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SOLIDARITY WITH THE BODY
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SECOND EDITION

KATERINA KOLOZOVA



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SOLIDARITY WITH THE BODY IN PAIN AS THE NEW
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Second Edition

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*Dedicated to the women, children and animals reduced to a trace
and material for exploitation by patriarchy and capital.*

Skopje, 17 October 2016



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CHAPTER I

Thinking the Political by Way of “Radical Concepts”

1. Overture: Thinking in Accordance with the Real

There is always already a Real of the political discontent and it is one that is transmillennial, beyond history and always already founding the very possibility of (a) History. The Unthinkable itself, the Uncanny enveloping any nameable existence in this or any other World, the Real, is the kernel of (political) life and (political) death. The Real (the “Void,” the “Event,” *Tuché*) not only participates in the political, but also grounds the very possibility of its heterogeneous origin. And here I am referring both to the Real in the Laruellian and to the Real in the Lacanian sense of the word. Although the two respective conceptualizations are different, they share one trait and it consists in the Real’s immanent tendency to elude signification, meaning, Language. In both Laruelle’s and Lacan’s work the Real is the kernel of “that-which-is-out-there”: it is the identity-in-the-last-instance of any and of all “existence” always already escaping naming and signification. It is the remainder that Language can never grasp and control. It is also a term congruous with Alain Badiou’s notion of the event (or the Void).

Yet the Real remains an abstract instance in the work of the aforementioned authors: one fails to see how the epistemological possibility of “thinking in accordance with the Real” can be applied in the context of a political critique or for the purposes of developing a political theory. Slavoj Žižek is the only thinker today who has openly called upon producing a political thought in accordance with the Real as the sole potential of creating a revolutionary stance and an entirely new political horizon. This chapter is inspired by this call and Žižek’s arguments of its liability. It is dedicated to exploring the epistemic possibilities of thinking the (political) Real by recourse to the few thinkers today who argue in favor of a “theory in accordance with the Real” and shall thereby attempt to determine the epistemological viability of the “realist thesis” advocated by Žižek. We will undertake close reading of François Laruelle’s realist or non-philosophical epistemology (primarily his theory of non-Marxism), but will also take a look at the epistemological possibilities for a political realist theory that can be found in the works of Alain Badiou and Quentin Meillassoux.

In the theoretical universes of these authors, the always already conceptually (discursively or linguistically) constituted World is something radically different from the Real. One would say even opposed to it. And yet, the opposition in question does not consist in mutual exclusion, in contradiction. It is rather an opposition consisting in a resistance to the uncontrolled, chaotic and engulfing

powers of the Real unless mediated, disciplined, articulated through – language. The Real always already evades language, conceptualization and meaning, i.e., what François Laruelle calls in one word – the Transcendental (1989 *passim*; 92 ,1992ff). Yet again, in spite of this evasion-in-the-last instance, the Transcendental renders the Real livable by way of transposing it into a Sign and thereby re-producing it into and for the World. Both according to Laruelle (1995) and to Lacan (1998) the function of Language is, through the figures of the Stranger (Laruelle 1995, 76-77) or the Signifier, respectively, to mediate the stupefying, overwhelming presence of the Real.

The task of Language is to transpose the "in-itself" of the "out-there" into a structure of names, of assigned meanings, of signification that mediates the network/the rhizome/the lump of traces of experiences of the taking-place-of-the-Real. It is the inescapable, unstoppable effort to reflect in the literal sense of the word, the desire to mirror the taking-place of the Real (the Event) against the plane of the Transcendental (of Signification). And this process marks the moment of constitution of reflection (in the cognitive sense of the word), reflexivity which constitutes the World and the Subjectivities that inhabit it.

In the context of François Laruelle's non-philosophy, the terms "transcendental," "philosophy" and "the world" are synonyms (1989 *passim*). Reflection produces the Transcendental, which always already produces the figure of Philosophy. In other words, the Transcen-

dental institutes (and perpetuates) a World that “makes sense,” that is – a (or: the) Philosophy. A universe of meanings – that is what a “world” and a “philosophy” is (Laruelle 1989, *passim*). The latter are radically different with respect to the Real and they are so in a unilateral way: they do not establish a relation of mutual inter-conditioning. The Real is radically indifferent to the World (the Thought, the Transcendental, the Language or the Philosophy), and this indifference is what grounds unilaterality in its inevitability. Regardless of Thought’s (Philosophy’s) pretension to found the Real – the “Thing-in-itself” or the “Thing-out-there” – the Real remains stubbornly indifferent (Laruelle 1989). This is what renders Thought – any thought – inevitably unilateral. The phantasm of bilaterality is necessarily the result of Thought’s duplication (*dédoublement, redoublement*), of its refolding (*repliement*) over itself (Laruelle 62, 1989).

In his *Après la finitude* (2006), similarly to Laruelle, Quentin Meillassoux undertakes rigorous critique of philosophy’s “redoublement,” arguing for a thought which strives to think the Absolute (the Real) – or rather the Real’s rendition as factuality – without “correlatively” constituting it. The term “correlative” refers to the supposed mutually constitutive relation between the Real (or the Absolute) and the Thinking Subject, to the always already supposed inter-mirroring of the Real and the Self.

In his book, Meillassoux subjects to a radical critique what he terms the Kantian legacy in today’s philosophy,

present in the "correlationist" claims according to which it is impossible to know "the-Thing-out-there," according to which one is always already trapped in one's own representation of it, in one's own perception or imaginary constitution of the "World-out-there." All theoretical positions, including the poststructuralist, according to which cognition is nothing but a process of *correlative* "re-creation" of the world out there (i.e., an imaginary creation of it appearing as the result of our encounters with the always already inconceivable Real), are termed "correlationist." Meillassoux insists that what "correlationist" philosophies inadvertently imply is in fact their own fundamental opposite. Insisting that there is an "out-there" that we can only imagine, that we can only fantasize to know – but never actually know it – is, in fact, a claim about the existence of the Out-There that is Absolute. What this means is that the Real is ungraspable, inconceivable, inaccessible through knowledge, that it is a certain "in-itself," indifferent to our pretension to know it, that it is – a self-sufficient transcendental. Moreover, that it is *the* Transcendental. It is *the* Real that stands for the endless myriad of encounters with different instantiations of the Real that the Thinking Subject undergoes during a process of scientific or philosophical cognition. So Meillassoux's claim is that the thesis about the radical split between knowledge and the absolute object of knowledge implies that the Real is an "in-itself," an "out-there" which, in its inacces-

sibility, gains the status and performs as – the Absolute.

The Cartesian legacy, on the other hand, claims the function of knowledge to be the understanding – or rather, to be the reflection of the Absolute. Nonetheless, Meillassoux shows that it is precisely this philosophical legacy, through its pretension to reflect the Absolute, implying the inter-mirroring of Reason and the Absolute, which “correlatively” constitutes the Absolute.

In order to avoid the vicious circle each of these two traditions of thought finds itself into, Meillassoux proposes a third way. Drawing on the philosophical implications of the modern scientific practice, Meillassoux concludes that there is a category of Absolute’s rendition that makes it susceptible to our aspiration to know it – the “factuality” (*factualité*). Factuality is: “[the] non-factual essence of fact as such, which is to say, its necessity, as well as that of its determinate conditions.” (Meillassoux 2008, 79)

2. Attempting to Think the Real of Political Discontent and Change

2.1. The Political as the Product of Language and the Real Intertwining

The Political is by definition a discursive, “worldly” phenomenon. Yet, we shall claim that, apart from its inherently discursive character, the Political is not only conditioned by the Real, but it also takes place because of the Real and through the instance of the Real. It acts

as the Real – it works according to the Rule of the Real. The Political is an automaton of signification *par excellence* (Lacan 55-54 ,1998), but it also takes place as accident(ia), as an unpredictable throw of the dice – as an event, as the destabilizing void within the discursive, as *Tuché* (Lacan 55-54 ,1998).

The endless multiplicity of singular actualizations of the Real, or rather the constant taking place of the contingent Real – instead of the absolute “being there” of the transcendental category of *the* Real – is what happens to the Political and what the Political happens for. The Political is the uninterrupted effort to deal with – to grasp, and to control – the Real, that is, the sheer-taking-place or the event, by organizing it into a meaningful Universe. The Real is the Traumatic *par excellence*. Language – discourse, or the political (the human universe) – is the instance of transformation of the unmediated experience (i.e., the trauma) into the bearable – intelligible and controllable – Signification.

Consequently, the political transpositions of the Real return as real – as events, as realizations of ideas – to the World (of the Political). Events – that in themselves are the purely experiential, the sheer “taking place,” the unmediated Real, that is, the Traumatic – happen to the Political order. The latter is constantly reinvented and repeated – i.e., perpetuated – in order to counter the overwhelming, engulfing, traumatic effect of the Real. The Void within the Situation (Badiou 2005), the Kernel of the Real at the

heart of the Political (Žižek 2006) is what conditions the Political. Language is re-invented in order to respond to these occurrences. The effects of the Real are namable – discursive re-inventions take place in order to counter them (Župančič 235 ,2000).

The event of another form of discursivity and normativity taking over power, another Discourse becoming dominant or normative, the event of *REAL*ization of a discursive (political) project – even through discursive means primarily – is an occurrence of the Real. When a new form of discursivity *takes place*, when a new discourse acquires a hegemonic status, it is an event – it is an instance of the Event. The World of the Political takes on its aspect of the *evental* or – the Real.

The taking place of political action or of clash of actions, the occurrence of implosion of dissatisfaction (triggering action) into the Real is the instance of the purely experiential, the instance that is non-linguistic in-the-last-instance – it is the sheer event at the heart of the Situation (Badiou 2005, 173 ff). The latter is linguistically constituted and opposed to the purely evental which, in its own turn, originates from the Void itself (Badiou 173 ,2005), from that which is always already beyond the discursive, radically and irreconcilably different from it, says Alain Badiou (Badiou 175-174 ,2005; 129 ,2001).

Yet, these non-discursive instances are conditioned by discourse, by historicity, by a fidelity to a certain (politi-

cal) Truth which implodes into/as the Real (as an Event). In other words, the (political) revolution, which is the incursion of Tuché *par excellence*, happens as the result of a certain fidelity to a political truth, to a certain discursive. Also, it is the Real (of violence), it is the Trauma which calls upon action, upon *real*-ization of an opposing (political) Truth. As one takes part in such an event, one finds oneself utterly submerged into it, drunken by the sensations produced by the rising tension of the Event taking place – one becomes an aroused body, and one's thought becomes a bodily sensation. The body becomes the individual site of the political *event* taking place. The subject of political action realizing itself as an unadulterated event – founded by the void of the evental, while the discursive merely mediates it – is a body in the Spinozian sense. It is a direct continuation of the cognitive, i.e., of the discursive or of the "ethical," and vice versa (Spinoza // 13p, 13n). It is around (the contingency) of the (or: an) Event in the midst of a (political) situation that one generates one's own – or "the new" – political Truth, explicates Alain Badiou (173 ,2005ff). The Event is always already pre-discursive: as soon as it finds its transposition into Language, the event ceases to be (what it is in the last instance, a "taking place" *par excellence*). And it is a single body that can undergo these transformations, a single human subject of a body and mind.

The Event is a Void in the midst of a Situation that is linguistically intelligible and socially regulated (Hallward

120 ,2003). It is a void as far as Language is concerned. It is that kernel of the pre-linguistic *always already* escaping Symbolization, the Real that *always already* underlies and yet escapes Signification. And it is precisely around that unique, unutterable experience of pure Event, around that Experiential-in-the-last-instance that a new (political) Truth is generated and established fidelity to, around which Language is re-invented. The new political Truth, reinvention of political discursive possibilities is brought about by a process, a course of action, a cause that is beyond (*au-delà*) the Linguistic. However, it does take place within a setting – or, according to Alain Badiou’s terminology, a *Situation* – which is discursive. Thus, in its identity-in-the-last-instance, the Event which is a non-linguistic category par excellence is nonetheless discursively induced.

The challenge I set here for myself is to establish a certain insight into – to arrive to a certain vision and knowledge of – the possibilities of interrogating the modes of participation of the Real (the Event, the Void, the Tché or the Trauma) in the production of a (new) Political Truth. (The latter is – we shall argue – a product of the interplay between the Discursive and the Real. In this endeavor I will adopt the epistemic posture of thought proposed by François Laruelle’s non-philosophy consisting in theorizing in correlation with the Real that is unilateral, non-thetic and does not attempt to reflect or mirror the Real (50 ,1989). It merely correlates with it

by way of acknowledging it to be the decisive instance of legitimization of the produced truth. The Real in non-philosophy is synonymous with the "immanent," the "radical" and the "identity in the last instance." The political thought (theory and activism) it advocates is one produced in "the immanent way" (*de la manière immanante*), a political thinking founded upon radical concepts (Laruelle 61 ,21 ,2000 et al.). Radical concepts are those that establish-as direct as possible-a link with the identity-in-the-last-instance of the explored social-political phenomena, with their "instance of immanence." In other words, it is the conceptual, the transcendental that corresponds with the Real.

2.2. The Syntax of the Real

The correspondence of the Transcendental with the Real is confirmed by *coincidence*: a concept is affirmed as one correlating with an instance of immanence by virtue of experience – by the instance of the Lived which, in the form of a symptom, confirms that a concept correlates with it (Laruelle 57 ,1989). Theory as "thought (of) force" (Laruelle 48 ,2000 et al.) should spring out of its determination in the last instance (*la détermination-en-dernière-instance*, or DDI), that is, out of a radical concept correlating with the instance of immanence or the Real.

The Real imposes its own syntax – it cannot and does not establish perfect correspondence with a doctrine (a

“philosophy”), it cannot be reflected by or reflect an entire theoretical universe. The Real, inasmuch as it is “the Lived,” produces a “syntax” consisted of the symptomatology it displays in its uniqueness; the “behavior” of the Real can be “cloned,” says Laruelle, into and from a concept. The Concept (the “Transcendental”) and the Real belong to two entirely different orders, the first to that of Transcendence and the latter to that of Immanence. The two can never be reduced to one another – the Transcendental can attempt to “describe” (to “clone”) the Real by virtue of acknowledging that it can never have the “same structure” (Laruelle 1989, 50).

In other words, having affirmed that the Real possesses a different status (that of immanence) in relation to Thought (which is always already the transcendental), one strives to think the Real by means of transcendence. The Thought can correlate (unilaterally) with the Real, following the “syntax” it dictates, it can attempt to describe this syntax without the pretension to reflect it (Laruelle 2000, 46-47; 1989, 50). In the following quotation from *Introduction au non-marxisme* (2000) the operation of establishing a thought in an “immanent way” (*de la manière immanante*) is presented:

The ‘real’ solution to the problem of the DDI as the object and cause of its own theory should avoid Hegelian idealism better than it has been done by the materialism. Neither a cause in exteriority nor a dialectical identity of contraries, the Real is the cause by virtue of immanence and determines cognition of its own syn-

tax, of its own causality, through a process that one would call 'cloning.' [...] Suppose there is an object X to be cognized. Provided it is affected by immanence or susceptible to DDI, that is seen-in-One, it also can clone "itself" from the material that is its transcendence. (Laruelle 2000, 47)

The Real is an effect of trauma, of a violent thrust into the automatism of the chain of signification. Put in Lacanian vein, it is the *Tuché* (the accident, the throw of the dice) which happens to the Automaton. Or in Lacan's own words:

We can succeed in unravelling this ambiguity of the reality involved in the transference only on the basis of the function of the real in repetition. What is repeated, in fact, is always something that occurs – the expression tells us quite a lot about its relation to the *tuché* – *as if by chance* ... Is it not remarkable that, at the origin of the analytic experience, the real should have presented itself in the form of that which is *unassimilable* in it – in the form of the trauma, determining all that follows, and imposing on it an apparently accidental origin? (1998, 54-55)

The Real is what happens, and what takes place as sheer happening, sheer experience – an *event*, unmediated by Language. That is why it is traumatic – it is the uncontrollable, meaningless (not yet mediated as a meaning), brutal incursion of the overwhelming Real into what "makes sense," into the meaningful world made up of discursivity, i.e., into the realm of signification or Language, into the "automaton" that the signifying chain is.

Accordingly, the Real is an effect – it is the Lived (Laruelle) or the *traumatic* (Lacan), or “the-taking-place-of,” i.e. and Event (Badiou). Such an effect can be produced by Discourse as well (and not exclusively by instances that are pre-discursive in their identity in the last instance, such as sheer violence, or the mute force of the “material”). Discourse that instills normality, discourse that brings about revolution, discourse that exerts power is *lived* as trauma. Discursive power is assumed through an act of violence, or rather – the act of discourse instituting itself as power is in itself a traumatic, i.e., violent or forceful event (regardless of the fact that the taking over of power may be exerted via discourse exclusively). The taking place of discourse produces the effect of the Real.

3. Naming the Real as the Condition of Fundamental Political Change

There is an instance where the Discursive and the Real are indistinguishable from one another, constituting a heterogeneous kernel of political force and action. I am subscribing to the claims Žižek makes in *Interrogating the Real* (2006) as well as in his contributions to *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (2000) that only a thought in correspondence with the Real can be the source of radical political critique and change.

Antagonism is a namable effect of the Real – an effect that bears a “political name” (that of antagonism) – and

it is what provokes political movement, processes (of change) in the symbolic field. Žižek applauds Laclau and Mouffe for their advancement of the thesis about antagonism as the kernel of the political (2006, 249-250). However, he criticizes them for not having "radicalized" the concept sufficiently, for having omitted to notice that antagonism is an instance of the Real. His main remark is that they have failed to arrive to a concept of a subject as one constituted by antagonism in the (epistemologically) radical sense of the word, i.e., for "conceiving the subject in a way that characterizes 'post-structuralism,' from the perspective of assuming different 'subject-positions'" (2006, 250) Instead of the latter, Žižek proposes the following epistemic possibility:

We must then distinguish the experience of antagonism in its radical form, as a limit of the social, as the impossibility around which the social field is structured, from antagonism as the relation between antagonistic subject-positions: In Lacanian terms, we must distinguish antagonism as *Real* from the social *reality* of the antagonistic fight. And the Lacanian notion of the subject aims precisely at the experience of 'pure' antagonism as self hindering, self-blockage, this internal limit preventing the symbolic field from realizing its full identity: the stake of the entire process of subjectivization, of assuming different subject-positions, is ultimately to enable us to avoid the traumatic experience. (Žižek 2006, 253-254)

Antagonism as Real or, rather, the Real as antagonism is what conditions the Subject, what grounds its very

possibility. The Subject is born out of the very necessity to incessantly strive to avoid the traumatic experience – the immediacy of the Real. Pure antagonism (as the internal or external limit) is an instance of the Real which has a political function and a political name. It is the origin of the “entire process of subjectivization, of assuming different subject-positions.” It is the origin of the political. And in the confrontation between different discursive stances, in the antagonistic interaction between political discourses, it receives different empty shapes that bare a name or names and give birth to different usages of the Language, to different discourses.

In other words, the Real is not merely an abstraction – an instance beyond Language and, therefore, irrelevant for theory or for the Discourse in general. According to Žižek, the Real is not the pure Negativity (of or with respect to Language). It is rather an effect that is nameable, and one conditioning the re-production of the Symbolic (such as, e.g., the effect or the “lived” of antagonism).

In his exchange with Judith Butler and Ernesto Laclau published under the title of *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (2000), Žižek insists that fundamental political change – installing of a new “hegemony” – can take place only if political language is re-invented around a name that corresponds most immediately with the node of traumatic experiences, i.e. the Real. The symbolic order is structured – viz. the hegemonic political discourse – around a certain Real that it mediates and whose trau-

matic effect it incessantly strives to moderate. Radical change can take place, entirely new hegemony can occur, only if – let us resort to Laruellian terminology for a moment – a new “radical concept” is invented in an “immanent way,” “cloned” from the experience of the real with the help of the “transcendental material” at hand.

Or, in Žižek’s words:

[...] the determination of the Real as that which resists symbolization is itself a symbolic determination, that is, the very gesture of excluding something from the Symbolic, of positing it as beyond the prohibitive Limit (as the Sacred, Untouchable), is a symbolic gesture (a gesture of symbolic exclusion) *par excellence* ... In contrast to this, however, one should insist on how the Lacanian Real is strictly *internal* to the Symbolic: it is nothing but its inherent limitation [...] (2000, 120).

The fact that the Real is an “inherent limitation” to the Symbolic does not mean that the Real is “beyond symbolization,” that it is some absurd, mute instance that disables speech, language or symbolization. On the contrary, it is the reason for symbolization to occur – it conditions and enables it.

Precisely because of this internality of the Real to the Symbolic, it *is* possible to touch the Real through the Symbolic – that is the whole point of Lacan’s notion of psychoanalytic treatment; this is what the Lacanian notion of psychoanalytic *act* is about – the act as a gesture which, by definition, touches the dimension of some impossible Real (2000, 121).

Similarly to these claims made by Žižek, in his reinvention of Marxism termed “non-Marxism,” Laruelle invokes the necessity of radical concepts in order to arrive to “thought (of) force” – theory that works as “act,” and from which political action issues in a way which is immanent, i.e., in correspondence with the Lived (*le vécu*) that the Real is. Radical concepts depart from the determination-in-the-last-instance (DDI), which is the minimum transcendental established in accordance with the Real. Considering that, also according to non-philosophy and non-Marxism, the Real underlying a “political universe” (= hegemony, the Symbolic) is a symptom (Laruelle 7, 2000), DDI is checked against the plane of the Lived (or in psychoanalytic terms, the experience of trauma). In other words, the accuracy and operativeness DDI should be checked by its functionality in the lived social reality, instead by that within a doctrine or a philosophy.

When the DDI is the cause or the immanent object of its own theory, one would say that this theory *is* the *force (of) thought*, the theory of the force (of) thought is itself in-the-last instance [...] Object to knowing, while remaining the known object, should also be capable of determining its cognition [...] Let us suppose that the ‘labor force’ is finally capable of its own ‘proletarian’ theory, without the Hegelian idealism, or has become the restricted model of the universal instance of the force (of) thought. (Laruelle 48, 2000)

Instances of the Real are always already “lived” (*vécu*) from within the World (in Laruellian sense of the word

similar in meaning to the Symbolic Order or "hegemonic discourse") and, therefore, they receive names, they produce "radical concepts" – *thought (of) force* issues from radical concepts founded in their DDI. Similarly, Žižek argues that one should tackle the kernel of the Real – or in Laruelian terms, the "determination in the last instance" – behind the political hegemony of today, and envisage a world based upon a different "radical concept" issuing from a radically different "lived" (i.e., instance of the Real).

And my point is that in so far as we conceive of the politico-ideological resignification in the terms of the struggle for hegemony, today's Real which sets a limit to resignification is Capital: the smooth functioning of Capital is that which remains the same, that which 'always returns to its place,' in the unconstrained struggle for hegemony. (Žižek 223 ,2000)

Thought (of) force is what enables fundamental political change, viz., demise or abandonment of the old and birth of a new hegemony. Both Laruelle and Žižek (and Badiou as well), in their own, different vocabularies, claim that such change is possible only by virtue of thought in "unilateral correlation" (Laruelle) with the Real. The Real is not an abstract, external to the World (Laruelle) or to the Symbolic order (Lacan) Transcendental. It is not a static *per se*. Rather it is the Lived, the experience *par excellence*, it is a concrete instance of trauma that receives a name, that it enveloped by a "meaning" (i.e., that is

subject to signification) from within the World and the Symbolic order.

Žižek claims that *antagonism* is the Real of the Political *par excellence* (and that which defines in the last instance); Capital is the name of the Real underlying and structurally conditioning all political discourses of today (even those of performativity and radical democracy). Laruelle insists that the Real of Marxism is determined in the last instance by virtue of the radical concepts of “labor force” and/or “proletariat.” Both claim that the accuracy of the Real’s determination in the last instance is authorized by the instance of the Lived (Laruelle) or the *acted* (Žižek/Lacan), viz. through political action (Laruelle 92-91, 2000) never opposed to theory, or by virtue of an empirical proof provided by the methodology of psychoanalytic therapy (Žižek), respectively.

