cognitive capitalism and which contributes to the social power and capital mobility.

In Paul Thomas Anderson's film *Magnolia*—a certain kind of cultural paradigm of America in the 1990s, in which the fragmentation of reality in post-industrial society is “depicted” and “represented” as a negative result of a neoliberal paranoia about the necessity of success, so all the characters in hysteria and a spiritual void suffer from the impossibility of love and happiness with deep anxiety and depression—the differences between the elite and the masses disappear. Meritocracy denotes the psychopolitics of the oligarchy, but its paradox is that it only occurs in a mass society without a real subject. For the first time in world history, the derealization of desire is happening. This occurs as desire propagates itself as an emancipation from repression, both in the libertine social movements of the 1960s and 1970s as well as in psychoanalytically directed Marxism on the trajectory of Lacan. Meritocracy is not just the rule of the educated, smart and talented in the neoliberal *new management* economy, as it is not just the psychopolitics of reaching the ultimate goals of political marketing. This is something that distinguishes culture in its post-modern reality show from the cult of difference and heterogeneity, flexibility, fluidity, hybridity and transformations of identity. Neoliberalism is, in its multiple forms, embodied in the *posthuman condition* without solidarity with the Other, without “social sensitivity”, without compassion for those at the bottom and in the underworld of the global order of inequality. It is by no means paradoxical that the policy of oligarchy and meritocracy—as a post-democratic struggle for the preservation of privileges in the frozen state of elite rule over social classes—is an ethical-legal consensus on the

permanent reforms of the same. The secret of the success of neoliberalism might be determined in that whereby management and marketing do not apply only to the economic strategy of “success” in the global market. Contemporary politics and culture represent corporative governance in which control of the transactions in the market of human capital no longer comes from outside the system. Control has become the category of the rule of the oligarchy as a meritocracy precisely because it deals with the inhumane. It is based on bio-cybernetical code instead of *face-to-face* communication. In other words, neoliberalism does not come down to the economy because it uses econometric methods of measuring everything that is found in politics and culture. Its essence is meta-economic, and politics is reduced to what Rancière called the *parapolitics* of events that are constructed, and in this social construction as the (counter-)revolution of capitalism in the 21st century the end of the event is nowhere on the horizon, which has global-planetary consequences for all visible and invisible subjects/actors.

Neoliberalism is often described as the ideology of the market and private interests as opposed to state intervention. Although it is true that neoliberalism conveys an ideology and a propaganda of its own, it is fundamentally a *new social order* in which the power and income of the upper fractions of the ruling classes – the wealthiest persons – was re-established in the wake of a setback. We denote as ‘finance’ this upper capitalist class and the financial institutions through which its power is enforced. Although the conditions which accounted for the structural crisis were gradually superseded, most of the world economy remained plagued by slow growth and unemployment, and inequality increased tremendously. This was the cost of a successful restoration of the income and wealth of the wealthiest. (Duménil and Lévy 2005, 9)

If we accept Duménil and Lévy’s view of neoliberalism as a *new social order*, then their understanding of society is questionable because it is precisely neoliberalism that destroys the essence of society in the liberal understanding of this notion. Namely, society should not be merely a space for the realization of the selfish motivations of an individual in gaining wealth, but a space of interaction between different individual and collective identities, from trade unions to NGOs, from civil services to the micro-politics of the identities of diverse sex/gender, racial and national minorities. Furthermore, society is not an assemblage of individual interests. Moreover, it is in direct correlation with the type of state within its territorial sovereignty. Michel Foucault rounded up his lectures on biopolitics and the art of governing with the fundamental question of the state that we could formulate by paraphrasing the famous statement by

Margaret Thatcher: *There is no such thing as the state*. If it is no longer obvious what society might be in a neoliberal regime, it seems that where a state works and what kind of state works is even less certain when the fundamental feature of its rule, namely sovereignty over its own territory in its legislative, executive and judicial authorities, is brought into question by entering the global order of nation-states with US hegemony in the shadow of Western civilization (NATO, IMF, World Bank, etc.). The “new world order”, which neoliberalism assigns as the ideological-political apparatus, can only be conditionally equated with the post-imperial form of globalization. The difference is that neoliberalism encompasses all and nothing in the strict theoretical and practical sense of the word: ideology, the economic strategy of the privatization of the public or common good, psychopolitics as marketing, the discourse of power, and the path to new inequalities between the ruling oligarchies in the world.

This *either-or* logic determines the complex of will in the new historical conditions. But the most important thing here is that the “new social order” designates signs of entropy and the edge of chaos. The reason lies in the constant staging of new crises and regional wars between the oligarchic-plutocratic forms of the post-imperial powers and the *rogue states*. These are not wars between nation-states, but rather police interventions in a permanent civil war on a global scale. A society without solidarity and without the internal stability of subjects/actors can only be a “society of control”. It is managed like a corporation. In addition, it might be a limited liability corporation with a temporary lifespan. Therefore, we cannot determine neoliberalism as a “new social order”. Conversely, with neoliberalism, we find ourselves at the end of a modern notion of society. What replaces it might be the world security system as the balance of “networked societies”, in the words of sociologist Manuel Castells (Castells 2000). Their activity is ultimately reduced to interactions in the network of the new communication power of the economy, politics and culture. And precisely because there is no elementary particle of the “new social contract” between meritocratically-understood individuals as *homines oeconomici*, the entire “new world order” seems to be a network full of holes and traces of the rhizome structure of the internal and external terror that pins this network on the nodes of the global crisis on a daily basis.

4.3 Critique of the oligarchy and its boundaries: Mafia as a dark Other of neoliberalism

If we return to the question of why the “rational choice” in the era of neoliberalism becomes the worst form of irrationality, then one of the answers is already contained in the very essence of global capitalism. We see that this adjective of “globality” is the result of recourse: contemporary capitalism based on immaterial work is financial or speculative and not industrial and focused on the production of objects/things. This, of course, does not mean that production has not surpassed all historical epochs. The problem is, however, that the turn of industry into the financial-speculative area of the stock market transactions rests on the “public debt” economy in which the so-called developing countries are immersed. The concept of *development* no longer applies to industry but to the exploitation of immaterial work in the digital economy across all the boundaries of endurance. Exploitation in cognitive capitalism is not speculative, but its consequences are dramatic for the development of normal sociability. It is about conquering leisure time up to the fringes of dreams because digital workers no longer sleep (Crary 2014). They interactively wake over the network in a thrilling innovation race in the ruthless global marketplace.

The consequences, therefore, are not only in the utter tiredness of immaterial work with which the public perception in the corporate viewing space is occupied but in terms of the reduction of free time to the “working space” of quantification. Speculative capitalism, indeed, seems very cruel in its oligarchic world management. The transaction time, namely, becomes the space of networked translocations in real-time, and operations that require new technical skills are giddily accelerated, and, moreover, rationality with no basis in permanent education not only creates the social pressure of a new modernization: society becomes totally insignificant. The only thing that seems crucial might be the power of the technosphere (cybernetics and informatics). Consequently, control and reign over re-investment could not be the result of mere “chance”. Here, any mystic contingency is disposed of. Capitalism in the speculative stage of its own development “necessarily” behaves like an axiomatic machine devastating internal and external environments. The reason is that there is no way to calm it down with any talk of “sustainable development” and ecological firefighting measures to preserve the oasis of nature from the devastation. Whoever calls for a quiet evolution will end like a figure in a catechism of a gentle harlot without any cover and no sense. Deleuze and Guattari clearly carry out what seems to be the fundamental paradox of this “here and now” capitalism based on the neoliberal idea of “rational choice”.

They say that in capitalism everything we imagine is rational, except for capitalism itself (Deleuze and Guattari 1995, 36). The madness has become systematic, and the mind cannot remain innocent in the madhouse. So, what happens when we enter from the stage of industrial development into the era of financial or speculative capitalism should be an inevitable consequence of the destruction of the social relationships of trust and the minimal consensus about ignorance or honesty in this game between banks, states and transnational corporations.

Corruption might be determined only as of the external phenomenon of the degeneration of value in democracies today. A deep destruction of the whole set of social networks of economics, politics, and culture is going on in the coming from the darkness out into the light, in the disclosure of “public secrets”, the discovery of mass paranoia without which this psychopolitical order of democracy could not exist, but so that everything remains the same. Béla Hamvas once said that “what was in the darkness, must leave in the darkness”. The most significant phenomenon of this transition that neoliberal capitalism has witnessed since the 1980s is not in the rational choice of *homo oeconomicus* to be the subject of its own desire for profit, its own corporation and the management of hyper-individualism. On the contrary, the most important phenomenon of oligarchic rule in which the economy defines the boundaries of politics and culture is represented by the transition of capitalism into the condition or social assemblage that Bernard Stiegler calls “mafiaization” (Lemmens 2011, 39). Godfathers and close relatives are no longer in the underworld. They are networked in the power structure of the global order. They are to be found in institutions of financial and political elites. So, they decide on states’ public debt in the face of bankruptcy, on poverty without borders, on life and death at a time of the inhuman control of life itself. The mafia is not somewhere else. It is no longer the Sicilian syndrome, unforgettably shown in the movie trilogy directed by Francis Ford Coppola, *The Godfather*. Instead, the mafia has taken over the mode of functioning of the oligarchy today, because the economy itself requires that in “irrational rationality”, surplus value must be shifted from work to non-work, from industry to culture. The speculative realism of neoliberal capitalism occurs everywhere that we can see architectonic towers, the urban monsters of a corporate architecture that rise to fascinating heights not because there is no longer a space for horizontal expansion, but because power is always a matter of vertical hierarchy, whether it is real or symbolic.

However, it would be inexcusable and wrong to view the speculative or financial power of global capitalism in terms of a conspiracy between neoliberal economics and the politics of subjectivity beyond the law. Far

from it. In authentic attempts at the analysis of globalization and the information age, among which Castells' trilogy surely is, the so-called mafia economy is considered within the scope of what is publicly available when it comes to statistical indicators and other parameters of economic-sociological research. So, in many ways, in numerous studies of neoliberalism in the 21st century, the structural crisis of capitalism in the 1970s has obviously led to the acceleration of the decommissioning of welfare states and the Keynesian equilibrium programmes of the recovery of economic growth, capital and the labour market. But is this transition to the reign of financial capitalism—which generates problems with the democratic order by introducing the principles of competence and expertise instead of equality in “public knowledge”, with the resultant emergence of oligarchy or plutocracy—just the result of the neoliberal direction of the economy and policy as management? The prehistory of crime as entrepreneurship is often at the border of absurdity. In an interesting documentary series by *National Geographic* concerning the rise of the mafia at the heart of the economy of the 20th century, of particular significance is the discovery of a secret deal between the CIA and the Pentagon with the godfathers of the Italian mafia in Chicago and Palermo during the Second World War. The cynicism of this “deal” was that the mobsters had their patriotic feelings about the United States and Italy directed towards the function of breaking down the corporate economy of Italian fascism. Nothing in this achievement was sublimely patriotic, nor was it an unbroken mystery. Fascist totalitarianism was, in principle, “state-oriented” to such an extent that it excluded the mafia clans from Sicily in the redistribution of GDP at the time of the war economy.

What this proves is that the *homo oeconomicus* in the neoliberal system is at the same time a desirable norm for both the state and the mafia, provided that there is an accelerated growth of speculative profit from investments in immaterial work, from the various enterprises with public services and service providers to the media and sports businesses. It should be avoided, therefore, that what belongs to the “financial” sector be announced in advance as parasitic work at the expense of physical labour. Marx saw this as a problem when he considered the covert forms of wage labour in the 19th-century capitalism. Everything related to the mediation activity becomes capital. The condition for this is the creation of new surplus value. Hence, the definition of work in the 20th century has been deployed to different “nomadic” professions. Neoliberalism thus presents a discerning dimension beyond (physical) labour. What creates a new value is, therefore, no longer related solely to the production of objects as

the material form of some item. Immaterial work and its corporate privatization in the entrepreneurial direction of management determines the mainstream of 21st-century capitalism (Duménil and Lévy 2004, 217-219). What is—in this context—going on with the moral values invoked by traditional liberals, conservatives and socialists? Was the mafia not created and did it not bloom in their “golden age” of the industrial economy of the early 20th century? The answer is known in advance. The nostalgia for a compromise between capital, labour, and the welfare state is, however, only mourning for the time about which Peter Handke sings in his poem *Living Without Poetry: When wishing still helped*. In neoliberal capitalism, the desire is a motif of social mobility, economic development and competitive ethics of proprietary individualism. Hence, it is not at all surprising that the *Chicago school* sought to build its programme of neoliberal economics on the new psychological theories of individual motivation as well as on many techniques of the psychology of success, of which Foucault spoke in his lectures on biopolitics. Whoever would try—in the footsteps of Gary S. Becker—to talk about the ethics of “rational choice” would first of all have to prove that he/she had even thought about the relationship between extreme enrichment in the financial sector, managerial commissions, and the poverty that occurs both at the edges of a globalized economy and in its centre. The differences between the classes in the information capitalism of services are even greater. It is not irrelevant to notice here that in the critique of neoliberalism by David Harvey, and also in that by Gérard Duménil and Dominique Lévy, we are faced with attempts to prove the claim that it is primarily a thing about restoring the power of the ruling class by a political project through the total transformation of the Keynesian economy and the democratic consensus of the 1970s in the US and Europe (Harvey 2005). Therefore, poverty in the heart of the rich world of the West was not created overnight. Along with immigrant waves from Africa and Asia affected by civil wars and the structural problems of the global economy, the end of the 20th century has revealed a problem that is present today as being almost insoluble without a radical shift in the constellation of economics, politics and culture in the global order. This is what leads to a contingent relationship between neoliberalism, oligarchy and the mafia. Politics as corporate entrepreneurship in the service of the power of transnational corporations also destroys the essence of democracy and strengthens the rule of corporate elites. The notion of equality breaks under the demands of freedom. It derives the true *homo oeconomicus* by squeezing his ability to acquire material profits and symbolic capital recognition as the driving force behind history. Instead of the balance of power, we find ourselves in

the entropic situation of the chaotic determinism of the world economy. The situation is no longer a “coincidence”. In the creation of dynamic reality, nothing happens without paradoxical bonds of rationality and chaos.

It should be understood that the poverty of many in the world is not just a consequence of increasing the wealth of some. Some have—with neoliberal politics—become the overwhelming minority of the oligarchic elite and many of the poorest have become the majority of the population in the world. Here governs the “law” of reverse proportionality. The main category of “development” appears as a changed dialectical category of contradiction. This is the constellation of the relationships on which power is based on the neoliberal discourse of freedom as equality of chance. Relationships are not a consequence of “natural” conditions of endurance, but a complex game of opposing forces. This is not just talking about the contradiction between capital and labour. Now capital has become the condition for the possibility of work as an information economy. Manual labour does not create new value. On the contrary, accumulated and socialized capital in the form of corporate governance over territory, industry and information decide on political-cultural forms of government. The paradox is, therefore, of neoliberalism—as a conservative revolution at the end of modern history—in that the synthetic unity of the three fundamental ways of articulation of life in general (theory, practice and production) is the result of a general reduction of politics and culture with the effect that the economy has become the new policy and culture. This shift from the means to the purpose, which in the modern age began with the introduction of science in the production of life to neoliberalism, reaches its largest degree of abstraction in life itself. The abstract machine of “body-without-organs”, as it was named by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*, becomes a neoliberal form of global capitalism (Deleuze and Guattari 1983). That is why the kinship between the forms of capitalist rule today in the West and China, for example, is bigger than their political differences. The oligarchy and the mafia formally need the free market and the corporate governance structure. The frameworks of the political system and the cultural differences are important only for the appearance of geographical differences, for what distinguishes the space from the territory to the extent that everything becomes a beneficial zone of “global governance”.

It looks like poverty is rarely seriously theoretically analyzed using the tools of thought close to the *Chicago school* of neoliberalism. By the end of the 20th century, the neo-Marxist French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu had shown that hiding behind the masks of European economic

development is the dangerous tendency of creating masses of the poor in the parallel societies of the West (Bourdieu 2007). Hence, the phantom ethics of neoliberalism assumes only some “private humanitarian consulting” or, in fact, *caritas corp* in concessions until the second coming of Christ. A third also exists, which is precisely what is happening today when the public or common good is corporately privatized, and from the civil revolutions on the squares of liberty, all that is left are memories and the media spectacle of a staged event. If we come back to the definition of the oligarchy in contemporary times, unlike in the age of ancient Greece, we will see what is truly “new”; such is neoliberalism as an event of breaking with the classical liberalism of the so-called natural laws of the market in terms of *laissez-faire*. Namely, the oligarchy in global capitalism cannot be just a new class of super-rich entrepreneurs and politicians in a constant struggle for power. Bare power becomes the only measure of success in the era of the oligarchy. As a criterion for assessing the degree of power on the social scale, it is obvious that it might be a form of motivational training for reaching goals with one’s talents. Economics and its mathematical methods of calculating profits hence appear to be a condition of the possibility of changing political and cultural status. Today’s theoretical analysis of class in the light of the neoliberal economy and politics must necessarily have in mind the data criterion as well as economic analysis in order to explain why class conflicts are no longer directed to the local nation-state territory, but are deployed into the global context of capital and labour conflicts, where the interests of capitalism, of course, are decisive, and therefore the crisis does not strike the wealthy and powerful but impoverishes those who are at the bottom of the social ladder. Moreover, when the term “class” is replaced by “the elite”, it shows a restructuring of the political definition of the notion of power in contemporary societies (Winters 2011).

The problem with the distinction between the original understanding of the oligarchy in Plato and Aristotle and that of our age is that in Greece this term represented a negation of the political dimension of freedom and equality. That is a reason why the oligarchs who condemned Socrates for the corruption of the youth and a conspiracy against the political order in Athens of his age were, in essence, only legal usurpers of democratic rule. The contemporary oligarchy has added value to that which might be a result of the neoliberal (counter-)revolution. The essence of politics and economics refers to the already perceived transition from the logic of industrial labour to immaterial work, which goes from the logic of industrial to cognitive-informational or speculative-financial capitalism. This is the essence of social transformation. From that, a new class is

produced as a technocratic elite in the higher education system and as a legitimate power of the establishment of the principles of economic growth, the privatization of the public or common good, the freedom of the market and the social mobility of capital and labour. In other words, the change does not apply only to the subjects/actors of the economy of neoliberal capitalism, but also to the political initiators of structural reforms. This mantra of today's world economy actually denotes a politically empty phrase. Behind that, the establishment of the total mobilization of all resources is concealed in order to achieve the programme of the neoliberal (counter-)revolution. Reforming the public sector will mean long-term damage through the transformation into the corporate sector of services such as telecommunications and energy, as evidenced by examples in the transitional countries of Eastern Europe. Transnational corporations in that sector receive the largest dividends with increases in the prices of their services. The state appears as a function of the "sovereign" servant of another master. Colonialism, of course, is not as cruel as it was in the 19th century. And so, in its new form, it became a cultural-political form of governmentality. When the mafia is no longer underground, all matters are perverted and paradoxical, even the fact that democratic politics in the era of the oligarchy are reduced to management and marketing rather than to the politics of truth as freedom and equality in the public debate. Corruption as a "necessity" for the functioning of politics in the plutocratic sphere does not apply only to colonized states in the imperial order of government. On the contrary, the fish stinks from the head down. The only difference is that corruption at the centre of the empire is legalized just like prostitution, and at the edges, it has the taste of wildlife and the amoral behaviour of governments and individuals.

Bernard Stiegler in the book *For a New Critique of the Political Economy* suggests that instead of the class-political bourgeoisie or capitalist class with the paradigm of labour and industry, a new notion of neoliberal rule in the global order should be introduced. Since, according to him, the political economy no longer has the same object or effect as in the 19th century—because work and surplus values are deployed into the spheres of the "proletarianization and depopulation" of the immaterial sectors of production and consumption—it is necessary to turn in the direction of a "new critique of the political economy". Firstly, proletarianization is the loss of power in the system of abstract logic of economic activity and obedience to the supervisory model of society, while pauperization is impoverishment on an absolute and relative scale. The bourgeoisie or the capitalist class are replaced by the *mafia*. For Stiegler, the term "mafia" is much more complex. We could say that it

encompasses the understanding of the new elite (without knowledge), the power of technocratic management, and the culture of entrepreneurial barbarism. All this stems from the fact that, for the mafia as “the new bourgeoisie”, forms of the aesthetic taste of the high culture of modernism are no longer important, only fun and luxury in the society of the spectacle. This “new bourgeoisie” was created in the dual process of economic-political trans-individualization: the neoliberal (counter-)revolution in the 1980s and the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the world. It should not be a surprise that Russian oligarchs—traders of oil, gas and weapons—in conjunction with the autocratic policy of the government, where state corporations like *Gazprom* become a deadly weapon of Putin’s blackmail in the geopolitical game with Europe about gas supply, have the features of precisely that derided word for reckless crime. The “mafia” in the epicentre of neoliberal capitalism, as Stiegler analyzes, represents something on the edge and beyond belief in modernity and law as a legal-ideological determinant of power.

Politics is no longer possible without the “mafia” share and its blessing as an area of electoral party marketing, the media formation of events and the culture of “democratic dialogue”. Laws on the prevention of conflicts of interest become a farce, because ownership of the real estate and movable property, as well as ownership in a shareholding without any special difficulties, are transferred to third parties. The tax system, even in the times of socialist governments in Europe—for example, if it comes to the policy of progressive rates that should go hand in hand with the equitable distribution of GDP in the middle and lower classes—, elegantly fits into the neoliberal program with just another sign. Foucault has shown this in his analysis of the economic measures of the German *Ordoliberal*s and the opposing neoliberal *Chicago school*. While the notion of the bourgeoisie—apart from the economic reign and political power of the ruling class of early capitalism—still had what Baudelaire considered to be the core of aesthetic modernity, namely, the cult of the new in the art and the decadent lifestyle derived therefrom, the situation of today can be described as the decline of values down to the arrogance and absurdity of rattle-brained celebrity figures in the media’s craze to elevate banality to the throne of extravagance. The result is the “normalization” of the mafia as populist figures from the life-world. They, however, manage the world economy and decide on the destinies of political elites. Can this surely be consistent with the image of morally neutral mass culture (Harvey 2007)?

One of the main indicators of the degree of corruption in modern democracies is not just the vulgar bribery of the presidents of governments and parties, but the various suspicious donations that come from

foundations and sponsorships of transnational corporations at the very moment of the outbreak of electoral races. The problem of corruption is at the centre of the functioning of the nation-state economy and its legal systems of limited sovereignty. It is the inability to control institutions such as the Federal Reserve in the US, and on an imperial level, the complete helplessness over the transactions of the IMF, the World Bank and the new inventions of neoliberal world politics—agencies created to question the credibility of the measures of the financial policies of states in the new world order that “independently” assess the situation of the public debt and the creditability of potential debtors (*Standard & Poor's*, for example). In addition, of course, there is the emergence of banks that lend credit to corrupt states in a way that they “exude” capital and bring them into a state of debt slavery on the financial markets, to bankruptcy, and to the complete disintegration of their social security systems, pension systems, and healthcare, as shown in the infamous case of *Goldman Sachs* (Stiegler 2010, 60-66). The assumption of neoliberalism as “creative destruction”, which David Harvey demonstrated in his critical analyses of global capitalism from a neo-Marxist perspective, seems to be only a part of the image of a universal paradigm of power over the globe. If the planetary essence of the global order is contained, and this means the primacy of space over time, then it denotes a geographical way of mapping new territories in which capitalism embodies itself and, at the same time, it is the evidence of false universality.

Instead of the civilizing mission of liberalism in Europe and the US from the beginning of the modern age to the 20th century with its programme of *liberties* and property rights for the purpose of the formation of individualism, without which the concept of freedom was empty and political order despotic or tyrannical, in the neoliberal notion, freedom as the condition of human creative adventure is reduced to *freedom of entrepreneurship*. So, that means that liberty is not thought of as an inclination of an event in which the equality of justice gives concrete content. On the contrary, freedom can be characterized by the freedom to be out of state control. Ernst Jünger was right when—in considering the possibilities and necessity of world governance (*Weltstaat*) in the future global-planetary fate of the world—he explicitly viewed the problem of anarchists and liberals who see the state as a threat to their own rebellious privacy and their own right to indifference towards the Other (Jünger 1960, 72-75). The whole problem of neoliberalism today undoubtedly shows that there is no longer a possibility of achieving freedom, equality and justice without what was once called “fraternity” or “friendship”, and which today is called “solidarity” between equals. During the modern

history of the conflict between capitalism and democracy (economy and politics), the attempt was made to think of the notion of solidarity as the communicative rationality of actors within civil society or as a relationship between equals within the structural division of society into classes and layers. Solidarity, therefore, was something just like an ethical imperative, but without the legal power of action. This “as if” appeal for the universality of freedom, equality and justice is impossible without the following: (1) radical changes in the economic conditions of the functioning of capitalism as the dominant model of the social distribution of wealth; (2) the political transformation of society from the state of elite or representative democracy into participatory or deliberative democracy; and (3) the cultural subversion of the political concept in the area of what Rancière calls “the police” in a democratic order of aesthetically understood politics as a communion in the upcoming state of equality (Marchart 2011, 129-147). We should notice how the turn of traditional terms in the historical context necessarily leads to the critique of the neoliberal (counter-)revolution. But ideologically, it is reduced to the “withdrawal of the political” or to the notion of the “end of ideology”. This was extraordinarily handed down by Margaret Thatcher in the slogan of her Conservative Party: *There is no alternative*. There are three fundamental pillars on this radical path where there is no alternative—*free markets, free trade and capitalist globalization*. Solidarity eventually falls to the moral-political issue of the actions of those who have been expelled from this cruel game because they have not risen to the risk of entrepreneurship or are simply collateral victims of the “new world order”.

Is it justified to use the term “mafia” for what constitutes a new class-social basis of neoliberal rule in global power? Is that not a rather heavy moral qualification, or somewhat Marxist rhetoric in an attempt to connote the discourse of history as the history of class struggles—as Marx claimed in the *Communist Manifesto*—in the revised sense of the word and by other means? In everyday jargon, the term “mafia” is used for the impossibility of achieving equality and justice in ensuring the survival of public goods or *communauté*. The disappearance of the values of trust in the democratic institutions of the state due to the growing corruption of the justice system, the police, the army, the church, and the university leads to the disintegration of the moral and political consensus, which creates an atmosphere suitable for the mafia’s anti-politics of organized crime. The weakness of such countries in the new world order—such as Mexico and Colombia—is inversely proportional to their economic potential. The greater the power of the mafia in controlling illegal drug trafficking, the lesser is the capacity to legally manage natural and human resources. The

mafia cannot be defined as a “state within the state”, but as a silent partner in the dual economy and the policy of oligarchic world governance. Examples are numerous, from the Russian mafia and the oligarchs up to potentially the most notorious mafia in the 21st century, the Chinese one, with which all the paradoxes and aporias of global capitalism come to light. The reason for that is that its sources are not just in the neoliberal economy that creates new markets. It is like a deep-rooted virus found in the network of political ideologies of Maoism and the management of the hybrid oligarchy. The Confucian ethos of loyalty to the state as a corporation and the neoliberal strategy of conquering the markets around the world carry within themselves the possibilities of transformation into one another and vice versa. China has no dialectics of history. But does it have a history of dialectical jumps and transgressive cultures as a tradition left behind by the cult of origin and the enticement of authenticity? Its entry to the stage of the global economy and politics in the 21st century obviously confirms the assumption of Harvey and Arrighi, for example, that strong economic growth can develop with the autocratic rule of political order in a blend of speculative-financial and hard (industrial) capitalism (Arrighi 2007).

Just as when Marx marked the bourgeoisie or capitalist classes and proletarians as the “character masks” of the ruling ideology, which presupposes the binary oppositions of the masters and servants of Hegel’s dialectics in the possibility of historical development, so in the speculative-financial type of global capitalism, we are not dealing with persistent actors. Everything is changeable and temporary. A “mafia” can only be marked as an abstract field of rule. In place of the public advocates, the secrecy of corporate capitalism does not lie only in the privatization of common goods. Crime and deceptions are not the extremes of the moral values of socially acceptable or amoral behaviour. Whoever wants to talk about neoliberal capitalism without the oligarchy and mafia, then, believes in its own illusions concerning the power of innocent economic and political rule. There are two groups of neoliberal actors, theoretical designers and practitioners, those who are generally referred to by this overwhelming term of amorality and the criminal network of interests. The first—the so-called *Chicago Boys*—have been inspired by the ideas of Milton Friedman. In cooperation with the Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet, a criminal and co-leader of the oligarchic-autocratic system in the world in 1971 after the collapse of the socialist leader and democratically elected President of Chile, Salvador Allende, this group made the first radical experiment of the privatization of the public sector with the undisturbed exploitation of all resources in the name

of economic growth. The neoliberal transformation of the economy and politics at the time of Pinochet, with all the consequences of this turn, shows the outrageous and criminal point of this narrative. In the place of the freedom and human rights with which liberal democracy parades the world, Pinochet's military coup with the CIA and the Pentagon against Allende was a paradigmatic political coup on democracy with a formal "democratic" defence of the fundamental values of liberal capitalism. The beginning was marked with the bloody terror of the military elite towards their own people. Concerning a possible scenario of the end, it is better to remain silent, because the *endless apocalypse*, as Derrida called it, turns the world from a project to the projectile (Derrida 1984). Another case is the use of the word "mafia" in its association with Indonesia. There were numerous reformers of the public administration and of the competitiveness of the economic system at work in the global market, but in such a way that the creators of new economic and other public policies were in the service of the bloody dictator Suharto and his autocratic order of the restriction of human rights. All of the "creative devils" in Indonesia in the 1960s had studied at Berkeley University in the US. They are therefore considered to be the precursors of neoliberalism in developing countries. Anyway, there are substantial uncertainties and ambiguities in the close connection between oligarchy and the mafia as, of course, the theoretical indentedness of the notion of neoliberalism has sometimes represented more than a complex theoretical problem.

Is all this a sufficient reason for dispensing with those notions as an aid for an explanation of the paradox and aporias of global capitalism? Not at all. The fundamental feature of the globality-planetary world as a process of the "progress" and "development" of capitalism is that we do not rest on anything fixed and durable. "All that is solid melts into air" is written in Marx and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, a political document in which capitalism is praised as a "progressive" stage in the development of world history for releasing man from slavery, from the political forms of antiquity and medieval feudalism, and which shows the epochal boundaries of systems of mass impoverishment and the exploitation of the working class (Marx and Engels 1972). Modernity is, then, a still not-yet-complete mobilization of all resources, because it is missing a metamorphosis of labour from the physical to the immaterial, and that of social Being into information and communication technology. The new power with which modern capitalism will give rise to the synthesis of the subject and the object of history rests in that context. If nothing is fixed and constant, as was the essence of Being in traditional metaphysics, thought of from the standpoint of eternity and immutability as "nature" and as "law", then we

find ourselves in a period of *becoming*, *fluidity* and *complexity*. Now contingency replaces the necessity of cybernetic systems, and the environment becomes a term that suppresses the “law” into the background. All the concepts that emerged from the neoliberal (counter-)revolution are hybrid concepts from new scientific disciplines: information science, linguistics and biology. Information, language, and life represent concepts that are in harmony with the trinity of modern-day categories of technical thinking. These are *computing*, *planning* and *construction*. However, neoliberalism is an abstract machine of capitalist “prosperity” and “development”, as Foucault best described in his lectures on biopolitics and Deleuze in his sketch of *societies of control*, so the relations between oligarchy and the mafia are the relations of an indefinite contingency of events. However, this only means there is no more reason to talk about the causality between one and the Other. Instead, there are complex mechanisms of overlapping interests, the interdependence of financial resources and capital and political crime, the irreducibility of education, and new competencies in nepotism and cleptocracy. But... it is true, we live in oligarchic regimes instead of democracies. It might be the most amazing thing that the one is not in opposition to the other, but rather it is its negative supplement or substitute.

In the history of the articulation of the concept, oligarchy, ever since Aristotle, has had an added “quality”. It is not just the rule of the elite over society. Above all, it is the political mode of the subjugation of the multitude as people (*laos* and *ethnos*). But when people in the democratic order emerge as subjects of political *demos*, then we are faced with a direct threat from the “inside”. The emergence of an oligarchy must have in itself a double tie between power in the political sense of the word (the rule) and wealth acquired by deception, machinations and robbery. What is evident in the contemporary meaning of the word “oligarchy” is that by its rise to the throne of power, the democratic order of values is destroyed. We have already seen that political philosophers and theoreticians of the *political* have attempted to think about that turn with terms that go beyond politics, or are directed towards determining what is at stake in an archaic rebellion of the very political against the institutional order of the rule (the “police”), as is consistently carried out in Rancière’s theory of politics.

Conclusion

Overall, the arrival of the oligarchy in the space of democratic debate with the dark shadow of the *Other* in neoliberalism—the mafia—indicates that the rule of the political nation at the time of the end of the sovereignty of

the nation-state has become an incredible narrative. Instead of the non-existent political people, as is the case with the European Union, the rule of the oligarchy has the features of the balance of left and right forces in and outside parliament in that which is still a part of the civil society, but is increasingly losing the spontaneity and creative resistance of micro-political subjects/actors. In parallel societies—with the hegemony of recognized political citizens and those who exist as an unrecognized immigrant population on the edges of economics and politics as “*stateless people*” or “*sans papiers*”—cultural conflicts are waged not only over the “empty centre of power”. There is even more talk about the recognition of collective identity (Agamben 1998). The issue of the political credibility of the European Union must, therefore, be opened up in the forthcoming period as a question of two types of citizenship insofar as Europe does not want to remain utopian without cover and wishes to survive in the face of nationalism and chauvinism. This issue of political credibility as a question of two types of citizenship is presented through

- (1) transnational citizenship, and
- (2) a political nation with the limits of existing national states with the aim of preserving its cultural identity and elevating itself to the still non-existent European cosmopolitan perspective (Archibugi 2003, 1-15).

If neither exist in reality, or collapse into mere ideas, then the paradoxical cynicism of the Enlightenment Project of Europe is that only the oligarchic elites are transnational and at the same time represent their own cultural tradition, while the mafia is “universal” because it is globally networking faster than unions, the NGO sector, and subversive counter-cultures. This might be nothing unexpected. The logic of capital in the information age consists of the fact that globality in the conquest of the market requires all the qualities that the neoliberal project of transformation of the economy and politics initially enrolled into its own code: competitiveness, rationality, expertise, entrepreneurship, investing in “human capital”, and social mobility. Transnational elites are therefore networking because it is no longer possible to rule a state and a society without sovereignty if there is no connection to the world markets and corporate governance based on the transformation of politics into management and marketing. The problem with democratic forms of government is that they are limited to the locality and sovereign power of citizens within the territorially fixed state. The public debate always runs in its backyard, although there are great opportunities for communication in the digital age. Cybernetic democracy

(online forums, petitions, the interactivity of participants in the process of participating in politics) is, however, the merely symbolic capital of participation and is not crucial for reaching the turning point. In the “new world order”, which is nothing more than a way against the imperial policy in the framework of the rule of oligarchy with democratic legitimacy, the hardest of the social consequences of this networking in the global-planetary framework is the growing phenomenon of waves of illegal migration from Africa to the countries of the European Union and of Latin American populations from Mexico, Puerto Rico, Panama and the USA. But neoliberalism and its economy of the global growth of financial capital just create moral panic about the scourge of illegal migration. The concentration of power in imperial centres requires mass unemployment. To put it more precisely, opening a multitude of temporary jobs replaced the Keynesian programme of full employment. The result of this process can be named by the term *precariousness* (Standing 2014).

The vast majority of the unemployed are highly educated people. And since the real sector of the economy frees itself from progressive taxes in favour of new entrepreneurial projects, the shift in capital simultaneously signifies the shift of the temporary workforce in the global move towards the source of temporary jobs. Everything becomes temporary because mobility and innovation are the cornerstones of social development. The problem is only that such a dynamic model of development works without society and solidarity. Finally, the idea of the family breaks up. A contemporary man is, finally, “tired of himself”, to follow Alain Ehrenberg’s definition of depression. In the end, the whole of life comes down to the pursuit of success (Ehrenberg 1998). The Stoic ideal of happiness breaks before this imperative of utility. What else is there but the *self-help* industry of temporary catharsis and long-term “work on oneself”. If something with neoliberalism finally reached the culmination of self-reflection, then it is a series of practices of the management of an entirely dispersed and abandoned subject.

The outcome of the contemporary era of oligarchy is no longer a problem with the concentration of economic-political power in the elite’s hands. The real problem is that the elites are multiplying in the networks of global capitalism. Equally, they do not just define perverted forms of democracy without a subject (the political nation). In grey zones of governance in the global order, the *same* with minimal cultural differences reigns. Oligarchic power is constructed from the power of financial capitalism. By geometric progression, this power is spreading and imploding in completely different junctions of the network. The rationality of elections becomes an excuse for the inability to truly choose the

alternatives between democracy and tyranny. When the alternative falls to a non-alternative within one and the same mode of world economy management and the various political orders from plutocracy to autocratic tyranny, the possibilities of change are exhausted. For this reason, once again in the neoliberal sense, there is only talk of structural reforms, while the notion of “change” means nothing but a change in the supreme power of electoral political marketing. The enchanted circle of oligarchies does not end in political revolutions. Quite the contrary, only after their triumph does “the day after” follow, in all its banality and routine of everyday life. And “we” (as “us”) as rational subjects of the economy of desire no longer control it. Instead of “us” being in charge, it is the rules of a game in which the oligarchy is not born from the human-super-human desire or the will to power. Its truth inside the “societies of control” became the transformation of the desire itself into capital as power without limits. On that last line, there is a line on the horizon, but the horizon is obscured. And behind it, there is only the complete darkness of global-planetary nihilism.

The future may not, however, “belong to the Corporal”. But when psychopathic machines of the power of an elite without dignity emerge instead of them, there is nothing left to do except the new opprobrious history. An alternative exists. It is in the event of the upcoming community of the absolute politics of equality as a system of universal freedom and justice. To it belongs our confidence and our struggle for the fulfilment of the meaning of life.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CORPORATION AND TIME: ON THE CONTINGENT OBJECT OF DESIRE

In the eighteenth century, it was often convenient to regard man as a clockwork automaton. In the nineteenth century, with Newtonian physics pretty well assimilated and a lot of work in thermodynamics going on, man was looked on as a heat engine, about 40 percent efficient. Now in the twentieth century, with nuclear and subatomic physics a going thing, man had become something which absorbs x-rays, gamma rays and neutrons.

—Thomas Pynchon, *V*.

Introduction

I would like to introduce here the key remarks regarding the relationship between the basic notion of contemporary economy-politics-culture and time. As a matter of fact, that assemblage seems to be quite uncanny, unlike the previous idyll of metaphysics as a long-standing period of peace and harmony. So, we are faced with three starting points. The first determines the acceleration of the assemblage of the digital age, which we could call by the name of the *technosphere*. In this assemblage of inputs, there is technoscience, information and communication technologies, and new media. The second point is related to the *biosphere* changes, and this includes body, animal and human life organization in the cybernetic model of the ecosystem and the environment. Contemporary capitalism, moreover, also passes through a third point. Let us call it the *mediasphere*. This term refers to the increasing role of media-constructed reality in everyday life. From technological gadgets to computer machines, the landscape of post-industrial societies is represented as visual archipelago network. All of that, in fact, cannot be understood exactly without the deconstruction of metaphysical grounds of history. As an integrated way of establishing relations in our complex social lives, in areas where the technosphere, biosphere and mediasphere overlap, we can see what is happening to the global order today: the constant deployment of the landscape leaves traces of its monumental architectural power. When, on 11th September 2001, the terrorist network of Islamic fundamentalists

called al-Qaeda destroyed the World Trade Center in New York, it became clear that the attack was directed at the corporate symbols of capitalism: the US and the West. What defines the essence of capitalism and why the notion of corporation—still known from Hegel’s idea of state law and economics, and from Marx’s critique of the political economy, if we were to leave out the fascist model of the total corporate state of the 1920s—emerges as a newness in the incarnation of that which is uncannily inhumane is information. We can find a literary image of the total power of uncanny governance in Kafka’s works as well as in the books of his contemporary successor—Thomas Pynchon.

What happens when a corporation instead of the subject of the sovereignty of a modern nation-state assumes in its hands the power to manage a global order as a network? If capital primarily denotes a social relationship and not the thing as such, then a corporation is represented as a “litter” and a “jade” of capital. The topology of power lies in the process of networking data. Now it does not just define the way of production and consumption of goods. Indeed, from a corporation’s origins, the way in which two dimensions of time come to us, the authentic and vulgar, the space of freedom and the space of non-liberty, is always in its own right. The question of the relationship between corporation and time might be the question of what makes this relationship possible in all modes of the world’s transformation today. Why is the network in the information society age controlled by the very concept that determines the space and time of capitalism? The corporation, though, is not rooted in real space. This means that capital should not be incorporated in the real-time of free production. Already, in the difference between living or concrete work and non-living or abstract labour, we are faced with a dichotomy. The possibilities of the transformation of place and time into the network of timelessness and spaces that the sociologist Manuel Castells called—in close connection with Deleuze—the fluid flow of capital (Castells 2000) shows us that there is nothing more in the corporate structure of the world than meaningless signs, matter without substance, architecture with no fixed construction, and product designs without artefacts. The problem we encounter today in the total void and nihilism of the world of information capitalism is what Lyotard named the fatal border of the libidinal economy. It is a “surplus” of values in the form of a desire to power or will for a will. This last station of power goes beyond the limits of humanity and its freedom. Capital-like desire becomes an empty place of power. At this turning point—in all possible transformations—comes the only thing that restores this power in the circulation of infinite movement with the increase of acceleration as well as the increasing intensity of

power. The credit system and the stock market allow the game to be borrowed or lost, or, in the case of investments and gains based on the new value of the budget, advanced and developed.

The last stage of capitalism, as well as the world and the order of things in networked environments, we call by the name “the corporation”. The disembodiment of life itself, which is organized in the communities of tribes across modern society and states, the corporation rises in the form of world management as the rule of capital and the environment. In the dystopic novels of Thomas Pynchon, the notion of the corporation has the meaning of real mysticism. It legitimately manages the processes of controlling natural and human resources whose total control of what is contingent, upcoming and unpredictable occurs within a network of corporate governance. From the chaos comes the emergence of time as the birth of a new life. What determines the spirit of the corporation is not, therefore, the economy and not even the politics of the contemporary era. Between the work and the action, the care and the actions of the change of the social relations are established as something very definite and non-permanent. Like the mucus from the “nature” of the alien in the SF-dystopian film *Alien*, the corporation no longer has a human structure of production process management, distribution, exchange, and consumption. The machine itself in its meta-medial determination of automation and digitization manages computer-based life—it generates a cycle of processes in the form of capital. The corporation designates, therefore, a negative theology of capitalism and its apocalypse with no apocalypse. The capital of the corporate network information becomes Hegel’s absolute science of spirit, and Marx’s science of absolute labour. Vices appear as a ghostly place of events that change into an infinite name sequence according to the logic of action of economic (natural) “laws” and political (social) “actions”. Everything happens rationally-irrationally, in binary code, in the equilibrium of bipolar forces wherein each has its own ideology and practice, but which are only functions of the apparatus of power. The essence of a corporation corresponds to the end of metaphysics in cybernetics. History therefore no longer has a purpose, goal, or plan. Only mutations and transformations of stability in the change of matters remain. Where else should we place the “critique of the political economy” if capital in the corporate structure of networks of social relations has become the *matter for itself*, emptiness and nullness in the aesthetic form of information? Does the deconstruction of the economy as the *technosphere* replace criticism of the science-ideology of capitalism in its total and violent mobilization of all sources of nature and of what is still left of the human? The question, of course, may assume that alternatives,

such as the critique (Marx) or the deconstruction (Derrida) of capital from the horizons of the political economy today, are necessary for the notion of the world's stability to be changed, but are not a sufficient reason for the "revolution" of this or that world. Let us see why things are going in precisely that direction.

5.1 Non-live conditions: the information market

It is often said that the event of the *reality show* emerged "accidentally" in 1992. Then, the American conceptual artist June Huston installed a webcam in her apartment to perform the visualization of the real in its absolute. Her story was shaped as a combination of horror and banality; she was haunted by ghosts inhabiting the space of her apartment. Only cameras can catch the rays of the materialization of "evil" as they emerge from the abyss of American mass culture. Due to this, the world becomes an interactive spectacle of narcissism and hysteria in a pure form of capital. In the mirror of this "event", Paul Virilio notes that total control of the world at the time of universal chrono-politics represented a step in the direction of creating a new concept of the market (Virilio 2000, 58-68). Namely, the market in the traditional liberal ideology of a free enterprise has been found in the place of "the central denominator" of capitalism. It is, of course, a free public or common space which involves the exchange of private goods for the equivalent value of the goods transported into the new acquisition. The logic of the matter from the beginning of capitalism was, therefore, in many ways so absurd and yet, at the same time, the only one possible. The public or common good within the already privatized space of the economy denotes a condition of the (political) economy from its early stage to its late stage. The market as a medium responds to the illusion of uncontrolled freedom. Hence, the reason for this could be that the ideas of the marketplace are mediating, medium, instrumental. If there is no longer any difference between private and public—as a result of the interactive spectacle of a search for the spectres in the world—what is left?

The etymology of the *market*, for example, is not entirely identical in many European languages with the English word *market*. In the Croatian language, for instance, the market designates a meeting space in a public square. Since the Middle Ages, the market in Western European societies has meant the creation of a modern city around monastery walls. Rising from the shell of feudal history, presumably, the emergence of urban autonomy is in close connection with its accompanying *liberties*. Therefore, the market has a progressive function of transforming sovereignty from the position of the unity of the Emperor/King and

religious leaders into a secular or profane form of the community. Its foundation is independent of the demands of any ideology. This is, of course, the economy. But what is the economy in the modern sense of the word? All translations of the Greek term *oikos nomos* into modern European languages do not correspond to the original meaning. While in Greece the economy is linked to the autarchic management of the community, the modern economy establishes a new way of the social organization of the relationship between people in the direction of greater mediation. This means that the market must necessarily be on a higher level of mediation between actors than it was in the earlier historical epochs of the ancient and medieval economies. The immediacy of the relationship to the country in the form of the common ownership of the patriarchal family (the static model of the community) disappears in favour of the private equity of the family. It does, however, still have patriarchal features, but changes are reflected in the fact that the conception of individualism in the West leads to the liberation of women. Of course, this liberation is just a shift from the household economy to the economy of industrial work: one problem of survival is replaced by another condition of existential security. The dynamic model of the community in the West is created by emancipating the economy from theology (Agamben 2010). What Hegel and Marx have shown in their analysis of the emergence of civil society and individualism in the West is that they are primarily related to the close relationship between the increasingly mediating, abstraction and regulation of market needs in the complex societies of the capitalist economy. This raises awareness of freedom as a condition of the ability of capital to adhere to local, regional and national boundaries. Without these two variables, economics and individualism, there is no possibility of ruling in the modern Western era. Therefore, the German term *Wirtschaft* for economics and the English word *enterprise* no longer have any contact with an autarchy of a closed community that exchanges natural forms of commodity goods.

Surplus value and entrepreneurship cannot be realized within the boundaries of the closed society. Agency work, therefore, must have a new form. Capital needs an unconditional guarantee of carefree movement inside and beyond the borders of the modern nation-state. It can, therefore, be said that capitalism might be a political-economic way of producing life as a social way of survival in the modern framework of human history. Liberalism, hence, is not just a modern ideology of the entrepreneurship of freedom and the private ownership of a person as the foundation of individualism, but a valid form of a viable “spirit of the age”. It has embedded itself in the history of Western civilization as a path to the

contingency of human freedom. Whoever wants to destroy it, destroys the legacy of the modern understanding of mankind. The secular moment of the seriousness of space for the freedom of repentance is a substitute for the idea that Christianity attributed to God's mind during the Middle Ages. Equal opportunities, the freedom of the person and the right to participate in the political community without any "natural" limitations are the results of the secularization of Christianity in the new era in Europe and America (Siedentop 2014). The market in European cultures—the Italian, French and German ones, in particular—is equated with the communal square. A public space of interaction is created around it. But in English, the *market* indicates something new and radically different. This, however, can be almost identical to the new freedoms of trade guaranteed by law in the free royal cities of Germany (Hanseatic regulations), but also significantly different. The *market* in its original meaning denotes a sign for trade, exchange, a mutual process of material relationship mediated by things as commodities. Using it comes down to the selling and buying of goods of different kinds and origins. The *market economy* is paradoxically established as a core of a global economy only when transnational corporations destroy the idea of society as a place for the social interaction of labour and capital. This is decisive. The corporation, in fact, cannot be defined as a bounded body under the rule of a Leviathan nation-state. It is nonsense within the limited space of territorial sovereignty. So, global *corporations* and *camps* are represented as two inescapable institutions of the post-national framework of imperial sovereignty. There are many proofs which have legitimized that assemblage of ideas and concepts in the transition from modernity to contemporary fluidness and contingency. The former term (*corporation*) rests on the idea of economic governance in the world, and the latter (*camp*) in the awkward state of the political suspension of civil rights in the name of the guarantee of imperial order from the terrorist threat of the globally created "enemies" (Agamben 2005).