In order to arrive to a political theory that enables re-invention of hegemony, birth of a new hegemonic concept and utopia, one is bound to step out of the vicious circle of “auto-fetishization” of philosophy (Laruelle); one is called upon establishing a posture of thought in accordance with the Real which manifests itself as symptom, and is verified through the sheer experience (of trauma). One is called upon establishing a map of symptoms displayed by the body(/ies) of Multitude(s) in its (their) reaction to the power exercised by way of the ruling discourses of our times, and produce *thought (of) force* responding to the cry of this body (or, these bodies).

The proximity to the "Lived" renders radical concepts descriptive and devoid of theoretical rigor. Nonetheless this does not mean that a political theory developed departing from a radical concept cannot be rigorous. On the contrary, as the model of science and scientific production of theory has proven, departing from descriptive presuppositions derived from empiric examination ensures greater rigor of interrogation than the solid transcendental concept backed up by the authority of a doctrinal system.

Exactitude is the characteristic of a theory. It is a quality pertaining to Language or to the Transcendental, and indeed the Real cannot be "exact." Yet, it is a theory's correspondence with the symptoms of the Real that proves it "true" or "relevant." For a political theory "to work" – to make sense and to be able to introduce change – its correspondence with the Lived needs to be proven.

4. Monstrously Hybrid Concepts

Thought does not and cannot reflect the Real, but it can *describe* it, says Laruelle (1989, 50; 2000, 47). The work of description is done by means of transcendental material by means of which the Real is "cloned." The object of cognition is one "affected by immanence," claims Laruelle. Immanence is susceptible to determination-in-the-last-instance. The latter is a transcendental minimum, language bordering with the Lived (Real).

Departing from the determination-in-the-last-instance (describing the “Lived” that the Real/the immanence is), one “clones” the experience of the Real behind the object of cognition by means of transcendental material (47,2000).

Having made this claim, one faces the quandary of how the direct link between the Real and the Language/Thought is established, and of how fidelity of the latter to the former is maintained. Or, put in Laruellian parlance, how does one know that the object of cognition (the “object” which is a representation, a mental, cognitive or “transcendental category”) is “affected by immanence”? How does one know one is not fully entangled in the web of the World, how does one know that the object of cognition in question is not affected exclusively by the Transcendental rather than by Immanence?

4.1. François Laruelle: Naming the Real is Always Done By Way of Radical Concepts

Laruellian Real is one building on the Lacanian while non-philosophically reversing its meaning. The aim of this reversal is overcoming the split at the heart of the Real, overcoming Dualism (between Thought and the Real) sustained by Philosophy (any philosophy of any epoch, according to Laruelle) in which Lacanian psychoanalysis participates. Instead of declaring the Real an Impossibility or Unthinkability, non-philosophy claims one can and should think in accordance with the Real while affirming

its radical difference and the impossibility of Thought to grasp and explain the Real in its totality. The Real itself does not have an identity-in-the-last-instance. It does not have a *diferentia specifica* determining and fixing its "meaning"-in-the-last-instance. The Real is a symptom or an instance or a modality of immanence rather than an identity. Nonetheless, the identities theory explores do have a reality – they are in the last instance determined by the order of the Real (Laruelle 1992, 91).

Laruelle proposes an epistemological stance according to the scientific model: science thinks, he explains, according to the "real order" (*l'ordre réel*), moving *from* the Real *toward* the Phenomena, unlike the Philosophy which does precisely the opposite (Laruelle 1992, 91). "Phenomena" are of transcendental material – they are full-fledged representations – and so are the "objective facts" (they are mental, cognitive products). Taking the so called "objective facts" as points of departure rather than "what takes place" in the register of the Real is what philosophy usually does narcissistically dealing with itself instead of the world *out there*, says Laruelle.

Laruelle maintains that, according to what he claims to be the epistemic model of science, the "real object" of study is a quadruple postulation *a priori* consisting of reality, exteriority, stability and unity (Laruelle 1992, 92). (Unity is meant in the sense of oneness or singularity. In contrast, the unity which is the result of dialectics or of any other form of unification or uniting is based on du-

alism/duality and spilt and the latter is what the entire project of non-philosophy argues against, aiming at its overcoming.) The object of cognition is one necessarily belonging to the register of the transcendental, and science inevitably thinks its object via the transcendental while “succumbing to the real” as the authority in the last instance (1992, 93).

Theory that assumes the non-philosophical posture of thought (homogeneous to that of science, according to Laruelle) does not “objectify the real” (1992, 91). It is “non-thetic”: it issues from “an experience of reality” and consists in a “rigorous description of the latter” (1992, 94) always already by means of the transcendental material. It corresponds with a realism which is “local,” “finite” and “in-the last instance,” deprived of metaphysical certitude and it rectifies its representations on the basis of its submission to the Real rather than to (a) philosophy (1992, 98). Non-philosophy or a theory in terms of the Real manifests itself as more primitive and more elementary than the philosophy (1992, 101). Just like the science it thinks the Real “at once” (*en-une-fois*), without splitting it and without splitting itself: that is why it thinks the multiplicity “at-once-each-time” (*chaque-fois-une-fois*), as a “veritable multiplicity in undivided terms or as chaos” (1992, 117).

When it is the “World” (in Laruellian sense of the word), i.e., the political or social reality, which is explored, when one theorizes the reality of human experi-

ence, in order to establish an object of cognition which succumbs to the Real as its ultimate authority one must resort to "radical concepts," claims Laruelle (2000). They rely on a determination in the last instance. The latter is necessarily "affected by immanence" (2000, 47). Being affected by immanence is checked by the concept's correspondence with an experience of reality – the experience or the "Lived" is the authority that gives legitimacy to the concept.

The radical concept that is a transcendental minimum describes the Lived, and it is "more primitive" than a philosophical definition. Description is the work/the practice of mediation (via language) of the experience, the experienced and the experiment. It does not pretend to define, to convey or give (ascribe, assign = "give") an essence, to establish possession of the Real itself. It is a rudimentary ("primitive") practice of mimesis – by means of Language – aiming at conveyance to the Other/mediation of what takes place in the order of the Real. Mimesis inevitably implies/speaks of the radical difference – unbridgeable fissure – between the Real and Language. Consequently, sheer descriptiveness guarantees and irrevocably affirms the insurmountable-in-the-last-instance abyss between the Real and Thought.

Non-philosophical posture of thought does not confuse its ambition to explain a certain reality with the metaphysical desire to close this ontological gap (between Real and Thought). It produces knowledge of that

certain “local” and “finite” reality without feeling an obligation to make sure this knowledge corresponds with a certain ontological decision vis-à-vis a metaphysical anxiety. The particular truth of a particular reality does not need to conform with any ontological outlook. It is irrelevant if it contains contradicting ontological implications. What is relevant is whether the produced knowledge is confirmed by the experience of reality, or by the “Lived.”

I will argue that assuming a posture of thought in accordance with the Real – informed by Laruelle’s non-philosophy – does not imply passing a decision about the irrelevance of ontology all together. Laruelle, for that matter, argues against any ontology simply because it is always already derived from the notion of the Being which he considers to be the source of philosophy’s intrinsic corruption with dualism and auto-fetishism (1989, 17). My own position on the matter is somewhat different: I would claim that “being” does not have to be seen as the spectral duplication of the Real; thinking the “being,” creating a theory of the “taking place,” of how certain categories of “being” (of taking place and of ceasing to be there) relate to each other and of how they establish a “universe” is not irrelevant. On the contrary, it is a pertinent theoretical endeavor that should be undertaken in radical terms, by recourse to a “thought in accordance with the Real.”

4.2. Some of the Many Names of the Real

Returning to the question of a political theory in terms of the Real, based on a methodology of radical concepts (conditioned by the determination in the last instance), I will reaffirm the position that it is the instance of the *Lived* that is the ultimate authority legitimizing the produced knowledge. Proximity to the Real of the (radical) concepts is ensured by their descriptiveness. Radical concepts describe the Real without ever attaining it. They describe the Lived (that the Real is). The Lived is the Experience. The pure Lived is anterior to Language: it is the mute experience before it takes recourse to transposing itself onto the Transcendental Plane, prior to the effort of making sense. Description of a sheer taking place is always a very rudimentary linguistic act. Descriptiveness (at least in the context of a theoretical endeavor) is about resorting to use of an impoverished (transcendentally minimal) language. Hence, it is "primitive."

It also borders with that which is radically different, with the radical exteriority, with the "out-there" – with the Real. Julia Kristeva claims this is something that produces horror, disgust or terror (1982). Adopting this claim, we will call this instance of bordering a "*thērion*," a monstrosity. Besides being the characteristic of scientific discourse, description of experience (rather than experiment) or the impoverished account of the Lived (which by definition is rich) can also be defining of the

Poetic. In Vico's vein, we could claim another instance of monstrosity, the one originating from the bordering between the Scientific and the Poetic. Radical concepts produce "monstrous" discourses: "monstrosity" of political thought and action is that which can radically undermine the existing discursive possibilities and bring forth a new political utopia.

Such "monstrous concept" is the "Poor" we find in Negri, Hardt (2001) and Rancière (2004). It provokes uneasiness by its directness (i.e., by its radicality), it embarrasses by its shamelessness echoing of poetic expression, yet it is very exact. It is a term susceptible to determination-in-the-last-instance and to exact scientific investigation (far more so than a term such as "class"). It provokes a sense of convocation (and recognition via the Lived) rather than interpellation. Similar can be said about the Schmittian terminological dyad of "friend" and "enemy." And such is the name of "Capital" which, according to Žižek, is the determination in the last instance of the political hegemony of today, i.e., liberal democracy.

The notion of "Capital" possesses the status of the Real in all of the variations of the hegemonic discourse, including the most subversive ones, i.e., the ones aiming at radical critique of hegemony, claims Žižek. He finds that "capitalism" is one of the indispensable elements, a condition, founding presupposition of Laclau's and Mouffe's project of "radical democracy" as well as of Butler's feminism (Žižek 2000; 2006). In liberal-demo-

cratic discourses, "Capital" is a term that is rarely used. It is always already presupposed but almost never directly referred to; as if it needed constant re-signification, in order for it to "mean something"; as if the term "Capital" meant nothing unless it was developed in a more complex concept such as "free market economy"; as if the concept of "Capital" were the Real itself facing us in its absurdity.

"Capital" is a radical concept indeed: it borders with the Real, it is a transcendental minimum determining in the last instance a constitutive aspect of the global hegemony of today. Finally, it is "primitive," it is overly descriptive and confirmed by and derived from the *Lived*. Yet it is an indispensable concept of the economical sciences. Radical critique departs from and is constantly realized by means of radical concepts.

"Gender" is another radical concept enabling radical critique, and it is the source of *thought-(of)-force* – put in Laruellian parlance – in Judith Butler's writings. Butler's theory operates with the concept of "gender," one dangerously close to the Real rather than with that of feminism which is an entire political-ideological project. Again it is a transcendently minimal concept which must be affirmed and confirmed by the *Lived*. Namely, any political or theoretical project, discourse generated around "gender" must gain legitimacy from the instance of the *Lived*. Concrete, singular realities (that can be voiced collectively) need to confirm the validity of a gen-

der equity related political project in order for it to come into reality. Laruelle gives an account of his dream of a (non-)Marxist project that would receive its legitimacy directly from the proletariat which should be able to recognize it as its “thought-(of)-force.” It seems that in the gender equity related movement(s) this is something that normally takes place.

In the polemical exchange with Žižek that tackles, among other issues, the question of universality versus particularity, Butler (2000) demonstrates that this dichotomy is false and that it is precisely the presupposition about the grounding status of a universality which gives rise to a political reasoning in terms of “particularities.” In other words, it is precisely the “universals” which produce “particularities,” whereby the former is always already a transcendental ideal that the latter fail to “fill in” without a remainder (Butler 2000, 144). Žižek’s insisting that the universals are founding of the Symbolic order and that they are in this respect purely formal and never fully embodied by “particular” individuals is a transcendentalist claim according to Butler, which she opposes by evoking Hegel:

Of course, the reply from even my most progressive Lacanian friends is that I have no need to worry about this unnamable sexual difference that we nevertheless name, since it has no content but is purely formal, forever empty. But here I would refer back to the point made so trenchantly by Hegel against Kantian formalism: the empty and formal structure is established precisely

through the not fully successful sublimation of content as form. (Butler 144 ,2000)

Butler explains that the universal of "sexual difference has a transcendental status even when sexed bodies emerge that do not fit squarely within ideal gender dimorphism." Concurring with Butler, I would claim that it is her concept of "gender norms" that works as a radical term since it enables bypassing transcendentalism of the notion of "sexual difference" and it is one that incessantly petitions confirmation from the "Lived," the experienced by the sexed bodies. Knowledge or theory of gender gains legitimacy and authority only from the particular realities of "sexed bodies." Conversely:

It would not matter whether sexual difference is instantiated in living, biological bodies, for the ineffability and non-symbolizability of this most hollowed of differences would depend on no instantiation to be true (Ibid).

Butler's *Psychic Life of Power* (1997) disassembles bodies of knowledge, i.e., corpuses of different doctrines, turning them into a *chôra* of transcendental material she operates with irreverently with respect to the schools of thought they may represent (or rather, are represented by). In this study, the concept of gender (norm) works as a radical term since it succumbs to the authority of the experienced (by a sexed body) rather than to the ideal of coherence of a philosophical system (or World, i.e., a discursive universe).

5. Instead of a Conclusion: The Question of a “Realist” Utopia

If we retain fidelity to the epistemic choice of thinking in terms of radical concepts, we cannot propose an ideology or utopian universe based on a single (“master”) radical term that would be unifying of everything else that inhabits (all other terms and all instances of experience) that universe. Unification under a master signifier is precisely the opposite of a political theory (and activism) based on radical concepts. Radical concepts enable radical critique irreverent of the master-terms (such as capital today) of hegemonic discourses, and they can inadvertently – or advertently – depose them. On the basis of an experienced affinity, alliances of political critique based on radical concepts can be established. However, it is arguable whether an alliance of affinities based on radical concepts exclusively can establish a discursive universe called utopia.

Utopia is founded upon a teleological and eschatological desire. It is a dynamic transcendental system driven by an eschato-teleological aspiration. I maintain that a utopian horizon of thought is indispensable for creating and carrying out of a political project. The two necessities, i.e., that of a utopia and the one consisting in the choice to think in radical political terms, do not have to exclude one another. Eschatology, I would claim, does not have to be subsumed under a single master signifier and it can be the product of a number of concepts that

establish affinity and that are continually confirmed by experience or by the "Lived."

In *La lutte et l'utopie à la fin des temps philosophiques* (2004) Laruelle argues for a utopia that is transcendently impoverished, ideologically minimal and radical in the sense of being "affected by immanence." In fact, his utopian project is founded upon the single, minimal goal of creating a World, a political universe that would be "affected (as much as possible) by immanence." It is a goal endowed with universality which is so transcendently and ideologically impoverished that one cannot expect it to be universalizing or subsuming of other concepts. It cannot be a universal establishing dominance over particulars; it cannot be a culturally hegemonic term since it is too transcendently minimal to contain hierarchy of concepts and to be able to propagate hierarchies that could be considered cultural. Any discursive universe, any World (*vis-à-vis* the Real) is suspended in this utopian dream, except the ascetic yearning for a life in a world "affected by immanence."

It seems arguable whether such a stance can be called political or utopian, rather than merely methodological one. Utopia or any other political project is all about establishing a World of human relationships, of signifiers and meanings – it is a linguistic or "transcendental" phenomenon *par excellence*. And it is the World that we inevitably live in – a pure dwelling in the purely Real is impossible. Without its domestication

brought about by a “World” (a discursive universe), the Real is uninhabitable.

A utopia which is produced by a radical (non-philosophical) political thought is also transcendently rich: it is a phantasmatic plenitude, which is indispensable for the production of radical concepts. The latter are indeed determination in the last instance established in accordance with the Real – radical concepts are “cloned” from the Real, yet they remain products of the transcendental. Thought is always already transcendental regardless of the fact that it succumbs to the Real as the (radically, irrevocably heterogeneous) authority in the last instance. Utopia that is transcendently rich, yet legitimized in the last instance by the Real, is what the thinking in terms of radical concepts can argue for.

The utopian dream which seeks its determination/s in the last instance to be transcendently impoverished radical concept/s always already confirmed by the Real, is a transcendently rich universe, yet submitting to the authority of the Lived. The fantasmatically rich utopian world is born out of radical concepts. One distinguishes radical concepts from the ones that are transcendently multilayered concepts by way of being able to make a determination-with-the-last-instance (as explained above). In other words, the Laruellian Real can be operative in the theorizing of the political only if coupled by the Žižian model of interrogating the effect of the Real as one always already and unavoidably transposed into the realm of the fantasmatic.

It is the desire circulating through the vessels of the fantasmatic which makes a utopia politically functional, i.e., which makes of a utopia an object of desire that constantly eludes, but is unavoidably pursued. One cannot either attain or possess the object-in-the-Real; nonetheless, the only way of extracting radical political pleasure is when the pursuit of desire, the repetitive desiring act follows and/or is followed by a symptom of the Real. It entails, by definition, a certain traumatic aspect, but it is the obsession with that traumatic which gives birth to any or all fantasmatic producing and sustaining the flow of the Real in its most brutal aspect, in its direct form of the "Lived" – the Desire itself.



CHAPTER II

The Location of Resistance: Persistence as its Nest

1. The Grounding Minimum of Revolt: Perseverance

In *Psychic Life of Power* (1997) Judith Butler engages into an exhaustive investigation of the questions of formation and location of resistance within the Subject. In Chapter 3 of the book, entitled “Subjection, Resistance, Resignification,” Butler repeatedly returns to the question of the Body as the possible site of resistance. The repetitive opening of this question, I will argue, contains the implication that resistance is in fact persistence. Namely, seen in its radical difference to the Subject as an instance of ceaseless transformativity, the Body assumes the status of the immanently stable topos always identical to itself. And it is precisely in the body, in that site of sameness and uninterrupted continuity which serves as the “polygon” for the subjective transformation, that Butler tends to look for the site and the source of resistance.

If the Body is expected to resist the Rule of Discipline which is the order of subjectivation, and if the latter

is expected to represent an *always already* relentless transformation, it can, consequently, be expected that resistance means to persist as the *same*, as *one* and integral. Disintegration, Foucault claims, is the aim and the means of Discipline (Foucault 1977, 147-148), whereas the latter is the means of subjection and normalization. We can, hence, conclude in Foucauldian vein, that the Resistance against the Norm/activity consists in resisting Disintegration. Resistance is about persisting as integral, as one, as the same. In other words, resistance is about survival. Survival or self-preservation is the origin of resistance and of critique – paradoxically, the revolutionary potential is provided by that fundamentally conservative stance of self-preservation.

Persistence as (corporeal) unity is to be understood as the determination in the last instance of (subject's) resistance. That which survives the change incessantly imposed by the Order of Power, which perseveres, which *persists* – *resists*. In fact, what is explored in Chapter 3 of Butler's *Psychic Life of Power* is the possibility for the Body to be not only the location, the site, the *topos*, but also the "substance" of resistance, i.e., "what resistance is made of." Continuity and resistance seem to be mutually complementary and supplementary notions – even identical in meaning, at least in the context of the closer reading of Butler's analysis which is proposed here.

Chapter 3 of *Psychic Life of Power* struggles with the fact that in Foucault no other explicit definition of the

Subject can be found except the one claiming it to be the direct *product of the disciplinary process*, of the processes of normalization imposed by the Order-of-Normativity-in-Power. Employing an approach of rigorous reading of Foucault, Butler points out to the fact of the absolute absence in his writings of any other definition of the Subject, or of the “Soul,” except as the one determining it as the product of disciplinary processes. At the same time, Butler offers an interpretation of the Foucauldian notion of the Subject as one endowed with the possibility of critique and resistance through subversion. In this attempt Butler takes recourse to Lacan; but before she does so, she exhausts all conceptual and methodological possibilities provided by Foucault himself. The relentless attempt at exhausting the entire theoretical/conceptual repository of the Foucaultian theory, repeatedly brings Butler back to the question of the possibility for the body to be that site of resistance and to the question of the substance of resistance.

I would like to point out here that the aporia – of the advocated yet seemingly impossible resistance – produced by the Foucauldian radically disciplined Subject is one that stems from – and applies to – Butler’s heuristic reading of Foucault. It is Butler, and not Foucault who unravelled the radical ambivalence of the Foucaultian Subject. Its fundamental ambivalence consists in the simultaneity of the two opposed processes: on the one hand, the relentless and unavoidable disciplining to

which the Self is always already subjected, by virtue of its auto-founding surrender to the power and the rule of Norm/activity, and its acting as the agency of the Norm, as the bearer and the active force of the Law, on the other hand. In other words, it is both disciplined and disciplining at the same time.

Power and discipline can be enforced but through its subjects – through those that have subjected themselves to the Norm and have, hence, gained competence to insure its rule. The radical ambivalence of the Subject consists in its constitutive simultaneous passivity and activity. The normal (disciplined and normalized) Subject becomes the agency of Normativity (i.e., of Normality) precisely by way of assuming discipline. In the process of subjection to the Norm, i.e., of being disciplined, the Subject endorses the Law, since in order to gain discipline one needs to understand the rule, that is, one needs to “see its point.” Or, put differently, the Discipliner does not only want you to just be obedient in exteriority, it demands your “passionate attachment” (Buttler 1997, 129), it wants your soul, it requests your love. In the process of disciplining, in the process of endorsing the rule and the rules of the Law, the Subject establishes a relation.

The Subject exists only by virtue of its role within the Symbolic order, since it has always already been produced as its function, says Lacan. Similarly to Lacan, Foucault explains that the subject is always already im-

plicated by the Discourse in/of Power, since it is conditioned by it. The only possible world for the Subject is the Universe of the existing and historically determined discursive possibilities. It is impossible for the Subject to think itself outside the horizon of thought introduced and maintained by the Law, outside the universe the Symbolic Order represents (except hypothetically). The stronger the hold of discipline is, the more impossible it is for the subject to imagine itself outside its world, and hence assume a critical position with respect to it. Let us reiterate, in this way a fundamental complicity with the Norm is established, whereby *the Subject assumes competence* with respect to it. Hence, it inevitably becomes the Subject in the etymologically incorrect, modern sense of the word, i.e., an active instance, an actor in a process – and, finally, a potential agency of political *subversion*.

Competence and power invested in the Butlerian Subject conceived as the active force of Normality and Norms, render the interpretation of this (the Butlerian) concept of subjectivity as fundamentally passive and always already subjugated entirely inadequate. Paradoxically, the complicity (with Norm) itself is that which ensures critique and, consequently, resistance. Self-reflecting (about) itself as the active and competent – authoritative, powerful – instance of exercising and re-producing the Norm, the Subject re-invents itself as also the instance of the production of the Norm (and not merely

of re-production). This process does not only imply complicity with the Norm but also the possibility of resistance since the pretension itself to assume the position of an authority with respect to the norm implies also the claim to the right to authorship. To create Norms is also to exercise critique of the existing ones (regardless of whether more conservative norms were introduced). The fact that Butler cannot resist tackling the problem of the body indicates her desire to identify a site of resistance which is inherently stable, an instance immanently opposite to that of ceaseless transformation.

It is, hence, no surprise that in *Undoing Gender (UG)*, seven years after the publishing of *PLP*, Butler strongly insists on the irrevocability of the “tasks of persistence and survival” for the “I” (2004, 4). Persistence and survival – “continuity through dissociated unity” (Butler 1997, 93) – are inherently related to and often conflated with resistance, since it is that same instance and “site” which enables both resistance to the Norm and persistence of the (dissociated) unity in spite of the unstoppable process of transformativity.