The logic of the very thing is in the complex balance of politics and economics. Hence, the corporation represents the world's management space as a market. As in the cybernetic idea of a network within an entropically structured complex environment, economics must spread from the system to the environment by occupying new areas of influence. Conquering the environment means that the system of political regulation "rationally" regulates the right of ownership of a foreign country. Either the foreign country is violently occupied due to wars for the country's resources (oil, gas, water), or violence against a foreign country might be ideologically represented, for example, as a civilizing mission of capital

and as its natural right to enlighten the savages. In both cases—and as Deleuze and Guattari described in their analysis of capitalism as an abstract machine of progress called deterritorialization and reterritorialization—the utopia of capitalism stems from its original mission of conquering a country. Let us remember that in English, the word “utopia” refers to what is now-here and nowhere (Deleuze and Guattari 1996). Power always works in binary oppositions. But at the same time, it goes beyond the dialectical game of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis. Instead of the “sacred trinity” of the real economy—in the politics of the symbolic and the imaginary culture—we encounter a dual pattern of action of new techno-scientific and technological power. Conquering a country means colonizing the Other. The first extermination is followed in the process by violent integration in the name of *difference and tolerance*, and we can see that this process represents only a continuation of colonization. The market appears as a means-purpose of the process of the deterritorialisation and reterritorialization of the *technosphere* itself. Without this, the economy cannot have all of its “autonomy”, and politics fails to maintain the structures of oligarchical power, irrespective of its ideological alignment on the left or right. The point is that neoliberalism under the idea of a *market economy* does not only include the autonomy of the economic sphere in the face of political and cultural autonomy. On the contrary, politics and culture (state and social values) are now the service activities of a corporately-established management form of the production and reproduction of life at large. This applies not only to the state but also to the primary matrices of disrupted sociality such as the family and the fragmented individual. In addition, the liberation of the “potential” of human individualism in the *market economy* paradigm is nothing other than the activity of reduction and suspension as the policy of regulating social relations outside of economics as well as a culture like a set of social values beyond the economy. Finally, the question remains as to who the subject of that operation is. The answer should be obvious: both politics and the economy of neoliberalism serve only the uncanny power of capital. But the problem is that capital in its two forms, immutable (earth and technology) and changeable (man as a labour force), determines the rule of the post-human condition. It changes invariably, and not *vice versa*. *Technoscience is revolutionary because it is a new productive force, and societal relationships are “shaken” because work in the physical form is replaced by robotics and artificial bodies/minds.*

As everything today appears to be under the sign of marketing, we are seeing the disappearance of the difference between the meaning of the word and what comes when the process of loss of meaning goes beyond

the limits of the visual semiotics of capitalism entirely. The market in times of the monetary implosion of cognitive capitalism not only witnessed the visible public or common space of exchange. It was also moved and deployed from the public or shared space to the virtual world. Total transactions and meta-actions of event control are even more present despite the absolutely free movement of capital. In this way, the whole global capitalist order can be described in the same way as the American conceptual artist explained the meaning of what she actually “did” in her apartment with digital cameras. Since the cameras are on 24 hours a day—they record the so-called real life of the artist and her “ghosts”—they control not only the objects perceived as a webcam but also entities like interactive voyeurs watching and commenting on it. As series of events without interruption had already existed between actors and networks, so market information becomes the *reality show* of the economy of life. The whole drama of searching for the materialization of “spectres” should be proof that capitalism designates a paranoid-psychedelic event of life. It might be overlaid by fears of losing a relationship with reality with the desire to construct reality as a material illusion of events. Hence, it seems that overlapping the fear of the Other, which it does not really have, with the desire to create the illusion of wealth actually brings the idea of value to the limits of performance. Jean-François Lyotard in his early work entitled *Libidinal Economy* opened a Pandora’s box of concepts of contemporary capitalism with its historical development in the late stages of the *technosphere*. Marx and Freud (work and desire) are pushed to the fringes of historical dialectics in general (Lyotard 1993). So, desire can be subversive only if the order is established so perfectly that its policy and culture repress themselves. But when the order came to the degree of equating desire with the work of desire for “more” wealth, “more” human rights, more freedom, and finally more pleasure, then repression turns into depression. The reason is that the emptiness of life itself shows that “more” can only be more “less”. Consequently, surplus values result in a lack of desire to revolutionize the very social order of capitalism. In other words, Lyotard announced the entry of the inhumane or the technosphere into the very structure of man’s immutable body. The ethics of psychoanalysis in late capitalism becomes a powerless voice against the fatal turn of desire in its own opposite—the will to nullify in the form of a contingent object or commodity as such.

The question that we must pose is as follows: what happens when telematic societies in cybernetic networks create emerging spaces of heterogeneous transactions between the formally legally identical subjects of exchange? Does the illusion of the private and public space of liberal

capitalism disappear, and does the market grow into a *technosphere* in a virtual space? The logic of the golden age of capitalism was that it corresponds to the traditional ontological difference between Being and beings. Capital as a condition of capitalism is created from the idea of surplus value as the purpose of investing in what we call the future. The time of capital is, therefore, determined by updating the goods on the market. But “now” and “there”, in the industrial model of the 19th century, had already shifted into ubiquitous space and upcoming time. The world is happening at the same time as the event. Undoubtedly, the condition of this coincidence must be to update two types of energy in the information market: (1) the energy of capital and (2) libidinal energy. Therefore, history takes place on a macro-micro *plane of immanence*. Time and energy equate as the two forces in a “third” form. Capital and desire cannot exist without information. This is the difference between the mode of production and the mode of consumption. What does desire really want? Just that which Heidegger determines with the notion of the subject of modern metaphysics from Schopenhauer to Nietzsche as the will to will or the will to power (Heidegger 1999). The desire for capital is merely a secular expression of the desire for excess power in the form and material realization of will. Profit as a pure value of things in the commodity-money economy, which its media has in the global capital market, denotes an economic expression of this objectivation of the subject as a desire for “more” than the desire itself. Therefore, the shift is linear and cyclical: from the infinite increase in profits to the repetition of production-consumption cycles in an ever-increasing acceleration of strength and intensity.

What is missing here might be the period of the conquest of space and the emergence of new markets up to the industrial societies of the West. It is left to contemporary information technology to make the process completely like the *reality show*. Under this term of mass culture, it should not be distracted by the vulgarity of culture regarding the visual marketing of banality. It is something much more significant. *Reality show* means a paradigm of the media’s construction of reality. Thanks to the possibilities of the technosphere today with the omnipresence of surveillance cameras, the interactivity results from the presence of images of events in real-time. Telematic societies are based on information production and consumption (Latour 1999). When this has been done in the very thing of reality, then visualization should not be something beyond the very origin and disappearance of “life”. New information and communication technologies are interactive because they allow the introduction of new language rules in their everyday use and new models of interaction in altered social

conditions. There is no difference between the media and the market. The corporate management strategy of the world as a mega-market unites itself with the power of information and communication technologies and the control of media-determined politics. The control of chaos in the movement of capital immersed in a bio-cybernetic network becomes a matter of “crisis management”. So, markets are media-determined technochronotopes of the economy. In other words, that means that the time spent in the investment and realization of the final cause of surplus value in the collection of profit accelerates the introduction of new technologies. Without acceleration, it would not be possible to maintain a hypermodernity in all spheres of its extension from the centre to the edges and around. What capitalism is always missing in its desire for the space of investment is—as Deleuze and Guattari concluded, following Karl Marx—*new people and new Earth*. It lacks the time for reinvesting in creating a new “Earth” and new “people”. In order for this future to grow in profit, the market is needed as the medium of interaction between subjects. But the market is not just the external character of material wealth. As in the theology of Christianity, the incarnation of Jesus Christ represents the mystery of transubstantiation, so in the political economy (of capitalism), the market signifies the introduction of surplus value in the driving mechanisms of social development.

The economy of consumption is based on this mystery of the desire to change the historical structure itself. Without a doubt, it showed itself to be stunted for the further development of man. When the “new medium” enters into the historical movement of the idea, such as the capitalist market in its development from the bank to the financial flow of capital accumulation at the time of the corporate model of entrepreneurship, then in the very *mediality* of the media, in the *marketing* of the market, in its infinite mobility and emerging allocation networks in all the economies of the world, there must be something mysterious. What is that? Nothing more than an event of the contingent object of capitalism—a commodity in its material shape becoming the formal subject of the whole process. *The contingent object for the first time in history becomes completely abstract and immaterial. In this way, its incarnation takes place everywhere and nowhere, regardless of its physical boundaries and the territorial determination of its space. This object might also be “blissful” and “obscure” in its pure immateriality—information.*¹⁰

Sublime and abject no longer signify that which is extravagant and obscure like the etymology of money being associated with the ancient cults of disgust (Baudrillard 1993). Money is ontologically considered as shit. The reason is that money in the material sense means the payment of

services. The exchange of spiritual values with money has already had the characteristics of the prostitution of value. Shakespeare and a pair of sausages represent a sign of equality between the spirit and the economy of commodity exchange on the market. Information, though, can be shit, but its “essence” is that anything that is becoming can be simultaneously everything and nothing. And its fundamental role in the development of capitalism is to create a condition for the transformation of society from a state of fixed identity into a fluid condition without identity (Castells 2011). So, societies are transformed into networks while information turns to communication in the form of the pictorial representation of reality (Debord’s *society of the spectacle*). The main problem of modern visual communication seems to be in determining the “subject” of the transformation of the notion of communication. If this term becomes a kind of substitute for society, then this would be evidence that contemporary culture denotes a visual or techno-culture. The reason for this is that it is no longer possible to determine where the “subject” of society begins or where it ends. After modern sovereignty vanished into dust and ashes, everything is replaced by escaping into the network. As the modern state (policy) lost its subject, the same could be said for the power of society (economy), which is left without a subject of power in networked societies’ global order. Transnational corporations, therefore, construct the worlds (of markets) in the same way as the *technosphere* constructs virtual spaces of interaction in the digital environment of the information age. The ontological notions of the concept of the network are exactly those which might be quite relevant to the cities of the world market: *fluidity*, *flexibility* and *emergence*. The network creates and destroys itself, going from one node to another activity and *feedback effect* (Greeve and Schnabel 2011).

The perception of the freedom of the owner of the goods on the market arises from the fact that subjects, regardless of whether they are “master” or “goods”, are in close relations with objects. Anyway, they are not free but are also placed in the social relationships of *a priori* enframing power. The rules of the game or what determines the symbolic meta-language and the real economy of the virtual market are also invariable and variable. What is, hence, uncanny might be that the market—in the capitalist meaning of this word—can only be that which presupposes an advanced form of an exchange of value (the stock) in the mathematical form of an infinite line. Nothing can be restored to the original state of matters. The axiomatic nature of capitalism, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, is irreversible (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). So, the idea of progress represents the mathematical problem of infinity from Leibniz to the theory of deterministic chaos. Since the natural sciences are the flywheel of

capitalism in new technologies, it seems quite understandable why mathematics determines the basic concepts of economics as a modern science of social processes of material life. “Nature” appears in the economy as a “law” governing social relations. The most striking and contentious of Marx’s assumptions in *Capital*, which was largely rejected by economists of the 20th century, denotes that capitalism—with its tendency to decline in profit rates—collapses into itself. Already, in this transition of the economy from the economy as the “law” of nature to the economy as a “tendency” of the regulation of life processes in the social conflict between subjects/actors from classes to institutions and political representatives of legitimate or illegitimate power, we can see the problem (Stiegler 2010, 71-129). Capital cannot, therefore, restore the state of ancient nature. As a matter of fact, a natural exchange is always possible, but then this witnesses the disaster of history. The same goes for the end of technology and the return to a state of primitive techniques. What determines the formal process and the condition of the community in which the interaction is articulated is simply *information*. The market can no longer be—if it ever was—the actual space of exchange in a fixed area of the Earth such as the public square of cities in the sovereignty of the nation-state. On the contrary, the market can only denote a logic of the activity of capital in its cyclical movement to infinity.

This change of place in the deployment of the space has far-reaching consequences not only for the “essence” of new capitalism but also for a change in the notion of time. We should notice that the process of information exchange is at work here. That which is described as the implosion of information in McLuhan’s theory of media, we can designate as the main feature of cognitive capitalism (Amin 2013). Instead of the expanding “nature” of the early stage of the industry that was determined in the late 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, the 21st century, with its post-industrial mode of production, shifted its focus to the network of technological innovations. Nothing is spreading beyond the outside world. Everything implodes within the infinity of the core. The expansion (extension) gives way to the narrow. It is in the micro-worlds of virtual spaces like the infinity of the universe that the real “wars of the worlds” are taking place. The dislocation of the centre does not mean that there are now fewer centres in the multitude and fewer differences according to the ontological principles of the digital world put forward in Deleuze’s main work *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze 1994). Instead of market polymorphism in the world-historical movement of capital beyond the borders of the Earth, we are faced with the implosion of the market in the very idea of capital as information. This means that the only thing that still

has the illusion of the freedom of the public or collective space of interaction—which is the formal structure of the idea of the market in the spirit of liberalism as the ideology of modern capitalism—becomes a corporation in the multiplication/networking of information in a memory machine of the *technosphere*.

Just as the corporation does not have its transcendental centre of thought in the real world of the fixed square or city—despite the fact that Al-Qaeda’s terrorist action destroyed the visible symbols of world corporate capitalism on 11th September 2001, namely the WTC in New York—the immanent nature of information is that it ought to be exchanged and multiplied like a virus or the creature in *Alien*. What is valid for Cordyceps—that is, for mushroom parasites that grow like pangs in the insect itself and thus destroy its colonies—is analogous to information/corporate capitalism today, insofar as the market, as well as the technosphere, is not a real space “somewhere in the world”. On the contrary, the construction of worlds as temporary *know-how states* of transactions must be performed in the capitalist market. The architecture of skyscrapers and underground garages, the aesthetics of a body’s design as a virus or a parasitic mushroom that destroys the Other on behalf of the Other—these are ways in which contemporary descriptions of inhumane today reach out to the sky! This should be known in the periodic staging of the crisis, stability and revolution in both the technosciences and what remains of society. Therefore, the market cannot be mastered. Quite the contrary, the market in the rhythm of planetary marketing carries the tags of full and absolute power. By using it as a network of posthuman relations, it governs its contingent facilities. The very rule is organized through the necessity of the freedom of economic transactions and political meta-actions. Hence, the market—from chaos to control—continues on the path of the metastability of change in the very “being” of capitalism. It is no accident, therefore, that today’s developers and marketing specialists are also involved in the oligarch-class of oil companies and gurus of *new age* religions. They have the same discourse of predicting the future, use the same metaphors derived from cybernetics and theology, and, finally, they try to be autocrats through the inner conscience.¹¹

Marketing extends from the economic skills of the self-organization of a corporation in the era of complex systems transitions to neutral techniques of propaganda in market wars and the paranoid-psychedelic activity of destroying the Other as a corporate network of actors. Anything else is just falling. Behind this dark *real* is hiding what Foucault described in his lectures at the Collège de France, devoted to the problem of

biopolitics in the 1980s, as the power of governmentality. In the place of the discursive formation of knowledge/power comes the uncanny reversal of knowledge into power as a technology for the management of social spaces of subjects/actors. The talk of power does not mean, however, that the distinction between technology and management technology should only be considered as something external. Technique refers to the question of the political sovereignty of the modern state. In this regard, technology is at work like the disposition with which the state organizes the machine management of rights, universities, bureaucratic apparatus, police, army and population control. The *economy* changes from its “*economy*” to its goals. With the movement to a dynamic *economy* system of an autonomous individual’s *entrepreneurship* within corporate-based conditions, the economy becomes the new Leviathan at the centre of modern socio-political order (Foucault 2008). In this way, capitalism in its late phase becomes a “market civilization”. We cannot forget that liberalism has transformed into the neoliberal doctrine and ideology of world rule as a market with the idea of the freedom of the individual and private property as the only rational and “just” structure in the social process of interactions between nations and states. Of course, we are faced with a new role of discursive power/knowledge incorporated in the ideology of enterprise capitalism. Marketing, therefore, should never be marked as a neutral technique of conquering the market. It is the only remaining power and inner structure of the action of technological-capitalism today. There are no worldwide markets that are waiting to be “conquered” peacefully by displacement and settlement. As the world in the information age is the event of the creation of the *technosphere*, so marketing is the logic of the action of transnational corporate capitalism in a time without a subject—the traditionally comprehended nation-state. Moreover, marketing stems from the assumption that states and peoples, politics and cultures are totally mobilized on the road to an integral spectacle. In it, goods and images are joined in the ultimate stage of the aesthetic dispositif of life. Finally, the ultimate goal is simultaneously the same as the aim of aesthetic capitalism: to enjoy the wellness-ideology of life as a spectacle. That is the way that must be followed by no other alternatives.

What will be the real “subject” and the fatal and uncanny power of the non-spatiality and timelessness of the market today as the *reality show* of the capitalist economy of the world? Marx set this down at the beginning of his “own” *Capital* (Marx 1954): it is capital itself, or, speaking in the language of Plato, the thing itself—to *autó*. But what exactly is the meaning of this thing—an idea or an appearance in which the idea must be

incorporated? From the standpoint of the logic of the movement of the absolute spirit in Hegel, this is the idea of the absolute science of the spirit itself, and for Marx, from the viewpoint of his critique of the political economy, it is an absolute event in capital's history from its emergence to its postulated end in communism. Capitalism refers to the alienated society of disassembled individuals, and communism is named as an authentic community of affluent producers. It should not be forgotten that Marx invented the idea of communism in analogy with the developed capitalism of the productive forces of science and technology. The richness of the nation with which the political economy begins has its equivalent in the wealth of the community on quite other foundations. But the problem is that the undisturbed development of production power for Marx marks the "iron law" of history (Sutlić 1994, 138). It is therefore not about this or that physical or symbolic/cultural capital, between which Pierre Bourdieu still draws distinctions. On the contrary, the problem of the very conditions of the possibilities of events like *reality show* spectacles lies in the quest for the materialization of "ghosts". As the substance of values is embedded in the idea of money, so the last truth of capital itself is that, through its three stages, it is spreading in the total nihilism of values in the era of information capitalism (Bourdieu 1977). There are three historical-structural stages of capitalist ideas in the form of markets:

- (1) the metallurgy of labour (coins)
- (2) the semiurgy of culture (paper money)
- (3) the virtualization of events (digital money)

It is not difficult to see how we are faced with the historical development of the substances in which money has appeared as an expression of value: from solid material, through the ability of portability and ease of movement, to pure dematerialization in the information code of computer production facilities with the help of 3D printers. Similarly, in this scheme, the historical development of money in material and substantive forms coincides with the development of the *technosphere*. Numerous theoreticians of new media will show that what is happening in the continuity of history corresponds to the logical model of complex systems. This can be clearly seen in Baudrillard's three-order simulacrum. The same applies to his concept of integral reality. Binary opposites finally disappear with it. Instead, a synthetic representation of reality corresponds to the analytical space that is occupied by the conditions and the transformations of that which traditional ontology called substance or "essence". With integral reality, "living" no longer differs from "non-

living” in the sense of the ontological difference between materiality and its derived substance (Baudrillard 1988; Klossowski 2017). We can see only a difference in the state of change of what “alive” and “non-alive” allows to exist within a certain circle of relationships.

The machine in the cybernetic status of delivery of information synthesizes previously existing differences in rank. So, the life made of something that is created out of God’s mind or nature is neutralized and suspended in favour of a new way of understanding the “life”. Of course, here we encounter a turn not only in the thought of history but in the suspension of history as the difference between nature and human. This difference was crucial for all dichotomies, dialectical operations and so on. The machine synthesizes the alive and non-living. All this happens when information transitions from the means to the purpose/aim of the process. The contingent object of the capitalist way of manufacturing can no longer be separated from the subject. Now this object appears in a pure form of immaterial value. The three-fold form of *goods—money—capital*, derived from *Capital* by Karl Marx, still works but on another principle: *information—communication—the network as a virtual event*. The entropic order of capitalism links stability and crisis, order and revolution. What is left is no longer a question about the “meaning” of this process. After all, in its contingency it simply is what it is, a purpose without purpose, it is pure nihilism of spending and the renewal of the same in the ever-increasing degree of intensity of power and the acceleration of the process. The question remains about the limits of its operability within the already exhausted possibilities of substance (Earth as nature) and subject (human as spirit). That is a reason why contemporary technoscience engaged in researching artificial life in the universe has become the paradigm for the further development of capitalism in general. Like the mystery from the SF-movie by Andrei Tarkovsky, *Solaris*, the path of further development can only be a spin into the uncanny as such, into what enables the existence of capital even without the man as an obsolete creature of the *technosphere*.

When the differences disappear or are neutralized and suspended, the cybernetic model of thinking is at work. Life is not a perpetual and invariable entity such as the gift of God or nature. Instead of the theo-cosmological principle of value as a gift, now everything should be the thing created by the onto-genetical construction of “new life” from the logic of the *technosphere*. But it creates and destroys itself. It is a pure autopoietic act of generating new structures that life comprehends as an integral reality of becoming. This means that information transforms the nature of the thing itself. In addition, information creates the worlds of

visual communication while everything that exists is being transformed into an event of the optimal control of the system over its environment (Ascott 2003). Anything that applies to the “substance” in its historical transformation from the living to the non-living state of the cash flow (financial capitalism) must also be true for the “subject” of this process. The subject of capitalism, therefore, is nowhere else than in the core of what constitutes the relationship between productive forces and production relations. This core is the thing itself or a realized idea of capital in what determines both the commodity and the money, as well as what we call the contingent object of the contemporary world. Instead of asking “what” this object is—if its ontological determination is in that which “is”—and instead of seeking for that “who” this subject is that initiates the whole process without the external possibilities of the disintegration or total revolution of the system and the order of capitalism, we should direct our attention to the explanation of “how” capital works almost impeccably in the new social form. What, then, does this new social form of capital mean, if not the inhumane in the information code? Is the result of this that the method of the substantial movement of capital is in the technoscientific construction of artificial intelligence (*AI*) and artificial life (*AL*) arising from the transformations of its subject into the networks of entropies of the economic world?

The relationship between capital and the time required for the circulation and reproduction of a non-living machine of value such as the term “information” shows that what this relationship makes possible is the space of the rule of its accumulated power beyond the civil society and the political state of the modern age. The space or topology of capital as a form of universal rule is not found anywhere else but in the empty space between the economy and politics. It is an in-between state. Thus, we cannot speak about a state of contradiction in a dialectical sense, for example, between class struggle and national emancipation. On the contrary, we have here the condition of binary oppositions of the order itself. Let us say that the logic *either-or* changes into action towards the inclusive disjunction *either-and*. The order also includes the power of destruction and the power to create. So, the crisis itself must be, of course, based on crisis management. Since the pyramidal structure of power can be replaced by rhizome networks of temporary allies of friends-enemies, as Derrida points out in his analysis of global policy (Derrida 2006), the battles for the throne resemble the gladiatorial games of the power market’s representatives. Hence, it appears that the language of the corporations is a hybrid which lies in between technoscience and marketing, language games and computer grammar. In the infinite time of

circulation, the state in-between comes down to the virtual actualization of the pure idea of capitalism as such and is, at the same time, the last stop on the path of historical development. The topology of power lies in the absolute knowledge of the “being” of this world as the corporate structure of the network. Capital can therefore no longer be divided into the invariable (land, raw materials, machines) and the changeable (manpower). Integral reality shows that the corporation becomes inhuman only as a bio-cybernetic network. It operates according to the principles of the society of control and it is run by the information code. Therefore, the very destruction of capitalism cannot come from what is external to the system. But it cannot undermine it from the inside like some phantom anonymous cyber warrior or hacker, or some other unknown network of anarchists and fundamentalists. The information code, in its “essence”, could not be an assembly of a technical nature, as it might not be the idea of capital.

Technology as the *technosphere* goes even beyond social relationships as a cause of the emergence of a system of market relations. This is the logic or the effect of what appears in the cybernetic modulation of the corporation. From this viewpoint, capital should manage and operate the world as the market on the edge of chaos in the process of what Heidegger, at the end of the 1960s, called *stability in change* (Heidegger 1977, 107). When we keep this in mind, terror and paranoia are just the consequences of the corporate network of relationships. The language of the economy appears to us as a permanent fear of one’s own ghosts in an empty house with no horror, not much unlike that of the American conceptual artist June Houston. How can this be explained? Simply put, language must become a pragmatic weapon of knowledge as *know-how*. This means that language no longer has its object in the world as such. Like the use of computer language instead of words, communication should be organized marketably by number and image. The number is the basis of mathematical science on infinite sizes, and the image no longer represents anything because there is no object to which the reference is made. The image visualizes the event of the world’s construction as a corporation on the market, from abstract models to simulations of future events. But what if the frustration is that the ghost is hiding in the gap between capital and the desire for desire, where the differences between the superstructures of production and consumption disappear and become something completely different? Capital without work or surplus value in the exploitation of the events of the synthesis of labour and culture may be the answer to the search for the new spectre of our times. Let us now turn to that matter.

5.2 Labour—culture—event: a network implosion

What Marx foresaw in his critique of the political economy, but did not consider particularly decisive for the paradigm of industrial capitalism in the modern world, belongs to the sphere of free time, leisure and culture as industry (Adorno) or to the society of the spectacle (Debord).¹² When leisure time becomes “capital”, or when space-time for the spiritual development of man is transformed into the continuation of the capitalist mode of production by other means, we find ourselves in the perverted form of the “empire of freedom”. In the information age, this ascends to the “empire of necessity”. Capital in the form of libidinal energies seduces human desires through their real exchange in the market. This path of the process of the total subjugation of the last refuge of freedom as a rest-from-labour lasted for the entire 20th century. The problem is, therefore, that cultural or symbolic capital in the information economy of services is nothing other than what marketing gurus like fundamentalist leaders sell on the world market under various names, and they are commonly referred to as the *freedom of human creativity*. No doubt, the transformations of capital are fascinating, just like the names for the transformation of the spirit into the cultural sector in all areas of life: social capital, human capital, and creative capital and its creative industry (information to communicate with the supremacy of the quarterly sector of services wherein design becomes a prototype of creativity). The *Chicago school* of neoliberal economists and sociologists in the 1990s opened a range of new theoretical paradigms with their rational choice theory. According to them, human actions and behaviours in the real world of global capitalism are always motivated by rational decisions, regardless of the changing situations and contexts in which social relations occur (Becker 1993).

The model for the rationality of actions of social entities/actors has become the economy according to the principles of free enterprise. Only that allows an excess of benefit with a lack of rational consumption of energy. Of course, this is only true if an individual acts in accordance with the language games and discursive rules of a corporately networked world. The society and the individual are interactively linked to the *Holy Grail* of neoliberalism—the market. But the shift towards traditional liberalism and the political economy of the industrial age is that the emphasis is now on the rationalization of a creatively directed and flexible individual. It adjusts to the changing state of the market. What was made so brutally clear by Margaret Thatcher—*There is no such thing as society*—is perfectly reflected in this notion of the new rationality of choice, which is, of course, already “pre-selected” by the necessary contingency of the

ascension or failure of society in the age of information capitalism. Instead of a society based on classically regarded solidarity, we find ourselves in a labyrinth of networked corporate privatized public/common assets. The principal rule and the only imperative becomes the market principle of profit applied to all the remaining spheres of human life, from family to freedom, pleasure, spirituality, and happiness. There are two key terms of capitalism in which culture becomes a new ideology—*rationality* and *freedom of choice*. It is interesting to note that these are at the same time the main concepts of the theory of science today that speaks of the emergence and contingency of a new event. When Žižek calls Deleuze the ideologist of digital capitalism because of his notions of diversity and difference, fluidity and becoming, bodies-without-organs, this is, of course, a wrong assumption (Žižek 2003). But what is so challenging in this judgement might be that the concepts of Deleuze's ontology are at the same time the underlying concepts of the digital age of information capitalism. In analogy, the same goes when we jump into the early stage of liberal capitalism and find that Marx's concepts were better than Smith's and Ricardo's after all. Does this mean that Marx was an ideologue of the alienated society of modern capitalism? This is a rhetorical issue, and it would instead be better to take things as they are in reality than make further "white noise" in the complex of theory games today.

The change or the variable nature of capital that Marx attributed to the labour force now lies in what the features of invariable capital (machinery, technology, resources) have been. When this shift of roles is thought of in its last consequences, we see something disturbing. First of all, the historical development of labour, which determines the historical development of goods as money in material form (from coin and paper to digital money), no longer witnesses the prevalence of "living" work and living money over "abstract" work and non-living money on the market. Share capitalism or equity capitalism embodied in the credit system of the public debtors/actors of the international economic system with the IMF and the World Bank as the roofing institutions of financial capitalism shows the magnitude of this ontological turn. The labour that is the basis of the industrial production of modern capitalism—and the figure of the worker that is the basis of the subject of latent physical labour—was made obsolete in the 1960s by moving robots into the process of production. So, the work of mediation is going to be a dominant sector in the post-modern supply economy. The sign replaced the subject as its substitute, which was theoretically acknowledged in semiotics and structuralism. Paper money, unlike coinage, marks the transition from metallurgy as the "heavy" industrial production model in semiurgy as an order of "light" signifiers.

Simply, fewer and fewer are paid for physical labour. This means that capitalism—in its pursuit of the immateriality of information—has passed the second phase in which culture substitutes work through flexible mediations. The figure of the worker was replaced by “white collar” figures or technocrats outside the factory. Capitalism has shifted from production to consumption. The “ontological turn” is that the difference between work as metallurgy and culture as semiurgy means a profound change in the “essence” of capitalism as such. A commodity or a contingent object itself now becomes a fetish. It is true that Marx noticed that kind of ontological perversion which has its origin in the very core of commodity exchanges on the market. But there are some quite new circumstances that allow the idea of transforming things in images and symbolic goods. The picture form of an aesthetic product equates capital and the desire for consumption. For its production, physical work is no longer the decisive factor in the sense of mere labour force; rather, it is creative or intellectual work. Since such work is the product of the brain and technology, it is obvious that it splits the project from its performance in a logical and historical sense.

The project refers to the role of art and science in the creation of the technosphere (aesthetical design code), and the performance shows that the relationship between the “living” and “non-living” has now significantly changed in its places and functions. Robotics, information, engineering, and computer constructions of objects/goods shorten the production time and cycle. The acceleration and obsolescence of goods as objects is almost identical to the great innovation in modern art that began with Marcel Duchamp. It is, of course, the concept of an aesthetic object. Artists’ work is replaced with product design: the originator gives the copy location, and the release is made before the reproduction. *Ready-made* objects are precisely the reproductive objects of the post-industrial society of services, and the leading professionals in the whole spectrum of newly-established mediation activities are now those who belong to the sector of services as a cultural industry—*design*. When a theorist of new media, Lev Manovich, asserts that the *designer is a prototype of our time*, and in the main terms of the language of the *technosphere* incorporates the transcoding of different formats in which there is information as a digital record, then the machine-language relationship in the creative industries of today is significantly changed. The design can no longer be defined in terms of “applied art”. On the contrary, the computer revolution of late or information capitalism has led to the unity and the equivalence of the technical-aesthetic construction of reality. Beautifying the environment is not a matter of design. Instead of decorating an existing surrounding

world, design as the construction of artificial landscapes in the era of information creates new objects thanks to the experiment and the method of technical science. Work in the meaning of the originality of the hand, the physical mediation between nature and culture, is lost in favour of the design of the new from the spirit of the experimental method. The technical logic of this “production” can no longer be explained by the notion of work in the traditional metaphysical perception of Being, beings and the essence of man as the formal-material cause of production and as the efficient-final cause of product consumption (Lazzarato 2004). When we are aware of this, we can go further into thinking of the otherwise structured relations of power in the world from the remaining traces of metaphysics. Undoubtedly, this seems to be necessary in order to comprehend our age, which is determined by the impacts of cultural and political entropy.

Digital ontology is based on the principles of cybernetics. So, the crucial element must be the modulation and feedback in the system of optimal control. In this way, the design constructs new worlds and does not embellish something pre-existing. From the technology of the design process itself, the “world” is created as a laboratory experiment and as a network of techno-aesthetic communication. The newly developed professions, such as communication designers, web designers, etc., sufficiently testify to this. The practical consequence of this is the new (political) economy of the productive consumption of neuro-cognitive capital in a state of the total mobilization of *attention*. Let us see how it really works. The perception is won and spent in the visualization of the worlds, the real and the phantasmatic ones (Crary 2001; Beller 2006). Two films provide good examples of this spectacular mode of production-consumption beyond binary differences: Cronenberg’s *Videodrome* and Wenders’ *Until the End of the World*. Appropriation of the Other means controlling its desire in the form of dreams. This is no longer the crazy imagery of dystopia, but the “real turn” of the economy from the area of goods/objects to the sphere of the unconscious production of desire. The *appropriation* of desire might always be just what Marx spoke about with regard to the original accumulation of capital by plundering a foreign country and territorial wars (*expropriation*). Any appropriation of the body of the Other is always the alienation of its property. There is no mercy in that business. There is also no possibility of a different relationship as long as the political economy rests on the idea of the wealth of nations: *capital + desire = nihilism as a pseudo-event of life itself*.

In Bataille’s *solar economy*, the notion of giving without repentance of what the condition is of the possibility of existence, life itself as a matter

of giving in the cosmic perspective, is opposed to the measurability and budgeting of the political economy. There is no common denominator between the merchandise and the market because in the understanding of *potlatch* among the Indians in North America, we have another type of “oppression”. It is not in debt or money, but rather in the inability to repay. This means that holding the Other as a hostage of one’s own generosity in the pre-modern community represents a different way of creating power. Instead of class oppression arising from work and capital relations, it includes oppression based on the social “nature” of interaction between different social hierarchies in the tribal lifestyle. There is a dual logic of things to do, two concepts of time and two concepts of the body. The logic is solar-sacrificial and not the logic of the (in)equality of the market. In that viewpoint, time should be seen in transgression of the linear infinity of profane modern order and not as a time of work in industrial production. Finally, the body becomes sacred in its insensitivity to goods/objects and is not a subject of exchange between the owners of the goods and commodities on the market (Bataille 1991). The omission of desire in the form of a spectacular visualization of reality (*reality show*) ends with the freedom of the body itself in the corporate capitalism of the network. The adaptation of the body in the post-human condition of the rule of artificial life and artificial intelligence takes on the feature of the new economy which might be in accordance with a digital age. It perfectly corresponds to the concept of bodies-without-organs that Deleuze appropriated from the work of Antonin Artaud and gave a completely new ontological significance. Let us clarify once again what has already been said. Does this all not seem to be a ghostly “narrative” that has nothing to do with reality? If all this was a mere “narrative”, then we could just declare dreams to be an illusion and the desire to be nothing more than the psychoanalytic problem of the unconscious, and we might say that we built towers in the air. But the evidence is, however, on the side of this *reality show* of the libidinal economy of the abduction of uncanny desire in its dark and bright tones of fulfilment. This process of the decaying of the duality of worlds—the reality and the illusion, the technological disposition of capitalism and the power of productive forces—was defined by Herbert Marcuse with the term *repressive desublimation* (Marcuse 1974).

The loss of the sublime in late capitalism affects just the driving force of culture. As a substitute for what is left of work after the entering of robotics into the production process, culture becomes a desublimated set of diverse experiences and practices. By means of this, the irreducible world of life is trying to resist the pressure of the work drive. Of course,

this all is just a farce, because culture represents a continuation of work by other means. Not to exaggerate, but its function is no larger than the mass-industry of relieving the worries and anxieties of survival in the technocapitalism of machines and desires. So, the transition from physical labour to cultural production is nothing other than *appropriation*—the *expropriation* of the freedom of the Other as an object/commodity with those obscure matters called “cultural needs”. With the collapse of black metallurgy, coined money is replaced by paper money on the market, and “living money” becomes possible only from the perspective of its reproduction in paper money. Metal being replaced by paper signifies entry into semio-capitalism, where all that is “living” becomes a sign for something else, as the flourishing of the tertiary sector of service activities means nothing more than the fleeing of capital into speculative moments of profit. The capital’s financial centres are moving and dislocating at breath-taking speed. The renegade system of dislocated markets of financial capital rests on a credit system that was formally created due to the rise of middle-class wealth and the demand of consumer culture for extended debt repayments. What follows from this was perfectly clear to Baudrillard when determined the notion of the credit system, the semiurgy of culture—as the empire of signs—and the disappearance of the reference in reality of the notion of the “public” global debt policy. However, global debt is neither public nor shared. It has not systematically privatized the conditions of consumer capitalism. Of course, we are talking about capital in the corporation’s escape system from the “labour” field to cultural production. To have the means “to be in the system”. But “to be in the system” means “to be as to spend”. This is the reason why spending speculatively moves into the credit system of the total debt of all and sundry, regardless of the actual extent of the borrowing of some states and many individuals. The “narrative” has its sense only in the appropriation of what is still to be considered the space of resistance and subversion—the life-world.

Let us add another thing. The desublimation of culture does not only affect culture as a kind of other nature of man. It denotes a process of mutual action because it is precisely reciprocal, both to the transformation of the concept of culture as well as to the transformation of the very concept of work. In the classical political economy, this residue of metaphysics which moves to the *technosphere* or the cybernetics of life is called *work* in the sense of the fundamental structure or the essence of a Being. Work, therefore, is represented as the cause of surplus value, which means that there is no capital without work. But work from the very beginning of the political economy is not unambiguous. After all, for both

Smith and Ricardo, it was obvious that the political or national economy deals with the structural analysis of a social production system within and beyond the sovereignty boundaries of the nation-state. Work must, therefore, be in the very essence of the process itself and is divided into two: the work of one who really works as a slave or a proletarian to survive the hardship of life, and the work of the one who lives from the work of others and deals with un-material forms of production. The dual nature of the work in all the other excerpts shows that capitalism can only be understood as (1) the total mobilization of capital in the invariable state of technological innovation and (2) a revolution in social relations in the direction of controlling the biogenetic processes of producing the very desire for transformation into the object. When Pessoa sings—in the futuristic stage of his poetry—*I want to be a machine*, that is nothing but the desire for the self-perpetuation of production in the immaterial state of pure information. Thus, capital at the time of corporate/cognitive capitalism necessarily goes from work as a source of surplus value to “culture” as the event of the total performativity of the life itself. The uncanny thing is that labour determines modern metallurgy. On the other hand, culture determines post-modern semiurgy. After all, we have to be immersed in a digital space of the *technosphere* as a synthesis of the biosphere and the media sphere. Work and culture lose their binary oppositional features by being pulled into the game of the techno-genesis of capital as such in its last mutation—the desire for power and the power of the inhumane. Business and politics are therefore necessarily erotic-thanatological processes of the appropriation and expropriation of the Other (Earth and its people) up to its disappearance.

What motivates the power of the embodied subjects/actors of global capitalism? It is not libidinal energy as a substitute for the total spending of life for the enchantment of enrichment. All that has been preached by the founding fathers of the political economy—Smith and Ricardo—about investing in the future as a condition of opportunity for wealth and which Max Weber determined as the essential role of Protestant ethics in the victory of the spirit of Western capitalism now turns out to be living for the “here” and “now”. The future is understood only as a realization of the present. The future project is no longer uncertain and unpredictable. The driving force of cruel power that plays for supremacy in the distribution of power within the network of corporate capitalism becomes the event of the rule of capital in the interactive apprehension/abduction of the Other (Earth and its people). In Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello’s book *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, the authors clearly show that innovations in technology and changes in the social structure of the *market economy* lead

to the creation of a “new class” beyond traditional definitions of social power distribution (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). The carriers of the ideology of the new capitalism based on the *information-communication-event* triad are not, paradoxically, “capitalists” by conviction, right-wing liberals and conservatives, but members of the 68-generation, anti-capitalist “developers” and managers with the lifestyles of the fluid and flexible nature of digital age networking. Newcomers are now integrated members of the managerial revolution of the 1990s. However, this is only a logical consequence of the corporate structure of the oligarchic world management: the banker and official during the day is a subversive dreamer and revolutionary at night, a perverted pair of Kafka and Pessoa in the process and transformation of the world from real hell into the paradise of fantasy. If you doubt the meaning of this perversion, it might be better for the performative odds of the new capitalism. In that respect, nothing non-human should be strange, and culture serves as an uncanny field of desublimation for the people.

Wealth, therefore, cannot be socialized because it is neither purposeful nor does it make sense because it is always only a means to another end, for example, the pleasure gained when in possession of someone else’s body or someone else’s soul. This does not happen by chance; even today, instead of the fun and spectacle of frivolity and cruelty in the orgies of life, capital strikes exactly where it is allegedly not its place to strike. This non-place is spirituality and religion as the key to a lost transcendence. Bankers and managers marvellously travel to Tibet to visit the Dalai Lama and to seek spiritual consolation in the religious experience of Zen Buddhism or the charismatic Christianity of marketing-minded healers. Walter Benjamin was right when he said that capitalism has emerged as a new religious cult. But this cult is not a place of the sacred; rather, it could be determined as a sacred place for the “cultural” capital extending from the Vatican Bank to the occult and esoteric brokers of Wall Street. In order for the system to work flawlessly, there must be at least an illusion that something is left “holy”, “virgin” and untouched by the sacred shit of money in which we certainly believe—*In Gold We Trust*. Culture cannot, therefore, have its own autonomous place in the production of capital, because it is always negatively determined: either as a sector of so-called intellectual work or as a life-world, in contrast to a system-world that produces surplus values. But this dual ontological model for late Marx was already a thing of the past. Marx came to the criticism of the anthropological definition of man as a universal being (the essentialism of history) by the idea of the historical definition of man from the state between the development of productive forces and relations in production,

and the notion of society and social relations having lost the mark of absoluteness as eternity is a model that might be decisive to the further development of the history of understanding work as a techno-scientific dispositif that can bring about total revolutions. No, any kind of revolution should be out of the question. The answer is no longer a concept of sublimity in culture or the life-world. Experimental science, which in itself connects the finding of the new and the creation of the new (science and art in the *technosphere*), significantly changes “work” and “culture”. Accordingly, instead of the binary oppositions of technology-science and life-art—which almost outright determines what is now referred to, from Lyotard to Stiegler, as the libidinal economy of rational capitalism—there is no longer even the unity and synthesis of contradictions, which are milestones in speculative-dialectical thought.

Instead, we have total control of life processes and the construction of reality according to cybernetic models of planning and optimizing the future. What, in the neoliberal economy of the corporate privatization of public or common goods and services, is referred to as the “real sector” actually belongs to the field of the phantasmatic sector. Its only goal is to create a *wellness-ideology* of wealth management for the subjects/players of the speculative game of financial capital. Bernard Stiegler lucidly shows that the capitalism of “labour” and “culture”—in which the subject of the whole process of creating modernity was the *bourgeoisie* with the idea of the freedom, private property and dignity of the individual—transforms into oligarchical order with the rule of the *mafia*. There are no more illusions. What is at work here is the rule without any idea of the future of the world except as a space-time network of the liquidation of the binary opposition friends-enemies in the spectacular capitalism of *inhumane* (Stiegler 2010, 60-66). Culture, therefore, in the form of entertainment or spectacle, becomes the capital or “creative industry” of carefreeness, relaxation and entertainment. As in *reality show* productions, the closed house of “horror” and the “uncanniness” of interpersonal relationships in the form of conflict and trauma takes on the irrational and phantasmatic outlines of artificial heaven. So the “real sector” that opposes the so-called “non-real sector” of state entrepreneurship, which is merely an ideological discursive game of simulated conflict between the “conservative revolution” policy with the idea of the radical privatization of public or collective goods and the “social-state capitalism” policy, is nothing but the total drive of *culture-work as a repressive/depressive desublimation machine*. In that circulation of capital from information to communication and interaction, life itself becomes heaven and hell, desire and anxiety, and the experiment of credit freedom and the shock of debt bondage. Where

is—and is there any at all—a “third”, safe way out, that radical revolution in the very “essence” of capitalism in the era of its merging with techno-cosmic principles of creative design of the bodies-without-organs? Can we be more inclined to think that a possible and sufficient condition for such a “revolution” is a new critique of the political economy as the deconstruction of Marx’s formula?

We know that this formula represented a tendency of the fall in profit rates with which capitalism collapses in its foundations, and in its place comes a new form of human community, named after the predicate of the totalitarian experiment in the 20th century, condemned to contempt, dismissal and hate. We know, too, that this uncanny expression should be very humiliated and defatted at the same time—*communism as an upcoming community*. From the very beginning of its use by Marx and his followers, communism was blasphemed by utopia and/or ideology. What are we to do when capital in the state of the economic-oligarchic *reality show* is no longer a horror from the conceptual home of an American artist, but the only *hyperreal*, the only thing left from “work” and “culture” in an interactive event of life as an information-communication market? Is the narrative of “revolution” in any form of future utopia finished, or are we right now about to witness the deconstruction of “revolution” based on other foundations that can provide another, “radically” new critique of the political economy?

5.3 Critique of deconstruction or deconstruction of the critique of the political economy?

What is “new” in the new critique of the political economy? Under that name, a criticism of capitalism in the information era or the corporate global order was carried out by Bernard Stiegler with a call for a philosophical critique of the political economy. Even at the beginning of the present book on this acute topic of our time, we are talking about the necessity for philosophy to finally wake up from the centuries-old escapism and to pursue that reality for the very things of philosophy and what else philosophy can designate in the future. The concept of philosophy can no longer just be the production of new philosophies of politics and culture in different versions of “criticism” or “deconstruction”. Philosophy after Marx has to rediscover the clarity of the matter with the economy again, which means that philosophy must re-examine its terms, categories, and what it metaphysically means to us today if it wants to understand its time, to paraphrase Hegel’s definition of philosophy as time understood in thoughts. The first assumption of the understanding of “our

own” time may be the next. All that was true of the political economy as the “anatomy of capitalism” referred to the materialistic way of understanding the body in its modern duality. Descartes’ model of the separation of matter into *res cogitans* and *res extensa* gave rise to the primacy of thought over the body. The distinction between mental and physical work is present in Marx’s distinction between the two forms of capital. Fixed or unalterable capital is determined by the existence of land, raw materials and techniques, and the variable capital represents everything that belongs to the social model of the existence of a workforce such as education, ethics, and culture. Productive forces are the drivers of the “progress” of mankind (fixed capital), and relations in production (changing capital) are adjusted to changes in scientific and technological progress, or they become an obstacle to “progress”.

Marx’s “critique of the political economy” is based on the assumption that the idea of “prosperity” is not a problem at all since the modern age is based on the rationalization of the world. In the *Communist Manifesto* is written probably the key phrase of the whole pathos and scope of modernity:

All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober sense, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind. (Marx 1998, 38)

What might be “real” in the structure of universal science as the ideology of capitalism? The answer lies in what triggers this “real” and does not always exist in the outside world. “Real” is, therefore, constructed, and does not “objectively” exist without the *feedback* of a human factor in history. Though the history of capitalism is truly a technological determiner of science and technology as a driver of “progress”, which to Marx cannot be controversial even in the worst nightmare of being, the freedom of events that production forces can undoubtedly render on the path of unlimited “progress” with the idea of infinity (from Leibniz to quantum physics) indicates the possibility of apocalypse and revolution, the end of progress and disaster events with which history disappears from the horizon of this radical and total change in the “direction” of history itself. In other words, Marx left in the third volume of *Capital* the formula for the change of that “direction” towards the realm of infinite progress. To this day it remains a riddle on the verge of the defective utopia of a new science or the emergence of an unpredictable event of the future that must “necessarily” come, just as for the Jewish-Christian messianic course of history the period of “this” history must “necessarily” end and, with it, the era of the “new” history of endless justice and freedom must

“necessarily” begin. The formula is as follows: $p = s / (c + v)$. The tendency of the fall of the profit rates of capital for Marx is, therefore, not “necessary” and “inevitable”. Instead, we are talking about a tendency, the chosen word for what belongs to the modal categories in Kant. These are the possibility, the reality, and the necessity. Among them, the precedence goes to the possibility of events. The second category is the one that belongs to the so-called world of objective natural “laws”. We name that category with the notion of the real. But the third category is the necessity from which follows the impossibility of events that could prevent the coming of something like the laws in nature. Undoubtedly, it is very often forgotten that Marx did not foresee the end of capitalism by this formula. Anyway, the prediction cannot be measured with the prophecy of the coming. Likewise, the prediction is not futurologically based on the exact science of nature. To predict the upcoming from the real-world movement of capital itself in its “progress” has brought about misunderstandings precisely because Marx’s tone in the analysis of capitalism is almost the tone of scientific exactness and apocalyptic utopia. It must be “realized” sooner or later.

In fact, the problem is in replacing the notion of tendencies (opportunities and odds) with the notion of law (necessity). Spinoza and Hegel’s comprehension of freedom as a grasped necessity (*causa sui*) appears here to be a belief in the understanding of the very thing. Capital as a transcendental form in the “plane of immanence” of the reality of the modern world at the same time demotes necessity and freedom in the development and advancement of consciousness of infinite progress towards the future. The wealth is, thus, in the foundation of profit as a purpose. It is realized in the exchange market in three forms of money through its history (coinage, paper, digital). From this, it might be quite clear that wealth (of people?) must necessarily emerge as the sphere of total and absolute productive consumption that moves from one form of capital to another, from living to un-living labour, from land to the machine. The abstract in this machine of progress is at the same time the most concrete in the total process of the transformation of matter into the immaterial (the inhumane as such, the *technosphere*). We are coming to the end of the distinction between nature and society, to the end of the dualism, and the only reality is represented by the abolition of transcendence in immanence. It is the end of the distinction of the essence in the appearance, the idea in reality as the reality itself becomes *ideal* (virtual). The problem, ultimately, of Marx’s destructive dialectics of history is in that it is nothing other than a trans-historic model of thinking of history itself. In short, Marx observes no contradiction at all in the

“advancement” of the productive forces (sciences and technology) making man himself an outdated entity, one which no longer controls the process of exchange of matter between nature and machine; in the era of the *technosphere*, man himself became the inhumane. The experimental science of freedom, which he had as an assumption in communism, is realized as cognitive or cultural capital. This destroys physical work and replaces the worker as a figure of the heroic rebellion against the unjust world of the robot, cyborg and android with the actors of a cybernetic network of interactive information exchange. The end of work belongs to the end of history, with all the negative and positive consequences of this event for the future of mankind.

So, the possibility that the contradiction between the development of the productive forces (science and technology) and the relationships between forms of production (education, ethics and culture) does not start with the collapse of the profit rate—the fundamental driver and the socio-economic order that determines the lives of people in the global order—belongs to something that Marx kept in mind. That is a turn in the “direction” of reinvesting the capital from fixed to variable, respectively; instead of the falling of the surplus value within the “non-living” sector, “living” work becomes “non-living” work in the form of artificial life (*AL*) and artificial intelligence (*AI*) as this turn becomes the “new spirit of capitalism” in its unpredicted progress towards the future. The tendency of falling profit rates is not just the mystery of the end of history. It is a metaphysical surplus of alternatives at the fringes between the emergence and contingency of events. No less vital than what is determined by this tendency, there is also a change of “direction” that has arisen that was not foreseen and which cannot be the basis of the scientific method of modern social sciences. In this, Marx’s “historical materialism” is probably the most significant analysis of modern capitalism in general. The unpredictability of the future direction of history was not foreseen. History was set with the tendency to move things itself. Thus, Stiegler’s judgement is correct when he states that anyone who thinks that Marx’s prognosis of the collapse of capitalism and the “necessity” of communism on this basis was wrong and that they do not understand what is being said at the end of the third volume of *Capital* (Stiegler 2010, 75-76). It seems that what the formula emanates with some metaphysical energy is contagious for two streams of thought. The first includes techno-determinists in the standpoint of the real and objective state of things, without which there is no “progress” or “development” of a person in the consciousness of freedom, and the second one includes those who consider that man as a “creative being” or subject can—by his own will—demolish the mega-machine of capitalism

by political revolution. However, both of the cognitive-practical sides in the conflict are actually mishit, and this is also marked by the history of Marxist thought throughout the 20th century and continues to this day.