Considering that Foucault is a declared Nietzschean, and that Butler declares herself a Foucauldian, it seems necessary to explore how the thesis about self-preservation as the origin of resistance, that I am attributing here to the Foucauldian-Butlerian line of thought, relates to Nietzsche’s idea of the “Untergang” as the basis of (political) change. The seemingly radical difference be-

tween the two positions will be reconciled – or rendered nothing but seeming – by way of resorting to Francois Laruelle’s “non-philosophy” and its epistemology of “thinking in terms of the One.” The latter refers to a non-relationist thought, to a thought in terms of singularity conditioned by the unique, singular reality of the object of investigation (of “theorizing”) rather than inter-relatedness and inter-conditioning of concepts within a doctrinal universe.

A Laruellian perspective will enable us to bypass the question about the possible radical divergence or split within the Nietzschean-Foucauldian-Butlerian line of thinking on the issue of self-preservation (and resistance). A Laruellian stance will enable an investigation into the questions of the location and formation of resistance that operates with the “conceptual material” provided by Butler, Foucault and Nietzsche inasmuch as sheer material and not a “structural function” within a legacy of thought (=a Doctrine). A non-philosophical approach of treating/operating with this conceptual material is to render it a “*chôra*.” (Laruelle 1989, 18) The latter refers to a conceptual (Laruelle would say “transcendental”) material that the non-philosophical posture of thought chooses to see as unorganized within a “Doctrinal Universe;” a conceptual material that is used according to the dictate of the singularity of the issue at stake in a theoretical investigation, rather than succumbing to the imperative to contribute to the coherence of a Legacy of Thought (=a Doctrine).

The heuristic reading and the non-philosophical stance will be the main tools of this attempt to “denude” the substratum of Foucauldian-Butlerian position on resistance. Once again, the “substratum of the position” that this essay strives to unravel is an implication or a potentiality of thought that will be inferred by means of the approach of heuristic reading rather than a Foucauldian-Butlerian explicitly declared position. In the end, the position maintained in this chapter, and derived from the potentiality of the Foucauldian-Butlerian discourse, will look for support in Freud’s thesis about grief as the source of revolt. As it will be demonstrated in the conclusion of this essay, according to Freud, grief/mourning is the solitary labour of survival of the Ego. From Freud’s *Mourning and Melancholy* we will learn that the Ego’s labouring for self-preservation *always already* issues into – or is marked by – a stance of Revolt (against the outside World).

2. The Origin of Revolt: Self-Preservation or Self-Demise?

According to Nietzsche, it is precisely the instinct of self-preservation which disables, cancels any critique (and revolt). The heroic act – a gesture of revolting against the ruling values – consists in an action of *untergehen*.

Untergang is a recurrent metaphor of Zarathustra’s quest: his “going down” among the people – his descent

from the spiritual heights of his solitude – bringing them the gift of Love for the Humankind is an act of *untergehen*. In *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, *untergehen* is used in a multilayered sense, referring to “the sun going down,” “transgression” and as “going down into peril.” As opposed to self-preservation, heroism (action which is not mere re-action, action stripped off *ressentiment*) – i.e., revolt and resistance – should be understood and exercised, according to Nietzsche, as *willed* self-demise. Certainly, the latter is oversimplification, however intended. It serves our debate by opening a trenchant opposition between a philosophy of resistance according to which the latter is inherently related to survival, and another philosophy according to which it can be anything but that.

However, Nietzsche’s “heroic position” with respect to the issue of self-preservation is not that unequivocal. In *Beyond Good and Evil* (13, 262)¹ and in *Will to Power* (Book I, 4, 45), Nietzsche maintains the instinct for self-preservation to be one of the effects of the will to power. He insists that desiring one’s own decay, death and disempowerment, to be the sign of weakness and decadence. At one point in *Will to Power* (Book IV, 495) he unequivocally establishes an equation between self-preservation and will to power (“‘sense for truth’ [...] as a means of the preservation of man, as will to power”). Still, again in *Will to Power*, he insists that the “true will” of the will to power, the *conatus* of Will-Power is to

transcend, to go beyond, to step out – to be an ex-stasis from – the state of self-preservation.

Means of enduring it [the eternal recurrence]: the revaluation of all values. No longer joy in certainty but uncertainty; no longer ‘cause and effect’ but the continually creative; no longer will to preservation but to power; no longer the humble expression, ‘everything is merely subjective,’ but ‘it is also our work!’ (IV, 1059, 3)

Here we find the terms of “will to preservation” and “will to power” opposed. The one who fully embraces the principle of eternal recurrence is called upon revaluating of all values (1059: 2), and in such an endeavour will to power replaces, or rather, suspends the principle of self-preservation. The latter is a form of the will to power, albeit the most rudimentary one, closest but not reduced to biology. It furnishes the precondition of the exercise of the will to power by being its primal actualization. However, power’s *telos*, according to Nietzsche, is to “discharge itself” (*Beyond Good and Evil*, 13), while self-preservation is one of its most frequent indirect results (*ibid.*).

Zarathustra exclaims that he loves the one who knows how to live solely through his own perishing, that he loves the one who justifies in advance the people of the future and redeems those of the past, while his will is to perish by the people of today (Part 1, Ch. 4). He loves those who live in the form of auto-consumption, as the flame of life being the living blaze and at the same

time the process of burning into one's own disappearance. Zarathustra loves those who live only through their will to die sacrificing their life for some worldly reason, contingency, nothing grand in significance, over a "small thing" (ibid.). These are the people who, like himself, love people, and it is they who willingly "cross the bridge" (ibid.). Since "their souls are as deep as their wounds," they can "die of some futile incident" – "because it is willingly that they cross the bridge" (ibid.). The incident can be futile precisely because their souls are as deep as their wounds, since in their great will/power they are airily fragile; and precisely because it is with will that they "cross the bridge." The source of this will is love.

Those who live through their perishing, those whose life is self-consuming flame, are the ones who justify the people of the future and redeem those of the past (by dying by the hand of the people of today) – these are heroes according to the Greek tragic model. These are the people of revolt, of resistance. And it seems that their principal driving force is that of death, not of survival. There is a seeming opposition between the view according to which resistance lies in the striving for survival and the one according to which it is in the will to die that resistance lives. And it is indeed but a seeming opposition. The conceptual kernel in each of the two positions *a priori* disables any opposition, any mutual exclusion on the basis of contradiction. Here is why.

In *UG*, Butler explicitly claims that one is *always already* engaged in the “tasks of survival” and that latter is the legitimizing instance of one’s claim to (the right to) realness (inscription in the legible discourses ruled by Norm/ality) which is an act of political resistance. Nonetheless, the category of self-preservation that Butler proposes, according to our reading of her theses in *PLP* and *UG*, is not the same as the one Nietzsche despicably rejects. In fact, as quoted above, Nietzsche insists that will to power and will to self preservation are, in certain instances, the same. It is affirmed as the source of soul’s health, and its lack brings “weakness” and “decadence.” In the name of precision, it needs to be clarified that the opposition between the two theses is heuristically constructed, on the basis of our reading of chosen fragments of the authors’ writings. I am not saying there is a general unequivocal position vis-à-vis this question held by either Butler or Nietzsche and that the two positions are opposed.

Survival upon which Butler calls is primarily a psychological notion, referring to the psyche’s and body’s “tasks of survival” as an “I” (unity, even though in the process of constant transformation). It is also a concept of both the ontological and the political registers in reference to the potentiality (its instance and its substance) of resisting against the disciplinary hold of the Order of Normality. Hence, the “survival” in question is an instance of the Self which revolts against Normativity and its aspects of

disciplining, subjugating – subjection and subjectivizing. The form of self-preservation despised by Nietzsche is precisely (self)preservation, (self)conservation of Norm/activity – conservatism, i.e. the lack of will to “revaluation of all values.”

In the last instance, Nietzsche and Butler do not seem to be opposed at all. The work of survival, in its identity-in-the-last instance, is consisted of the ultimately destructive gesture of revolt – against the Order-in-Power; survival is rebellion against the violence of subjugation and bodily and psychic disintegration, which, according to Foucault, is the primary means by way of which Norm/activity produces the “dissociated unity” of the Self. Resistance is a stance situated at the border between survival and peril. It is, as Heidegger would put it, inasmuch as heroic (i.e., tragic) act indeed a “*Gränzsituation*.” “Death drive,” destruction (including auto-destruction), seems to be the constitutive element of that of survival or Life.

This does not mean that Life is Death and Death is Life. This type of paradoxes – or “making sense” through a paradox – is something I do not embrace, following in this respect François Laruelle’s advice. The latter consists in Laruelle’s observation that the paradox as a category of philosophical truth represents a “romantic solution,” (Laruelle 1989, 231) through which one remains entrapped in the binary logic of opposition, in the grasp of the dualistic reason. Laruelle calls upon non-relationist thinking, thinking in terms of singularity whereby the

definition of the object of investigation is not conditioned by a constitutive opposition or, for that matter, of any dual relation whatsoever.

3. A “Laruellian Twist:” Bypassing Opposition

I would like to briefly present the grounding constituents of the methodology of François Laruelle’s non-philosophy, his “Thought-in-terms-of-the-One” (or “Vision-in-One”). Non-philosophy’s main goal consists in surpassing dualisms produced by philosophy’s “self-mirroring.” And this is something I subscribe to. “Thinking in terms of the one” is a methodological position that will help us bypass the opposition between self-preservation and tragic heroism.

Thinking-in-terms-of-the-One, copying (“cloning” as Laruelle would put it) in this respect the model of the scientific thinking, correlates with the Real of its object of investigation. The object of investigation is always of “transcendental material” – simply: it is a concept – but the ways in which one attempts to think it are not conditioned by another concept as part of a conceptual construct (a discourse or “Doctrine”). Rather, one thinks the concept in correlation with the (or: its) Real: with the Real behind the Transcendental (a term that in non-philosophy functions as “Language” or “Discourse”), which the latter always attempts to grasp and reflect.

The Real, on the other hand, is the elusive instance that each concept strives – by *always already* failing – to discipline and reduce to a meaning, to Language. The Real of non-philosophy is close to, yet not identical in meaning with, the Lacanian Real; it's rather its (non-) Euclidean twist. Laruelle argues for thinking in correlation with the Real. While always already failing to reflect the Real in its identity in the last instance as the result of thought's radically different structure, the thought which correlates with the Real attempts to *describe* it in its singularity. Hence, what non-philosophy advocates is an attempt to "reflect" the Real "without a mirror," without the pretension that the Thought in its constitution could ever be the reflection of the Real and vice versa. Laruelle purports that "language can describe the One [the Real], which has not at all the same structure, without reflecting it exactly or reproducing it" (Laruelle 50 ,1989).

Correlating with the Real is theoretical attuning with the "radical immanence" of the "Identity" (in Laruelle's parlance, referring to the concept-object of investigation), which is postulated as the "real object" of the non-philosophical research. The "real object" of research is a postulate and is not considered *the* direct reflection – in spite of the pretension – of the Real of the "Identity" that is subject to investigation. There is a distinction between "the Real" as "the finitude of Identity" and "the real object of research." The latter, being an extrapolation from the World (a "transcendental" Universe or

the Discursivity in which we are all inevitably born and live in) contains “theorico-technico-experimental ingredients,” claims Laruelle (1992, 93). The two objects, “the Real” and “the real object” of (non-philosophical) research, contain “the same representations, but of an entirely different status” (ibid.). The distinction between the two, insists Laruelle, “is not epistemological [...], but only of-the-last-instance, that is to say, either *transcendental or immanent* [...]” (ibid.). Furthermore, it does not imply the distinction between “experience and concept, the concrete and the abstract, the experimentation and the theoretical – nor any of their ‘dialectizations’ or ‘couplings,’” insists Laruelle (ibid.).

It is important that the thought correlates with the “Real” and it is this process that brings us to the “real object” of investigation. It is the result of acknowledging the Real as the identity-in-the-last instance of that which has been subjected to theoretical investigation, as that to which the cognition succumbs as to the ultimate authority. In sum, this posture of thought suspends relationism, cancels the authority of a discourse to determine the status of the “real object” of investigation by the position it holds inside its own doctrinal universe.

Returning to the paradox of Life and Death simultaneously present in the instance of revolt and resistance, I will attempt to explicate my claim in non-dualistic, non-binary terms whereby one does not exclude the other, nor reduce it to itself. They do not establish inter-

changeability. The two terms do not mutually condition each other. Subscribing to the non-philosophical critique of dualism, I will argue that the simultaneity of the active role of both Life-drive and Death-drive in the labour of survival is not something that renders the two notions paradoxically interchangeable. In such a case, to quote Laruelle, we would have a situation where “the form of the equation has been changed, but the equation as a form of thought still persists” (1989, 231).

I will argue that the destructive stance is invested in the labor of persistence and survival, of Life; the paths and modes of this investment do not render it reducible to the other term (to Life); the stance of (auto-)destructiveness, seen in its singularity, in its “identity-in-the-last-instance” is integrated in a process which is, *in the last instance*, one of sustaining, re-creating Life. Executing the task of survival in its paroxysm of pure revolt implies the participation of Death-drive as the inevitable result of the risk always already present in the revolt against the Order-in-Power. Death is unilaterally invested in the tasks of Life without establishing an equation with it.

Revolting against the Order, against Discipline and Self-Discipline, implies the risk of Punishment, of Peril, of Death. And it is by assuming this risk, passionately, that one confronts the Rule-of-Power, rebels against it aiming its disintegration, overpowering or death. One desires the death of the instance of discipline (working through bodily and psychic disintegration, claims Fou-

cault), and one passionately embraces the possibility of one's own death. Revolt is traversed by Desire: Desire for Life (for one's own survival, and liberation from the disciplinary hold of the Norm) and Desire for Death (of the Repressive Forces); but also by the desire forming the passionate embracement of the possibility of one's own peril. The "passionate attachment" to the Threat of disintegration, in the case of the revolutionary subject, is *jouissance* consisting in the savoring of the phantasm about the Liberation from the violent Norm and of the taste of its imminent *realization*, rather than in the Bondsman-Master dialectics.

This modality of a desire for Death, the passionate attachment to the possibility of one's own death, is possible only as a constituent of the revolutionary act, only as a component of the Subject-and-Body-situating as an instance of resistance, and in the name of persistence, survival, self-preservation.

4. Searching for the Site of Resistance

In line with Foucault's theory of subjectivity, drawing on his conceptualizations of the "body" and the "soul" and their respective roles in the Subject formation, in *PLP*, Butler refers to the Body as "*the site*" of transformativity (of the Subject). The Body as "*the site*" of – the polygon for – transformations in Subjectivity is clearly

referred to in its aspect of “materiality,” or rather physicality. In fact, by way of making a distinction of opposing terms between Transformativity (inasmuch as workings of the Sign/ifer) and its Site (the Body), it is implied that the latter is considered in its aspect (rendition) of the Real. The “site of transformations”—through its defining opposition with respect to transformativity—is assumed to be *always already* the same and one (at least mathematically). Butler is explicit in her claim that the Subject is never really identical to itself: it is *always already* re-created, re-invented through the endless process of re-subjectivation imposed by the Order-of-Power.

Through the search for the “site” of these transformations, inasmuch as it is the opposing term to transformativity itself—both terms constituting a binary enabling their respective definitions precisely through the mutual exclusion and opposition they establish—it is implied that the Body (the “Site”) subsists as the same and one. It is clear here that Butler does not write about the imaginary/imagined body from *Bodies That Matter* (1993) that is a territory of signification and, in that respect, itself subject to a process of certain transformativity. Inasmuch as “the site” of transformation, the Body, in *PLP*, is conceived in its opposition to the “Soul” (both terms inherited from Foucault). The body in this context is pure physicality and it is the Real. It is a passive *Site*. Hence, resistance is to be found in a still, static, stable site.

At one point in her analysis (in *PLP*), Butler concludes that “[F]or Foucault [...] process of subjectivation takes place centrally through the body” (Butler 1997, 83), where upon she enters into a critical re-reading of Foucault through the hybrid lens consisting of the intersection between the psychoanalytic and the Foucauldian perspective. It is a critical re-reading of Foucault via Foucault whereby “[...] criticism will entail re-emergence of a Foucauldian perspective *within* psychoanalysis” (Butler 1997, 87). The latter is a methodological intervention that enables bringing to the fore an important dimension of the Foucauldian Subject, one of central significance – that of its constitutive ambivalence.

Nonetheless, Butler’s reading to the letter of Foucault shows that, according to his conceptions of subjectivation by and/or subjection to the Order-of-Power, the effects of the processes of Subject-production seem to be “totalizing” (Butler 1997, 86). The dimension of totality would be the immediate result of the imprisoning effect of the “soul” as it is explicitly conceptualized and termed by Foucault. However, by way of making Foucault re-emerge into psychoanalysis, and vice-versa, Butler conceives of a Subject endowed with the capacity for resistance, which still adheres to the Foucauldian legacy of theorizing subjection/subject-production. The choice of taking recourse to psychoanalysis is only meant to unravel and re-invent the ambivalence that Butler deems inherent in the Foucauldian Subject – its Janus-like con-

stitution whereby Passivity is the opaque of Activity and vice-versa. Still, the thesis about the ambivalence is only implicit in Foucault's own writings, or rather left without an explicit and exhaustive elaboration of the ways in which it operates and of its constitution.

Defining trait of the Foucauldian Subject's ambivalence, as revealed by Butler's heuristic reading, is its double constitution enabling it to operate on two levels simultaneously, both on that of passivity and on the one where activity takes place. Namely, apart from being constraining, the effects brought upon by the "imprisoning soul" also form an instance which has "formative or generative effects." "Prohibition and restriction," are Power's procedures of producing the Foucauldian "Soul." Yet, the "Soul" is the Executor of the Order/s of (in) Power. Discipline, "prohibition and restriction," is brought upon the Body and the Self. The latter is subjected to the Order. On the other hand, in its role of an agency of *assumed* Power (always already taking a Form and the form is always already a Norm), in its role of the inevitable "personification" of Power/Norm, the Subject produces "formative and generative effects" (Butler 1997, 87).

The only explicit statements we find in Foucault's writings seem to be claims about an unequivocal dichotomy between the body and the soul, which would indeed leave no possibility for the body to resist either, being reduced to a "malleable surface for the unilateral

effects of disciplinary power” (Butler 1997, 86-87). Butler also makes the observation that Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish (DP)*, reduces “soul” to the Subject as a “position within the Symbolic order,” to use Lacanian parlance (Butler 1997, 86). Consequently, if not complemented by psychoanalysis, Foucault’s discourse on subjectivity, according to Butler, leaves little, if any, space for the “location” of resistance of the Subject.

Butler looks for an answer to this aporia in what she calls “incommensurability between psyche and subject” (Butler 1997, 87). However, she refuses to resort to an easy answer that psychoanalysis could provide to the questions of the location and of the identity-in-the-last-instance of resistance, one that could locate the Resistance on the territory of the Unconscious. The latter would be a “romantic solution” building on a romantic notion of the Unconscious as the “Land of Innocence” as far as Normativity is concerned. She hypothesizes that the unconscious is also “structured by power relations that pervade cultural signifiers” (Butler 1997, 88).

Having adopted this position with respect to the Phantasm about the “Purity of the Unconscious,” Butler situates the Subject’s ambivalence, or rather its complicity with power, in the Unconscious as well. From this point on, it becomes even more difficult to establish the location and trace the mechanisms of resistance within the Psyche. Eventually, as soon as the discussion exploring the hypothesis about the Unconscious as the possible

source of revolt is exhausted and reaches a dead end, Butler reintroduces the question of the “body” as the possible location and substance of resistance, inviting us “to return to the problem of the bodies in Foucault” (Butler 1997, 89).

By searching for that which is *outside* the Foucauldian “soul,” outside the *Subject* inherently articulated by the mechanisms of Power – that “mere position within the Lacanian symbolic” – as the possible *locus of resistance* (for the “I”), Butler is also attempting to locate that thing which “glues the bundle [called Subject] together” (Braidotti 2002, 5). It seems that by looking for that *topos* of critique (directed at the Order-of-Power) *outside* all of that which is essentially a mere form of the process of subjection, Butler implies that the location of resistance is *de facto* a location of resistance to ceaseless transformation. Subjection inasmuch as subject-formation is always already unstoppable subject-*transformation*. Transformativity, subjective *change* is a process unavoidably taking place inside the confines of a power-formation. It is a process (auto-)generated by the Order of Power.

In brief, if the transformation takes place through subject formation, it is inextricably implicated in the processes of Enactment-of-Order, in the processes of Disciplining in accordance with the Norm. Hence, the locus of opposition to the Norm, the locus of Resistance is outside transformativity, outside the continuous change – it is in fact a *static* stance. Static in the double sense of the

word: “not moving,” but an adjective derivative from the ancient Athenian political concept of *stasis* meaning a rebellion or a civil war in the polis, suspension of the Polis, of the Order-in-Power (Loroux, 2001). *Stasis*, meaning both stillness and revolution (στάσις), is a *pause* in the Normality of the functioning of the State.

The locus of resistance is, therefore, an instance of potentiality for situating oneself with a radical, immanent detachment from the ceaseless auto-generated processes of subjection (of “being a Subject”). Thus, it is situating beyond the instance of transformability. The latter, by definition, belongs to the domain of the Subject; the instance of paused transformation, or of paused subjection, can take place at the level of the Subject as its own Negative, as a crack within the subject formation. What matters is that it is an instance of resistance to transformation (inasmuch as a process of subjection), to change (inasmuch as generated by Norm-in-Power), resistance to movement – it’s a stance of stability, of continuity within the *same Self* although endlessly involved in the processes of (self-)transmutation. It is a *topos* of virginity as far as subjection is concerned, a *topos* of self-identity – the *topos* of sameness is potentially also the *topos* of emergence of *any* resistance to *any* oppressions of Norm effectuated through *any* form of subjectivity. This *topos* of resistance can be but that “thing” called by Braidotti the “glue” for the non-unitary Subject. It is an instance of *continuity* and *persistence*, it is the *critical stance re-*

sisting the processes of subjection and identification in order to *survive* as the Body but also as the Self free of repressions imposed by the Power-of-Discipline.

The implicated link between resistance and continuity (of the “I”) that I see in *PLP* is affirmed by Butler herself in *UG* when she writes “[...] the possibility of my persistence as an ‘I’ depends upon my being able to do something with what is done with me” (Butler 2004, 3). *UG* is a book which insists on the tasks of survival for the Self. Still it neither “undoes” the concept of subjectivity as conceived in *PLP* nor the argument concerning the topology of the resistance and continuity as proposed by the same book.

5. Hiatus in Repetition

According to Butler’s close reading of *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault’s conception of the “Subject” – being but an “instrument of power” – can hardly allow any interpretation of its constitution in terms of ambivalence, one that would render it also an active instance and an agency of resistance (apart from its being a sheer product of subjection). It is for this reason that Butler invites us once again to “return to the problem of bodies in Foucault” (Butler 1997, 89). What follows immediately is an interrogation of the possibility for the Body to be the *topos* of resistance *par excellence*. Struggling with

what seems to be an aporia established by the body/soul opposition in Foucault, Butler asks: “Has it come to the paradoxical point where Foucault wants to claim that the soul is the exterior form, and the body interior space (Butler 1997, 89)?

Archaic oppositions of the type “soul as the exterior form” versus “body as interior space” are not the basis upon which Foucault’s philosophy operates. The idea about the double sense of Power, about its simultaneously subjugating and liberating effects, and also about the double-faceted process of subjection as *the* form in which Power operates, would be irreconcilable with an archaic position of the sort. The ambivalence of Power (and hence of its agency) in the sense of its endless potentiality for transmutation from overpowering force (of repression) into one of empowerment is implied throughout Foucault’s opus. In fact it is an opus dedicated to this message.

Therefore, the hypothetical reading according to which Foucault’s philosophy leaves no possibility for resistance – proposed by Butler merely hypothetically, for the sake of analysis – should be dismissed; not only because of its anachronistic overtones, but also because it would indeed leave *neither space nor potentiality of resistance/critique* which would itself be in downright contradiction with the entire emancipatory project of Foucault.