The conflict between “late Marx” (*Capital*) and “young Marx” (*Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*) does not exist, because it is only about the systematic-logical development of the very thing that is so plastic and at the same time expressed in a metaphysically mysterious way in the famous formula of the so-called collapse of capitalism. The contemporary capitalism of corporations and networks overcomes the contradiction of living (labour) and non-living (capital). Moreover, the question of the libidinal economy that is at the core of the *technosphere* as the event of the construction of the inhuman itself could not become a sign of separation and dualism. The tendency of capitalism’s development was changed at the core of industrial capitalism in the 19th century by introducing automation and through constant engineering advancements. The name of the working class became the proletariat, profits were poured into the hands of capitalists (the bourgeoisie), and knowledge and occupations (technology) mediating between work and capital emerged. Marx clearly demonstrated that in his analysis of the transformation of the work process and hence exemplified the “utopian” conclusion that communism must be the sole source of accumulated wealth as a scientific and technical advancement beyond the obsolete space of the world economy. Of course, this outdated area of the 19th century is the nation-state with its instruments of ideological violence. Instead, capital must necessarily go beyond the borders of nation-states because it is its mode of action and space-time updating in the corporate structure of government. Power cannot, therefore, be constituted by “now” and “here”. It must be boundless and total, dynamic and imperial. From the sphere of the nakedness of physical violence (the state), it is necessary to move to other forms of appropriation/expropriation of the Other (Earth and its people).

Heidegger, in his lectures at the end of the 1930s, was on the path to a decisive notion of the time Marx speaks of at the end of the third volume of *Capital*. What Heidegger calls by the word *machinery* (*Machenschaft*), and soon by the fundamental word of his thought, *enframing* (*Gestell*), denotes the essence of the technology that is put into the relationship of power and rule over the world with regard to its five basic features: (1) dynamicity, (2) totality, (3) imperialism, (4) rationality, and (5) planetary (Heidegger 1997, 18). When we keep this in mind, then it is not difficult to conclude that modern capitalism appears in a tendency movement towards the four stations on its way to the implosion of the event itself. As is well-known, the term implosion explains, in media theory, the transition from

the expanding state of the dissemination of matter (information) to the imploding state of energy coercion (information). What was once endlessly spreading is now narrowing infinitely. In this way, the fundamental mark of classical metaphysics and the physics of the extensibility of space in the universe now enters the spaces of the immensity of infinite summation. Complexity theories in natural and social sciences have opened up the issue of the extensibility of space and the narrowing of time. Everything has to be reduced to elementary particles. Global information capitalism, therefore, does not spread beyond the scope of the Earth. It narrows by the time of its immediacy in micro-virtualization universes. The implosion of capitalism means that we are faced with the acceleration of the flow of time and the flow of information and of the spiralling of networks necessary for their flow of communication. The market as a foundation of entrepreneurship (*market economy*) really becomes a virtual universe. Heaven is no longer a limit, and the Earth, for capitalism, is depleted fixed capital. Everything has to be moved and deployed in the “third Earth”. That is what—on the trail of Franz Kafka’s trajectory and his vision of the corporate world-governing machine—belongs to the “litter” and “jade” of capital as subversions in the “essence” of the technology itself.

No longer is the controversy between the two—productive forces and productive relationships—fundamental for historical “progress”. Instead of dialectics as an internal principle of critique of the political economy, now we have the deconstruction principles of the aporia and the paradox in the difference and the multitude of worlds of what is the *same* in becoming the *Other* and *different*. The uncanny thing with capitalism today is that the tendency of falling profit rates no longer constitutes the revolution after the total destruction of social relations. Neoliberalism might be the best indicator of this vicious change in the order of magnitude. When, after 1968, the “conservative revolution”—which is the subject of the study of the “new spirit of capitalism” by Boltanski and Chiapello and marks the end of the work carried out by André Gorz and Jeremy Rifkin—succeeded in its intention for all life and desires to become the continuation of capitalist production by other means, aporias and paradoxes were no longer a motive for the turnover in the “essence” of the matter. On the contrary, they became the inner “necessity” of the work of the machine of corporate capitalism itself. We can call this the phenomenon of the perverted critique of capitalism. From Foucault to the neo-Lacanian Marxists, this “cultural critique”—even when it seems to be in the form of demands for a radical political revolution—deals with “the present” and does not reach beyond that which is the result of the democratic struggle for “surplus values” of capitalism. In other words, criticisms, in all their

“new” forms, always work constructively and destructively on the corporate governance system of the world. It is, therefore, only another mode of stability in change. This uncannily accurate analysis was carried out by Heidegger in *Four Seminars*. There, he mentioned the events of 1968. The “defeat” of the student riots in Paris was an indicator of the futile struggle for and against the consumer society. The reason is that it was still a struggle for the “new spirit of capitalism” in its socio-cultural liberation from the industrial phase of the difficulties of physical labour.

What happened next already belongs to history. Neoliberalism as a “conservative revolution” has opened up the possibilities of re-investing in technology. This happened through the privatization of public or common goods up to the last oasis of “autonomy” and “freedom” in the world of life. By transforming universities in Europe into corporate institutions of knowledge as information (goods) to maintain cognitive capital in the state of fluidity and flexibility, “culture” has been revealed to its fullest in its essence.¹³ It is no longer the production of knowledge for the needs of the market outside the powerhouse. On the contrary, the aporias and paradoxes of capitalism today entail that “culture” as capital creates new markets for industry and routes in the event of communication between the actors of “revolution” and actuator of the “stability”. These are the notions of the means/purposes of the information in the immaterial state. It synthesizes freedom in itself as a desire for power and power as a desire for freedom. “Revolution” no longer belongs to society because society has been broken up and turned into communication networks. Capital cannot be socialized because it is already in its “being” beyond the private and public dichotomy. Thus, in the privatization of public or communal assets, it is always about appropriating what is still-not-capital in the form of genuine freedom from capital. To privatize freedom means to make it the means/purpose of new production. Its production line, of course, has a market price and serves the interests of corporations. This “service” is even heavier because there is no ecstasy of patriotism, nor the sacrifice for the “big Other” (God, nation, culture, humanity). Instead of these relics of history, the Other is sacrificed on behalf of the “big Third”. Heidegger named this with the German term *das Man*, and the irony is that this *das Man* is nothing but the anxious and inhuman Kafkian “K”. It is not even by chance that a Joseph K. appears as the main “hero” in two of Kafka’s novels, *The Trial* and *The Castle*. The “big Third” can be referred to as the structure of the network matrix. Nothing can destroy that machine, not from the inside, nor from the outside either, because there is always one more door behind another and the destroyed network hubs are renewed in another hub. And so on and so on, until the end of time. Everything else

derives from this “mystical network”, as in Kafka’s work where the mutually opposed exist; universal guilt and individual responsibility, sacrifice without crucifixion, and salvation without God. The corporate structure of capital is determined by what Heidegger talks about when the dynamic character of the machine or enframing (*Gestell*) is established through four stations on the road. Capital, therefore, is no longer just the radical transformation of society as relations in production (variable capital), but also and above all of the very understanding of wealth and its purposes and objectives. These denote the next station in the foursome of the rule of power over the world as a network:

- (1) the *total* mobilization of technoscience as the cognitive production of information;
- (2) the *imperial* elimination of the nation-state’s sovereignty in transnational corporations, the oligarchic governance of which is at the centre of the “bipolar disorder” of democratic politics in the game of thrones of the “right” and the “left”;
- (3) *rational* thinking as a paradigm for all the other discourses that gain their place as the Other only as irrational, poetically fantastic, exotic, “wild” and “strange” compared to the West;
- (4) the *planetary* world, which shows that power is no longer just “total” and directed to one nation and one people, but its borders are only within the boundaries of earthly spheres like atmospheres and stratospheres, which means that the planet as a whole is an image of power that can be overtaken by a “penetration”, thus neutralizing possible planetary opponents.

These four stations on the interplanetary path of the *nomadism* and *exile* of freedom in the corporation itself testify to the impossibility of a “new critique of the political economy”. Stiegler’s analogy with Marx assumes, of course, the deconstruction of the concept of criticism and the deconstruction of the political economy as the science and ideology of the capitalist mode of production. However, the problem is that Marx himself, in the subtitle of his “own” *Capital*, pointed out in the Hegelian manner that the real in the movement of capitalism did not behave in accordance with his “theory” of the real. Unlike Hegel, one can no longer say so much the worse for the facts. Why “worse” if the facts are already “worse” than the best and the best of the worst? Is not the corporate governance of the world as a network the proof that the event never happens spontaneously and independently of the logic of the action of capital itself? From the time of the new era to date, liberty has always been determined negatively or

teleologically, with a purpose attributed to something other, outside of itself, like history. In the thinking of history, Hannah Arendt's anthropology of politics has already begun deconstructing such a concept of freedom (action). The *anarchy* (as *an-arché*) of freedom arises from an event beyond the scope and purpose of history. When freedom takes place in action, then what history transforms into the history of the era of alienated work—or the epoch in which capital appears in the social forms of the new era of the modern and global articulation of world-historical power—is only a tendency to fall into nihilism without history. Everything becomes *total*, *rational*, *imperial*, and *planetary* simply because it has nothing more to offer except eternal wandering around the globe. In the lack of homeland, there is a lack of possibilities of transformation “to be” the man in the techno-animal structure of the network. Gregor Samsa, in Kafka's story *The Metamorphosis* (*Die Verwandlung*), becomes an insect. That is the point.

This uncanny (*Unheimlich*) event of perverting the meaning of Being leads to total mobilization of work and the planetary destiny of capital as an age of the permanent implosion of time. Yes, the acceleration is breathtaking! That is precisely why the *critique of the political economy* no longer belongs to capital, not even in what is “new” in its focus on the area of the irreducibility of human freedom of desire. Nor is the deconstruction of the idea of capital a question of future thought. Labour and capital are not binary oppositions, but inclusive disjunctions, aporias, and the paradox of something that is beyond capitalism as *reality* and communism as *utopia*. The problem is, in fact, that capital as work of the *technosphere* no longer has the dimension of practice to distinguish it from the sphere of theories. At work is just the techno-poietical practice without a subject. In the cyber network, it serves to manage the process of creating information based on the code. Progress is indicated by the necessary development of technoscience and the creation of artificial life and mind only because what is alive is no longer able to live without a share of the non-living. The capitalist mode of production and the ideas of Marx's communism are thus two faces of the same historical event. Heidegger calls it *enframing* (*Gestell*). When a person appears to be a subject, and society takes on the features of modern industrial production, it is not difficult to conclude that the corporate social management system is only a technical regulation of the relationship between things/objects. The market in that economy of capital as a desire for power or will becomes a social network of events. Everything happens on an unpredictable path of emergency and the contingency of the information itself. Therefore, the only solution to that chaos in the “nature” of capitalism is for it to be

rationally controlled. And that is what Marx thinks within the mission of communism: a rational exchange (control) between nature and man, which leaves the possibility for man's experimental science to expand the concept of free time into control over the machine, and not in war. Let us remember the utopian description of communism as a game and a creative experiment of freedom. Marx calls this the time for "higher activity". Everything should be clear: art as a game appears to be the true model of communism. Machines work, man creates and thinks... But where are the animals in all of this? Nature in this productive vision of the future serves man. Denatured and conquered, nature in "human nature" becomes a techno-aesthetic landscape and nothing more (Marx 1974).

Now it is obvious that the machine based on the information chip manages production, so it controls the time remaining beyond the binary oppositions of work and freedom. But that time is no longer work or leisure. That is a reason why there is no longer a possibility to establish the empire of freedom by overcoming the imperium of necessity. "Revolution" is a completed narrative. The reason is that technoscience does not serve capital as such nor itself. It is, in its essence, technological, therefore, beyond the human and inhuman too. Indeed, what Heidegger said about Marx as part of the elaboration of issues about Being and time with regard to the end of metaphysics and the rule of cybernetics conveys his determination to abandon the illusion of the "new critique of political economy" and deconstruct the idea of capital as a new illusion of an authentic thinking of the future. From these illusions, not even a "new" God can save us anymore. Let us see what Heidegger said about Marx. In a seminar at Le Thor in 1969, dealing, among other things, with the interpretation of the 11th of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*—"Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it"—we also read the following:

Which transformation of the world do we have in Marx? That of a transformation in the conditions of production. But where does production have its place? In praxis. And praxis is determined by what? By a certain theory, which casts the concept of production as the production of the human by itself. Marx therefore has a theoretical representation of the human – a very precise representation, which includes as its foundation the Hegelian philosophy. Reversing Hegel's idealism in his own way, Marx requires that being be given precedence over consciousness. [...] For Marx, being is the production process. This is the representation that he receives from metaphysics, on the basis of Hegel's interpretation of life as process. The practical concept of production can only exist on the basis of a conception of being stemming from metaphysics. (Heidegger 2012, 52)

The change for Marx does not mean, therefore, a radical discovery of *praxis* in the metaphysics as a philosophy. So, the critique of the political economy does not mean rejecting the technological-scientific progress that determines the world's production. The change of the world is primarily the change of relations in production, or the social relations that determine the essence of capitalism. Production powers are not at all considered as controversial for Marx's ideas of the progress of history. That is a reason why communism is undoubtedly beyond any kind of upcoming "society of misery". The tendency of falling profit rates is only a political-economical expression for the apocalypse of metaphysics that "wants" to turn the possibility into the "necessity" of the emergence of the new world. But what is crucially important here should be Heidegger's instruction that the change of world by virtue of *praxis* already assumes a certain interpretation. The theory of this change for Marx appears as a double change: (1) the change of the theory itself or of the interpretation of the world, and (2) the change of the "change" or the revolution of the term "revolution" as an ethical-political act of a violent overthrowing of the power of politics that formally/democratically serves the interests of corporate capitalism.

Political revolutions, by the way, make sense only if they are the means of establishing radical-democratic goals in the sphere of politics that neither serves the economy nor the culture but is entirely the condition of freedom of choice. But when it comes to changing the world, Marx, at the level of *Capital*, does not in any circumstances raise doubts about the historical character of productive forces (science and technology in the service of "progress" of mankind). What remains within the boundaries of metaphysics as the reversal of Hegel's science of the absolute spirit is the epochal boundary of the political economy itself after the change of the world or after the tendency law of the profit rate reaches its realization. We saw that this tendency remained only a possibility that was not realized. Instead, the capital moved and was deployed into the cognitive sphere of the life-constructing event itself. In this way, it became inoperable to speak of two empires, necessities and liberties, two times and two worlds. Life itself became a substitute and an artificial artefact, and when the biogenetic process of creating life out of the *technosphere* had eliminated any further operation of the "criticism" and "deconstruction" of metaphysical categories of Western history, the "stimulus for change" disappeared. So, why change without an answer to the question of what the direction of "communism" is except the socialization of capitalism by creating a community for "higher activity"? Revolution is, therefore, something that belongs to "man". Therefore, in its total-radical aspect, it is

only that which is retained within the limits of the technical-scientific production of life that essentially changes the relations of theory, practice and production (*theoria*, *praxis* and *poiesis*). Now the last has become the first, but in itself, it synthesizes the theoretical practice of creating the *new*. The techno-genesis of worlds ruins any further dream of changing the world. With this development, in fact, there no longer exists such a thing as an image-notion “about” the world. At work now is the construction of worlds from the techno-genesis of artificial intelligence. This means that we are no longer dealing with “man” in the metaphysical meaning of this word on which Marx was counting in his anthropological critique of Hegel. Instead of “man”, corporate capital deals with investing in what metaphysics—from Aristotle to cybernetics—calls *animal rationale*. It invests in the research into the cognitive capacities of what is left of man. Post-humanism and transhumanism are today new paradigms of this complex (Paic 2011).

The brain becomes the high point of the new life of the *technosphere*. The immaterial production of information for interactive communication as an event—that in the *market economy* becomes a place of selling and buying ideas, findings and creativity—defines the boundary between “what is” and what is no longer real. This means that the only permanent revolution comes from the new “holism” of techno-science. Everything adjusts to this or fails. The idea of communism remains a metaphysical expression for the upcoming community. But the problem is that communism no longer has the social prerequisites for its realization. Because the life itself in the experiment has become the control of chaos, and the corporation a place where numbers and images rule—an abstract machine moving and shifting from one territory to another in the constant *nomadism* of capital and *exile* of freedom—it seems that somehow the desire for change has disappeared. It cannot be said that there is not enough “fuel” for social revolutions. Anger explodes on the barricades of the 21st century, igniting after the global financial crisis in 2008 and now getting stronger and stronger, but its effects are almost insignificant. Why do we still expect an unpredictable event of a change in the world if it has been obvious for a long time now that the desire for freedom always ends with “voluntary slavery” for consumer pleasures in the desublimated object of desire? The reason might be very simple. The world as a production of the techno-scientific system and the environment is too flattened and closed in its principle openness of perspective. Such a world has the features of creative chaos. All the while, art serves the total political or aesthetic order, so the spaces of freedom are narrowing like the implosion of new information technology. Capital no longer separates

between the two worlds and two forms of incarnation of living and non-living work. Instead of separation, we are witnessing the synthesis and integration of all the autonomous areas of action in the new framework.

This *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) becomes *Gesamtkunst-Ereignis* (total artistic event). But we are no longer dealing with “art” as the sublime of man’s performance, but with the aesthetic event of the *technosphere*. Capital, therefore, in the immateriality of the abstract machine of production of new forms of society ultimately no longer appears anywhere else but in the *reality show* of corporate capitalism. No one even sees its image because the essence of the spectacle is iconoclastic. The need for the spectre of capital corresponds to the obsessive desire for the “big Other”. But its kingdom of appearance vanished from the stage at the precise moment when the cybernetic model of the network transformed the world from a world of work into an event of the information market. Where is the essence of marketing? In selling a product or in something that a product as a contingent object desires in itself has as a mystery? The answer to that question lies in the gap between the object and the desublimated experience of the objectification of the desire itself. Marketing does not sell goods/objects. It is a strategy of appropriating-expropriating the soul of the Other by turning it into a subject of free choice. Fashion designer Ralf Lauren made that clear: “I do not just sell clothes. I offer to the world the philosophy of life”. Whoever talks about marketing and management today knows very well that we are no longer dealing with things/objects. Instead of the notion of trading, which was still in action in the early stage of industrial capitalism, what is at work now is the appropriation/expropriation of the Other in its entirety. The uncanny perversion of global corporate capitalism might be the fact that, hidden behind the mask of this propagandistic seduction of the Other, we do not find any human face of aestheticized consumption. On the contrary, behind the mask, there is *no one* and *nothing* of the whole spectacular event. As it is so abstract in its seductiveness, so it is the only result of the economy as marketing entwined by the desire of the Other. Lacan explained this with the concept of the perversion of the gaze in the spectacle of the world (Lacan 2004). When a “woman” pretends she does not know that she is seen in the theatre of the world, the seduction effect is even greater. This is true both for the object of the gaze and for what lies in the gaze itself and behind it. So, what makes the gaze transparent is nothing other than an interactive information-communication event. In the world theatre as the media market for communication between the subject and the actor, the event becomes a symbolic exchange of objects. We do not communicate as “we”, but as objects as ideas in the virtual network of

events. That thing called “we” is signified by someone else in the real economy of the *inhumane*.

Conclusion

The whole logic of corporate capitalism regarding an action should be a realistic ontology of despair. Since desire is what has in itself the dual nature of freedom and slavery of the body to something beyond desire, because the essence of capitalism is beyond the economic logic of profit, then the libidinal economy faces three fundamental ideas: (1) information, (2) communication, and (3) event. The goods/objects are materialized in the market in the form of money (coins-paper-digital) corresponding to Lévy-Strauss’ anthropology of history (raw-fried-cooked) (Lévy-Strauss 1964). The ultimate result of this process is the very event of the realization of the process of the production-consumption of desire in the immortality of the object itself. It is highly contingent, even necessary, in its coincidence, and it is immortal because it can no longer appear as anything other than a deficiency in time.

The gap between production and consumption is always a disadvantage which is ultimately demonstrated as the renewal of the cognitive capacities of capital. The desire will always want “more” and “more”. Capital as a machine of desire must, therefore, accelerate time to the interplanetary implosion of the universe. The abyss between the two stations and the gaps at the end of the process denote the epochal limits of capitalism, capital and the monstrous world of the corporation. The remaining time does not fall into “working time”, because that time is the empty time of the machine’s maintenance. It is reduced to “leisure time”, what Marx utopianly thought of as a time of “higher activity”. But let us move on from Marx. Was Aristotle not the one to consider “sacred leisure” (*scholé*) as the condition of the possibility of the space of freedom? Only in free time can we have an experience of freedom and enjoyment. But it is precisely today that this time has become emptier than the emptiness of the *technosphere* as it fills up with life without the world and the event of the visualization of life as a synthesis of the real and the imaginary. In her apartment in 1992, the conceptual artist June Huston captured the “essence” of contemporary art, life, and the ultimate secret of capital. Under the impression that with the observers—with whom she shared her intimacy—she caught the respect by the tail, she actually caught that deepest in the space-time of this “now” and “there” in the corporate nihilism of the world. What she caught due to the possibilities of the *technosphere* was the crystal clear “essence” of metaphysics in its

materialization in all of our lives. She caught a timeless moment of the event. With it, capital and desire begin and end in their onto-theo-cosmo-anthropo-technological adventure of history. That is what makes the very thing (*to autó*) of (hyper)modernity in all its forms and transformations—emptiness. The time of this event is the time of one-off and unrepeatable emptiness. This is what makes capital “eternal” and its contingent object of desire “revolutionary”. But the problem does not lie in desire or in its emptiness, but rather in the fact that the difference between eternity and revolution has become a creative substitute of the origin and the upcoming event. When the machine thinks, what remains for the body is only emptiness.

Is the only remaining path for future thought the one that does not hide in the rationality of the thinking animal (*anthropos*) but in the mystery of the soul in the “essence” of the animal itself? In the encounter with death, man does not approach contact with God Himself. The animal is the one that is still shown to be the closest to him. Our close biological relatives crawl under our feet, suffer and just think quite *differently*. For Parmenides, nature has been a model of the notion of Being. So, Being is always meant to be without addiction or substitution. Being like nature, of course, means “to have” a possibility of contingency without a stake of the subject as a will to power. With the disappearance of nature, the last oasis of sovereignty has disappeared, with which thinking does not become mere knowledge of “the world” or the creation of “new” artificial worlds, but rather the thought of what is happening without the construction and destruction of the world itself. The question of the upcoming community should be, above all, a question of upcoming thinking. There is no fixed body without nature. Without the body, however, there is no further possibility for the compassion that leads to ethical access to the world. The animal in the time of the *technosphere*, in the end, remains the only true remaining “philosophical” problem. What does this animal “think”? What does it want? Does it really even have “its” world? In the time of the rule of the power of the corporation, the micro-worlds of “resistance” and “subversion” to the total devastation of the “Earth” and “its people” who are always lacking capital are in the dark underground world. The nature in its uncanniness (*Unheimlichkeit*) represents the last zone of resistance to the inhumane which, in the name of “man” and its “progress”, progressively destroys the Earth and transforms its people into new colonies of cognitive proletarians. Becoming-an-animal or being-a-human is equally bad for both animals and man. Aristotle in *De anima* perceived life as the highest possibility of having a soul (*psyché*). When the world at the time of corporate governance no longer has its “soul”, the time is nigh

for a “new” thought. But it must go through two equally unsuccessful alternatives in the analysis of the contemporary world: political theology and existential psychoanalysis. Because the “soul” is, in a sense, everything and nothing. Body-without-organs and soul-without-world correspond to the *post-human condition*. We last in this condition at an increasingly high degree of intensity and with an increase in the memory of the *technosphere*. It is maybe the time to cancel our unconditional trust in both. It is perhaps time to think of an encounter with those things that are closest in connecting the animal with the human, of that which breathes life into them and allows for something “less” than philosophy as well as art. But this “shortage” may ultimately prove to be a “noisy” surplus with no value. *Maybe...*

CHAPTER SIX

AT THE EDGE OF CHAOS: THE END OF REVOLUTION, THE POLITICS OF RESISTANCE, AND THE SPECTACLE OF SUBVERSION

No “revolution” is “revolutionary” enough.
—Martin Heidegger, *Die Geschichte des Seyns*

6.1 Mephisto’s problem: So, what if there is nothing left behind?

One of the most lucid analyses of the essence of a contemporary world in which the governance of capital becomes the assemblage of the power of techno-science, transnational corporations, and crisis management policies is the monumental study by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello titled *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. The main assumption seems extremely provocative. In spite of late capitalism being a neoliberal doctrine and the practice of the radical privatization of public/common goods in the world from the end of the 1970s to today, one can speak of a reaction to the defeat of the idea of the student rebellion in 1968 (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005). How are we to comprehend this almost emblematic assumption of left-wing theory? For this, we have at least two explanations. One is that capitalism cannot work without periodical crisis. Stability, otherwise, arises from the danger of the system’s collapse. So, the balance of the structural elements of its existence, such as the supply economy, political changes in the bipolar system of liberal democracy and, most importantly, innovation in the field of science and technology, seems to be constantly violated. Therefore, the governance crisis in all situations from political revolutions to the wars of conquest for new markets in the 20th century and today shows the continuation of the power struggle by other means. The classic era of industrial capitalism belongs to modernity. Its ruling idea encompasses unconditional progress. But the late capitalism assembled by IT corporations is based, however, on the idea of sustainable

development. What is the difference? Can it be visible only in the way social relations function? The paradigm of the linear notion of history in the social sciences and humanities has been replaced since 1968 by models of indeterminism and contingency. However, despite the uncertainty in the era of doubt in unlimited economic growth, the facts contradict the heroic pathos of the “Big Defeat”. With the transition from the form of the object/thing in the form of techno-scientific capital to the process of creating a new life (biogenetics and biocybernetics), unconditional progress became a *posthuman condition*. Its main features include the following:

- (1) Science now connects once separate spheres of nature and man by exploring the possibilities of creating artificial intelligence and artificial life. In the *know-how* of the information society, man is reduced to biogenetic code. With it, the experiment is aimed at improving the cognitive-physical capabilities for performing complex work operations. All sciences have now become technoscience. The concept of technology, unlike the technique, is no longer an asset for purposes other than itself as the “essence” of the contemporary era. Technology, hence, refers equally to nature and culture, the production of objects and the way of creation of a subject. The shift from technology to the *technosphere* means the transition from the analogue to the digital paradigm of the historical development of thinking and Being.
- (2) Technology, therefore, combines areas of science and culture, nature and man, information and communication. All technical logic is today digital, and instead of their instrumental power, in the centre arrives a new aesthetic function. But now we are no longer talking about a beautifying of objects. Design, on the contrary, becomes the conception of the new digital world, as the construction becomes the basic notion of complexity, but of the fundamentals of new sciences (cybernetics, informatics, computer intelligence, neuroscience). Artificial intelligence (*AI*) and artificial life (*AL*), thanks to the relationship between nanotechnology and the cognitive machines, have become the creators of life from the uncanny power of immateriality. The space of their proximity and their events is virtual, and time is taking place in the immediate instant. We can define that as a condition of forgetting the past, without being aware of the already possible event of interruption with the order of the perpetual updating of the new.

- (3) Finally, culture simultaneously becomes the life-world and the ideological justification of the performing event of the power of capital and capitalism without alternatives. Within this framework, culture takes the “power” of the irreducible remnant of what is most proximate to the man due to the art and its non-instrumental character of the un-representability of the work. From spectacle to design, from aesthetics to architecture, from high culture to mass culture, identity is constantly emerging. We no longer understand life as a gift and unchangeable destiny. So, to create something new, based on the methods and experimental technoscience and freedom of choice, is more important than a biologically given position as a facticity of Being.

When this “holy trinity” of the *posthuman condition* is translated into the language of communication, then we are immersed deeply into a cognitive model of capitalism. The paradoxes and aporias of historical experience are simply shown in the fact that the 1960s were the years of the highest growth rates in the second half of the 20th century within the capitalism of the West, as well as in the framework of real socialism in Eastern Europe, particularly in the former Yugoslavia. It is by no means a coincidence that this was the time of a pervasive belief in the stability of the new economy, despite regional wars in Indochina and the Middle East and the ongoing political crisis. The welfare state became—due to the Scandinavian model—a desirable image of labour and capital compromise. Structurally speaking, capitalism is expanding through wars of conquest and in the context of the decolonization of the Third World, and it internally intensified its power by political movements for human rights and democracy. The second explanation, however, is that neoliberalism as a new spirit of capitalism should be much broader than the dogma about the privatizing of public/common goods, the disappearance of nation-state sovereignty, and the destruction of civil society institutions. It denotes, in fact, an ideological-political project of establishing a new form of rule and governance. Foucault, in his lectures in the 1980s, used the term *governmentality* (*gouvernementalité*). The substitution of the notion of discourse knowledge/power to the *dispositif* denotes the expected turn that Deleuze determines as the transition from the disciplinary society to the society of control. In short, this might be a kind of connection between the apparatus of political power in the discursive practices of the ruling and the technology of the rule of contemporary capitalism. What are the consequences therefrom in current politics?

Without any doubt, this is a talk about a breaking of the worlds. Ideology, namely, becomes a question of the identity of culture, while politics directly serves the interests of corporations. The forebodings of the right and the left are almost irrelevant. Two models of economic-political rule, two different and programmatically opposing ideologies, correspond to two prevailing economic doctrines in the 20th century. The former is the *Chicago school* as the leader of neoliberalism in the 1970s and the 1980s, and the latter is the *Freiburg school* of Ordoliberalism as a model of the social market economy and a political outlook that is close to the ideas of social democracy of the 1920s (Foucault 2008). The shift of political ideologies in power through proper cycles corresponds to the “bipolar disorder” of the equilibrium of economic models. In both cases—the apology of private entrepreneurship and that of social capital—there is only one purpose and the goal of global capitalism—the sustainable development of capital. Anything else is an illusion and utopia without cover. When the ideological *brand* of capitalism has been changed from the culture of pleasure to an ascetic lifestyle, from greed to humanitarianism, there is always a perversion of reality at play. The hypertrophy of ethics of all colours and flags in the era of biopolitics serves as the media voice of unclean conscience. No one converts to the right path due to a desire for the sanctity of life. Only a fear of punishment and indifference to the suffering of others are the real stimulants for the inflation of ethics today.

Why did neoliberalism become almost the paradigmatic way of action of late capitalism? A possible answer might be the following. Because it represents a network of diverse subjects/actors beyond the nation-state, and by destroying the core of social solidarity, it creates a corporate network of the world’s management strategy as a market which cannot be counteracted by any alternatives that would be on the level of Marx and his consideration of capitalism as a world-historical order that, in an alienated form, represents the absolute power of productivity. We are faced with the destruction of any form of social solidarity. In the name of the “necessity” and “inevitability” of the ultimate purpose and the goal of increasing capital for profit, anything should be allowed (*anything goes*). This post-modern password conceals the brutal irony of a large spectacle. Neoliberalism denotes, therefore, the only total ideology of late capitalism. By combining the nihilism of production and consumption as part of the development of technology, what has remained unsettled since Hegel is a form of the corporation as a kind of absolute “end of history”. The corporation encompasses not just a bureaucratic economic management system. Much more than this, it designates a matrix that organizes a social

overall method of production. In other words, with the corporation, the differences and distinctions between society and the state should disappear. Because there is no fixed territory, as capital is constantly on the move and in transformations of world management, it might not be surprising that the concept of the corporation (*corp.inc*) has represented a substitute for the empty place of God/Law, as in Kafka's and Pynchon's literature. The corporation precisely marks the topology of the idea of *Capital*. We could say that this place is no place in the time of total acceleration.

Just like insects, the corporation or machine of inhumanity constantly changes its physical form by taking on a pure form as such—capital itself as a substance-subject of the end of history. And since human resources (*human capital*) appear as the added values of knowledge, culture and sports, then the new spirit of late 20th-century capitalism transfigured to an evil spirit of the corporation (*network*). The system is organized on the basis of a techno-biological management model. All areas of life become strictly corporately organized. However, this means that the spaces of the public/common good are transformed into the corporate property of the oligarchic elite in post-democratic and authoritarian dictatorships (economy-politics-culture). Would it be legitimate to say that capital designates just another name for the indifference towards the Other? Indeed, does the contemporary capitalism of a corporation-network go beyond liberalism and democracy? The answer should be quite affirmative. Yes, and the evidence for this can be found in China, India, and Russia today.

But the problem is that now labour, as a source of value, no longer needs a naked physical force. An exception, though, exists. We can see that in so-called dirty jobs as a crude intermediary between nature and machine. It is quite clear that this is intended for the poorly educated and immigrants from the Third World in the very heart of Western societies. The loss of living work is substituted by what is created by technoscience—artificial intelligence (*AI*) and artificial life (*AL*). The society of control, therefore, cannot be considered as a continuation of totalitarianism in the 21st century. Deleuze—on the trail of Foucault—just took what was already latent in the essence of total mobilization in the modern era. With the arrival of new computer technology instead of the vertical power of human power over people, we are now all in the *posthuman condition* of the total control of life from the beginning to the end. The process of production itself and the enjoyment of consumption take place in the process of optimal control, regulated by marketing and management, as a *technology of the achievement of desire*. Let us pause here to make it clear that the event is of great importance for the further

development of capitalism entirely. First of all, technology is not external to human desire but denotes its imminent realization in the form of an object beyond the logic of causality. In other words, this technology has represented a realization of the desire for the transformation of the human into the inhumane. Therefore, we can no longer use the distinction between human and non-human. Everything just mentioned above is now so far behind us. We urgently need to change our conceptual tools and our understanding of things entirely.

The liberal idea of freedom is perfectly suited to the non-political way of creating a new community. The term “non-political” refers to the perversion of the ontological rank of politics in modern times. In fact, the purpose becomes the means and the means become the purpose. Politics, hence, today serves the interests of corporations, without exception. From the instrument of protecting the liberal idea of society, politics becomes the uncanny sliding into the mud of oligarchic rule in the world. Citizenship is, therefore, no longer a social formation of identity. In the articulation of life as a contingency and the emergence of units within the networked space, the corporation replaces the class solidarity of workers. The purpose and goal of the political economy of the “lifespan” become profit without visible borders. Thus, the irrational rationality of this new ideology of politics-economy-culture acts as a *dispositif* of power. In this respect, the notion of neoliberalism might be, of course, an ideological creation. The same goes for globalization. These are all fluid network terms. They refer explicitly to the rule of the subject without substance. Today we have with the examples of nation-states without sovereignty or nationalism without a nation (Paić 2005). When there is no longer an “essence” that stands out of the spectrum, we are in the state of quasi-totally. The system functions in binary oppositions, but no longer through the logic of disjunction—*either-or*. We must say that the system is now based strictly on the neutralization of the Other. A new logic denotes the condition of inclusive disjunction (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Everything becomes conceivable only in such a way that the discrepancies are no longer abolished in synthesis as the power to suppress contradictions and to overcome the form and the power to keep and raise the content to a higher degree (*Aufhebung*). Instead of the constructive-destructive dialectics of history, we have a new assemblage which might be termed as *cybernetics without history*. The unpredictability of the chaos of events in all areas of life—from nature to society, from writing to art—marks the “essence” of the post-human condition. At the end of the book *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari are almost craving a golden age of capitalism:

We require just a little order to protect us from chaos. (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 107)

At first glance, it is obvious that the historical movement of modernity denotes the fury of unconditional progress. So, if nothing else, it is worth questioning it as a sort of dogma of the Enlightenment, and then definitely marking off the areas that are involved in the idea of progress. This primarily refers to the source of power. Apart from the real forces of politics and economics, culture is no longer merely a symbolic power. Moreover, the shift in the distribution of the real power of ruling to social capital spaces might already be apparent from the fact that the key subjects/actors of “crisis management” are coming from the quaternary sector. They are logocrats and managers of transnational corporations. A wide network of *know-how* knowledge is made up of pragmatic characters. This means that knowledge in the corporate system network should be exactly what the sociologists and economists of the *Chicago school* determined as hybrid concepts of *human capital*. At work here is the addition to physical capital. The added value is articulated in higher education, culture, health, and sports. Economics in its latest stage of the operation is no longer just a form of consumer or hyper-consumer capitalism based on the creation of the desire for objects (Lyotard 1993). What marks the “here” and “now” holds the features of the total mobilization of information-communication technologies. Their ultimate purpose is to rule the territory of resistance and subversion in the very desire for freedom. Instead of the delirium of spending in a surge of hedonism-business, we have entered into the era of the experimental accumulation of capital. Knowledge about future investment processes requires accounting, planning and construction methods. So, the change consists of the fact that binary oppositions of production and consumption lose their meaning. Synthesis comes from the logic of capital on a *plane of immanence*, speaking in the terms of Deleuze, which arranges the vicious circle of socio-axiomatic stations (production, distribution, exchange, consumption). Everything disappears in a spiral network of feedback. Now, the network itself and the concept of an information code have replaced the metaphysics of the aims and objectives of the entire process. Cybernetics is not just a new universal science of the information age. It would be better to say that we are faced with the beginning of the process of a total change in the relationship between Being and time. These basic concepts of traditional ontology are replaced by cybernetic language. Control and chaos, rationality and indeterminacy, and the planning, construction, and projection of the future determine the methods of the synthesis of the substance and subject.

The new spirit of capitalism, therefore, rests on only one problem, but it goes beyond Mephisto's riddle: how to fully master the world market of a multitude of diverse cultures that in their holograms preserve the past and present experiences of the nation-states with their myths of *arché* and glorious histories of freedom directed to something like a postmodern victimology? Mephisto, therefore, demands a new Faustus in his unquenchable duality to fulfil the metaphysical mission of evil. Since evil is immeasurable because it falls into the area of what is radically different from the mind, history without purpose and aim in something out-of-the-narrative does not seem reasonable. It might be necessary to find a replacement for the ethics-politics of *capital* within its empty core. How is this possible? Paradoxically, the conquest and mastery of cognitive capitalism over the world presuppose a struggle with the last unbowed zones of the common Being of man—a desire for freedom and an irreducible victim in the name of cultural identity. Freedom and sacrifice are seemingly contradictory. But we shall see that correlation and mutual action stand in the very core of the thing itself. Since the idea of freedom without foundation is in something like God and His secular substitutes (people, humanity, race, culture), in order to maintain and neutralize the powerful foundation of the metaphysics of the “source” and the “foundation”, it is necessary to establish the idea of freedom as a new power of quasi-foundation. Without sacrificing the body of an individual and a collective, power cannot be established in the world. Sacrifice in the name of God and His secular surrogates is always, ultimately, just a sacrifice for something else. The meaning comes from the future as utopia. A sacrifice for freedom, however, presupposes a sacrifice for a singular event. Only the event provides an authentic way for the community to grow. Hence it is the only sacrifice beyond the logic of the means-purpose of metaphysical history from Antigone to the anonymous heroes of the political revolutions of the contemporary age.¹⁴

Boltanski and Chiapello did not, however, impose any unexpected assumptions that would not already have been known in circles of neo-Marxist theorists after the defeat of the student movement in 1968. Undoubtedly, it was a matter of explanation close to the thought of Marx at the time of *Capital*, as well as Lacan at the time of *Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. We should be aware that capitalism can survive all epochs of social change because it responds to the demands of the irrational rationality of freedom and desire. What is Mephisto's problem? It would be common to say that Goethe in his *Ur-Faustus* raised the problem of art relations and its sense of the world as a problem of relations between good and evil. What is the point of creation at all if it does not involve the

advancement of humanity in the pursuit of the highest degree of freedom? But, in all interpretations of Goethe's works, since the writings of Bloch or Adorno, the thought about the essence of modern history being delivered from the bondage of nature prevails. Freedom within a modern notion is understood as a radical denaturalization of humans. It belongs to the attempt to remove the "bestiality" and the "animal" from human nature (Derrida 2009). Art is, hence, alongside science and philosophy, a necessary form of overcoming the biological limitations of man. This implies an ontological category of necessity since the sphere of impulse and bondage in the habitual space of sex/gender "necessarily" also means the impossibility of the openness of liberty itself.

If a man is determined by something beyond the nature and necessity of obeying "the purposes" of animal survival, then its space-time may be in the openness of the horizon of Being and time. This openness is placed in the project of the upcoming, and that means that ideas of contingency and emergence become signs of freedom. So, the anthropological machine assumes the possibility of overcoming the necessity of nature. With the creation of artificial nature as a new habitat or frame of existence, thanks to contemporary technology that emerged from experiments with the genetic code, it is not just utopia. Everything changes with the entering of technology into the production of a new life (Sloterdijk 2009; Agamben 2003). We can detect Mephisto's problem in that we—despite the negative dialectics which postulate that truth is not a whole—should start from the "zero point" of modernity itself. If the sovereignty of the subject means a step from the immediate experience of consciousness to mediated self-consciousness, then we should ask ourselves: what if there is nothing left "behind"? The transcendental subject guaranteed that experience is a reliable foundation for a new understanding of history. Kant's suspicion of the possibility of knowing what was "behind" with the means of a pure mind was also a doubt of the ability of the mind to act in the chaotic order of nature without regulation coming from beyond the phenomenon. In other words, without the idea of the over-sensory experience of the thing-in-itself (*Ding-an-sich*) as the first substance, there cannot be, thus, any Copernican turn. The antinomy of a subject is sufficient, but not a necessary reason for the above-expressed. A pure mind can at the same time prove the existence of God and be denied of it (*either-too*). The difference between the apparent (phenomenal) and the unknown (non-apparent) worlds corresponds to the difference in the possibility of the knowledge of Being entirely. Instead of Descartes' methodical doubts, transcendental scepticism has been performed as a critique of the previous metaphysics. If philosophy, from its beginning to its end, is onto-

theological, as Heidegger once claimed, then the question of the subject (*subjectum, hypokeimenon*) is at the same time a question about the meaning of its action. What does this subject really want? From this, it seems evident that the subject has—from the New Era onwards—always been comprehended as the way of thinking as a will of Being. As Heidegger showed in his lectures on Nietzsche, the notion of a subject—from Leibniz through Schopenhauer to Nietzsche—signifies the will and knowledge of the subject as a signifier of the world. This will have been shown in its ontological purity as a will to power. Therefore, it is not the case that the subject wants to overcome that which is opposed to him on the path to the final release of all chains, but he wants it now and unconditionally. All figures of the subject which Heidegger has already overcome are only transforming metaphysics into the issue of the end of metaphysics as the end of the epoch of the subjectivity of the subject, which means the end of society as a modern creation of the rule of the subject entirely.

But with what right are we talking of the possibilities of radical change from the perspective of the will to power? Freedom requires legitimacy as the human body demands its right to exist beyond the service to the mind. However, the “zero point” of the sovereign rights of the subject for the violent demolition of the political order through revolution or subversion surely does not arise without the launch of this entire anthropological machine. The “zero point” consists of the fact that modern science as the initiator of human history (progress)—in Hegel, the absolute spirit in the consciousness of freedom, and in Marx, the overcoming/abolition (*Aufhebung*) of the social relationship in which the essence becomes capital¹⁵—does not come from the good, nor from hell. The starting position of the “zero point” of the historical-epochal condition might be determined by what Heidegger called the *enframing* (*Gestell*). The problem that arises here is thus the impossibility of acting without the purpose of the action. The first cause or substance that triggers the subject of the process of historical movement must be suspended or neutralized. *Tertium not datur*. For Marx, the idea of capital was still in the likeness of substance and subject as a synthesis of values and desires. This means that what may be called the empty space of the sublime Other, or the mystery of the society in the epoch of capitalism in all its historical stages of development, is located outside the capital itself. Heidegger’s assertion that the essence of the technique is nothing technical corresponds to Marx’s claim that the capital is located beyond capitalism as a social formation that, in the West, has its correlation with the idea of a free citizen, private property, and the market economy. In both cases, the

problem comes down to the search for the origin of the fall into the inauthenticity of Being, beings, and the essence of man. The difference can be determined precisely in that Heidegger thinks of history as the destiny of Being from the original time(ness) of the event. In the effort, however, to reverse Hegel's dialectics, Marx thinks of history as starting from the linear perspective of infinite development and the free production of life.

The essence of the enframing (*Gestell*) is in the emergence of the constellation of modern technology. So, it is not only the production power of modern society. Moreover, technology signifies the substance and subject of that process. When this happens in the "essence" of what we call the real process of the production of life, then the main question is no longer "what" is behind the phenomenon of the world with the rule of capital. On the contrary, the main question is "how" does the inhumane—instead of being a desire for freedom and sacrifice on behalf of the identity of the nation in the modern world—become a driver of the axiomatic order of capitalism? This inhumane—as Mephisto's response to the question of the abyss of freedom—is revealed in the methods and experiments of techno-sciences. With the research into artificial intelligence (*AI*) and artificial life (*AL*) comes the decisive turn in the notion of the "essence" of capital. If this is no longer physical work but a *technosphere*, we are faced with a techno-political and social turn with larger consequences. We used this concept, anyway, as a vivid metaphor for the living cybernetic machine. In the idea of capital, the concepts of value and time are closely related. The abstraction of real-life allows only the concrete existence of the emergence of the world of goods. The *thing* becomes a commodity thanks to the market value of the exchange. All the secrets of understanding the *society of the spectacle* from Debord to Agamben are reduced to the fetishism of goods in the form of images from the production to the consumption of visual capital. What are the proportions of the corporate revolution in an understanding of Being and time? When a subject determines the setting of nature by the activity of the pure mind in the form of natural science, then the substance is no longer the first cause in the idea of the infinity of God. The subject takes that place. It takes on the transcendental structure of the pure mind (Kant). Contemporary science thus becomes a paradigm for the transformation of consciousness in self-consciousness, and the subject reflects itself in the knowledge of the subject as such. The turning point towards the subject, or the "zero point" of modern epistemology, is not just a matter of philosophy. Of course, this act not only gets rid of the shackles of scholastic theology. As Agamben has credibly demonstrated in his genealogical research on the emergence of modern ideas of governance, sovereignty and power, the

emergence of a political economy is a result of the transformation of the idea of the infinite substance (God) into the idea of the end of Being. We can read this ontological operation in this manner: the sovereignty of God is replaced by the sovereignty of the people. Adam Smith, therefore, named his new science on methods of researching the wealth of nations as the national or political economy. So, economy and politics in the modern sense represent the secularization of the theological machine of ruling with the idea of two separate worlds—divine and human (Agamben 2010). For its new start, the subject must necessarily have that negative as a foundation. The sovereignty of the rule and the absolutism of power in the modern discourse begins with this turn. The substance appears as an essence in all of its forms of existence. The policy of the sovereignty of the nation-state, in turn, corresponds to the modern capitalism of industrial production. But this works only in the confines beyond the ideas of nature and life. Thus, the notion of immanence or openness entered contemporary thinking, from Spinoza through Nietzsche to Deleuze.

The immanent limit is still not fixed. The order of the economy-world of 1914 and the beginning of the First World War shows that which is latent in the essence of capital. So, the implosion of its limits refers to a new definition of the world. Instead of global expansion, we are faced with planetary expansion (Heidegger 1997, 8). Thus, the term “globalization” conditionally indicates the dominance of space over time. Expansion (*extensio*) represents the matter in the sense of its extensibility. By contrast, the term “information” belongs to the area of immateriality. The time of virtual actualization points to its moment(-ariness). When the “world” computerization process is taking place, then the various experiences of time are necessarily annulled. Everything is equalized. But everything is also translated in the format of the virtual presence of information that becomes faster and easier to read because it comes on the application of visual transparency. The planetary nature of spatiality opens new odds to the whole assemblage of actions and achievements. That is a reason why the truth of the new spirit of capitalism lies in its full implosion. The term, as it is known, was born in McLuhan’s media theory. The bottom line is the compression and reduction of the meaning of this information. The right formula for our age should thus be performed in this way: *the implosion of information = the ecstasy of communication* (Baudrillard 1998, 145-154). In that sense, the terms of capitalism today as a globalized economy-world—in which we have a network of communication instead of society, and wherein information technology determines the flows of capital and the fluid exchange processes in the instant of time—become not only empirically verifiable. That is, also, a reason why the only real

problems of the current world are how to turn the substance into the subject and the issue of the emergence of techno-science in accelerating streams of time.

The failure to analyze time in comprehending social processes can be explained very easily. Time accelerates when the biological cycle is interrupted by the introduction of technological rationality in modern industrial society. So, modernity denotes a time of radical change. The effects are visible from the outside, not from the inside. This means that the subject is objectified in industrialization, rationalization, and the creation of mass society. The work-technology conflict with the life-world shows itself in the expansion of space. In that regard, a homogeneous time of discipline and control in the linear thickening of the flow emerge. On the other hand, the only odds of resistance derive from the desire of the subject for the slowness and reflective extension of the time of self-consciousness as a space of freedom. The runtime-technology index encompasses a time of productivity and a time of the life-world in such a way that memories and relaxation might be desirable places in dreams, as well as in our collective imagination. In modern literature, of course, this is evident in the novels of James Joyce and Marcel Proust. *Ulysses* happens in a single day. In *In Search of Lost Time*, the modern subject opposes the tyranny of “eternal actuality” with synesthetic memory. The total mobilization of capital and acceleration of subjects/actors of this game of the “infinite end” of Mephisto shows that whatever we still call by the name of social processes, social forms of the relationship between technology and nature, and social interactions between techno-science and humans are nothing other than fundamental proofs of changes concerning the self-consciousness (self-knowledge) of modern society in general.

Life in a *high-speed society*, as Rosa and Scheuerman explain, must be the process of the radical deployment of power (Rosa and Scheuerman 2010). So, the speed cannot just be the result of some cause. Furthermore, speed does not just determine the property of the movement of the body in space. From Einstein’s theory of relativity, it is known that the speed of light presupposes the condition of the observer’s time perspective. Likewise, the acceleration of the events that are dizzyingly alternating in the consciousness of the observer point to the turning point in the cognitive-aesthetic shaping of our world. Attention or accumulated perception in the visual culture of late capitalism determined the quite new notion on that subject (Beller 2006). Information circulates within social networks and does not come from an unknown source like the divine creation *ex nihilo*. This means that the interactivity of new media in the digital environment provides new opportunities for action. In the process

of thinking, there is a change in the relationship between “Being” and “appearing”. In that assemblage, what does *interactivity* mean? The term comes from the logic of new media. It refers to the mediated immanence of dialogue and discourse techniques through new communication channels. The interactivity of new technologies synthesizes the cognitive experience of machines and humans. So, the thinking thus loses the autonomy of what Lyotard calls—in the footsteps of Edmund Husserl—the conceptual monogram (*noema*). It becomes a computer hologram. Instead of the unpredictability of events, there is a programming situation which is very complex, and very predictable. Models from theory are surely incredibly complex, unlike other existing models in our daily reality. The speed of the reaction is such that the event cannot happen without a media structure. So, the media event already assumes its various interpretations. The best examples of this include the rebellions against dictatorships and the violence of authoritarian orders from Egypt to Libya and Syria during the *Arab Spring*, the action against the oligarchic policy of the global order of power known as *Occupy Wall Street*, the overthrow of the autocratic political order in Ukraine, the radical demands for social justice in protests in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and so on. The transformation of the subject into contemporary philosophy is also the activity of the deconstruction of the metaphysical sources of its power. When this happens, we are witnessing that the question of “what or who is a subject” remains, as a rule, without a precise answer. The reason lies in the fact that we suppose it has to exist, if not as some new subject then at least as its supplement or even as a surrogate (Cadava 1991). In the deconstruction of the concept of authority in Western metaphysics, Derrida opened the problem of the new creation of political power at a time without a subject. If the collapse of the idea of the subject in philosophy after Hegel is analogous to the disintegration of the idea of sovereignty after the demolition of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and entry into the global age, then the concept of interactive media is not replaced with an intersubjectivity of consciousness. As for the path of the deconstruction of the concept of man as the subject of his own “destiny”, it must be open. Of course, it still seems to be naive to talk about individual and collective subjects. Why? The reason is in that society in the *posthuman condition* has its *topos* in steady and constant acceleration. Instead of the individual and the collective, some anthropologists and sociologists like Bruno Latour use terms such as “actors of the network of social events”, while Niklas Luhmann defines society by the concepts of cybernetics and the theory of complexity, referring to the autopoietic systems of life (Latour 1996a; Luhmann 1998). An individual and a collective have their own meanings

within a model of social subjectivity in which a hierarchical order of roles governs. In the corporate model, only actors are active in the network. They are linked to the non-hierarchical condition of management. The order is—like the autopoietic network of events—re-established by itself thanks to emergent networks rather than individual and collective patterns of action.