Moreover, a reading according to which the possibility for resistance would be outside the boundaries of

Selfhood, outside the “soul,” would find itself in utter disagreement with the concept of the “Self” from *The History of Sexuality, vol. III: The Care of the Self (HS-III)*. Foucault’s “soul” is neither reduced nor reducible to imprisonment and constraint; it is also an instance of liberation and pleasure, the Self (*le soi, le moi*) should be the produce of practices of self-cultivation (“*souci de soi*”), insists Foucault in *HS-III*. Butler’s radical readings of Foucault in *PLP* – radicalizing the concepts and rhetorical means for the purposes of a heuristic reading – serve to unravel the complexity of Foucault’s writing by bringing to the fore the instances of impasse present in it. This radicalization by way of reading Foucault to the letter is necessary, because of the problematic (=symptomatic) explicitness in his insisting on the imprisoning effects of the “soul” at the expense of the symptomatic implicitness – or lack of explicitness – in elaboration of its liberating potentials.

In direct relation to the latter, Butler recurrently returns to the question of the Body as the Site of Revolt *par excellence*, only to conclude that “[...] there is no body outside of power, for the materiality of the body – indeed, materiality itself – is produced by and in direct relation to the investment of power” (Butler 1997, 90-91).

The logic inherent in Butler’s interpretative search for the location of resistance in Foucault would be the following: resistance can be located only outside the Power

formations (inhabiting the Subject) and, hence, outside the Subject as well; since it is proven that even the Body is also invaded by power and discourse, resistance is not to be found there (in the body) either. Butler's reading is a symptomatology intended to reveal the great *aporia* of Foucault – a point of frustration which is also the focus of greatest potentiality, the most fertile grain in his thought.

To support the latter claim, let us remember that Foucault himself explicitly states that there are possibilities for resistance, a multitude of them, and that they are to be located in the instance of Power itself, through inversions of its articulations, through subversion of its institutions and instruments of the Order of Normality and Normativity. In *History of Sexuality, Volume 1: The Will to Knowledge*, Foucault writes that there can be “no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of Revolt.” Instead, one can talk of “multiple possibilities of resistance enabled by power itself” (Foucault 1998, 95-96).

The ambivalence of Power is invested in and through the Subject and induces in the latter a creation of a double-faceted constitution. The Subject is *always already* the agency of both Norm/activity and of Revolt, i.e., of Resistance. Similar to the Moebius strip, the single-boundary *topos* of Power takes a curve creating a reverse, or rather an oblique, of the same. This “double nature” of Power is what constitutes the double nature of the Subject, rendering it both disciplined/disciplining as well as

revolutionary: “[...] in its resignifications, the law itself is transmuted into that which opposes and exceeds its original purposes,” says Butler (1997, 99). In fact, outside the vicious circle of pursuing – or rather merely testing – the argument about the body as the site of resistance *par excellence*, Butler proposes her own thesis about the origin of resistance in the Foucauldian Subject: it is in the constant reiteration of the Norm (1997, 93). The constant reiteration undermines the solidity, the Norm’s status of a given – it is as if in the hiatus of re-iteration, the Subject of critique and resistance arises. Hiatus is a pause, it is a *stasis*.

Butler’s interpretation of Foucault seeks to explicate what Foucault himself is not explicit about: the processes of transmutation of one aspect (“expression,” articulation into the Symbolic) of Power into the other, from disciplining and repressive into revolutionary. It is an interpretation, operating with the conceptual and methodological tools of (Lacanian) psychoanalysis, according to which the origin of the transmutation is the ceaseless process of reiterations of the Law (or the Norm; Butler establishes a parallel, or rather an equation, between the disciplining force of Power and the Lacanian Law, see: Butler 1997, 86, 88-89, 98-99 et al.).

Re-iteration is *always already* re-signification. Even when re-signifying the Same, the very act of bringing in(-to-Power) signification, moreover from the position of an agency of power – from the stance of “having the

authorization,” that of “being a Subject”, to re-inscribe the Norm (or “the Law”) – renders the *always already* same Law *always already* different. The Subject incessantly differs in the Name of the Law – by way of constant re-signification of the “raw material” of the undisciplined phantasmatic – and through this process the Subject itself becomes different, shifted on the signifying chain. This interpretation echoes epistemologies other than just Lacanian psychoanalysis, such as Deleuze’s epistemic project of “difference and repetition,” or Nietzsche’s conception of the “eternal return” or Spinoza’s thesis about the Subject’s radical embeddedness in its environment (in “Nature,” which includes human individuals and their societal network as its immanent part).

Let us consider the following, one rare explicit reference to the location of resistance made by Foucault:

[...] there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case: resistances that are possible, necessary, improbable; others that are spontaneous, savage, solitary, concerted, rampant, or violent; still others that are quick to compromise, interested or sacrificial; by definition, they can only exist in the strategic field of power relations. But this does not mean that they are only a reaction or rebound, forming with respect to the basic domination an underside that is in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat. (Foucault 1998, 95-96)

In the quoted passage we do not find anything referring – either directly or indirectly – to the rules of structure or of inner organization of Power in the form of the Subject. He writes of a multiplicity (and unpredictability) of possibilities for resistance in terms of and from the perspective of the Social, within a society or a culture. Evidently Foucault is referring to the locations, possible manifestations of resistance on and in the Social Body (and “Soul”).

There is one definition concerning resistance (i.e., its location) that we find in this passage: resistance can “exist” only in “the strategic field of power relations.” And in the context of the quoted passage it seems to belong to the topology of the Social. Nonetheless, we should investigate more closely the proposed definition of the location of resistance and see if it is applicable to the interrogation of the potentiality for resistance of/within the Subject itself. Since, it remains a question how the “transmutation” of Power takes place on the “territory” of the Subject, of the Individual; what are the structural changes, or the changes in terms of “inner organization” of the Subject or in terms of the possible modalities of subject-constitution that take place? So, the question is not only how the Subject posits itself within the Network of Power relations – not just in actuality or reality, but also on the level of the “Symbolic” – i.e., how it re-situates itself with respect to the Law, but also what prompts this re-situating. In other words, what reversal

on the level of the Self must take place for the revolutionary repositioning to take place?

In reference to “where” the resistance can take place on the level of the Individual – of the Subject and its body – Foucault writes about “focuses of resistance [...] inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain types of behaviour.” (Foucault 1998, 95-96) There is reference to both “body” and “moments of life, certain types of behaviour” (“body” and “soul”) as the possible locations of resistance. Hence, according to Foucault, resistance can take place both within the (disciplined) soul, as well as in and through the (disciplined) body. And also, as we could see from the previously quoted paragraph, resistance, that “odd term in relations of power,” (Foucault 1998, 96) according to Foucault’s own words, is possible. Why Foucault chooses to elaborate extensively on the disciplining effects of power/soul and not on the liberating ones is another question that we are not going to open here.

Resistance or critique of the Norm implies – or rather, *takes the form of* – also a change within the subject-formation, it implies trans-formation of the Subject or of the Self; and paradoxically so: since it is understood as also the stance of resistance to change, to transformation (always already imposed by the Order-of-Power). If we embrace the interpretation according to which resistance is persistence as the same, that revolution consists in resisting change as always already imposed by the Norm, we

are obliged to imagine the transformation of the Subject into a revolutionary agency, as one of a radically different status in terms of immanence. It takes place at an instance that is able to enunciate its radical independence vis-à-vis the Order/World/Norm, to claim its right to survive as itself, to defend its individual, solitary truth, and to circumscribe itself as its inalienable self. Hence, one inescapably imagines a site or instance (or substance?) of continuity upon which transformation takes place.

The transformation process implies that a certain "Same" undergoes a process of becoming "different to itself," a process of "dis-identification" and "re-identification" to which *one* is *continuously* subjected. And it is not "one" in a merely grammatical sense of the word but also mathematically. Hence, it is "one" also in the ontological sense of the word. A certain instance of Selfhood has to remain identical to itself or has to persevere as some sort of continuity, so that the subject-transformation is experienced as *one's own*. An instance of continuity is needed so that it functions as the instance from which the possession of subject transformations can be claimed. And the latter is valid also for the changes that are neither enunciated nor recognized by the "revolutionary Subject," it applies also to the imperceptible and uninterrupted processes of Subject-transformation imposed by the Norm-in-Power (or the Power-in-Form).

In order to be able to say "I have been many Subjects," or "I have found myself in many subjects-formations," or

“I have lived and died as a number of subjects,” there is an instance which enunciates the multiplicity as a process of transformation contained within a unity and on the basis of continuity. As far as the issue of subject-transformation is concerned, it seems that the notions of unity and continuity coincide in meaning and in status (in terms of structure or rather in constitution of “selfhood”). Only a certain instance of oneness can act as an instance of continuity, and the latter is indispensable in order to be able to speak of a transformation and multiple possibilities for subject-formations of a self. (Otherwise the reference to multiplicity would mean no more than mere plurality of dispersed subject-formations; and there could hardly be any possibility for reference to *trans*-formation of the Subject.)

In my view, it is for reasons of establishing identity between continuity and unity – and thereby implying that it is the instance of stability that furnishes site for resistance – that in *PLP* Butler keeps returning to the Body as the possible site of resistance. Foucault claims that the Self is always already dissociated while always already “adopting the illusion of a substantial unity.” Furthermore, he claims that the Self or the Subject is created through the process of destruction of the body (the Body is called “that volume in perpetual disintegration,” inflicted by Language, i.e., by Norm/activity) (Foucault 1977, 147-148). Thus, when Butler is investigating the possibility for the body to be the site of resistance, it

means that she is also searching for that focal point of potentiality within the body to resist destruction and disintegration. Once again resistance is inextricable from persistence, from unity and continuity.

6. Grief and Survival: Death invested in Life

Memory, that sequential instance of cathexis to a lived experience or to an internalized object of love/hate, is yet another form of continuity enabling the Self or the Subject to know of its transformations, of the subjective deaths and births it has been through. Mourning and grief is a theme that gains significant importance in Butler's later works, more specifically in *Precarious Life* (*PL*) and *UG*, and it is to the latter that we will focus at this conclusive point of our analysis.

Both mourning and grief is the labour of memory. It is memory's continuous production and its own reproduction. In *UG*, Butler insists on the right to realness, and she reiterates at many places in the text that it is through the recognized reality of one's grief that access is gained to the right to realness (Butler 2004, 27). Realness is an instance that Butler closely links to the experiences of grief, hence of memory, hence to a form of continuity and unity that is the only work that memory perpetually executes. She calls upon reclaiming the right of realness of all whose lives have been rendered unintelligible, dis-

cursively non-existent, who have been reduced to bare life. She calls upon resistance, revolt striving to furnish re-inscription into the linguistic world of the experiences of those reduced to bare life, those deprived of the right to a personal narrative (Butler 2004, 25-27). This is a claim that, once again, invokes resistance in order to insure persistence – through inscription in History, which is the “knowable reality” (27) that Butler demands for the discursively nonexistent “loves and losses” (ibid.).

The hard labour of ceaselessly insuring one’s persistence, one’s survival, through the relay of one’s memorial continuity and preserved (to say the least, bodily) unity – taking the state of mourning/grieving as the paradigm of this labour, self-consumed work of mournful cathexis – is one that takes place at the heart of one’s radical solitude. Assuming the task of ensuring one’s own survival, facing the devastation brought upon by the violence of the loss of an object-love, is a form of labour whereby one is investing oneself entirely into realizing one’s own survival. One is exposed to one’s own self, submerged in the love (care) for oneself (and/or for the object of libidinal cathexis) actualized through the relentless work of surviving, of protecting oneself from the pervasive forces of the “outside world” (the World of Norm), forces of disintegration (destruction of the body and dissociation of the Self).

Butler, however, warns that contrary to the opinion of many that grieving is a solitary state, it is rather one

pertaining to the constitutive sociality of the Self (Butler 2004, 19). Still the behaviour that the grieving or mourning one demonstrates is that of recoiling from the world, “loss of interest in the outside world” (Freud 2000, 284), and of the relentless work and enduring posture of self-circumscription or, in Freud’s words, “circumscription in the ego [...] expression of an exclusive devotion to mourning [...]” (ibid.).

The grieving one does not show any interest in the outside world (Freud 2000, 285), in what is known or recognizable as life, and suffers serious impoverishment or withdrawal of the ego-libido (Freud 2000, 290). This death – revocation of life – is necessary in order for the work of mourning to be successfully completed and upon achieving the state of hypercathexis to be able to liberate oneself from the cathectic links to the object-love (Freud 2000, 284). This submergence into an all-flooding death (of the object-love, of the libido, of the outside world) is necessary for the recovery to begin and for ensuring, making possible the survival of the grieving one. Grief is a struggle, and it is clearly a revolt (cf. Freud 2000, 287) against the menaces of destruction of libido, life, of the ego, which issues into a either successful or unsuccessful achieving of its primary goal of – the survival.

In Homer’s *Iliad* Achilles’ wrath is one of mourning, one stemming immediately out of grieving over Patroclus’s death. His mourning takes and maintains the form

of *mēnis* – “bitter wrath” (*Iliad*, 18.318-23). In *Mothers in Mourning* (1998), Nicole Loraux compares Achilles’ grief, his (psychological) state and (cultural) articulation mourning to that of a mother mourning over her dead child reaching its climax of intensity, of expression when mourning a lost daughter. It is mourning which revolts against the irrevocability of the loss, anger against the annihilation of the loved one and the severing of the cord of love. *Mēnis*, probably even etymologically, is linked to memory, to defiance to forget, to defiance of memory preserving love against the violent reality of death. Nicole Loraux describes Achilles’ *mēnis* and that of a mourning mother as:

[...] black like a child of the night, it is terrible and it lasts. It is repetitive and endless, all the more so since never to have end is precisely the motivating force of *mēnis*. Thus a motionless “always” (*aeí*) establishes itself, ready to vie endlessly with the political meaning of *aeí* that tells, on the contrary, of a continuity in the service of the city, a continuity that nothing must break. (Loraux 1998, 44)

The “political meaning” of *aeí* in the name of “continuity in the service of the city” refers to the rite of lamenting always and traditionally performed by women, the purpose of which was the preservation of the collective memory, of the place of the dead one in the collective memory. Demonstration of violent feeling of grief, expressing a *pathos* so strong that could guarantee one’s

lasting place in the collective memory, was the characteristics of female lamentation that could be considered a rendition of mourning *qua mēnis*. Ritual lamentation is excessive, yet, it is an excessiveness that has been prescribed by the city, normalized and given the above mentioned political sense.

Returning to the individual, solitary cases of maternal mourning, to the stories of Demeter, Niobe or Clytemnestra, the black night of the endless *mēnis* of uncontrolled and uncontrollable excess – it is a furious, angry, painful, relentlessly mournful remembering. It defies annihilation, revolts against Death through the labour of preservation of the traces of life nesting in the *mnemae* of love.² Loraux argues that this tendency toward infinite intensity in grieving, toward intensity that necessarily produces infinity, that this unyielding mournful wrath is characteristic of a mother’s grief over a lost daughter. The paradigmatic example of this structural law of the western imaginary and symbolic order is, according to Loraux, Demeter’s mourning of the loss of Persephone. Quite similar is the grief of Clytemnestra over Iphigenia as well as of Hecuba over Polyxena. The cord of intimacy between the mother and the child is severed by the fact that the son’s function in the symbolic order (the “civilization”) is to re-produce and re-present it. The daughter is that spot of negativity, of the necessary dialectical negation of the meaning of the symbolic order, of the non- that the order necessitates as part of itself in order to maintain itself.

Or in Loraux's own words:

[...] let us bear in mind that the daughter could be designated as *ōdís*, a word that refers to the act of childbirth, in its length and in its pain, just before the separation between mother and child is accomplished; the son could be said to be the *lókheuma*, the finished product of childbirth, already separate from the mother, already ready to be "civilized" by paternal recognition. (Loraux 1998, 52)

Freud admits the necessary presence of revolt in grief, while Nicole Loraux intensifies this point by insisting that anger or revolt is the kernel of the state of mourning and grief. If mourning is labouring for self-preservation of the Ego, and of its mnemonic constitution through objects of love, and if mourning is inevitably linked with revolt, then, consequently, the radical stance of self-preservation – that the mourning is – is unavoidably invested with revolt. In the radically solitary work of self-preservation, of keeping one's Ego alive, of sheer labouring of survival we find revolt (=resistance) nesting in its very substratum.

Going back to Butler's claims that being rendered "unreal," not being inscribed in the Language of the Polis is perhaps the harshest form of oppression and exclusion, the point about the aspect of sociality in grief is certainly one of high relevance. I am embracing it convinced that it is not in contradiction with the point I am trying to make here about the radical solitude in the la-

bour of survival of the grieving one. Indeed, from the pits of deepest mournful solitude one reaches for the Other, and in this openness for the Other, in this exposure desiring the invasion of the Other that will disturb the disturbing solidity of the solitary Self, one is vulnerable, dependent on the Other.

I believe that it is precisely this self-enclosure into oneself that takes a radical form whenever survival is threatened that creates the urgent need for sociality, rendering the grieving one dependent on or grievingly yearning for the Other. As the exit from the Uncanny that such self-envelopment creates, as the Farmakon curing of the inevitability of being-within-oneself by way of transforming it into the opposite. After all, it is the precariousness of the hard labour of survival that always alerts its agent to seek for the help of the Other. It alerts the agent to revolt against the outside world, against the norm, against the violence. And it does so primarily through the mournful solitary work of the Ego's circumscription; as soon as the libido-detachment is accomplished (Freud 2000, 284), the "passionate attachment" to the Norm dissolves, and the political resistance begins.



CHAPTER III

Sheer Life Revolting:

The Concept of Life and Its Political Meaning in Spinoza, Agamben, and Butler

1. A Spinozian Intro:

The Hubristic Essence of Humanity

By virtue of expression intrinsic to it, Spinozian conatus of self-preservation can be defined as intensive whereas the latter, i.e., intensity, is defined by infinity (Deleuze 1990). In accordance with the immanence that defines it (the conatus of infinity), self-preservation is transgressive or hubristic. Namely, if human “appetite” consists in the necessary tendency toward an infinite power of existence, and if infinity bears the mark of – or gives mark to, i.e., defines – immortality (or godlike existence), we can conclude that human essence is hubristic. It is an inherent tendency of the finite being, *always already* participating in the Infinity, to endlessly increase its Desire (Spinoza’s “conscious emotion”) for perfection of life, that is, for a life that offers as complete and as undisturbed as possible state of pleasure.

In a Spinozian universe, perfection is achieved within a community of human (and other living) beings. Perfection or the state of total pleasure depends on our constitutive interrelatedness with the others. Imagining the others suffer affects our own wellbeing, our own state of being-in-pleasure, explains Spinoza (*E III*, 30p). Imagination, according to Spinoza, has a formative role in relation to mind whereas the latter *always already* integrates emotion (Lloyd 1996, 53-58). Therefore, the human individual wishes to “exclude the existence” – in and through imagination – of whatever affects the others with sadness (Lloyd 1996, 76). Striving toward the “exclusion of existence” of what brings about pain and sadness in one’s life, always already inextricable from the lives of all living beings, is immanent to human essence – immanent to the “appetite” for preserving (in) life (Spinoza *E III* 29p, 30, 30p).

Consequently, one could infer that opposition to (or critique of) all that corrupts life with negativity is immanent to Spinoza’s conatus (of self-preservation). Concern with the opposition between Good and Bad, positioning oneself in terms of this opposition seem to be constitutive of self-preservation, and *vice versa*. Critique is at the heart of self-preservation. Revolt seems to stem from the purely experiential, almost pre-linguistic stance of sheer self-preserving, from the mute stance of merely surviving.

Inferring one further implication of this thesis, one might say that the need to maintain life as little as pos-

sible corrupt by pain urges the individual to introduce change in society. Namely, in order to be able to increase his/her power of activity, the individual seeks to introduce beneficial, life-increasing change in the organized network of interpersonal relations.

This logic of inference is valid only with reference to the active and conscious emotions, i.e., to desire/s. Passions are passive (Spinoza *E III 56*). Passions, in the Spinozian sense of the word, are re-active emotions lacking in imagination and reason in order to introduce change (*E III 49p, 56, 58*). Passive emotions are not desires for any sort of change except re-active reversals – products of *ressentiment*. In fact, in a Spinozian universe, passions are no desires at all. Desire, in the Spinozian sense of the word, is a conscious and active emotion (Spinoza *E III 9, 49, 49p, 58p, 1def. 1def.exp.*, “General Definition of the Emotions”). Passions are contrary to active emotions (Spinoza *E IV 23, 23p, 24, 24p, 33, 33p, et alibi*). They are the product of being passively subjected to external inflictions of either pleasure or pain (*E III 57p*, “General Definition of the Emotions”).

The possibility of infinite excess of “appetite” gives rise to a vision of an immanently hubristic Humanity. Still, in Spinoza’s hypothetical world of absolute freedom, in his utopia of active (conscious) emotions, conflict would be impossible. What everyone strives for, accompanied by desires formed by “adequate ideas” (*E II, def. 4*), is well-being. The “good” is something immanently originating

from the infinite power of being that is given as potentiality to the finite beings. “Good” is never external, never something possessed by an external entity or body that one would strive to acquire by way of dispossessing of it that other body. This is a necessary implication of Spinoza’s thesis about the “true nature” of any finite being as a modal essence participating in the attributes of infinite Nature or God. Whereas, as far as the good/evil opposition is concerned, according to Spinoza, it does not exist in itself. Good and evil are always already relationally determined.

In what follows, then, I shall mean by “good” that, which we certainly know to be a means of approaching more nearly to the type of human nature, which we have set before ourselves; by “bad,” that which we certainly know to be hindrance to us in approaching the said type. (Spinoza, *E IV Preface*)

However, there are two things that Spinoza claims are good and bad *per se*:

Pleasure in itself is not bad but good: contrariwise, pain in itself is bad. Proof. – Pleasure is emotion, whereby the body’s power of activity is increased or helped; pain is emotion, whereby the body’s power of activity is diminished or checked, therefore pleasure in itself is good, &c. Q.E.D. (*E IV, 41*)

Being subjects to passions (*E IV, 4c*), to the re-active emotions of passivity (*E III, def.3nb*) resulting in a lessened power of existence, finite beings of mankind can

be the source of evil or bad (all that which is not beneficial to our own or our neighbor's being). The latter may contain potentiality for a world to come according to the Hobbesian vision (Spinoza *E IV* 34, 34p, 34n). Hence a Form-of-Control is required, based on reason, claims Spinoza (*E IV*, 35, 35p, 35c1, 35c2, 35n).

The Form that suspends the possibility of a chaotic, violent world ruled by fluxes of passion, in Spinoza's view, is the State (*E IV*, 37 n2). Institutionally imposed norms, values as well as threats of punishment, accompanied by means of enforcement are the "invention" of moderation, of control over the possibility not of excess of intensity of life – since no such danger exists – but of passions. Accordingly, Spinoza calls upon respecting the laws of the State and invokes the necessity of normalization (*E IV*, 37, 40).

Still, I would argue, this is a formal claim. In other words, Spinoza insists on the necessity of a form of control over the passions of humanity, and that form is called a "State." Yet, there is no reason to think that the latter implies that each state is – or that the concrete state of the concrete epoch in which Spinoza lived was – ideal. Spinoza's ethic is "*ordine geometrico demonstrata*." His discourse is abstract and the terminology is formal (or generic) and so is the claim about the State (just as all the other statements referring to other instances of the palpably societal human life). His advocating respect for the "State" is simply arguing for the structural or formal

necessity of the instance of the Law (*E IV*, 37 n2, *E IV*, 40) and/or for an organized society of enforced laws.

In this respect, proposition 40 of the Part IV of his *Ethics* could be read in a double sense, as both a formal enunciation about the necessity of Law that introduces and sustains harmony among individuals and a potentially revolutionary call:

Whatsoever conduces to man's social life, or causes men to live together in harmony, is useful, whereas whatsoever brings discord into a State is bad.

If a State is organized in a way which introduces a considerable lack of harmony, disproportion of pleasure and pain, an asymmetric extent of pain to a part of it causing imbalance and, hence, pain to the entire structure of society – then, one is called upon to re-evaluate all values, called upon introducing fundamental change into society.