The question should, therefore, be set in a completely different way. It is no longer about “what” or “who” should be the subject of this uncanny process of the total mobilization of capital, but about *how*—in that inhuman state—the rule of the fleeing techno-science with its constructions of artificial life (*AL*) in robotics, nanotechnology, genetic engineering, and computer intelligence can still hold onto the notions of “substance”, “subject”, “Being”, and “time” and their associated spheres of economy, politics and culture if everything becomes fluid and metastable, and a cognitive activity of the monitoring of (visual) events has accumulated all that matters in the cultural capital of the spectacle. Nothing is a free and simple result of a media-created event. What are the consequences of this total change of the world if we can no longer define the boundaries of society compared to the state as it functioned in the golden age of modern capitalism? Is it not really the end of the idea of the subject which disappeared not only with the political sovereignty of nation-states but took another dramatic dissolution on a global level and seems like a direction towards the end of society in general? Of course, this kind of desolation is not original. It derives from Heidegger’s thinking of the technique. In the position of *Gestell* as the essence of technique, Heidegger claims, in fact, that industrial society as a mark for modern society is only the result of modern subjectivity. The so-called social essence of a man is determined therefore from the creation of modern subjectivity as the rule of science and the technique of nature as an object. Society can appear as a subject only when its object is a result of modern industrial production. In that sense, any extension of the concept of subjectivity corresponds to the extension of the notion of society to all other areas of human Being (Heidegger 1977, 125). Talking about the acceleration of society, the society of control, the networked society, the information society, the telematic society, or this or that society without its subject necessarily leads to the process of the drying-up of the social from society in general. The same can be seen in the works of contemporary art after Duchamp. With a request for the social participation of artists in the public space in which real life is taking place, there is an increasing demand for finding a new subject of the legitimacy of the artwork/events of the art itself. Through the processes of disappearing of modern society,

it loses the cause of its meta-aesthetic desire to change the state of things. By the way, one of the features of the techno-scientific view of art is that the underlying concepts of technoscience—the method and the experiment—are those that give contemporary art a meta-aesthetic meaning. Moreover, without these concepts, it no longer has reasons to justify itself. The politics of resistance and the culture of subversion thus become substitutes for giving up on the total revolution of the capitalist mode of production. From Malevich and Duchamp to Beuys and Warhol, we can testify that the process of “drying” the substance of contemporary art reaches its end. The road goes straight on towards a *spectacle of the picture without the world* (Paic 2006).

What we still call “society” without an external, transcendental source that still allows interaction between the subjects/actors within the global system and the environment in its illusion of subjecting at the level of world-historical activity, or so-called sociolinguistic activity, might be the consequence of deploying capital from industry to information. Technology, however, is not neutral. Nevertheless, modern society as a subject is indeed an object of its own determination in industrial production. When cybernetics and informatics emerge in relation to the genetic structure of life, we enter into the area of the biotechnological control of the process of life’s subjectivization. However, this idea arises in the actualized reality of corporate capitalism. It is beyond the modern separation of the areas of politics (state) and the economy (society). The turn stems from the fact that contemporary capitalism as a bio-techno-cognitive network of information no longer needs anything that is “behind” the event itself. There is no more distinction between symptoms and phenomena as a source of the ideological creation of reality. Instead of something beyond phenomena, we have a transparency of events without a subject. The absolute immanence of the *thing itself* ensures that capital is not an idea that needs its realization in the real world. On the contrary, we are faced with the construction of the event as well the world like a cybernetic network. Its only purpose seems to be, as Deleuze and Guattari said, to protect us from chaos with just a little bit of order. If capital is always missing the “Earth” and “its people”, it might be possible to argue that this deficiency is the internal driver of the whole process. The nihilistic desolation of the “Earth” goes hand in hand with the displacement/settling of a “people”. From the infinite end in the processes of transforming matter into information, information into communication, as well as people into capital, the sole idea of capital is nothing social in the sense of eternal human condemnation to a common life. At work is an epochal contingency. It may, however, seem that this is the last social

order in which human liberty reaches the state of the Absolute in the sense of the “perpetual present”. In this way, the abstract and concrete connect to the technological assemblage, in a theoretical and practical sense, and construct the brave new artificial life (*AL*). Mephisto’s problem of history “today” is precisely in that. So, what comes after knowing that there is nothing left behind? History without fate and the drama of “evil” certainly lose the cause of their existence (historicity). What is left? In the name of what are we to act? With what purpose and aim do we stand on the new barricades to sacrifice this and our only life for something else, something Other? Finally, in the name of which idea are we to heroically attack the spectres of the new winter castles and fortresses if “behind” the global scene is nothing more than emptiness and nothingness?

6.2 The end of the revolution: A subject without event?

We almost forgot to look at the stars. Let us leave the superstitions and prophecies of *new age* esotericism aside for the time being. Here we are thinking of the connection between the ways of Western thinking from its emergence to its end in contemporary technoscience. That thinking should always be total. It does not decay in the debris of the systems, although there are historical periods in which the speciality has a larger specific weight than the whole: for example, Hellenism on the outcome of antiquity and the rule of the Greek spirit on the interim time between early and late modernity, which we call the post-modern condition (Lyotard 1979). Metaphysics, hence, appears as part of the onto-theo-cosmological anthropology (Sutlić 1987). Each community from the *arché* of mankind has its basis in the relationship between heaven and earth, immortal and mortal. Plato’s *Republic* (*politeia*) combines cosmic harmony with the virtues of people in the unity of difference between *theoria*, *praxis* and *poiesis*. The politics of the new era in Rousseau and Hobbes, the republican state and the Leviathan, cannot establish a modern way of life in a political community without the substitution of the divine (Critchley 2012). All the political revolutions since 1789 have—as the sacredness of their own ideas—the relation between citizens and man in the dialectic of the nation-state and the cosmopolitan order of values. The French Revolution had the rights of man and citizens at its centre, that which is universal and particular. Let us leave aside the criticisms that focus attention on the emptiness of defining the notion of “man” by becoming a native member of the ruling nation in the state (France). Without the ideals of the freedom of mankind, all the political revolutions of the modern era are unfinished.

By entering into the global era of the information society, for the first time, it is true that the idea and reality in the present world of the power of the rule of the one and the same are in the differences of world history as the history of the *technosphere*. Being, God, the cosmos, and man are the integrity of the assemblage as a whole. So, it can be sustained only under the condition that each member within it has its own “autonomy” in relation to others. Hence, something might be clear in advance. Those who speak of revolution from the new era onwards must always keep in mind that almost any “new” revolution takes place by making this metaphysical assembly grow, decompose, and reorder it, as Marx did with Hegel’s dialectics. However, it remains unquestionable that the revolution, as a matter of fact, represents a radical and total change not only of what is called society but above all of Being and time. Without this, no man, nor the cosmos, nor even God can be conceived as they were “before”. With all that having been said, every great revolution in history shaped a new time. Rimbaud, in the *Letters of the Visionary*, announced revolutionary violence against symbols of tradition, but he also anticipated something more far-reaching. The subject is no longer defined from the position of the pure mind. The removal of this “transcendental illusion” begins as the concept of Other constitutes the Self. The Other, taking it explicitly, does not have the features of an intersubjective Other. On the contrary, the Other signifies the move beyond the fringe of the subject’s boundaries from what is embedded in the language itself. Speaking and understanding the world as truth precedes reflections “on” the world. This is the same as if language, from its own indefiniteness, goes beyond the limits of the mediation of thought and the world. This is, finally, the notion with which we enter into the field of ontology and its critique, destruction and deconstruction (Agamben 2007). Its critique and destruction correspond to the question of the end or disappearance of the subject in the ephemeral significance of revolution and turns of events, and the deconstruction of the subject by the distribution of its traces and signs in the space-time of text and images corresponds to the question of resistance and subversion towards capitalism as power without foundation in fixed identity. The scheme should be taken only as the outline of one hypothetical idea:

THE SUBJECT AND ITS OVERCOMING

1. Critique of the political economy—revolution and communism (Marx)
2. Destruction of traditional ontology—the event and the upcoming God (Heidegger)

3. The deconstruction of logocentrism—the difference between history and upcoming time, the messianic without God (Derrida)
4. The overcoming of the metaphysics of the subject—the plane of immanence and creative utopia (Deleuze)

ANALOGUE TIME AND THE DIGITALIZATION OF THE WORLD

Revolution, therefore, does not belong to either Being or time in the traditional meaning of stability, immutability, and eternity. The word refers to the unpredictability and the contingency of *events*. With the event of the revolution, everything becomes new. Nothing is reducible to the “old”. And time is no longer considered as the time of this fluid and flowing series of “now”. Becoming, in the change of the existing order, determines the development of a presence in a virtual actualization of the possibilities of Being. So, the upcoming event should be highlighted in the presence of a real event itself. But there are still no signs of change yet. The distinction of concepts such as “order”, or a “system” vs. “revolution”, presupposes, first of all, the differentiation of what legitimizes such an “order” or “system” and, on the other hand, the justification of the revolutionary promise of the change of a rule established by force of law. Legitimacy, of course, comes from the law. This term defines the use of the mind in the process of judging truth, good and evil, the motives of action, and the purpose of action. The relationship between the legitimacy of a state based on the sovereignty of a monarch or a nation according to “revolutionary violence” is always articulated in an attitude towards the modern world and in the relationship of political power and ethics within it. Herbert Marcuse, in his book entitled *Reason and Revolution: Hegel and the Rise of Social Theory*, showed clearly that, from the speculative philosophy of modernity with its highest point in Hegel, the question of revolution means something much more than a mere change in the political order (Marcuse 1962). For Hegel, the question of revolution belongs to the development of the awareness of freedom in history. When new institutions of the objective spirit are established in modernity—civil society (economics) and the state (politics)—what brings to an assemblage “reason” and “revolution”, the thinking and the event of a radical change of Being, is the overcoming/abolition (*Aufhebung*) of history as a sign of the alienation of the subject. It is not by chance that Hegel subsumed a subjective spirit under the objective in the logical and historical sense. The revolution opens the question of making a new historical complex. It reconfigures the old concepts, ideas and categories of the entirety of

metaphysics. Only then can we continue to talk about, for example, scientific revolutions and the paradigms of changes in theory and practice.

If the revolution should be a radical and total change in the historical framework, then the question of the subject of the revolution (“who” or “what”) must be crucial to any further notion of the impossibility of revolution in cybernetics and technoscience today. What, then, is the revolution and who might its subject be? With the new era of Copernicus and his heliocentric system, which proved that the Earth revolves around the Sun, the career of the concept of revolution (*revolutio*) began. In astronomy, revolution denotes the circular motion of the planets. So, it is obvious that we are not going “forward” or “backwards” with revolutions, but are instead growing in the circle of that which is constantly new. The ontological problem with the modern concept of revolution began with the Enlightenment. It was then that the linearity of historical movement towards the infinite progress of knowledge of nature and man was manifested by the separation between the “old” notion of the world and the “new”. The former is a circular motion without the idea of change, and the latter assumes the rule of linearity as the current potential of Being. In any case, with the Enlightenment, we witness a break with the idea of history as was determined in the ancient and medieval world. The capitalist revolution was necessarily the breakthrough of the “new” on the front of the total mobilization of productive forces (technology). Therefore, the time of modernity and the time of the capitalist mode of production is just an empty time of technical updating. Everything that has to be “new” is always condemned to rapid obsolescence. So, the preservation of the past appears as a phenomenon in today’s discomfort with digital oblivion in dizzying accelerated time. But what creates the condition of the possibility of asking questions about the subject of the revolution and its possible end or revival in another historical context is something that is somewhat uncanny. We have already seen that the problem of alternatives to the new spirit of capitalism is that they begin with the rebuilding of the devastated civil society on other grounds. It is always like the political foundations of the condition of self-rejection in the limited space of early modernity. This space is determined by the political sovereignty of the state and the freedom of organizing society. With the disappearance of sovereignty, they no longer have access to global corporate capital from the grid, since capital is without a homeland, beyond local projections, and has its own destiny. *Wherever we move away to, we are still just nomads and aliens in the night of the world’s loss of authenticity.* That is the problem.

Capital is at work in the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization in ever new spaces across the scope of the Earth. Just

like the mystery of Zeno's turtle, which Achilles is unable to catch in the aporia of the impossibility of movement, so the capital that is opposed to work is divided by the total acceleration of the cycle of its own reinvestment. The subject of revolution must, therefore, be in the "essence" of the idea of capital as a corporation. On the other side of the state and society, the event will suddenly arrive, unpredictable and out of nowhere, like a new apocalypse of history. In this sense, all events of a radical and total change of matters are at the edge of chaos. This is proof of the phrase that it is not possible to foresee "the future development of the event". This is clear, because the event is not finished as a cause that applies to processes in nature if they are isolated from the viewer's point of view. There is the only anticipation of future situations, not events. The difference between the situations and conditions (states) and the event lies in the fact that the event takes place in a discontinuity of time, and situations and conditions are fractals of events, isolated and reduced to elementary particles of the process. Conversely, in the event, there is an openness to the odds of change. The event changes the situation and the conditions, not *vice versa*. In a certain frame of uncertainty, all that is shown is how many things that are happening in the global age in politics are related to models of complexity theory (Byrne 1998). There are, therefore, two possible answers to the question of the subject (of revolution) and its (im)possibilities in the current world. From that, it is self-evident that there are two different subjects in the possibility of performing the event of total and radical changes in the metaphysical drive of history.

(1) The subject of the revolution is what might be called the condition of the possibility of the creation of a "subject", and that can only be that which is without foundation in anything external and transcendental, regardless of God or His secular substitutions from people to humankind. The freedom without foundation is like an event of breaking with the continuity of history. All other ideas are derived from it, from the era of ancient Greek democracy to the present. Equality in this way has a decisive significance for the political revolution of modernity. It is not just about equalizing inequality in the sphere of the wealth of society, but it is something that could prevent the corruption and erosion of democracy in under oligarchic rule. Since 1989 and the end of real socialism, the idea of equality has been perceived as a path to economic poverty and "political monotheism", to use Lévinas' expression for the suppression of differences in thinking. Keeping all of this in mind, one can easily conclude that all "revolutions" after 1989 in the world are simply political revolutions against:

- (a) the autocratic order of governance, and
- (b) the oligarchic model of state and society management based on the association of corporate capitalism and political elites.

Political revolutions at the time of late capitalism inside and outside of the control space of so-called Western civilization, from the *Arab Spring* to Ukraine, were everything but a radical and total event of a change of the “world”. The turnovers that followed the bringing down of the power of the totalitarian and autocratic leaders testify to that. Then, instead of the fundamental values of the modern world contained in the *Declaration of the Rights of the Man and of the Citizen* from the French Revolution, arriving in the centre are the values of the nation, culture, race, and religion. *Political post-totalitarian revolution ends as an identity politics. That means that they are only changes in the values in culture, rather than the radical and total politics of “changing the world”. Instead of the “events” that are so celebrated in the political ontologies of neo-Marxist philosophers, we have only that which makes the “essence” of our age—a subject without substance, or a subject without events.* This can be called whatever you like—decentred, “tricky”, spiralling, this or that subject. But one thing should be more than obvious. The position of such an entity can only be that which Confucius once said regarding the concept of universality: *a white horse is still a horse*. In principle, the question of the subject necessarily presupposes the time of the total objectification of man and what still determines him as a man—thought and language. A subject without event is of the same rank as freedom without power.

What really happened? Just and only the following. The subject of revolutionary politics loses its justification in the clash with the logic of a corporation as a non-place. “Behind” this lies nothing than a pure *plan of immanence*: the entities of the post-human network event correspond to what Vanja Sutlić in his seminal book entitled *The Being and Contemporaneity* from 1967—as well as Heidegger in *Four Seminars*—called *stability in change*. The event, therefore, boils down to the establishment of the “zero point” of the liberation of the “people” from tyranny, dictatorship, and despotism. Nothing more and nothing less. When an entity cannot justify itself by elevating itself to the very event of the revolution as a radical and total change in the metaphysical framework of God-Being-World-Human, the subject then breaks down into a micro-politics of resistance and subversion and necessarily becomes an identity politics. On the barricades, the rebellion is happening, but against whom and what? Capital as such? Unfortunately, for all enthusiastic utopians, angry righteous militants, mystical fighters against the world’s injustices,

and those who actually have something to lose from work to life and dignity, barricades and guerrillas are only fragments of that which Guy Debord calls the *integrated spectacle* (Debord 1995). It is an event without events, a frontal conflict of binary oppositions that are no longer relevant to the logic of late capitalism. *The state is now without sovereignty and society without integral solidarity. Capital in this regard no longer has a "natural enemy". The reason lies in the fact that the working class is "outdated" and "delayed" in relation to the total acceleration and transformation of the rhizome networks and fractals with which technoscience operates in the engineering of artificial life.* Capital drives work, not *vice versa*. This structural perversion explains why speculative-financial capital nowadays embodies psycho-figures like Gordon Gekko, the main character of Oliver Stone's movie *Wall Street*, a real rhizome in the corporate network of endless greed for pure value. Greed should be not called the psychopathology of a deranged individual. On the contrary, it could be a reckless embodiment of the will to power. Therefore, Gekko is not mad *an-sich*. In that figure, we are faced necessarily with a pure embodiment of the "spirit of new capitalism". The madness is thus completely conscious of its own rationality. Undoubtedly, that is a reason why the system works flawlessly in global crises.

There is no such thing as "human nature". Of course, there are states and situations in which someone "is" what he/she has "become", because what determines the conditions and situations already presupposes the possibility of the "subject" of its own execution. In turn, this means that the system simultaneously creates and does not create psychopathic individuals. It is only thanks to the *feedback* system and the environment that it is possible to outgrow the monster from the gloom of indifference towards the Other. All this may possibly be due to the disappearance of society in the neoliberal ideology of capitalism with the outcome of the loss of the subjectivity of man at the very beginning of modernity. The French sociologist Gabriel Tarde saw in the early 20th century how the process of rationalization in industrial capitalism creates a new form of mass indifference towards the public/common space of democratic politics. The transformation of the civil public into the mass audience of the staged event is an unbreakable way of creating "emptiness" in the value of order. *Dictators in the era of post-democracy might be possible because society has become a mass, and the mass becomes the reign of mediocrity in the era of the media construction of events. The banality of rule in mass society stems from indifference to the technique of ruling. Everything should be regulated by calculation, planning and construction: from sports to art, from the sublime to radical evil.*

(2) The subject of the revolution is no longer in what has been achieved by Marx's deduction of categories, itself derived from Hegel's reversed dialectic on the grounds of real materialist history. Instead of the proletariat that abolishes itself through its realization in the absolute work of machinery, a substitute of neoliberal global capitalism—the *precariat*—emerges (Lorey 2010). As a result of the corporate capital strategy in creating a “new Earth” and a “new people”, a highly educated class of unemployed can be nothing but what it really is, and this is a temporary state of disposition for capturing the axiomatic machine of global capital in its fluid flow of nets and codes. The fluidity of capital flows corresponds to temporary employment. Serious life in the shadow of the rule of techno-science and bloody ethnocultural wars become the main marks of the global order of capital without labour. The problem is that both subjects—which are always in relation to the total power of the techno-sciences in the form of corporate cognitive capital (artificial intelligence and artificial life)—are only the substitutes in the movement of what is necessarily “late” and “outdated”. Only buildings, industrial complexes and factories are not obsolete. Apart from the apocalyptic graveyard of modern technology, we are facing the waste of the information age almost every single day. We can see how this is not limited only to product design, but how it also extends the brain of the software that drives the appliance that becomes unsuitable for new complexity operations. The only real problem that affects contemporary information technology, as well as contemporary art itself, comes down to the increase of memory. What is outdated the most is life itself within the work of the subject. It is irrelevant whether the subject is understood as the creator of new technical worlds or, in turn, as Lacan's and Deleuze's decentred subject of desires. Theoreticians of new media are prone to say that the media is faster than man. The same goes for the capital in the form of the acceleration of its substance. Revolutions are crucially “outdated” because society, in the total acceleration of techno-science and information technology, must adapt to the fluidity of networks or fall into the quicksand of history forever. This scenario cannot be very comforting for the ability to master whatever remains of history. That is precisely why this is not the scenario of any dystopia of the future. On the contrary, this is what is reckless and the only *real* in all its traumatic void of any other definition except the bare facticity of the very *thing*. A subject that is not even an answer to the question of “what” is the essence of man within the network of corporate nonsense—nor the answer to the question of “who” this is or “who” the ones are who determine the rules of the game in the transformation of the condition of the global order—obviously cannot

aspire to the desire for freedom, equality, solidarity and justice. All of that shows how this world is approaching the edge of chaos.

The question of the subject is, in its turn, always an issue about the “zero point” of thought. Who really thinks? I or We? The thought is thinking, and language speaks. The subjectivity of the subject, thus, denotes a feature of thinking, but paradoxically no longer in language as Being, as in Heidegger’s thought, but dwelling in an experimental laboratory by constructing “being” as a techno-genesis and accelerating time to its disappearance into the black hole of information. In the movies *The Thin Red Line* and *The Tree of Life*, both directed by Terrence Malick, as a sort of philosophical meditation on the origins and end of the human in the angelic landscapes of verdure and atmosphere of ocean solitude, we begin and end with these issues: *Where do we come from? Where are we going? Are we here by chance or do we accomplish a mysterious goal? What is the meaning of all this suffering if we are finally awaiting bliss and nothingness? Who are we? Are we raindrop or dew?* Whoever talks about a subject necessarily talks about the intentionality of the action of that and such a subject. Already this proves to be a problem. How do I act at a time when an entity in its subject does not have a place (topology) for the realization of the possibility of existence? Modern society, therefore, did not remain without its subject in the sovereignty of citizens as the foundation of the nation-state. It was constituted by the subject of disjunction. This means that, from the very beginning, the subject of the revolution was its own double, as Foucault says in his critique of Kant’s thinking. The transcendental subject doubles in the empirical and *vice versa*. Capital doubles in its drift into work and *vice versa*, but this process of taciturn or constant transformation remains one and the same in its differences. What might be “the same” in the differences? Nothing but the subject as its own object in a state of stability in change. Who, then, is the subject of revolution as the event of a total and radical change of this world? The answer is apocalyptic: capital as the substance of the whole process from the beginning to the end, from the formation to the disappearance, from the “source” to the black hole of Being. Where does all this come from and where does it go? Now-here and nowhere. *The complete teleology of capitalism is, therefore, a negative eschatology. Revolution is not a process of transformation, but a total and radical change of the “same” in its differences, so that new and different become “the same” at the same time. Revolution and crisis, hence, are conditions for the stability of the capitalist mode of production.* This is the most astonishing thing in the whole narrative of the rise and fall of the subject in modern times. When there is nothing left behind, it is the time for

immanent transcendence and its doubles, such as the politics of resistance and spectacle, or the culture of subversion.

6.3 Metapolitics of identity: From resistance to subversion

Let us go back to the main assumption of Boltanski and Chiapello in their book *The New Spirit of Capitalism*. If it is analyzed again in its own starting point, we will see something even more uncanny. The defeat of the student movement of 1968 was not the defeat of the “revolution” against capitalism as such, but rather the defeat of the structural possibilities of association between the two faces of modern work or the “subjects” of values in modern society. Remembering all theoretical attempts to illuminate the essence of 1968 and all that which would follow from the paradigm shift of labour in the paradigm of culture, which is convincingly witnessed by the key sociological concept of cultural capital in the works of Pierre Bourdieu in which economic and social capital is involved (Bourdieu 1977), we will notice that the reasons for the impossibility of workers and students meeting in the struggle against capital were, in fact, in the apparently paradoxical structural disorder of the relationship between the two opposing “classes”. One belonged to the industrial drive of early modern factories, while the other was the beginning of the development of this famous cultural capital or cognitive capital of late modernity. The former class represents a traditional class of physical labour, and the latter is one that is formed by a combination of technoscience, cybernetics and information in the space of the cognitive “knowledge factory”—the university as a corporation. It might not be possible to establish any work except the philanthropic and utopian work between workers and students. Namely, the ethics and awareness of the position of misery and the exploited proletarian class are beyond the point, whereas what is in question is the objective position of that which Marx in *Capital* called the dialectics of productive forces (technology and science) and relationships in production (the whole spectrum of social interactions). The problem is, then, that between the work and the capital, a new powerful mediator comes into play. This develops precisely as a result of Marx’s dialectics of historical progress (productive forces + productive relationships = corporation as Absolute). This mediator has been created by the logic of the unconditional progress of capitalism in the sense of innovations in technology and improvements in the living conditions of consumer societies. When the consumption of the 1960s became the trademark of the final frontier of Western civilization instead of work and

production, signs and designs were introduced to substitute the real world. Semicapitalism is the sovereign governor of the space of the inhumane.