2. Sheer Life:

Political Sovereignty in a Pre-Linguistic World

In *Homo Sacer* (1998), Giorgio Agamben proposes a genealogy of the concept of political sovereignty, namely of the one pertaining to the European civilization. Beginning with Roman Antiquity, Agamben's genealogical account of the European cultural invention

of political sovereignty enables a discovery which is of critical importance for the argument we are making here. We will attempt to demonstrate that Agamben's genealogy of the notion of political sovereignty unravels the immanently pre-discursive grounding of the latter. Namely, his analysis, more specifically in *Homo Sacer*, shows that sovereignty is based upon the founding act of sacrifice of "bare life." This is the primal sacrificial institution which represents initialization into and of (European) civilization. Life itself, sheer life defined by its physicality and voiceless labor of staying-in-life, has to be sacrificially killed in order to be transformed into an *eikon*, into an image and a linguistic sign, in order to constitute a political universe.

In every case, sacred life cannot dwell in the city of men: for the surviving devotee, the imaginary funeral functions as a vicarious fulfillment of the consecration that gives the individual back to normal life; for the emperor, the double funeral makes it possible to fasten onto the sacred life, which must be gathered and divinized in the apotheosis; for *homo sacer*, finally, we are confronted with a residual and irreducible bare life, which must be excluded and exposed to a death that no rite and no sacrifice can redeem. (Agamben 100, 1998)

Indeed the "irreducible bare life which must be excluded and exposed to death" cannot be redeemed by any rite or sacrifice. Bare life is precisely what has been sacrificed in the name of the Symbolic. It is the necessary subject to sacrifice so that the World is estab-

lished. The “bare life” of a *homo sacer* or of the medieval king is the sacrificial animal, the organism, the body that ought to be sacrificed in order for the political universe to come into being. It is the Real that must be annihilated for the Sign to arrive in its place. In order for the Signifier-of-Sovereignty to be produced, the bare life of the political subject that embodies the Sovereignty has to be sacrificed: it may be the embodied life of a king or of the citizen/s (= “the nation”). As Agamben shows, from Roman Antiquity – and, referring to the institution of *pharmakon*, I would say from the Greek Antiquity – to the globalized European invention of the modern nation-state, political sovereignty is realized only on the basis of derealization of the embodied life of its subjects. Life as body, life as the pulsating bloody mess that the human animal’s organism is has to be annulled for in that void left behind by the departing Real the Signifier of Sovereignty to emerge. The latter is the Signifier that will enable the transformation of bare Life into pure (political) Meaning. In order for human life to possess meaning, life at its most radical – as bare life or nothing-but-life – must be effaced. The process of effacement, however, *always already* fails to be executed without a remainder. The remainder that always eludes the process of signification is bare life – precisely that which should have been saturated with meaning in the first place.

The political (of the European Civilization) has been but an incessant process of signification of life in its

radical immanence (life-in-its-aspect-of the Real) – an endless process of an always already failed process of taming the uncanny of Life by way of Meaning. Today, it is clear that the Political is about controlling, exploiting – *transcending* the “biological.”

The fact is that one and the same affirmation of bare life leads in, in bourgeois democracy, to a primacy of the private over the public and of individual liberties over collective obligations and yet becomes, in totalitarian states, the decisive political criterion and the exemplary realm of sovereign decisions. And only because biological life and its needs had become the *politically* decisive fact is it possible to understand the otherwise incomprehensible rapidity with which twentieth-century parliamentary democracies were able to turn into totalitarian states and with which this century’s totalitarian states were able to be converted, almost without interruption, into parliamentary democracies. In both cases, these transformations were produced in a context in which for quite some time politics had already turned into biopolitics, and in which the only real question to be decided was which form of organization would be best suited to the task of assuring the care, control, and use of bare life. (Agamben 1998, 121-122)

In Antiquity, both Roman and Greek, it has been life in its bareness – as the body, the animal, or the “biological” – that had to be sacrificed (sacrificially killed) for the political order to emerge. In Ancient Greece, the purpose of the blood sacrifice, the *hiereia* (ἱερείᾱ) is precisely the maintenance of the *polis*. It is to the Olympic gods that

the *hiereia* are offered (Burkert 1983, *passim*; Burkert 1977, *passim*). And the Olympic gods represent, install and maintain order. The *enagisma* (ἐνάγισμα), on the other hand, the offerings of wine, honey, water, dried fruits and crops, is always intended for the dead and the infernal gods (Alexiou 2002, 9-10, 16, 32; Mouliner 1950, 209, 210, 73, 111, 80-81, 109). The *hiereia* always yields into a *holocaustos* (ὀλόκαυστος) – burning of the sacrificed, dead animal that can be, in the mythology, also human. This is a clean, unpolluted and non-polluting sacrifice – it brings in the light or reason, the logos and the polis. This is a sacrifice of annihilation, effacement, burning to the ashes of the bloody mess of the biological life. Upon the plane of pure meaning that is left behind after the incineration of the sacrificially killed embodied life, Logos that equals Polis is built (Vernant 1982, 50).

The *enagisma*, the offerings in liquids and food to the dead and to the gods of death, normally performed by women, is related to burial and mourning rituals that are by definition related to pollution and defilement (Alexiou 2002, 10). The term *enagisma* (ἐνάγισμα) is derived from the word *agos* (ἄγος) which means defilement that is owe-provoking, a negative taboo, moral pollution that is the result of crime (Liddell-Scott 1968; Parker 1983, 5, 18, 322-23). The opposite meaning contained in the word *hagnos* (ἄγνός) – sacred and pure – is derived from the word *agos* (ἄγος); and so is *enagisma*, a word which means moral, god-observing practice of

due sacrifice to the (chthonic) divine powers (Moulinier 1950, 9, 16).

Clearly there is ambivalence in the notion of sacred which is contained precisely in the word *hagnos* (ἄγνός). The ambivalence in question consists in the fact that *hagnos* (ἄγνός) is derived from the *agos* (ἄγος) or *hagos* (ἄγος) which refers to a specific type of defilement and transgression. The latter relates to being in touch with a dead body or being in touch with those affected by mourning, to giving birth or being in touch with members of a household where a birth took place, to violating temples and to breaking of the great taboos of incest, murder or parricide. In other words, the defilement of (*h*)*agos* is related to the transgression of the boundaries that define civilization, stepping across the lines of exclusion of everything that destabilizes sense and order (i.e., the established normality).

(*H*)*agos* is, in fact, about transgressing the boundaries of reason, of Law, of the translucent Transcendental – stepping across the threshold of Meaning and Order. Chaos is provoked by the blurring of boundaries that are guaranteed by the observance of taboos. Destabilization of the boundaries that ground the Law and the Symbolic Order takes place as the result of closeness to or being in touch with the “biological” – or of the Real – of Life in occasions of funeral, wedding and birth. The rites – i.e., the practices of inscription into the Symbolic – of marking and making sense of the three types of events have vir-

tually the same structure and terminology to name the components of the structure (Rehm 1994, 22ff). For example, the word *kêdeia* means both funeral and alliance (through marriage) and parenthood, whereas *kêdeuô* means to tend a bride or a corpse but also to establish an alliance through marriage (Alexiou 2002, 10). Funeral, wedding and birth are instances of direct encounter with that which always already escapes symbolization – which provokes awe and disgust at the same time, which is on the border of violence and the bloody brutality of beginning and end of life.

The un-symbolizable is that which participates directly in the Uncanny, in the Real; the Glance at this “World-beyond-Imagination,” in which there is no Language, no Sign or *Eikon*, inspires a paralyzing awe. It is that stance of staring into the bare eye of full reality. It is the blinding gaze into the Real – the instance where signification fails, a *topos* that can be inhabited only by gods. That is why in Greek (vase) painting Dionysus or the Gorgon or a person devoid of reason (i.e. a drunk person) is always presented en-face whereas the normal representation is always in profile (Vernant 1990; Vernant 1995). This realm beyond the reach of mortals and a territory upon which the light of reason is never cast, this place that is a non-place, in Greek religion, is usually the place of the dead, of the chthonic gods and of the god of transgression Dionysus. And it is to these divine powers that the *enagismata* are

offered, while the blood sacrifices, i.e., the *hiereiea*, remain reserved for the Olympic gods. The latter also stand in awe in the face of this domain of the divine. The center of the world in Greek Antiquity is, as Burkert reminds us, the Omphalos Stone in Delphi – and this is a place of libations, i.e., of *enagismata* offerings (Burkert 1977, 125).

Agamben is puzzled by the double sense of the notion of “sacer” in the case of the Roman religious-political institution of “homo sacer” (Agamben 1998, 71-74). *Homo sacer* is a man marked by the pollution of transgressing the boundaries of humanity as stipulated by the divine authority: through committing a crime that implies a violation of a taboo (such as a murder), he has stepped into a territory that can only belong to the gods. He is defiled by the sacred that is the inaccessible, the unutterable and the unthinkable. Transgression of the boundaries of human and defilement by coming into contact with the realm of the divine is the highest form of crime and pollution, since the sacred is the *adyton* or *abaton*, the inaccessible, and the *arrheton*, the unutterable (Burkert 1977, 403). The one who acquires the status of “homo sacer” has been polluted by the crime of stepping into the *agos* – into the *topos* beyond reason, the impossible place beyond Language, since he/she has committed an unutterable crime and an act permitted only to the immortals. In other words, he/she has stepped into the territory of the sacred.

Coming into the prohibited direct contact – i.e., through crime – with the sacred provokes destabilization of the boundaries between mortal and immortal. The marvel of blurring the boundaries between the two worlds is in itself an awe-provoking manifestation of the sacred (that is, its incursion into the world of the mortals). This sort of instantiation of the sacred is called *agos*. *Enagisma* is a term derived from *agos*. Let us remind ourselves, it refers to a ritual offering consecrated to the chthonic gods and to the dead. Apart from the libations traditionally offered to the dead and to the gods related to death and resurrection, to some chthonic gods other offerings were submitted as well. For example, at the crossroads of Athens women left sweepings from the house of all sorts of refuse as to Hekate (Alexiou 2002, 16). That which lies at the border between “clean” and “dirty,” between orderly and disorderly, that whose exclusion represents an act of delineation between sense and beyond-sense is what women used to submit as *enagisma* to the goddess of black magic – Hekate. Libations or *enagismata* to the dead and to the chthonic divinities were acts of ritual sacrifice which were by definition performed by women, whereas the blood sacrifice offered to the Olympians was performed by men exclusively (Burkert 1983, Parker 1983, Alexiou 2002).

The *agos* relates to the abyss of the divine – to that black hole of the unthinkable that devours the mortals. *Agos* is the point at which even the logos-bringing

gods of Olympus stop in owe; Aeschylus' *Orestia* speaks about the exclusive authority the pre-Olympic divinities had over transgressions of *agos* such as e.g. matricide (and of the political struggle of the Olympians to gain a share of this authority). Through committing a murder, incest or a parricide one does not become a mere criminal, one becomes an incarnation of defilement beyond words. *Homo sacer* is somebody defiled by *agos*. He is polluted. Hence he cannot be offered as a sacrifice to the gods. On the other hand, he is sacred: he bears the traces of *agos* upon himself; moreover, he has become himself the trace of it.

Murdering a *homo sacer* is beyond punishment because the one who would kill a sacred person would himself already be polluted by the *agos*. But also because his life on the earth is a bare life, a human life stripped of humanity. His soul has been invaded by the *agos*. It has undergone a monstrous transformation – it is no longer a human psyche. Through the violation of the sacred, just like Oedipus in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, the *homo sacer* has already been consecrated to the gods; the sacred he has come to bear as a constitutive part of himself is the *agos*. Therefore, he cannot be subject to *hiereia*, to a blood sacrifice offered to the Olympians. As a living *agos* among the living, as the instantiation of that-which-is-beyond-human-reason wandering under the sun that illuminates the polis, he has no other role than to be the flux (an *enagisma*) of dehumanized hu-

man suffering offered to the gods. Through the act of consecration of the *agos*, the transgressor has been transformed into a redeemer, a cure of human souls – a *pharmakon* (Sophocles, *O.C.* 21:12).

Apart from the role of a *pharmakon* invaded by *agos*, *homo sacer* is a wounded body and a wounded soul stripped of human form. He is a wandering, wounded and vulnerable bare life devoid of humanity.

3. Vulnerability Preconditioning Humanity

In *Precarious Life* (2006) and in *Undoing Gender* (2004), Judith Butler tackles the question of the mute suffering of the ones whose lives, whose “loves and losses” have been rendered “unreal” (Butler 2004, 27; 2006, 36). The silent suffering and the ensuing sense of derealization is the result of the fact that these are people precluded from “universally” legible mediation of their experiences. They do not have access to the linguistic means of the globally dominant discourses that would render their personal narratives universally communicable. These human losses have suffered de-realization by the dominant discourses within which they do not succeed to gain meaning, claims Butler (2004, 25, 27). The loves and the losses for which it remains impossible to provide articulation within the universally communicable discourses are the loves and losses of the not-completely-

universally-human experiences, these are anomalous lives of love and suffering (cf. Butler 2006, 33-34); the latter represents a *topos* inhabited by a variety of embodied lives that disrupt and elude what institutes itself as the Normal, a diverse group of “abnormal” embodied agencies that include queer people as well as the countless and nameless Palestinian victims (Butler 2006, 35-36).

The structural laws of the “intelligible discourses” render these losses meaningless, since they cannot be *named* – and, hence, ascribed value – in a legible way of the universally (i.e., globally) dominant discourses, that is, the discourses of normality. The “intelligible” is that which is thought and thinkable according to the globally dominant model of Normativity. This means that the “intelligible” and the “normal” can also be “sensitive to the cultural difference” since the dominant norm can decide to integrate within itself “the respect for difference.” Still the grief for the killed Palestinians *cannot be named* because the ones who speak from the instance of the dominant discourses, on behalf of the universally understandable *cannot name* the victims. The sound of these names is unrecognizable, indiscernible – these are names that “one forgets,” these names are difficult (*hard*) to pronounce by those who can speak on behalf of all of us. These are hardly “real names.”

The sense of living a life that is deprived of meaning even in its most ecstatic and most dramatic moments, of being absent from “What-Makes-Sense” even when one

is at the peak of a lifetime accomplishment or in the pit of a life's most serious downfall is an experience of being deprived of reality. Meaningless is unreal in the inescapably eikonically constituted reality. These losses and grief are not represented, they are not talked of, and it is impossible to publicly mourn them, claims Butler (2006, 37-39) – they are not inscribed into the collective narrative. They have no place in the imaginable reality. They are banned access from the reality that can be imagined and talked of. By not naming them they have been rendered unreal. The oppression is not only political. At this point it becomes ontological.

In order to gain access to reality one ought to gain access to the “universally” (dominantly and normatively) legible discourses. One's voicing about one's pain, grief and loss ought to acquire legibility within the existing normal/normative discourses in order render meaningful and legitimize one's dissonant (“subaltern”) narrative.

In the Chapter titled “Violence, Mourning, Politics” of *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler writes:

So when we say that every infant is surely vulnerable, that is clearly true; but it is true, in part, precisely because our utterance enacts the very recognition of vulnerability and so shows the importance of recognition itself [...] This framework, by which norms of recognition are essential to the constitution of vulnerability as a precondition of the “human,” is important precisely for this reason, namely, that we need and want those norms to be in place, that we struggle for their establishment, and

that we value their continuing and expanded operation.
(Butler 2006, 43)

Recognition is *always already* an operation of Language: it is an operation of the eikon, of the sign (visual or verbal/textual). It is the result of signification assigning significance. According to the quoted paragraph, one's vulnerability and one's wound, one's grief and loss ought to gain access into the widely and dominantly legible discourse/s in order to obtain legitimacy to be considered as such. In fact, in order to acquire the status of a vulnerable being one has to translate one's own vulnerability into a language that is spoken by those who constitute the field of reality – i.e., what is *recognized* as reality which is the (Normative) World of Normality. In other words, reality is constituted upon an act of recognition. This is a point that Butler clearly makes in the paragraph just quoted.

Yet, there is another enunciation present in the cited paragraph that I am particularly interested in exploring. It is a statement which is obviously irrelevant for the thesis advanced by Butler, yet one worthwhile tackling for the point I am attempting to prove here. In the beginning of the citation there is a reference to what is considered a commonsensical self-evident truth, i.e., certain "goes without saying." And it is precisely the status of a "goes-without-saying-true-hence-not-sufficiently-relevant-for-a-theoretical-investigation" which provokes the question of how the quality of self-evidence of a certain

truth is established, legitimized and stabilized (but also destabilized). The self-evident truth which Butler states is the following: “So when we say that every infant is surely vulnerable, that is clearly true.” And she continues by claiming that “it is true, in part, precisely because our utterance enacts the very recognition of vulnerability and so shows the importance of recognition itself.”

So it is “clearly true.” It seems so self-evident that it does not deserve theoretical interrogation. “In part,” however, it is true also because of the enactment of recognition through language. It seems that, in our age of post-modernity, this “in part” has always been more important or more worthwhile politico-theoretical exploration than the “clearly true.” The “clearly true,” the “goes without saying” has been assigned the status of a commonsensical presupposition, residing within the realm of the moral constitution of the theorizing subject and its truthfulness is guaranteed and apofatically (de)legitimized by the moral subject of theorizing. In this way, the commonsensical truth is rendered “untheorizable.” However, this absence of recognition of theoretical relevance to a discursive phenomenon that formatively participates in the discourses that are subject to theorizing is telling. The commonsensical “clearly true” constitutes an important element of an argument, it is a statement (i.e., a discursive category), and yet it remains discursively irrelevant, or rather, theoretically insignificant. It is utterly absent from the domain of contemporary post-structuralist theory.

The commonsensical self-evidence does not receive the recognition of relevance in a way that would produce a theoretical narrative (of it). It is a form of discourse that gains no recognition by and within theory. It is theoretically unrecognizable, and illegible. Within the horizon of theoretical reality today, it is de-realized. The commonsensical “clearly true” is always and by definition absent from the political theory of the so-called post-modern era. It is theoretically illegible. It is outside the theoretical discourses on subjection and political subjectivity that situate themselves beyond modernity in both the temporal and epistemic sense. It has no access to the theoretical recognized and recognizable reality, or it does not have the status of a theoretical real.

I would like to tackle this problem of theoretical de-realization, and in this respect, attempt to interrogate the contents of that “clearly true” as something that may have relevance to a theoretical investigation into the theme of the political subject formation and its aspects of responsibility and solidarity. What seems to be “clearly true,” according to the cited passage by Butler, is not only the mere physical fact about children’s vulnerability, but also that vulnerability means something, contains a certain signification, that it is a function of a discursive structure. Evidently, it is the discursive, linguistic rendition of vulnerability that needs to be recognized in order to gain reality. What needs to be recognized in order to be *realized* is “what it means to be vulnerable”

and not the mere fact of physical vulnerability itself. The bare fact of vulnerability devoid of meaning (language) is not what preconditions humanity. The discursive category of vulnerability, the sign and signification that “vulnerability” represents is what needs recognition in order to precondition the “human.” This is my proposition for summarization of Butler’s main argument in the chapter “Violence, Mourning, Politics” of *Precarious Life*.

Building on this discourse advanced by Butler, I would like to take the discussion a step further and raise the question of whether bare life itself, that pre-discursive phenomenon of life exposed to the threat of violence can have a political meaning and/or value. Can we attribute political and ethical value to life and vulnerability of life prior to its attaining the status of a sign/signifier, prior to acquiring a meaning, prior to becoming “what life and vulnerability means”?

The Spinozian initiation of this article could show us that sheer life, the Being-as-Nature reduced to its *determination-in-the-last-instance* (Laruelle 2000, 10) that is the mute labor of self-preservation can contain the foundation of the ethical constitution of the self. Let us recall that in Spinoza’s *Ethics* pain and pleasure appear as the names of a decreased and an increased level of “presence of life,” respectively (*E IV*, 41). Let us recall that according to Spinoza the pain that is suffered by others *always already* acquires presence in our personal life since it inevitably appears on the cognitive level of our

existence (*E* III, 30p). We know of somebody's state of pain, and by knowing of it we are invaded by it. Because one cannot ever abstract oneself from one's human – as well as non-human – surroundings, because one is always already inextricably constituted by all that which participates in the overall *natura naturans* (Deleuze, 1990), one is always already afflicted by the pain present in the others (Lloyd 1996, 76).

This affliction initially takes place on the cognitive/mental level; however, it is almost simultaneously transmuted into a bodily sensation. This is the inevitable – and logically necessary – result of the immanence of life which represents a link of uninterrupted continuity between the bodily and the mental (*II* 13n). It is apparent that in Spinoza's *Ethics* it is the body which possesses the status of the determination in the last instance and the identity in the last instance of (individual) life: the "adequate ideas," and the active emotions that are the product of Reason, are adequate inasmuch as they contribute to a higher power of activity or "presence of life." The locus *par excellence* of experiencing and/or of expressing presence of life is but the body. Since the mind and the ideas are determined in the last instance by the body and represent nothing but its "modifications" (Spinoza *II* 13, 13p). Moreover:

Therefore the object of the idea constituting the human mind is the body, and the body as it actually exists (*II*. xi.). Further, if there were any other object of the idea

constituting the mind besides body, then, as nothing can exist from which some effect does not follow (I. xxxvi.) there would necessarily have to be in our mind an idea, which would be the effect of that other object (II. xi.); but (I. Ax. v.) there is no such idea. Wherefore the object of our mind is the body as it exists, and nothing else. (Spinoza // 13p)

The experience/expression of an increased presence of life or “power of activity” takes place in the form of a sensation – and an achieved state – of pleasure (Spinoza, *E 3 1, 1p, 3, 9p, 9n, 10, 56*). Adequate ideas are in service of the state of an ever increased experience of pleasure (taking place through the body), whereas the latter is the expression of the increased power of activity or intensity of life (Spinoza *E 3 11, 11p, 11n, 15p, 20, 37p*).

Expounding on these ideas, or perhaps merely reformulating statements that can be found in the text of Spinoza’s *Ethics* itself, I would like to propose a hypothesis about “the Organic” (about “Life”) as the determination-in-the-last-instance of political responsibility. The latter will be conceived also as the kernel of the “ethical” or the origin and the immanent law of the “care of the Other.” Spinoza’s inference about the immanence of the ethical is based on his “selfish premise” that one does not wish the harm of the other simply because, by virtue of being aware of it (imagining it), one is him/herself affected by it as well. However, there is another premise from which the inference about the ethical as imbedded in the conatus of self-preservation or of preserving (in)

life departs. It is the Spinozian thesis about the individual's constitutive interrelatedness with and inextricability from the rest of the World (=Nature). The essence of the individual is but an expression of and participation in the attributes of God or Nature. Individualism in the sense of self's radical autonomy is impossible in the Spinozian context: one does not have to "invent" ways of and reasons for the Self's desire to reach the other, to establish a relation of care. The "care of the Other" is immanent to Life, to any individual's life, as the Other is immanently present in the life of any individual self.

Without subscribing to the entire Spinozian "cosmology," and also putting the thesis about the constitutive interrelatedness with the world into parentheses as something that could have the status of the direct motive for ethical acting, let us consider the possibility that Life in its pre-linguistic sense of the Conatus, life in its aspect of ceaseless auto-regeneration, is the origin of ethical and political responsibility. How can the pre-discursive be the origin of discursivity *par excellence* (the Political is) immanently containing the laws of its constitution? What makes this heterogeneity of origin and the identity-in-the-last instance of the Political plausible? Before tackling these questions let us investigate whether the pre-discursive source of the ethical can be identified as the experienced (or, putting it in Spinozian vein, legitimized through body) interconnectedness with the World. Or, whether it can and should be determined in

its last instance as something else. At this point I would like to revisit and reinvestigate Butler's thesis about vulnerability as that "precondition of the human."

In her pursuit for that which is the foundation of human solidarity, of the human rights, of political and ontological equality, of human equality, of the Care-for-the-Other, Judith Butler raises the questions of the "precondition of the human" and of its "recognition" (2006, 43). Evidently, in order to establish solidarity with the Other, in order to establish empathy with and political responsibility toward the "human condition" of the Other, this Other has to be recognized as "human." The "human" is always already a discursive category since it is the product of the linguistic operation of recognition. Yet a category heterogeneous to that of discursivity is what "preconditions the human" – it is the instance of vulnerability, the experience of potential or actual pain.

Even when experienced and categorized as "mental," "emotional" or "psychological" in its identity-in-the-last-instance, pain is a bodily category. When the perplexities of the troubled, humiliated soul that has been subjected to violence are experienced as *pain*, one inevitably recognizes that an immediate transposition of the psychic experience onto the bodily plane has taken place. When the sufferings of the "soul" become painful we know this through the "body." Pain can be recognized as pain but through the body. The dichotomy between the two terms is highly problematic and, therefore, the opposi-

tion between “body” and “soul” is *ad hoc*. So I will try to go beyond the falsity of this opposition and argue that it is life-in-its-last-instance, i.e., the category of the *Organic*, which is the bearer-in-the-last-instance of the unadulterated experience of pain and vulnerability.

Leaving aside the question about the body-soul dualism, and the dilemma of which of the two opposed terms represents the *topos* proper of pain, the instance of vulnerability and pain is still defined, by its determination in the last instance, as heterogeneous to the discursive, to language, to signification. Namely, pain – both in its actuality of being wounded and the potentiality of vulnerability – is the instance of the purely experiential, of the experiential *par excellence*. It is an event. It is what happens in spite of any discourse, utterly regardless of the Language. It is the taking-place-of-the-Real. It is the *tuché* that thrusts into the *automaton*. Thus, if vulnerability preconditions the human and provides the basis for its recognition, it needs to be said that, paradoxically, it is the kernel of the *lived* (echoing François Laruelle’s notion of *le vécu*), i.e., of the Real which serves as the foundation of the discursive operation *par excellence*, that of recognition.

Pain is pre-discursive. It is the unadulterated lived (*le vécu*) put in Francois Laruelle’s terms (1995, 225), or the instance of the “evental” put in Alain Badiou’s terms (2005, 173-177), or the kernel of the Real prior to symbolization (signification) put in Lacanian terms (1998, 53-

54). In Spinozian terms, it is life at its most radical: the bodily experiences of pain and/or pleasure are the immediacy of life pulsating with intensity. Nonetheless, the “bodily” is not the material as opposed to the psychic (mental, rational, ideal, etc.) since there is no such opposition in Spinoza’s philosophical universe. Nature is but the *expression* of the divine essence, and the attributes of *cogitatio* and *extensio* are the two chief attributes of the Being which shows itself with at least the two faces: that of Nature and that of God. Matter and idea are not two opposed categories in Spinoza. Highest category of God (or Nature) is the Being, and it is not split between matter and idea. Moreover, “matter” and “idea” are not among the categories in which Spinoza thinks the Being. The analogous pair of categories, that of *cogitatio* and *extensio*, is the binary of attributes which neither exclude nor oppose each other, but are rather mutually complementary. Within this framework of thinking, the Body is not a “material” category or one belonging to the attribute of “extension” exclusively.

The Body is “life” in its identity in the last instance, in its radical immanence, entailing expression through both attributes equally (extension and cogitation). The mental, which is always accomplished through the emotional, is the reflection of the fundamental, defining state of one’s existence – the one taking place on the level of the body (Spinoza *E* 5, 14). The body is the location *par excellence* of pain and vulnerability, i.e., the instance of

the radical identity of life. The body is the *topos* of the radical (pre- or/and meta-discursive) knowledge about a possible threat to the survival of an “I.” This particular cognitive process taking place at the level of the Body in the form of an absolute state of alert is, by definition, automatically accompanied by total mobilization – again, taking place primarily through the body – toward staying-in-life, making one’s own survival (as both body and soul) possible.

That instance of pre-discursiveness which is the Pain, i.e., vulnerability, participates in a formative way in the *per definitionem* discursive phenomenon of recognition (of the “human”). In fact, it is the condition of that “discursive category” called humanity. The thesis about vulnerability as the condition of the “human” implies the formative heterogeneity of humanity inasmuch as it is the experiential/evental instance of vulnerability which makes possible the discursive constitution of humanity. At the root of the “human” lies the organic instance of vulnerability and pain, at the root of the “human” we find the body that suffers. At the root of the Human is that which is beyond (or rather, behind) Humanity – the Body, the organism subjected to pain and confronting the irrevocable call for self-preservation, always already immersed in the struggle for survival.

Drawing on the Spinozian “selfish thesis” about any individual’s compulsion toward avoiding pain including the one experienced by the others that would make it-

self present cognitively, I would say that solidarity and political responsibility toward the suffering of the others originates from our ability to identify with the pain of the other body. We are able to identify with the body helplessly exposed to a possibility of affliction by pain, with body's vulnerability. In fact, the less we can recognize the other as human, the less "human" he or she is, such as a child or an old helpless woman or man, the more we are able to revolt against the violence brought upon him or her. The less we see a Subject in control of the potentiality of violent threat against its body the more we are called upon acting toward its protection: the level of vulnerability is proportional with the absence of a masterful subject of humanity.

The less discursive competence they have the more we see them as vulnerable that we are compelled to protect. The less they are what is discursively constituted as human, the more we feel called upon acting humanely. The less they are human the more they meet human solidarity. I would claim that recognition of the Other's humanity inasmuch as a discursive category is not only unnecessary for establishing solidarity but also redundant and even an obstacle to it. It is life to life, individualized through bodies, that establishes solidarity and not the products of an operation of recognition called "human."

CHAPTER IV

Solidarity in Suffering: A Possibility for a New Political Universal

1. Identifying with Suffering stripped of Humanity

Judith Butler makes one of the most inventive and potentially revolutionary claims in political theory today by arguing that grief can be a resource for politics. According to Butler, grief offers the possibility to identify with the “suffering itself” that the Other undergoes. Let us consider the following lines from *Precarious Life*:

Is there something to be gained in the political domain by maintaining grief as part of the framework within which we think our international ties? [...] To grieve, and to make grief itself into a resource for politics, is not to be resigned to inaction, but it may be understood as the slow process by which we develop a point of identification with suffering itself. (Butler 2006, 30)

“Identification with suffering itself” could constitute political solidarity which is established independently from and beyond the Discursive. In other words, if we identify with the “suffering itself” we are identifying with the purely “evental,” i.e., with the sheer experience (of

subjection to pain) which is a pre-linguistic category. The “suffering itself” is but a taking-place of pain and/or of trauma. Put in Laruellean parlance, it is the “lived” *par-excellence*. Thus it is the Real in the Laruellian as well as in the Lacanian sense of the word. Resorting to Lacan’s terminology, it can be said that the “suffering itself” is the *Tuché* (the incident and the accident, the Trauma) which interrupts the endless chain of “making sense,” which produces rupture into the Automaton, i.e., into the Signifying Chain (Lacan 1998, 53-54).

The most potent idea contained in this claim is that there is possibility of identification beyond the Discursive, an identification with the Other which is pre-linguistic. The potency (or the revolutionary potential) of this idea consists in the fact that it enables inclusion unlimited by the inclusiveness of the category of Human. The site and the agency of this process of identification is the body, since, according to Butler, it is through the body that the suffering and the sense of vulnerable exposure primarily take place. Butler’s argument seems to be that bodily suffering and vulnerability are the generic notions from which one could, for instance, infer the psychic suffering and vulnerability. Or rather, the presupposition about the categorical primacy of the physical suffering and vulnerability over their psychic renditions appears to be one of the premises upon which Butler’s entire argument is built.

Let us return to the issue of grief, to the moments in which one undergoes something outside one's control and finds that one is beside oneself, not at one with oneself. Perhaps we can say that grief contains the possibility of apprehending a mode of dispossession that is fundamental to who I am. This possibility does not dispute the fact of my autonomy, but it does qualify that claim through recourse to the fundamental sociality of embodied life, the ways in which we are, from the start and by virtue of being a bodily being, already given over, beyond ourselves, implicated in lives that are not our own. (Butler 2006, 28)

Grief is a state of sheer suffering, albeit not exclusively physical. Nevertheless, it is precisely this complex transcendental-real and psychic-physical purely experiential state which signals that the identity-in-the-last-instance of suffering is physical. Namely, as Butler writes, grief is a state that unravels "a mode of dispossession that is fundamental." The primacy of this dispossessed mode of existence consists in the fact that "prior to the processes of individuation" (Butler 2006, 31) one is always already an embodied life, which implies that "by virtue of being a bodily being" (Butler 2006, 28) we are "already given over, beyond ourselves, implicated in lives that are not our own" (*ibid.*).

This mode of dispossession takes place on the plane of the Real; it is an imprint of the Real and into the Real of pre-linguistic subjection to Trauma. It is "prior to

individuation,” it is pre-subjective, pre-reflexive – it is (in) the Real. One is always already vulnerably exposed to the potential violence (or Trauma in any form) in its sheer brutality, prior to any making sense. And it is with this primordial instance of vulnerability – with “the suffering itself” – we are called upon identifying. In spite of the fact that the means of identification are always already transcendental (in Laruellian sense of the word), i.e., the product of mediation by means of cognition (of imagination and of reflection), what we identify with is an instance which does not require discursive recognition.

Bodily suffering, a body in utter helplessness facing a threat of brutal violence, is an instance we can identify with without any need of conceptual frame that would enable valorization or “making sense” of it, i.e., without the category of humanity. What we share in the “common human suffering” is the suffering itself, not humanity. Humanity is a restrictive category: it is the product of signification. Or in Larueallian parlance, it is a category of the Transcendental. It is significance, in the double sense of the word: it signifies and also it is significant (it is on the top of the signifying hierarchy).

There is a discourse of humanity – or rather humanity is always already the product of a discourse – and it “establishes the limits of human intelligibility:”

It is not simply, then, that there is a ‘discourse’ of dehumanization that produces these effects, but rather that there is a limit to discourse that establishes the limits of

human intelligibility. It is not just that a death is poorly marked, but that it is unmarkable. Such a death vanishes, not into explicit discourse, but in the ellipses by which public discourse proceeds. (Butler 2006, 35)

Concurring with Butler, and building on her other arguments in the chapter “Violence, Mourning, Politics” of *Precarious Life* (2006), I would like to explore the possibility of expanding the discursive category of “humanity” by means of identification with the “suffering itself.” Or in different words, let us explore the possibility of identification with suffering itself (with grief as suffering) as the means of expanding inclusiveness of the notion of “humanity.”

2. The Broken Figure of Humanity: Jesus and Oedipus

2.1. Jesus: Rereading Donna Haraway

Postmodernist, poststructuralist, and deconstructivist critique of the category of Humanity (or of the “Man”) as a term of impossible monolithism, has left us with the fragmented notion of humanity inviting infinite inclusiveness. We have learned that, just like any other discursive phenomenon, the notion of Humanity is historically and culturally conditioned. In other words, there is a hegemonic notion of humanity and it is one which is still white and male.

In an essay entitled “Ecce Homo: Ain’t I (Ar’n’t) I a Woman, and the Inappropriated Others: Human in a Posthumanist Landscape” (1992), Donna Haraway has taken this point to its farthest by demonstrating that Humanity is a notion constituted by the perennial split and opposition of two transcendental categories: Technology (=Culture, Mind) and the Organic (=Nature, Body). This binary is one of asymmetry and hierarchy whereby the latter term is always already dominated, controlled and prescribed by the former: this is the chief argument of the entire opus of Haraway, and the philosophical core of the *Manifesto for Cyborgs* (1985). What Donna Haraway calls upon in these two texts is embracing this radical constructedness and the constitutive split as our true “nature,” i.e., as that which defines the “Human” as Cyborg. Consequently, we are called upon embracing our radical fragmentedness since this universal *topos* of Cyborg is inhabited by a multitude of cultural, social, and gendered positions (1985). This multitude of positions is founded upon the constitutive split between Technology (Culture or Civilization) and the Organic (Body or Nature) and formed by the tension between the two terms of the binary (Technology/Organic). The multitude of gendered cultural positions is endlessly diverse. The underlying constitutive split, however, is universally shared. Let us call it a “universal” that draws together the endless fractal web of particularities.

The universal which signifies the split between Language (Culture, Technology) and the Body (Organic, Animal) refers to the problematic raised by Butler with the opening of the question about the possibility of identification with the bodily suffering itself vis-à-vis that of discursive identification with the notion of Humanity. Namely, the central thesis in Butler's "Violence, Mourning, Politics" of *Precarious Life* (2006) is that the identification with the bodily suffering of the others can bring about greater solidarity among people of different communities and in fact expand inclusiveness of the category of humanity. By way of identifying with suffering, in its radical, i.e., physical rendition, the universal "humanity" is more firmly grounded. Identification with the body exposed to (a threat of) pain enables the stability of the *universal category* of "Humanity" without excluding the reality of an endless socio-cultural and gendered web of particularities.

In "Ecce Homo: Ain't I (Ar'n't) I a Woman, and the Inappropriated Others: Human in a Posthumanist Landscape," Dona Haraway attempts to establish a universal category of humanity which would be inherently inclusive. Similarly to Judith Butler, she argues that it is the identification with sheer suffering that makes the universal of Humanity possible. And this universality is not undermined by the socio-cultural, racial, and gendered particularities, but rather enabled and, in its inherent inclusiveness, conditioned by them.

My focus is the figure of a broken humanity, signifying – in ambiguity, contradiction, stolen symbolism, and unending chains of noninnocent translations – a possible hope. (Haraway 1992, 87)

The figure of broken humanity is the figure of human universality and it is one to be constructed by “intercultural and multicultural feminist theory” in terms of “post-colonial, nongeneric, and irredeemably specific figures of critical subjectivity, consciousness and humanity – not in the sacred image of the same, but in the self-critical practice of ‘difference,’ of the ‘I’ and we that is/are never identical to itself.” (Haraway 1992, 87) This “critical practice of difference” should take place not only on the level of the Discursive, but also on the level of the Bodily – the generic human figures should be “dismembered,” writes Haraway, as both discursive and bodily categories.

“We,” in these very particular discursive worlds, have no routes to connection and to noncosmic, nongeneric, nonoriginal wholeness than through the radical dismembering and dis-placing of our names and our bodies. So, how can humanity have a figure outside the narratives of humanism; what language should such a figure speak? (Haraway 1992, 88)

The figures of humanity outside the narratives of humanism, the figures that can serve as “routes of connection” to a wholeness of the human multitude which is “nongeneric and nonoriginal” occupy temporarily and successively the place of the empty master signifier of

Humanity. They are the “dismembered and displaced names and bodies,” they are the broken figures of “the suffering servants” and their “mutants.” Haraway suggests Jesus and Sojourner Truth as the two paradigmatic figures of broken humanity, the two paradigmatic figures of suffering servants. Both Jesus and Sojourner Truth are tricksters, figures of mime, mockery and masquerade. They are never original, never generic, never monolithic figures of unequivocal and fixed meaning, but rather always already guised, *always already* miming a different figure of humanity in an endless metonymic chain of irony.

The suffering servant figure has been fundamental in twentieth-century liberation theology and Christian Marxism. The guises of the suffering servant never cease. [...] Jesus appears as a mime in many layers; crowned with thorns and in a purple cloak, he is in the mock disguise of a king before his wrongful execution as a criminal. As a criminal, he is counterfeit for a scapegoat, indeed, *the* scapegoat of salvation history (Haraway 1992, 90).

To always already mime an identity in its fullness is to imply a fundamental disbelief in the possibility of identity fullness, to express doubt in the possibility for the master-signifier to be filled-up by a lived reality, i.e. for the discursive category of identity to equal the Real (or the Larueallian *Lived*). To mime an identity by way of irony and self-irony is to express the sense of failure to achieve a normalized and normalizing identity in its fullness, to express and to affirm the unavoidability of such

failure. Jesus is a mocking, carnivalesque figure of a king signifying the “impossible king,” the impossibility of kingship, the underlying remainder of a broken subject as the common human condition and the reality in which one finds oneself unavoidably even when performing the cultural role of a “king” or a masterful subject.

The brutal irony of wearing a crown of thorns, the cruel mocking with the symbol of the subject position of ultimate mastery, is the painful grin in Jesus’ mime of kingship which tells the story of suffering and vulnerability as the universal human position. The farce of Jesus’ suffering known as the “Passion” tells of the experience of pain and vulnerability as the only universal in the intra- and inter-subjective human condition.

The ridicule of suffering as the “Truth” of the common human condition speaks of the impossibility of truth in the sense of fullness of meaning reflecting the Real in its totality, or rather of the impossibility of establishing an equation between the Truth and the Real. It speaks of the porosity of truth, of the elusive character of meaning, of the illusive nature of knowledge, of the spectral character of Language and Discourse (or, in Laruellian parlance, the Transcendental). Yet the bodily reaction of pain and laughter this farce provokes is the symptom of the Real – it is the signal that the narrative has touched the traumatic spot of sheer experience (of pain) or of the Lived (of pain).

To mime an identity is not necessarily a strategically conceptualized subversive act of auto-irony. It is also a

direct result of an ontological impossibility. And it is a poetic act, i.e., the result of a process of sublimation. The void underlying our identity which exposes but our physical vulnerability is elevated to a meaning, to a truth – the Truth of that sheer negativity inhabited by our vulnerable bodies. It is a tragic truth. The truth that every tragedy prompts is the one of our radically ambivalent existence, and the reaction to it is always physical, consisting in the simultaneity of weeping and laughter.

Ancient farce, comedy and tragedy all tell us of the fundamental lack of essence, of that grounding absence of sense, of the founding ontological inconsistency produced by the fact that it is always two contradictory instances that simultaneously determine the courses of our lives: one which is always already beyond our power (the Gods) and one which is by definition in our power (one's Ethos). The two contradicting instances issue into a single one endowed with radical ambivalence – a person's "Fate." Jean-Pierre Vernant (1990) explains that the tragic mode of existence should be understood in the double sense of Heraclitus' fragment 119 "Man's character is his daimon." According to Vernant, it does not merely mean that the "daimon" (gods' will) comes down to the person's character, i.e., that it is only one's character or ethos which decides one's fate but also that one's character or ethos is formed by instances beyond one's control and one's ability to understand them.

The instances always already beyond the Subject's control are what would be called in a Greek tragedy the

“laws prescribed by the Gods,” and they are what we would call today the rules of Normality; our failure to understand them and to observe them, our failure to be normalized is what causes our tragic fall. Our failure to control and to understand the void upon which our subjectivities are founded – or rather, out of which they are born – is what makes us always already tragically fallen. In the last instance, we are always already broken subjects, fallen bodies exposed in our vulnerability.

The spectral and elusive character of normality unravels the Subject’s empty form, or rather – it unravels the Subject as a sheer gesture and pure posture of striving to achieve fullness of meaning, completion of the self-imposed task of one’s existence making sense, of filling up this void posture with signification. The Sisyphus’ work of attaining normality, of achieving subjectivity which is prescribed by Normality as not only required, but also desired, is marked by the absence of that towards which we strive – fullness of meaning of our existences. When a life “has a meaning,” when one’s existence “makes sense” – “happiness” is achieved. Happiness is about having a “meaningful” life, having a “fulfilled” life – filled by a sense of meaning. By way of seeing through the spectrality of the “Gods’ will” and of one’s subject position in the World “ruled by the Gods” (=Normality), one faces the void, the lack of sense, and the only thing one can see at this moment is – himself or herself as a vulnerable, exposed, helpless body.

2.2. Oedipus-The Pharmakon: Rereading Sophocles

The paradigmatic helpless, wounded, vulnerable and homeless body, exposed to the threat of the “Outside,” i.e., unsheltered by a polis but rather under ceaseless and brutal menace by it, is that of Oedipus as the paradoxical figure of the transgressor who has become a “saint” (or, in the terminology of classical Greece, a hero), a *hubrist* possessing powers of purification from – and protection against – *hubris*. It is the image of Oedipus the pharmakon (or “the homo sacer”) depicted by Sophocles in *Oedipus at Colonus* (406-407 BC).

The figure of the self-blinded, ragged, old, and banished Oedipus, deprived of not only his polis and home, but of any dwelling in the only thinkable world (that of normality). By way of committing parricide and incest, Oedipus is defiled by treading the threshold of the fullness of reality or the Real itself. The greatest and most disturbing *miasma* he bears, however, is that of having looked into the Real itself, into the primordial trauma conditioning humanity itself – that of the sheer exposure to the Real preceding any symbolization. He looks at the spectrality of all that represents normality, of all that seems to represent the substance of any and all conceivable worlds of humanity and sees it proven to be the product of a mere chance and utter arbitrariness. In other words, normality, the only thinkable World (or the symbolic order) is a spectral product – that of

a sign, product of human judgment and signification. It is the product of human ruse (intelligence) which is there only to invent ways of avoiding and evading direct encounter with the only stable, substantial “out-there” there is – the brutal, traumatizing Real (or in Laruellian parlance: the Lived). Looking into the Real of his own sheer trauma, of his own groundless existence, gazing at the spectral foundations of the only livable human life is what renders Oedipus blind.

Treading into the domain of the fullness of being – the domain belonging exclusively to the Daimon, never to a mortal – is what causes a tragic fall. He or she becomes defiled, stained, invaded by the *miasma* of such transgression. It is believed that the *miasma* can spread endlessly, contaminate everyone that comes in touch with it (Parker 1983). Hence, the *hubrist* must be expelled from the polis. In this way, paradoxically, he or she becomes the source of purification, a *pharmakon*. The case of Oedipus is one of radical transformation from source of defilement into source of purity. Immediately before his death, upon which he will undergo a process of heroization (a form of apotheosis), he arrives at Colonus and with Apollo’s blessing enters and seats down for some rest in the forbidden space of the shrine of the Erinyes (or the Eumenides) – the *abaton* into which no mortal can set foot. His stain of contact with the domain of the Unthinkable accessible only to the Immortal (i.e., his direct encounter with the Real) has

already turned from defilement into sacredness. The *abaton*, the inaccessible space is accessible to Oedipus. In the very opening scene of the tragedy through a dialogue between Oedipus and an Athenian we learn that Oedipus feels no fear of punishment by the Goddesses for whom this inaccessible space is reserved:

STRANGER

First quit that seat, then question me at large:
The spot thou treadest on is holy ground.

OEDIPUS

What is the site, to what god dedicate?

STRANGER

Inviolable, untrod; goddesses,
Dread brood of Earth and Darkness, here abide.

OEDIPUS

Tell me the awful name I should invoke?

STRANGER

The Gracious Ones, All-seeing, so our folk
Call them, but elsewhere other names are rife.

OEDIPUS

Then may they show their suppliant grace, for I
From this your sanctuary will ne'er depart.

(Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus*, 36-45)¹

1. **Ξένος**

πρὶν νῦν τὰ πλείον' ἱστορεῖν, ἐκ τῆσδ' ἔδρας
ἔξελθ'· ἔχεις γὰρ χῶρον οὐχ ἄγνὸν πατεῖν.

Οἰδίπους

τίς δ' ἔσθ' ὁ χῶρος; τοῦ θεῶν νομίζεται;

Ξένος

ἄθικτος οὐδ' οἰκητός· αἱ γὰρ ἔμφοβοι
θεαὶ σφ' ἔχουσι, Γῆς τε καὶ Σκότου κόραι.

Oedipus is no longer a *hubrist* who dares violate the holy space of the Furies – it is following God’s advice (Apollo’s prophecy) that he dares set foot in it. Stepping into the holy space reserved for the Erinyes is precisely the condition for his apotheosis, or rather, inauguration into the status of a demigod, a hero.

The broken figure of Oedipus-the Pharmakon is quite similar to that of the “broken figure of humanity” the Christ is. The pure suffering Oedipus-the Pharmakon (of Sophocles’ Oedipus at Colonus) is made of and conditioned by inaugurates him as the universal figure of humanity in a similar way to that of the Christ as analyzed by Donna Haraway, and also, in a quite similar way, by Slavoj Žižek. Both Oedipus and Christ are the incarnation and the impossible symbolization of the Real (underlying and repetitively begetting human existence) of pure pain and of the universal human state of always already being (tragically) “fallen.”