When meditating comes into play between physical and cognitive capital, the result might be visible in their mutual permeation of each other. What is born from the “new” in this process can no longer be overcome as a matter of “superstructure”, as was normal for the capitalism of the 19th century. Culture, in all manifestations of the aesthetic construction or design of the information society’s life-world, will then have a decisive function of a new ideology. What determines the new spirit of capitalism is nothing other than the fact that culture has become a new political economy of capitalism. It encompasses cognitive capital in the form of knowledge that perfectly embodies the new productive forces of progress, such as technoscience and cybernetics, and the production relationships, such as all corporately-formed spheres of what we call the irreducible residues of social life (education, social welfare, healthcare, the service sector, cultural industry, *entertainment*). A whole library of books about the post-modern or informational economy of human and cultural capital has been written before now. One thing is common to all these sociological attempts to explain our era of contingency and entropy. Absolutely nothing outside or “behind” the very mega-machine of capital as the driver of social change—and, at the same time, of the disappearance of society in the total mobilization of techno-science—can in any way turn this “frantic ship” away from its nihilistic journey of the conquest and realization of the absolute desire/will to power beyond all human limits. The problem is that the whole of the turn in which ideology becomes a culture, and culture an ideology, has taken place within a radical transformation of social relations mediated by what Deleuze calls the *axiomatic machine of capitalism*. But what is meant by the fact that there are no longer any oppositions of consciousness and unconsciousness, truth and lies, nature and culture, progress and advancement? With the rise of cybernetics and information systems, society has become telematic. Communication that today has the shape of social networks represents a new techno-culture of the body that dictates the difference between the living and the inactive, the not-living.

Therefore, the transition of ideology into the form of a new culture denotes an inevitable process of interactive communication. Virtual spaces of resistance interfere with the real-time restraint of space. We could determine the social order itself as the inhuman structure of post-human networking technology in which one system communicates with another. No human culture is of any kind of significance, except techno-culture. Indeed, the significance of culture in terms of the traditional humanistic

project boils down to that which is on the margins. Everywhere in the world, the humanities are immersed in crisis. The unrelenting techno-scientific march towards the future seems to have no alternative. Therefore, the only options are adapting to this march or disappearing on the horizon of “progress”. What is important and has significance is no “culture” at all. On the contrary, power derives from the techno-genesis of societies based on the logic of emergent networks in the increasingly interactive activities of the assemblies, in which the collapse of one system, state, or culture is the necessary way towards the existence of another. We live in an era of total entropy. Any illusion about a resounding alternative coming from the immediate culture of resistance is only a way towards the kind of ethics that Michel Foucault, at the end of his life, proposed in his lectures at the Collège de France. Care of the self becomes the only model of a fully shattered subject of this culture, which breaks down in many different directions (Foucault 1988).

Identity politics, namely, includes minority rights in the pluralistically cultured societies of the West, but it also implies collective and individual rights. Perhaps it is appropriate here to talk about the difference between the politics of resistance, or “micropolitics” in Foucault, and the various methods of the rebuilding of radical conservative ideas of the discipline of post-modern society. The beginning, of course, was 1968 in Europe and the United States, with the students’ rebellion, the emergence of counter-cultures, and post-colonial movements for the national and racial identities of the oppressed. In sociological theories of globalization, identity politics is considered as a fluid field of struggle for its own recognition of the irreducible Other-ness (women, racial and national minorities, LGBT populations). It seems that Calhoun’s typology of identity, accepted by Castells in his analysis by giving it credibility in its current use, is applicable here. In short, identity politics denotes contingency and resistance, the negation and affirmation of the differences within the existing order in which nation-states at the end of the modern order of sovereignty determine the boundaries of belonging to the community. The foundations of the politics of identity are—in the case of post-modernity—untenable, that is to say, what is at work is the creation of a new way of affiliation. Instead of birth and the organic community of origin, now it is only significant to reconcile “destiny” with freedom of existence. Living as a nomad or a global “man without qualities” means being in between the borders of nation and race, the organic community and the traditional order of value. Identity politics has become, thus, a small cultural transformation of the original subversion of modern exclusivity. Or, put in other words, when the same term applies to fundamentalists and rebels, to

post-fascists and post-communists, to the haters of modernity and to the radical advocates of freedom without borders, then the term has exhausted its meaning. The goals were originally in the democratization of modern society, moving the boundaries of tolerance towards the Other, establishing different criteria of value, the autonomy of the free individual. It has not all gone forever, but with the retribalization of the global order and the neoliberal ideology of consumerism, it has been reduced to the spectacle of lifestyles.

As in negative theology, if one wants to define the concept of God, one does not start with the analogy of beings but from what should be contrary to the ideas of the perfect and perpetual, the good and just. The power of identification in a global but not cosmopolitan sense derives from the awareness of the possibilities of apocalypse and disaster. The ecological threats, the demographic explosion and the information bomb—not to mention the strict (un)controlled intensity of nuclear conflicts (North Korea and what will go on in the new balance of fear between the United States and Russia, China, and India)—bring about the question of the survival of mankind as being the only remaining question of identity. But it seems that something could be even more important than this “pathetic” collective consciousness in the present state of the risk of the disappearance of the world at large. Hannah Arendt argued that the 21st century will become the century in which immigration will be the test of the conscience of humankind. In this regard, the meaning and sustainability of the idea of democracy will be measured in general. The last illusions of well-being and tolerance break down in a terrible way. Sweden and the Scandinavian “silent model” of integration into the cultural order of prosperity after the rioting of immigrants becomes a painful point of identity politics. The global level is also a local level in its most perverted form of the social re-articulation of power. Where the scenes of burning cars in the world’s great cities are seen, there is at play a structural crisis of global capitalism everywhere. The paradox is that the crisis does not appear to be a political exaggeration. This clash on the ideological level of the conflict of cultures is just another side of the social reorganization of the system. Instead of the policies of multiculturalism and interculturalism, everything attests to the strengthening of something that has the signs of the conflicting interests of capital, transnational corporations and nation-states in the transition from culture to conflict identity politics.

What, then, is the *posthuman condition* of entropy? First of all, this might be a situation in which the radical and total revolution of the historical-metaphysical assemblage of Being-God-World-Human is no

longer possible. When the metapolitics of identity exhaust their reserves of resistance against the “system” and “order” in the constant subversion of ideology—whether it is comprehended as a dialectics of “false consciousness”, as a semiotics of cynical power, or as a hermeneutics of knowledge/power with all the devices that we have at our disposal today—there is a new spirit of capitalism available, and culture comes to the scene as a subversion. The closed circuit of “resistance” and “subversion” constantly changes its face and features. In his reflections on the history of the notion of Being, Heidegger has mentioned—in a number of places—the concept of “communism” as an ideology within the totalitarian rule of the world and technical warfare at the end of history. But what has caught special attention is the attitude that

No ‘revolution’ is ‘revolutionary’ enough. (Heidegger 1998, 69)

The main problem might be as follows. When the event is absent, or its expectation is greater than its real effectiveness, then a pseudo-event occurs in different shapes. In the history of early Christianity, various versions of the “cancelling” of the second coming of the Messiah are mentioned. Expectations, therefore, have the implacability of impatience and resignation. It is like the ironic parallel between the Apocalypse and Marx planning to write three volumes of *Capital*. Just as it will not be time for the second coming until the secret meaning of the Book of Revelation is grasped, it will also not be time for the Revolution until the last will and testament of the *Capital* are written. In the place of a historical circuit that reverses or completely abolishes the metaphysical framework of the whole of history—as Marx, following Hegel, wanted—comes a substitute in the form of an *immanent transcendence* of the system. Unlike the “big narratives” of philosophy as metaphysics of the history of Being (*logos, idea, energeia, subject matter, spirit, work*), we are faced with “little narratives”. Difference and Other overwhelm both Being and identity. In the overlapping tendencies of the logic of substitution and pseudo-events, there should be nothing more behind and beyond the very core of life, because there is nothing other than the formation of identity in difference. Translated into the language of the social articulation of the struggle to power, we can call this *resistance and subversion*. So, resistance might always be reactive, and when it is active it is always opposed to what gives it the condition of acting-out. All micropolitics of resistance are from this point also a struggle for the “values” of that which is not Being, but it happens in the awareness and existence of differences as a minority policy in the society of control. The difference between resistance and subversion emerges in that the first constitutes a meta-politics of minorities and the

latter a meta-culture of minorities. In both cases, at work is the becoming-revolutionary action but without the true event of a revolution. This denotes an action that does not “undermine” the ideology-politics of the new spirit of capitalism precisely because the subversion as a culture has already been integrated into it, as with the prophecy made by Debord when, in 1988, the typology of the spectacle as ideology—further to the concentrated (fascism, Nazism, Stalinism) and the diffuse (liberal capitalism)—articulated the third, final stage of the *integrated spectacle*.

Conclusion

1. The new spirit of capitalism, unlike the old, leaves nothing to chance. The control of the future process of creating events presupposes the existence of crises and conquering wars of low intensity and high entropy. Techno-science as a driver to accelerating what remains of society in corporate networks of contingency leads to the end of the subject in the artificial genesis of artificial life (*AL*). It is no longer a form of cultural capital, but capital without form, substance-subject in the form of cognitive “work”. All the processes of interaction between “nature” and “man” are reduced to the experiment of reproducing life. In this respect, the “future” is no longer the thing of utopias. The future present could be a dystopia in the movement from crisis management to crisis production, from information control to the implosion of communication.

2. The networks of resistance and subversions within the spirit of the corporation are no longer anywhere “behind” and “outside” the world-historical order without alternatives. If there is an alternative to neoliberal capitalism as a paradigm of globalization, then it might only be one that connects dictatorships/despotism/autocracy and post-democracy, legitimate system violence, and the “divine violence” of which Walter Benjamin speaks as the ultimate blow of the endless justice. All political systems today are in the service of transnational corporations. This means that oligarchies and corporations represent the “essence” of networked societies of control. Corruption, hence, is not an anomaly in the system. Without corruption, there is no new *debt/spirit* of capitalism. There are no exceptions. The alternative does not exist either “behind” or “out” of this single world in which all differences and multitudes are nothing but planetary trends of ethnocultural folklore. If there is no alternative, what is left? Nothing other than the Same as the new beginning of history without the pathos of change and without the cynicism of the stability of metaphysics in pseudo-events. There is no alternative because the new spirit of capitalism is by itself an alternative inside the stability in change.

3. If all the “revolutions” are not “revolutionary” enough, then the problem is not in the construction of a “new society” (the defeat of the Enlightenment represents a defeat of the critical theory of society in all its essential attempts at “negative dialectics”) but in the destruction of techno-scientific thinking of “progress” as computing, planning and construction. Thinking cannot be “revolutionary” because it is not preceded by the unpredictability of the event. The thinking, thus, that opens new perspectives can no longer run in fear in the future as productivity without end in the infinite chain of states of optimal control.

4. “The beginning of historical thinking takes place in the technical constellation of nihilism” (Sutlić 1994, 162). If this constellation continues in the experiment with “new life” from the spirit of techno-genesis as a radical construction of artificial worlds, is it still possible and necessary to seek the other beginning of history beyond nihilism? Is it not time for the turnover in the very essence of techniques itself that allows us the thought as an experiment of the construction of the “new” and the thought as a reflection of Being and time that is not marked by the destruction of what endowed history with its historicity, a man with his true dignity?

5. We live permanently at the edge of the chaos. This is our destiny and salvation from the total control of the acceleration of what remains of society. The more chaos, the less control. Doesn't this seem like an “alternative” in the bare essence of the totally controlled process of becoming-the-world?

6. Time, which is increasingly accelerating, becomes—like life itself—artificial time, with no differences between what could be authentic or vulgar ways of existence. Artificial time corresponds to the question of the essence of artificial life that has its origin in the artificial mind. In the corporate world of networks, all becomes only structures and functions, numbers and quantifications in the sign of the boundless and the immeasurable. Capital in its form of cognitive networks of neurons is determined qualitatively by becoming the subject without substance, the machine for the accumulation of space as well as a time machine of “bad infinity”.

7. It is time for an event of the upcoming community because time is accelerating and growing increasingly distant and will no longer exist except as an intense duration in the total agony of the Real. The time remaining may still be sufficient for the experiment of absolute freedom. It is only just that is left to the joyful adventure of thinking and living together.

NOTES

¹ In both cases, as was evident in the Soviet occupation and attempted conquest of Afghanistan in the 1980s and the US military intervention in the fight against the Taliban as part of the “war on terror” (Afghanistan and Iraq), the differences in the ideological-political and strategic goals of the imperial forces are evident. But they are not of particular importance because this only concerns different ways of conquering a sovereign and independent state. Therefore, in order to talk about contemporary forms of wars between global empires (the United States and Russia) and their satellites in the 21st century against “rogue states”, it is necessary to separate three levels of speculative-reflexive considerations of what is being done here as a singular event of war: (1) the geopolitical and strategic level of the occupation of the country as a space for all available resources (water, oil, gas, noble metals); (2) the ideological-political level of governmentality in “warfare-information-communication protocols”; and (3) the self-determination of total power in the absolute structure of an event in which a war moves from a military-political conflict into the dimension of a permanent condition. This state can be called a stand-by position. There are many post-humanists/transhumanists claiming that Silicon Valley is more important than the Valley of Kings or Arab deserts for the upcoming interplanetary exodus and “star wars” (Al-Rodhan 2009).

² Rancière 1995, 43-67. Oliver Marchart—in his instructive analysis of “political differences”, that is, the *political* and *policies* appearing in the contemporary debate on the issue of a new set of equalities and freedom—showed that Rancière, unlike almost all other post-foundationalist theorists (e.g. Nancy, Lefort, Badiou and Agamben), does not explicitly make this differentiation (Marchart 2010, 132). Instead of the notion of the *political* as the ontological event space of creating conditions for democracy shortly before dialogue and discourse, Rancière uses the notion of politics, and instead of the traditional concept of politics comes to the centre of the rather controversial term “police”. Ranking or regimes, therefore, must always think of the social hierarchy of power within the state. It is the order of legislative, executive and judicial power as an administrative technology of ruling. That is how Michel Foucault, in his lectures at the Collège de France in the late 1970s and 1982-1983, on the basis of extensive historical-genealogical analysis, came to the notion of “governmentality” (*gouvernementalité*), that is, the specific state and society of management technologies from a close-knit perspective of economics and politics. Rancière, from a different horizon of understanding this problem, thinks the same as Foucault. But he emphasizes that the meaning of “police” assumes positive features of the legitimacy of the execution and the stability of the liberal-democratic order. It thus seems significant that “police order” is not merely the preservation of capitalist production and social relations built on the ideology of free competition, the market, and individualism.

It might also be a transition from the internal sphere of action to the outside at the time of the post-imperial order of hegemony in the world's history, as is the case with America today, which led the war against terrorism and "rogue states". These are not wars between nation-states. Now, we have new police interventions in the global space of expanded sovereignty (Chambers 2011, 18-43).

³ A strong separation of politics and police (*le politique* and *la politique*) goes so far that one can often get the impression of man's understanding of the world being in secular Christian "good" and "evil" categories. But between these two concepts, the government is mutually conditional. We can here accept the interpretation of Oliver Marchart, who argues that the policy of disagreement stands above the existence of "two worlds in one" but is subject to what is termed as "emancipatory apriorism". This means that equality is not only a prerequisite of democratic political action, it is also a prerequisite of its contradiction—the police order. If, therefore, the idea of a policy is contained in the concept of equality, then this term appears almost as the "grounding unfoundation" of democratic rebellion against the order and has revolutionary potential. In this way, Marchart concludes that it is within the post-foundationalist theory of politics, and Rancière's attempt to think of politics from the principle of *an-arché* is nothing other than the path to a-historical conditions. So, this means that the political struggle against "regimes" has the status of the "transcendental conditions" of egalitarian politics (Marchart 2011, 134-135).

⁴ Marchart, in a precise philological-critical analysis, shows that Badiou's term *le politique* is synonymous with the term *politique*. This inversion is not a mistake in the thinking of "political differences" within the post-foundationalism of Heidegger's trajectory, but of a peculiar intervention by Badiou in distinguishing unauthentic from authentic politics. The first is what happens as so-called *realpolitik* in the societies of liberal-democratic consensus. The term Badiou used here is an interesting syntagm of the capital and form of (liberal-democratic) states—"capital-parliamentarism". Second, however, is that only authentic politics encompasses the features of emancipation-revolutionary project. Its real name should be the *politics of truth*.

⁵ It is interesting that one of the best commentators on Badiou disclaims any possibility that his opinion suffers from an unspecified "theological" background, and highlights the new type of materialism with the ontology of the multitude and understanding of political events in the new theory of the subject is devoid of contact with traditional metaphysics. According to Peter Hallward, Badiou and Deleuze represent the most radical thinkers in contemporary philosophy who readdressed the key issue about the death of God (Hallward 2003, 7).

⁶ In Rancière's most important book, however, it is evident that the notion of *metapolitics* is one of three dominant figures in "political philosophy". The first is *archipolitics* from Plato to Bourdieu; the second is *parapolitics*, which leads to Hobbes and Alexis de Tocqueville; while *metapolitics* belongs to Marx. Its main function is to hold realistically existing institutions in the liberal-democratic form of the state ("police regime") in an emancipatory policy of equality. In short, for Rancière, the notion of *metapolitics* denotes a political practice of a double type of

prohibition: one is linked to class, and the other to the nation-state. Both are just “empty markers” without a universal equality policy, which, of course, always leads in a specific way and in a singular framework of events (Rancière 1995, 93-131).

⁷ The term *plutocracy* comes from the Greek words *ploutos*, meaning wealth, and *kratos*, which signifies power, control, and rule. In contemporary social sciences, such as political science, sociology, law and economics, the term is often equated with the meaning of elite power. In conjunction with financial capital, it has decisive power in all important issues of internal and foreign policy. Furthermore, the term is used for the imperial policy of the United States, since it originally signified a combination of capitalist economics and representative democracy with a tendency to increase the power of professional politicians. The political order in the United States has, in its assumptions, the desire to concentrate power in the hands of a small number of people. The plutocratic roots here do not only undermine the democratic unity of freedom and equality. They also warn of the main problem of the functioning of the rule in Western societies, all of which escalates into the crisis of participatory democracy. The American political scientist Robert A. Dahl uses the term “polyarchy” with which to think about the rule of a minority as elite in representative democracies (Dahl 2006). All of this has its origins in the modern theory of politics as an instrument of power in Machiavelli’s work (Winters and Page 2009, 731-751).

⁸ “The term *digital economy* has recently emerged as a way to summarize some of the processes described above. As a term, it seems to describe a formation that intersects on the one hand with the post-modern cultural economy (the media, the university, and the arts) and on the other hand with the information industry (the information and communication complex). Such an intersection of two different fields of production constitutes a challenge to a theoretical and practical engagement with the question of labor, a question that has become marginal for media studies as compared with questions of ownership (within political economy) and consumption (within cultural studies)” (Terranova 2000, 33-58).

⁹ Neoliberalism thus emerges in many of its forms, such as (a) discursive formations, (b) programmes of governance through society/state management, (c) ideologies of libertarianism and possessive individualism without borders, (d) hegemonic projects in a global order, (e) technical assemblages of ideas from cybernetics, information science, mathematics, economics, demography, and criminology, and (f) abstract machines of capitalism in all areas of life (Gilbert 2013, 7-22).

¹⁰ In accordance with systems theories and basic concepts of cybernetics, by “information”, we mean any incentive or event of transmitting a message from the system to the environment by means of signals that should be decoded so that the message may change the behaviour of the recipient. Therefore, information assumes the transformation of the organism in complex systems without the conscious decision to accept or reject the influence. An example of this is the biological world or the DNA structure of genetic code. Gregory Bateson defines the notion of information, in addition to the above, from the point of view of the

notion of consciousness, which means autopoietic: information is the “difference that creates the difference”. This results in a cyclical structure of a three-dimensional form: information-transformation-knowledge. All information is a call that comes as a non-event event in the system and changes the behaviour of the environment by enabling new knowledge of the event. Instead of classical techno-determinism, the notion of information is not here, therefore, understood in the ontological scheme of cause-effect, but techno-indeterminism emerges from the contingent “nature” of events without the original cause and the ultimate purpose. What information will become does not depend on the static message received by the object. Moreover, the object itself is always the result of another subject and as such gains the value of the “sign” for something else. Information has the significance of the conditions for the possibility of changes in the system environment itself as life and therefore carries virtual potentials for updating the new one. Information as knowledge determines the transformation of systems and order in the logical-semantic and socio-cultural relations. Applied to the modern economy as an entrepreneurial and marketing cognitive drop means that information as a commodity has already entered into the process of creating new “knowledge management”. It is not traded with information in the mediasphere of capitalism, but the media constructs reality as a communication market where every subject/actor is incorporated into this game, because it is interconnected in the interactive and globally speculative capital. The ultimate result of applying the theory of information to the present model of global capitalism is that data has become the meta-data of a complex system of market relations, and the context in which this is done has the structure of a rhizomatic network. Outside of its hubs, there are global models of investment within one and the same mode of production (Bateson 2000).

¹¹ “Not priests, nor prophets of old and new religions, nor propagandists of political ideologies, nor military leaders or scientific authorities, but marketing and economic reorganization specialists provide knowledge of orientation and behavioural practices that should serve to operate under the imperatives of the market” (Bröckling 2000, 134).

¹² “The cultural sector (of course, more or less, here or there, in this or that “branch”, etc.) binds directly to the economy not only by serving it, which becomes a sector of capital production. In this sector of production, usable values become value-goods, which again acts on their very nature as usable values—‘goods’. Applied to the capitalist mode of production, they are not just commodities, nor is the work invested in their production capitalist productive (i.e. creates surplus values), but *of* goods whose useful value for consumers, whose character of the mass article with all their range shows a line that Marx would be astonished with, that is, these usable *values reflect self-capital as a massive usable value on the part of a worker-consumer*, who (e.g. in the form of ‘shareholders’) participates in its own consumption. What Marx himself would be surprised about is that capitalism has become attractive to workers. It is as if his hopes for the proletariat in the name of its *humanity* revolutionized the capitalist way of

production. Human dignity is integrated in man in the most painless way, through the ‘social’ of society, in the capitalist mode of production” (Sutlić 1987, 189).

¹³ “What has become clear is that universities are losing their sense of public mission, just as leadership in higher education is being stripped of any viable democratic vision. In this new Gilded Age of money, greed, selfishness and profit, academic subjects gain stature almost exclusively through their exchange value on the market. What happens to education when it is treated like a corporation? What are we to make of the integrity of a university when it accepts a monetary gift from powerful corporate interests or rich patrons demanding as part of the agreement the power to specify what is to be taught in a course or how a curriculum should be shaped? Some corporations and universities now believe that course content is not an academic decision but a market consideration. In addition, many disciplines are now valued almost exclusively with how closely they align with what might be euphemistically called a business culture” (Giroux 2015).

¹⁴ Unlike the classic philosophy of politics, the contemporary notion of politics in the context of democratic order being in the foreground instead of the idea of equality raises ideas of freedom and justice (Lyotard and Rawls). The point is that equality cannot be understood from Aristotle’s arithmetical justice, but assumes something that allows it at all, and that can only be justice. Freedom without justice thus becomes blind, and justice without freedom is void. Freedom of liberty derives from the fact that the political as a space of free action does not exhaust itself in action in the present, but gains the sense of the foregoing. Freedom enables the communion of the community, but not what sustains the community as the power of the common Being from the Greek *polis*, the Roman *republic*, the modern *nation-state* to the global *cosmopolitan* order. Only unconditional justice as a sort of messianic form of “violence” without God can confirm the fragile power of freedom out of the service for other purposes and goals. Therefore, it is almost common today that, at the time of the end of the sovereignty of the nation-state, referring to the idea of an upcoming community always addresses the tradition of quasi-religious foundations. This is the case with US presidents in their inaugural speech of the nation/republic or by the acclamation of an event of sacrifice for the political community in the constitution of nation-states, as in the case of the “People’s Revolution” in Eastern Europe in 1989. The problem of contemporary politics might be not realizing freedom and justice in “society”, but the creation of a just and free “state” at the end of sovereignty. Perhaps it becomes clearer why the following “substitute games” are happening today. The left, with its tendency for anti-essentialism and post-fundamentalism, takes for its interlocutor Carl Schmitt, a controversial German lawyer and political theoretician who was very close to ideas of Nazism in 1930s, and the new right refers the key concept of the cultural struggle or the “cultural war” (*Kulturkampf*) of the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci to the notion of ideology in the era of neoliberalism and post-democracy (Paić 2013).

¹⁵ “The crucial difference between Marx and Hegel, which is to be emphasized, is that in Hegel, *constructive dialectics*, that is, the *establishment* of an Absolute world spirit, is at work, and in Marx what is at work is *destructive dialectics*, the

abolition of absolutes, in this case, capital. [...] Marx's destructive dialectic *is based on capital as a substance-subject of modern event*. He shows that this substance-subject is actually an *alienated* substance-subject because the *essence* of capital is (as well as the essence of money, being, goods, etc.) *work*. Capital should be absolute for one particular epoch, it is the absolute of the capitalistic way of production. Capitalist dialectics is, in fact, a dialectics of work, just in that sense, that work is in itself, in its dialectics—but it is also in the form of capital itself, in its own right. *Work at all has dialectics just in its own other-being*. And when it returns to itself from this other-being, then the *work is itself* (i.e. continuous, with no external limitation of the productive forces of labour). But a destructive dialectics does not rule over this work anymore, in fact, dialectics *is no longer valid*" (Sutlić 1994, 67-68).

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