They are the tragic sublime, or – in Žižekian parlance – products of “downward synthesis” (or the “Christian sublime”) which enables a glimpse into the Real itself precisely by way of the minimal, radical representation of the unrepresentable Real or the Lived.

Οἰδίπους

τίνων τὸ σεμνὸν ὄνομα ἄν εὐξαίμην κλύων;

Ξένος

τὰς πάνθ’ ὀρώσας Εὐμενίδας ὃ γ’ ἐνθάδ’ ἄν
εἴποι λεῶς νιν· ἄλλα δ’ ἄλλαχού καλά.

Οἰδίπους

ἀλλ’ ἴλεω μὲν τὸν ἱκέτην δεξαίματο·

ὡς οὐχ ἔδρας γῆς τῆσδ’ ἄν ἐξέλθοιμι ἔτι. (Σοφοκλῆς, *Οἰδίπους ἐπὶ Κολωνῶ*, 36-45)

Christ was the “son of a man,” a ragged, miserable creature crucified between two common brigands; and it is against the background of this utterly wretched character of his earthly appearance that his divine essence shines through all the more powerfully. In the late Victorian age, the same mechanism was responsible for the ideological impact of the tragic figure of the “elephant-man,” as the subtitle of one of the books about him suggests (*A Study in Human Dignity*): it was the very monstrous and nauseating distortion of his body which rendered visible the simple dignity of his inner spiritual life [...] Therein consists the “Christian Sublime”: in this wretched “little piece of the real” lies the necessary counterpart (form of appearance) of pure spirituality. (Žižek, 1998, 49)

In spite of the impossibility of access to the Real in its immediacy, symbolization (or in Laruelle’s language: Thought) unstopably takes place and its sense is to incessantly strive to mediate the Real. Thought or Language is touched by the Real – or rather, touches upon the Real – precisely when a concept is radical, when it is minimal, descriptive of the Real and conditioned by its syntax (Laruelle 2000, 47). The “tragic sublime,” whose paradigmatic figures are both Oedipus and Christ, is a radical one, residing on a minimum of transcendental and correlating with the Real the suffering is.

The apotheosis (the event of his heroization) of the “greatest sinner of them all,” Oedipus, has remained one of the greatest enigmas for the modern – and Christian – interpreters of the Greek tragedy. Sophocles does

not make a slightest attempt to explain this transformation. As if this was something which needed no interpretation for his contemporaries, for those who had the competence of direct practitioners of the cultural codes of the culture to which they belonged, that of classical Athens. Orestes had to seek from the Erinyes (or in Latin: the Furies) absolving of the guilt and punishment (which consisted precisely in the insufferable feeling of guilt – a state of madness) they brought upon him after the matricide he had committed against Clytemnestra. Quite differently to Orestes, Oedipus is welcomed by the Erinyes – it seems even invited by them – into their sanctuary and allowed access to its impenetrable zone filled with secret and sacred knowledge belonging only to them. The Erinyes are chthonic goddesses of the pre-Olympian (pre-rational, pre-political) race of divinities. Their horrible powers have been subjected to “political control” – by a “political contract” made between them and the Olympians – and they have, thus, gained a new, euphemistic name, that of Eumenides. The powers and the category of knowledge, the direct insight into the horrible black truth of all finite and infinite existence, the Erinyes possess is denied even to the Gods of the Pantheon. Yet again, the Erinyes, who persecute most severely – through a form of insufferable madness consisting in relentless sense of guilt – precisely for incest and parricide, graciously embrace Oedipus’s divinization. It seems that they even preside over it, and by welcom-

ing him into their *abaton*, they initiate him into the terrible truth of all mortal and immortal existence, a truth, a *theoria* insufferable to all others except themselves and their hero Oedipus.

From Aeschylus' *Eumenides* we know that the Erinyes are a chthonic, collective female divinity, possessing immediate insight into the truths and powers which concern the underworld or rather, the netherworld (since in Ancient Greece death is departure into nothingness, into deprivation of existence – engulfment by the Void). From the same tragedy we also find out that the Erinyes' role, prior to their "domestication" undertaken by the Olympians and presided by Athena, was to defend the Mother's primordial primacy in signification and power – in short, the Mother's right to symbolic primacy – versus the usurpation of the status of symbolic primacy perpetuated by the Father. At the trial of Orestes in Aeschylus' *Eumenides* the accusers, the Erinyes, and the defender of Orestes in this case of matricide, Appolo, debate over the right of the mother to claim parenthood, as well as over the basic worth of a mother's life and death:

CHORUS LEADER

You plead to set him free. But think of this—
 will this man, who shed his mother's blood,
 who spilled it on the ground, return back home,
 to live in Argos in his father's house?
 Where are the public altars he can use,
 the family cleansing rites he can attend?

APOLLO

I'll speak to that, as well. Make sure you note
how right my answer is. That word mother—
we give it to the one who bears the child.
However, she's no parent, just a nurse
to that new life embedded in her.
The parent is the one who plants the seed,
the father. Like a stranger for a stranger,
she preserves the growing life, unless
god injures it. And I can offer proof
for what I say—a man can have a child
without a mother. Here's our witness,
here—Athena, child of Olympian Zeus

(Aeschylus *Eumenides*, 830-847)

The inauguration of the Name of the Father as the one which presides Symbolization, and the transformation of the Erinyes into Eumenides, as the pledge of this transformation of the Law, is realized by a political, democratic vote of the gods of the Pantheon and is won by just one vote more in its favor, that of Athena the daughter of Zeus born without a mother.

ATHENA

It's now my task to give my final verdict.
And I award my ballot to Orestes.
No mother gave me birth—that's why
in everything but marriage I support
the man with all my heart, a true child
of my father Zeus. Thus, that woman's death
I won't consider more significant.
She killed her husband, guardian of their home.

If the votes are equal, Orestes wins.
 Now, members of the jury, do your job.
 Shake the ballots from the urns—and quickly.

(Aeschylus *Eumenides*, 934-944)²

After losing their case in this unprecedented trial, the Erinyes have been domesticated and persuaded – by Athena’s words of reason, appealing to respect toward the goddess of Persuasion (Aeschylus *Eumenides*, 1101) – to collaborate with the Olympians: the Erinyes, the children of the Night, the horrible avengers of parricide, the have been renamed into Eumenides, the gracious ones.

The Erinyes are the daimons of the naught, the void of signification, of the blinding or paralyzing gaze into the “Head of the Medusa” the encounter with the Real is (or the fullness of being the Mother represents), and the unparalleled martyr of the “Erinyan truth” is indeed Oedipus.

The Messenger (the *Angelos*) describes the apotheosis of Oedipus:

After brief space we looked again, and lo
 The man was gone, vanished from our eyes;
 Only the king we saw with upraised hand
 Shading his eyes as from some awful sight,
 That no man might endure to look upon.
 A moment later, and we saw him bend
 In prayer to Earth and prayer to Heaven at once.
 But by what doom the stranger met his end
 No man save Theseus knoweth. For there fell

2. Translation by Ian Johnston.

No fiery bold that reft him in that hour,
Nor whirlwind from the sea, but he was taken.
It was a messenger from heaven, or else
Some gentle, painless cleaving of earth's base;
For without wailing or disease or pain
He passed away--and end most marvelous
(Sophocles *Oedipus at Colonus*)³

The “awful sight that no man might endure to look upon” is the sight that has blinded Oedipus. It is a sight whose witness he has become for all humanity. He is the martyr of this divine truth. Ragged, humiliated bagger once a king, Oedipus – just like Christ - that mockery of a kingdom, has become the broken figure of humanity,” one which in its sheer suffering visible in the fallen body and soul can serve the basis for universal humanity.

3. Solidarity of the Bodies in Pain

The vision of Humanity in its Cyborgian aspect, the awareness of the presence of technology and the role it plays in what is construed and understood as Human today, poignantly exposes our animal physicality in its vulnerability and helplessness. Subjectivity is always already mediation, i.e., language; and technology is a linguistic product. The Technology/Body dichotomy radicalizes – or rather renders visible in its radicality – the hierarchy between the two terms. The body is constantly

3. Translation F. Storr

disciplined, reduced to a material with which and upon which technology works. This implies that technology or discourse (our linguistic “Self”) is what exhausts the meaning of the term Humanity, it is what re-presents Humanity: the sovereign right to act upon the bodies, the organisms, to act upon the animal in a masterful, dominating, subjugating fashion. The primacy of culture over the body works like any cultural supremacy – it is a form of colonization. In *Primate Visions* (1989), Donna Haraway writes of science’s orientalizing of the animal.

Simian orientalism means that western primatology has been about the construction of the self from the raw material of the other, the appropriation of nature in the production of culture, the ripening of the human from the soil of the animal, the clarity of white from the obscurity of color, the issue of man from the body of woman, the elaboration of gender from the resource of sex, the emergence of mind by the activation of body. To effect these transformative operations, simian “orientalist” discourse must first construct the terms: animal, nature, body, primitive, female. (Haraway 1989, 11)

Scientific discourse is highly political and it exercises brutal domination, humiliation, reduction of the animal or of the body – of the Organic – to mere material of no value in itself: the value is always added through scientific labor. It is either the body’s or the animal’s function in “Nature” as a scientific representation – a concept – or its use in Technology that adds value, that which makes it valuable, i.e. which makes sense out of the senseless

bodies or makes them worth protecting. Linguistic competence brings forth the indispensable minimum – or the identity in the last instance – of a possibility to revolt against the subjugation, to demand recognition and aspire for emancipation is always already a discursive act. The animal, both human and non-human, is ontologically deprived of the potentiality of recognition and of achieving its own liberation. The body or the animal can produce a sheer gesture, pure act of revolt – it can produce a speechless revolution, brutal and bodily. And it will exhaust itself in that brutal bodily revolt, without bringing the necessary recognition.

Making a parallel between orientalism and “simian orientalism,” Haraway quotes Marx when he writes about the people of the Orient: “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.” (Haraway 1989, 144) Indeed, the human and the nonhuman animal cannot represent themselves and they must be represented. Is it possible to re-present the animal or the body in fidelity to its animality and physicality, in fidelity to the Real and the Lived? François Laruelle’s non-philosophical theory, the thinking in terms of the Real and by means of radical concepts provides an epistemological stance which makes the Thought in fidelity to the Animal-Body possible.

As elaborated in more detail in the first chapter, concurring with Laruelle, I will maintain that Thought cannot reflect the Real but rather describe it (1989, 50; 2000,

47). If we take the Real to be a Symptom, an Occurrence, an Event, a sheer experience, we are, claiming, together with Lacan that the Real is Trauma, i.e. that the Real is always already the Tché painfully interrupting the Automaton of pleasure (Lacan 1998, 54-55). Thus, what can be *described* is a set of symptoms – always already actualized as sheer experience, taking place in the form of trauma – and their interrelations. Also when producing pleasure, the sheer experience or the sheer Eventual introduces – or rather introduces itself as – Trauma. It thrusts into the Automaton of Signification, it brings destabilization into the Signifying Chain – it produces Uncertainty.

Thinking in fidelity to the Body is theorizing against the epistemic backdrop that consists of correlating in the last instance with the instances of trauma that a body undergoes. This implies that legitimization of knowledge is sought from the reality of sheer experience. Yet again, reality is cognitively mediated. It is described by means of Language: it can never be directly made present in – or reflected into and by – Thought without a remainder. The description is carried out in terms of transcendental minimum, by means of radical concepts. Radicality consists in the transcendental impoverishment of the concepts and their tendency to descriptively “follow the syntax of the Real.”

The traumatic node, the incursion of the Real into the Signifying Chain, the taking place of sheer experience, the opening up of the void of Event devoid of Language

serves as the symptom of reality – of the fact that a discourse re-presents the *Lived*. Politics is about re-presenting subject-positions that are assumed to be “authentic,” i.e. coupled by an experience. In other words, any political representation claims to represent not only identities and ideas but also the experience and the lived (the “sufferings”) behind the identity in order to justify an advocated political idea. Moreover, any political project assumes to be corroborated by “the truth” about the human experience, and to be legitimized by it.

Just as in psychoanalysis, also in political analysis the Symptom of the Real is the proof or the signal that a certain claim is *true* (relevant, legitimate and correctly representing the interests of an identity). Hence, a symptomatic map of occurrences of the Real, a cartography of suffering is an epistemic necessity: it enables the Political Subject to circumvent arbitrariness of her/his claims that the political option s/he advocates re-presents the *life's* needs of a social group or a society. Any political discourse claims to know and address “what people go through:” all political discourse resorts to the instance of the *lived*, of the experienced and the suffered as the ultimate instance of legitimization of its fundamental claims.

Apart from being a Symptom (of the Real), apart from being an instance beyond the Political (even though ultimately of highest relevance for it), Pain can be “cloned” (Laruelle) into a “radical concept,” into a transcenden-

tal minimum that is a political term (Laruelle). The Real operates according to its own syntax which cannot be reflected in totality by the Language into a transcendental construct, ideational product, into a “truth” or a discourse. Yet a concept can be cloned from the Real, argues François Laruelle. A concept which correlates with the Real, which is determined in the last instance by the syntax of the Real rather than by the Transcendental (a doctrine, a system of ideas, a theory), a concept which is “affected by immanence” is one “cloned” from the Real (Laruelle 2000, 47). According to Laruelle’s non-philosophical terminology, let us reiterate, the concept cloned from the Real is termed a radical concept.

Pain is one of the instances of the Real *par excellence*: it is a sheer taking-place or a pure experience, utter event regardless of whether one pertaining to the body or to the soul. Pain is by definition a pre-linguistic instance even when inflicted by a linguistic occurrence such as an injurious speech act (Butler, 1997). The experience of pain is sheer bodily passivity, subjection to Trauma: in its last instance, it is but that which is suffered and always already via the body. Pain is a term that is “cloned” from the Real both in its colloquial as well as in its theoretical use: it is transcendentially minimal and descriptive, referring to the memory of an experienced pain as the ultimate instance of legitimization of its meaning. It is a term that is always already invoked in any political discourse as an instance of ultimate legitimization.

However, in the context of “Philosophy” such transcendently impoverished or rudimentary notion does not hold the status of a politically meaningful term. In Laruelle’s terminology “philosophy” is virtually all thought which does not rely on the co-relation with the Real as its ultimate instance of legitimization but rather on its auto-legitimizing discursive laws, on its auto-reflexive wishful thinking; or simply, that is the product of “auto-reflection,” of “mirroring” of Thought into Thought, of Thought’s “auto-fetishization” (Laruelle 1989, 17). In Laruellian vein, we could say that we can subsume under the notion of “philosophy” all and any political theory of today.

According to Laruelle, this is also valid of the past political thought as well, since all political theory, science, ideology and utopia has always already been a “philosophy”, a speculation pretending to re-present the real/ity. The Real is always already substituted by an idea of it, a concept, an “essence,” a “transcendental” – duplication of thought is created whereby Thought thinks Thought. Also when the Real is declared to be unthinkable, un-representable, when it is assigned the status of that which is beyond thought as it has been done in the era of the so-called postmodernism, the situation changes only in some peripheral way: there is no longer pretension to re-present the Real, but the Thought continues to duplicate itself, Thought thinks Thought. Autofetishization of Thought continues in an absolute form.

“Pain” or “suffering” are terms which are “affected by immanence” (Laruelle 2000, 47), that is, they work as direct invocation of (the memory of) an experience (of pain or suffering). Identification with the pain or the suffering itself of the Other can serve a basis of political solidarity, one that is far more inclusive than the discursive category of “humanity.” In *Precarious Life*, Judith Butler argues that “humanity” is constituted through recognition which is a purely linguistic act and that in order to maximally expand the category of “humanity” vulnerability should be postulated as its precondition (2006, 43). In order to radicalize this position with which I concur, I will argue that solidarity with (a body) suffering (in) pain beyond and regardless of the “procedure” of recognition as human can serve the basis of political solidarity endowed with a great force for political mobilization. The acts of recognition and interpellation are product of humanist rationalism that obstructs, contains, frustrates the life-force of the radical sense of solidarity and the urge toward action a solidarity with (a body in) pain can instill.

4. The Political Action of Solidarity in Suffering

Overcoming the hierarchy between “Body” and “Soul,” Nature and Culture, Biology and Technology can bring about radical sense of solidarity, unconditioned by processes of valorization (recognition). Yet, it inevitably

issues into action that is product of the Language, i.e. an action which is political. Moreover, it originates from an instance that is heterogeneous – one that is sheer experience only *in the last instance*, yet at the same time unavoidably mediated by language. That purely experiential and virtually physical action of co-suffering immediately translates itself into the linguistic re-action of “identifying with the other.” “Identification with” becomes “solidarity with.” The latter is a sense of being called upon to act; it is the source of political action. Out of the “Void” or out of the “Event” a process of “truth-generation” commences (Badiou 2005, 173 ff). It is the “truth” of the necessity for solidarity, of a sense of community, of revolt against violence (in all its forms, primarily repression and affliction of pain) and of elevating this sense of solidarity into an ideal, into a utopia, that will create and participate in a political worldview and set of beliefs.

Solidarity-with-the-suffering (bodies) is a radical political stance not only because the term of “suffering” or “pain” is a radical concept in the Laruellian sense of the word, but also because it motivates action which is radical itself, that is, almost pre-linguistic. In Spinozian words, it is the political action toward the very rudimentary, primitive or radical goal of “increasing power of activity” or “presence of life” versus suffering of pain as “diminishing power of activity.” The suffering or the diminishing power of activity in others is made present in our own mind and body through “imagination,” argues

Spinoza, and in that way we “suffer-with” – we experience pain (*E* III, 30p). Departing from these Spinozian premises, we can infer that revolting against pain in the others, against the diminishing presence of Life experienced by others, is egotistically motivated. According to a different Spinozian logic of inference, however, based on the presupposition that every living being participates in the Being, in Life or Nature (that is God), and is, hence, constitutively interrelated with the others, with everything that lives, we can conclude that one revolts in the name of Life itself rather than in the name of her/his finite existence.

Continuing in this Spinozian vein of thinking, we can say that solidarity with the others and revolt against the pain brought upon them stems from two simultaneous and at first glance contradicting sources: from the “egotistic” stance of self-preservation as well as from the “altruistic” sense of being affected by the pain that the others suffer in a way which makes the concern for our finite being irrelevant (*vis-à-vis* the experience of unacceptability of the “diminishing power of activity” of Life itself).

Our existence is conditioned by the Others, by their recognition regardless of whether linguistic or merely bodily (by way of touch, care for our physical survival). Judith Butler shows how this inter-conditioning, this dynamic of mutual conditioning between the Individual Self and the Other, originates from the sense and the fact of our bodily vulnerability.

The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of the others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well. Although we struggle over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own. The body has its invariably public dimension. Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine. Given over from the start to the world of others, it bears their imprint, is formed within the crucible of social life; only later, and with some uncertainty, do I lay claim to my body as my own, if, in fact, I ever do. (Butler 2006, 26)

We are constituted by the act of recognition by the Other which is pre-linguistic since our status of vulnerably exposed bodies is a state that always already precedes the constitution or the assertion of the Subject (Butler 2006, 28).

Nevertheless, the sense of being exposed to potential violence, the sense of physical vulnerability, that very “uncertainty” of whether we can claim our own body is what brings us back to ourselves, reduces us to the Real of our urge for survival, to the experience of a sheer sense of necessity to protect ourselves against the threat of physical annihilation or affliction by pain. And in this radical survivalist mode we sense our constitutive dependence on others – on the Other’s touch that has enabled us to stay in life. I mourn the loss of the other because by losing him I loose a constitutive part of myself, I loose myself.

[...] we can say that grief contains the possibility of apprehending a mode of dispossession that is fundamental to who I am. This possibility does not dispute the fact of my autonomy, but it does qualify that claim through recourse to the fundamental sociality of embodied life, the ways in which we are, from the start and by virtue of being a bodily being, already given over, beyond ourselves, implicated in lives that are not our own. (Butler 2006, 28)

We are fundamentally always already given over to the others, constitutively always already beyond ourselves. Identifying with the sheer suffering of the others, with the bodies in pain always already “beyond themselves,” always already exposed to threat of violence, is what enables solidarity beyond what is recognized or recognizable as “human.” The identification with the experience of suffering itself (of a body stripped of the masterful Subject) awakens the infantile sense of revolt against the betrayal of trust in the touch of the Other (Body) that our “pre-individual” Self desires endlessly. Our “pre-individual Self” aspires to instill certainty of (our own) survival in an absolute way. Putting it in Spinozian-Deleuzian words, our desire that Life’s power of activity infinitely increases is infinite (Deleuze 1992). Precisely because of the infinity of this desire our pre-individual self demands that the non-violence of the Other’s touch is universally guaranteed, that it is guaranteed in an absolute way and proven infinitely certain.

The human animal is convoked to become “immortal” at the moment when it establishes a relation of fidelity to a truth, claims Badiou in his *Ethics* (2001, 40). The “subject” is co-constituted simultaneously with the process of a generation of a truth about an event which has already destabilized the world as we knew it. The “subject” is the product of the process of truth generation and is sustained by its fidelity to the truth that constitutes it, explains Badiou (2001, 44-48). And this process constitutes the human animal as “immortal.”

[...] Man is to be identified by his affirmative thought, by the singular truths of which he is capable, by the Immortal which makes of him the most resilient [résistant] and most paradoxical of animals. (Badiou 2001, 16)

The process of transformation from a mortal to an immortal animal – an animal that participates in immortality – as part of the process of truth generation is explained via Spinoza. Adopting Spinoza’s definition of human essence as “perseverance in being,” Badiou claims that whereas the mortal human animal perseveres in mere conservation of life, the immortal animal the subject of truth has become perseveres in *fidelity to fidelity* (Badiou 2001, 47). It is about “perseverance in being of what he is,” about perseverance in fidelity to a truth by way of which he participates in eternity (Badiou 2001, 45). Fidelity to a truth inscribes the human animal in an instant of eternity, claims Badiou. And it is explained in the following way:

The 'some-one' thus caught up in what attests that he belongs to the truth-process as one of its foundation-points is simultaneously *himself*, nothing other than himself, a multiple singularity recognizable among all others, and *in excess of himself*, because the uncertain course [*tracé aléatoire*] of fidelity *passes through him*, transfixes his singular body and inscribes him, from within time, in an instant of eternity (Badiou 2001, 45)

The infinity of desire as the essence of the human animal according to Spinoza and the immortality as that which defines the human animal of truth according to Badiou, are the instances that enable transcendence of the confines of our finite selves and render solidarity possible.

The pure experience of *infinite* desire that the non-threatening nature of the Other's touch is *infinitely* guaranteed is always already inevitably translated into language and checked by "Reason." The purely experiential (the Event) is necessarily mediated, transposed via and into language. Thinking in terms of radical concepts or in terms that correlate with the Real (Laruelle) enables fidelity to the sheer, pre-linguistic experiential and suspends the dictate of the Transcendental (any discursive/political "Cosmology"). Vulnerability as the precondition of human solidarity is one of those radical concepts that succumb to the authority of the Real rather than to a Hegemony of Ideas as the instance of legitimization of its political relevance. It is a concept producing thought-force (Laruelle), i.e.,

political idea that almost immediately translates itself into action which is pure event and the “truth-generation” (the production of the Transcendental) takes place only as secondary to it.

Fidelity to the Real of suffering cannot be reflected into the Language without a remainder, as the Real cannot be mirrored by the World in Laruelian sense of the word, i.e., by that Web of representations, a universe (the only possible universe for us) which is of purely linguistic origin (Laruelle 1989). The experience is inevitably mediated by language. Nonetheless the World of Discourse, i.e. Lacan’s (and the Aristotelian) *Automaton*, is inevitably rendered porous by the cracks produced by incidental thrusts of the *Tuché* (the Incident, a sheer taking place, the Event or the Real) into the *Automaton* of the signifying chain (Lacan 1998, 54-55). The interventions or invasions of the Real into the Language, the radical destabilization they produce are the occasions for correlating with the Real. The Real’s unpredictability or rather the unpredictable changes that the Thought’s correlating with it (the Real) may produce on the level of the Discursive can be the points of origin of a potentially revolutionary stance. Laruelle, Lacan and Badiou agree on one thing – that the Real is “impossible in its immediacy;” nonetheless they also seem to say that the effect of the Real is the source of radical symbolic restructurings (Lacan), linguistic re-inventions, i.e., production of “radical concepts” (Laruelle) or, put in Badiou’s terms, of the “generation of new truths.”

[...]the Real happens to us (we encounter it) *as impossible*, as “the impossible thing” that turns our symbolic universe upside down and leads to the reconfiguration of this universe. (Zupančič 2000, 234)

Evocation of an experience of pain, in a process of identification with the Other’s suffering – rather than identification with the value of his/her life as “human” – can be the origin of solidarity transcending limitations of recognition of a “love and loss worth mourning” (Butler 2004, 27; 2006, 36). Dwelling in the purely “evental” or the Real is impossible: we live in the World-of-Language; correlating with the “impossible Real” of suffering, undergoing the experience of co-suffering, having the sense of solidarity in pain can lead to radical “reconfiguration of this universe.” (Zupančič 2000, 234)

Solidarity will always take place in this inescapable World of the Word, and its agency is inescapably the Subject. And it will always be called upon in the name of a certain political (or ethical) truth. And this World of the Word, this “transcendental universe” is not an “illusion,” not a “mirage” compared to the purely experiential or – the Real. On the contrary, in the last instance, it is always already “affected by the Real” and its purpose is to enable us to deal with the Trauma the Real is. And the modes of “dealing” with the Trauma, the truths of the Real (of suffering) are not arbitrary – they are produced in fidelity to the experienced and incessantly strive to mediate it (as truthfully as possible). The question of the

“accuracy” of the mediation is a different one that we will leave aside since it is not an object of this investigation.

There is an uninterrupted continuity in the process of the Real’s self-translation into the Language, or rather in the automatism of the auto-generated and inescapable course of mediation of the Real into/by the Language. The Real and the Transcendental, the suffered experience and the political truth we attempt to generate of it interchange incessantly forming an endless Moebius strip.

Politically correlating with the Real (of suffering) is about suspending the hierarchy between the “Transcendental” (the Language) and the purely experiential (the Real), about abolishing the supremacy of “Soul” or “Mind” over the “Body.” Let us reaffirm that the purely experiential, the “evental” or the Real does not come down to the “bodily:” rather, it can be located beyond the Body/Soul dichotomy. Correlating with the Real of the Suffering Body serves the transcendence of this asymmetrical dichotomy and enables solidarity beyond the procedure of recognition of what counts as human (Butler 2004; 2006).

The body is the location-in-the-last-instance of the suffering itself. Bodily suffering is suffering at its most radical precisely because of the Body’s helplessness, its exposedness to touch and to violence when devoid of that instance of mastering (of both the Linguistic and the Physical) called the Subject. And this primal sense of ex-

posure, sense of primordial helplessness of the body is an experience that can be recognized by any-body, possibly even as “the precondition of humanity” without the procedure of valorization of what counts as a *human being*, a “human life worth living” (and mourning). Identification with the instance of suffering experienced by the Other that takes place beyond the procedure of recognition which assigns it the status of “human” (which is a category of exclusivity) can serve the basis of solidarity stripped of any dialectics of hierarchy enabling inclusion uninhibited by cultural and other forms of identity division.



CHAPTER V

Violence: The Indispensable Condition of the Law (and of the Political)

1. Introduction

Carl Schmitt's *Political Theology* (first published in 1922) brings to light the violent precondition of any law or political contract: the act of introduction of a law, i.e., of inauguration of any self-organizing principle of a society, carried out by the bearer of sovereignty, is "pre-legal." It is the result of pure Will (pure Desire, the Real or Unilateral Difference) taking place prior to any form of social accord which is, in its determination in the last instance, a discursive instance. The inauguration of a law is an act of violence and its origin is the pre-discursive domain of sovereignty. In its last instance, any political order and any legal system does not come to being from a certain rational or discursive principle, but rather from the Real-of-Sovereignty.

Amidst the discursiveness of the Political stands the bearer of sovereignty as a void, i.e., as a stance of pure

Power devoid of Discourse, as the sheer experience of unilateral assertion of Will. All Law stems from a certain “Because I said so.” The latter is a statement that is meager in terms of discursive contents, an apophysis which consists in the mere performative act (by recourse to discursive means) of power. It is but a sheer expression of “unilateral difference” (Deleuze, 1993) which dispenses with logical explication, with any desire to make sense. It works as Badiou’s “void:” fidelity to this purely experiential instance, fidelity to that sheer experience of an entirely new *event* is the source of or the cause for generation of an entirely new political truth, of an entirely new law conditioning a new political situation (Badiou 2005, 173ff).

In his *Critique of Violence*, Walter Benjamin explains not only that the Law is enabled and engendered by violence, but also continuously sustained by it. He distinguishes between pure (or divine) violence and violence as means, insisting that the latter is always either law-making or law-preserving.

All violence as a means is either lawmaking or law-preserving. (Benjamin 1999, 287)

Violence is the “kernel of the Real” of all and any law. Hence, it is the Real of any political system and all political life, since the Political is but a derivative of the more radical concept of the Law. We conceive of the Law as the Norm/activity which enables a societal organization whereas we refer to the Political in the sense of the

ruling Logos which sustains the Norm/activity. (The latter is historically conditioned and so is the content of the Logos. Still, I understand both terms as universals, although in purely categorical and formal sense). The Law is a radical term, in Laruellian sense of the word, because it is transcendently minimal and descriptive of the Real as lived. Namely, it renders the experience, the lived of the Law thinkable in that “transcendentally impoverished” sense, by describing it as an *event* of a barred flow of desire (producing a secondary *experience* of a particular type of a frustration) by way of introducing an instance of the Transcendental (the Law itself) as its limit. It is a very rudimentary concept describing an occurrence on the border between the Real (the lived) preceding Thought and the Language. It is, hence, radical – minimally transcendental and descriptive of the workings of the Real.¹

Antagonism is indeed the “kernel of the Real” of the Political, as Žižek maintains (Žižek 2006, 259-260), and it does not consist only in the partisan politics or in the opposition between different political discourses; on the radical level it consists in the grounding act of Violence engendering the Law and the Political itself. This grounding gesture of violence is made of the sheer taking place of the decision (to introduce or maintain a certain law, i.e., a certain political *logos*), in the political will or desire that only *a posteriori* develops a discourse around itself.

The pure assertion of will or the unilateral act of manifestation of power aiming at introducing a rule or a norm which is always assigned the status of universal, i.e., which is always the Law, works – let us resort to Lacanian parlance – as the Thrust of the Real into the Automaton of the pleasure principle (the endless signifying chain). Thus it works as trauma, i.e., as the Trauma *par excellence* the Real is. The birth of the Law is the working of Violence in the radical sense of the word (in the minimally transcendental identity-in-the-last-instance of the notion of “violence”).

A radical concept, according to François Laruelle, is one that represents determination-in-last-instance correlating with the Real or the Lived (experience) rather than with a theory which, in its last instance, is part of “philosophy.” Philosophy is but “auto-fetishism” and “self-sufficiency” of reflection (Laruelle 1989, 17). Thought is but an occurrence of the Transcendental, and its Subject is inevitably mediated by way of the Transcendental or language. A radical concept is, thus, a transcendental instance since it is the product of Thought. Nonetheless, it is transcendently “impoverished.” Let us recall, a radical concept is one which is minimally transcendental and is, therefore, fundamentally *descriptive* of an experienced or empirical reality, one that follows “the syntax of the Real” (Laruelle 2000, 47). Such is our use of the term violence here: it is determined in the last instance by the effect of trau-

ma, i.e., in its last instance, it is descriptive of the *lived* (of) Trauma.

[...] “trauma” designates a shocking encounter which, precisely, DISTURBS this immersion into one’s life-world, a violent intrusion of something which doesn’t fit in. (Žižek 2001, 47)

It is this disturbance of one’s life-world, “intrusion of something which doesn’t fit in” bringing in a sense of trauma, that we will call violence here.

And we will claim, along with Benjamin, that all violence “as means” is either lawmaking or law-preserving. Such is the determination-in-the-last-instance of sovereignty as well: as Schmitt has shown, it consists in the will of the sovereign and its form is an act of decision, an instance which is beyond legal justification and holds a status “analogous to that of the miracle” in theology (Schmitt 1985, 36). This is the core of sovereignty and the pre-legal source of Law. The violent, “pre-legal” contents of sovereignty and, hence, paradoxically, of the origin of the Law is most unequivocally and radically expressed in the state of exception. The latter is a situation in a state when all hitherto existing law is suspended in favor of the sovereign’s (or, that of the direct representatives of sovereignty) right to carry out decisions that have direct bearing on the lives of the citizens or the inhabitants of a country. This absence of law is legally established – the sovereign’s (or that of the subjects of sovereignty, of “the citizens’,” *re-presented* by the Parliament) suspension of

the legal system becomes a law. It is a certain “non-law,” or, put in Benjaminian vein, it is a state of lawmaking violence. The state of exception, and the suspension of law it entails, is habitually vindicated through the instance of “necessity,” explains Giorgio Agamben.

A recurrent opinion posits the concept of necessity as the foundation of the state of exception. According to a tenaciously repeated Latin adage (a history of the *adagia*'s strategic function in legal literature has yet to be written), *necessitas legem non habet*, “necessity has no law” which is interpreted in two opposing ways: “necessity does not recognize any law” and “necessity creates its own law” (*nécessité fait loi*). In both cases, the theory of the state of exception is wholly reduced to the theory of the *status necessitatis*, so that a judgment concerning the existence of the latter resolves the question concerning the legitimacy of the former. (Agamben 2005, 24)

Necessity is yet another name for the intervention of the Real into the discursive automaton of a society. It is an event instilling the sense of a “must,” and the latter is a sheer experience, a lived trauma brought upon by (a) force to which one's individual desire and intention must succumb. It is the force of the unadulterated taking-place of an event (such as sovereign's will, a war or a natural disaster) of which only an *a posteriori* discursive explication is developed and justification of the unavoidable lawmaking processes is produced. Necessity is habitually deemed to be induced by a threat, it is violence

induced by violence. Unlike the philosophical meaning that could be ascribed to the term *ananke* in Antiquity which could also refer to events such as love, in modern legal terminologies necessity is always defined by the potentiality or actuality of negative events, threatening with annihilation. The contemporary colloquial use of the term necessity, however, allows its positive connotations. Yet again, in the Western legal terminology since the Roman law (until nowadays), the figure of necessity *par excellence* is the state of exception (Agamben 2005, 24-31)

2. The idea of pure violence: *in-itself* and *for* the Law

In his *Critique of Violence*, Benjamin repeatedly affirms and demonstrates that all violence (“as means”) is either lawmaking or law-preserving. He claims that if the violence “[...] adds no claim to neither of these predicates, it forfeits all validity.” (Benjamin 1999, 287)

A few pages further, Benjamin writes:

Lawmaking is power making, and, to that extent, an immediate manifestation of violence. (Benjamin 1999, 295)

In opposition to the violence which is *always already* lawmaking or law-preserving, Benjamin introduces divine violence which is “law-destroying” rather than law-making; it is “expiating” unlike the law-making violence which brings in “guilt and retribution”; it doesn’t threat-

en but “strikes” and it is “lethal without spilling blood.” (Benjamin 1999, 297)

In spite of the fact that the “pure” and “law-destroying” violence of expiation is defined as divine, according to Benjamin, a human rendition of it is possible and it is one that can bring about true revolutionary change toward a stateless society or a society which has undergone “the abolition of state power.” So Benjamin concludes:

But if the existence of violence outside the law, as pure immediate violence, is assured, this furnishes the proof that revolutionary violence, the highest manifestation of unalloyed violence by man, is possible [...] Divine violence, which is the sign and seal but never the means of sacred execution, may be called sovereign violence. (Benjamin 1999, 300)

Divine violence is “the sign and seal” of sovereignty as violence and it can be the source of revolutionary violence. According to Benjamin, this type of violence is different from the lawmaking or law-preserving type. In spite of the fact that I concur with the distinction, I would, nonetheless, argue that the violence which is used as means of either lawmaking or law-preserving is not different in its substance or in its determination-in-the-last-instance from the pure, i.e., the divine violence. Substantially or in their determination-in-the-last instance they are the same. Violence in the last instance can be defined but as violence. In the last instance, it is

the advent of pure force of (political) desire – it is *always already* pure or divine violence, which only via the instance of linguistic mediation becomes enmeshed with the Law or political discourse.

Benjamin has explained elsewhere that purity does not exist in itself, but is rather the result of a process of purification (Benjamin 1966, 206/138).² A thing is pure relatively to something, and always already relatively to the human intellectual activity, i.e., to language (Benjamin, *ibid.*). A concept can be “contaminated,” e.g. the idea of violence can “lose its purity” by virtue of defining it as mere means (of lawmaking/law-preserving), i.e., by way of defining it according to the Transcendental rather than the Real. In other words, a concept is “contaminated,” its purity is reduced or it is less radical when the determination in the last instance is a claim of a certain doctrine, a system of thought – or simply, the Thought – rather than a concept “affected by immanence” or by the Real (cf. Laruelle 2000, 48).

A concept can be “purified,” i.e., seen in its purity or, put in Laruellian parlance, rendered *radical*, when it is determined-in-the-last-instance not relatively to other concept/s but by the event of the real that this concept is aiming at capturing or mediating. Benjamin’s “pure or divine violence” is a radical concept in the Laruellian sense of the world, namely it is determined in the last instance by the advent of the Real, by the event of violence taking place stripped off any justification, any

“making-sense,” i.e., any mediation through language – any “lawmaking.”

Radical concept is determined and shaped by its “syntax of the Real,” while inevitably making use of the Transcendental (Laruelle 2000, 47). The latter, being yet another term for the (Laruellian) “Thought,” is descriptive of the workings of the Real, using concepts (products of the Transcendental) as unorganized material (*chôra*) without conforming to conceptual cosmologies (theories, systems, doctrines, discourses defined as schools of thought). This type of truth-generation is termed by Laruelle as non-philosophical, a process in which Thought succumbs to the dictate of the Real (Laruelle 1989), a process which resorts to philosophy albeit by virtue of introducing that “non-,” that *epoché* vis-à-vis philosophy as a whole.

The radical concept is always the product of a “Vision-in-One,” a thought which is non-relative to the Transcendental and correlative only to the Real (Laruelle 1989, 46; 1992, 93ff; 2000, 47ff). The Real is the *lived* and it always already precedes – or rather, is beyond (au delà) – language, maintains Laruelle (1995). It is thus the sheer experiential, or rather, the mere “taking place” one is exposed and subjected to. It is homologous to Alain Badiou’s notion of the “evental.” Seen as the sheer “taking place,” seen as an event prior to any language of it, infinitesimally prior to any possibility of being rendered the “means” of the Law, violence appears in its purity.

Thus, a non-philosophical re-conceptualization of “pure violence” is the product of a “vision-in-one” which is attuned to the singularity of the event rather than to its relations to other concepts and frameworks of thought the concepts belong to and within which/in terms of which they are thought (philosophical or theoretical systems, schools of thought, doctrines). It is a concept which has been extracted from a philosophy, from a universe of thought and, thereupon, divested of its transcendental status determined within a particular framework of thought.

At this point, it is interesting to note that Benjamin explains the property of conceptual purity in a way that is very similar to the Laruellian process of concept’s radicalization.

It is a mistake to postulate anywhere a purity that exists in itself and needs only to be preserved [...] In other words: the purity of every (finite) being is not dependent on itself [...] For nature, human language is the condition of its purity that stands outside of it. (Benjamin, *Briefe* 2 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp), 1966, 206/138)³

In fact, Benjamin claims that the property of purity (also as an ontological category) does not exist as an in itself, it is but a concept, an idea, which has been radicalized, “purified” from all that is not – put in Laruellese – its determination in the last instance.

[...] at the origin of the creature stands not purity [Reinheit] but purification [Reinigung]” (Benjamin 1999 Vol. II, 455)⁴

Unlike the pure violence which is “divine” and “expiating,” which is the instance of violence itself taking place (the sheer advent of violence in the form of the Laruellian “Lived”), the violence exercised by the state and its mechanisms of law enforcement, for the purposes of preserving (and/or making) laws, is always “degenerated violence,” maintains Benjamin.

[...] the police intervene “for security reasons” in countless cases where no clear legal situation exists, when there are not merely, without the slightest relation to legal ends, accompanying the citizen as a brutal encumbrance through a life regulated by ordinances, or simply supervising him [...] its [police’s] power is formless, like its nowhere tangible, all pervasive, ghostly presence in the life of civilized states (287).

Within the Benjaminian universe of thought, law, and its enforcement through mechanisms of the state, is always already degeneration of violence since legal violence is “impure.” However, the “greatest conceivable degeneration,” according to Benjamin, takes place in democracies.

[...] it cannot finally be denied that their spirit is less devastating where they [police] represent, in absolute monarchy, the power of a ruler in which legislative and executive supremacy are united, that in democracies where their existence, elevated by no such relation, bears witness to the greatest conceivable degeneration of violence (237).

The level of degeneration is the “greatest conceivable” since the institutions of a democratic state, in their attempt to claim that the violence they produce is not what it is (=violence), i.e., feigning it is not through violence that they rule, unavoidably transform it into its own reverse, the law. However, this re-version of violence is merely its per-version rendering violence invisible, misrepresenting it to be the opposite (law as the “non-violent way” of ruling a state). It is an endless chain of ever more elaborated legal mechanisms whose purpose is to present the violence with which a state is ruled, and its citizens controlled, as non-violence. The transmutation of violence into law is an endless, unstoppable chain of linguistic production which consists in covering the trails of the sheer violence that is always already there and at work under the guise of the Law. This process represents a ceaseless automatism of (auto)generating legal provisions, policies of institutions and prescriptions of procedures.

Moreover, the law is always already maintained by force, namely by a system of penalization which also executes physical violence over its subjects (including detention depriving the body of its freedom of movement) and by the constant threat of punishment if not observed. Its power is all-invading through the unstoppably, exuberantly self-reproductive administration. The democratic legal system attempts to neutralize (render

it imperceptible and relative and, at the same time, control) the presence of violence inherent in it by way of transforming it into a legal and moral order we will call the Norm(ality), which acts as its proxy. The meanings of the legal and the moral collapse into the meaning of “normality” (as a unity of the practical, the moral, of preserving rights and improving state institutions’ efficiency – all at once) reflected into and by the administrative policies. Considering that violence is inbuilt in the Law, considering also that the administration of a country is also a manifestation and exemplification of its culture (that is, morals), the administrative procedures and styles represent subtle yet omnipresent exercise of state violence by virtue of transforming it into a structure supposed to represent a commonsensical order (and normality).

The question which calls upon tackling at this moment in our discussion is whether the legal system and the administration can be “purified” from the presence of violence, and is this done by reclaiming, reaffirming and re-instituting pure violence. In other words, must we endorse pure violence in order to invent and establish an administration, a law and institutions that are purified from violence; is a revolution necessary and is it always the product of “divine violence”?

3. Radical Politics and (Non-)Violence: If We Exclude the Metaphysical Grounding Instance of Violence, Radical Politics is Non-Violent

One can easily establish analogy between pure or divine violence, on the one hand, and the Badiouan Void as well as the Laruellian/Lacanian Real, on the other. It is the Traumatic *par excellence*: the violence that has been “purified” from language is a sheer thrust of *Tuché* into the *Automaton* of the signifying chain (Lacan 1998), to put it in Lacanian parlance. Having defined the Lacanian Real as traumatic – moreover, as the Trauma itself – Žižek has demonstrated that it is not an abstract instance deprived of qualities. On the contrary, the Real is always already a status assumed by an occurrence that bears a specific name. For example, “antagonism” is the name of the kernel of the Real behind the “Political” pertaining to the contemporary democracies (Žižek 2006), whereas the repressed Real of the hegemonic political concept defining our contemporary era as neoliberal is called the “Capital” (Butler, Laclau and Žižek, 2000). In other words, the Lacanian Real, as elaborated by Žižek, is always already an *instance* occupied by a certain *substance*. By the latter I mean an event, an occurrence resulting into a purely experiential instance – that is, a certain *lived*, put in Laruellian parlance. The lived that has not been mediated by language, in its last instance, is determined

as traumatic. The body in its helplessness, in its state of mere exposure to the Event prior to any subject's assuming its *always already* masterful position, which is by definition linguistically exercised, is but traumatized. If the event one is subjected to is experienced as a mere "taking-place of the Violent-Itself," one is faced with the intervention of the Real *par excellence*. Violence is the Real-in-itself. Affliction of pain (causing trauma) is the sole possible result of such event. In a political context, its purpose is to impose will and exercise power which is *always already* done through acts of linguistic mediation, i.e., acts of "giving meaning" to an event of force by recourse to the Law as its paradigmatic discursive form.

Pure violence is an instance of the Real – as it is also its "substance," it's what the Real as sheer trauma is "made of" – and as such it precedes the Law and all forms of the "political making sense." The Law (in its widest, abstract sense, encompassing also the meaning of the Political) is product of the event of decision, of the violent, forceful, "unilateral affirmation of difference." (Deleuze, 1993) The decision is a sheer event, a pre-linguistic moment of an "It is so because I say so" inasmuch as a sheer *lived*. And this is what sovereignty consists in. The act of decision, the taking place of a force that carves into the void (the evental is) what is going to become a law is the "abyss of an empty call" (Žižek 2004, 120). The abyss is made up by a sole substance, namely, that of "divine" violence.

[...] the abyssal tautological authority (“it is so because I say so” of the Master) does not work only because of the sanctions (punishment/reward) it implicitly or explicitly evokes. [...] what seduces us into obeying it is the very feature that may appear to be an obstacle – the absence of a “why” [...] (Žižek, 2004, 120)

The Real of sovereign power, the Real of the decision that “something is to be so” precedes its symbolic rendition, its translation into a law and via the Law, its making sense carried out – instituted and sustained – by the Subject of the Law. Indeed, its initial making sense consists in the tautology of “it is so because I say so,” as Žižek puts it.

[...] the Lacanian “Master-Signifier” designates precisely this hypnotic force of the symbolic injunction which relies only on its own act of enunciation – it is here that we encounter “symbolic efficiency” at its purest. The three ways of legitimizing the exercise of authority (“authoritarian,” “totalitarian,” “liberal”) are nothing but three ways of covering up, of blinding us to the seductive power of the abyss of this empty call. (Žižek, 2004, 120)

The “empty call” or the “divine violence” is wherefrom all and any law is generated. The sovereign Will mediates itself through Language, i.e., transforms itself into a law/the Law, only *a posteriori*, nonetheless necessarily. Living the Real-in-itself, at its purest, is impossible – it would be a sheer destruction, an uninterrupted trauma (since all possible interruptions of trauma can be

but linguistic). Divine violence, just as every rendition of the Real, necessarily translates itself into language, and into its paradigmatic linguistic form – the Law. Divine (or pure) violence constitutes sovereignty and is also the origin of the Law (as the Real unavoidably translates itself into language). This means that “divine violence” cannot be outside the Law since it is the Real which unavoidably must be mediated through language. So, it is inextricable from the Law not only as its means, but also as its divine origin. It is what any law is grounded upon and enabled by. It is the “kernel of the Real” of the Law. This implies that we cannot separate the Law and the Divine Violence ontologically, as the Language cannot do without the “kernel of the Real” which produces it. The Real necessitates the Language, it necessitates its own mediation since, in itself, it is unbearable – the Real is sheer trauma. By way of auto-alienation of the Lived (Laruelle, 1995) – analogous to the Hegelian self-negation – or as the result of the Real’s mediation through Language (or Thought, in Laruellian parlance), the fundamentally estranged Subject is produced.

Pure violence – or the violence in-the-Real – is indeed a “divine” instance, one that is certainly not accessible as such to the finite beings the humans are. By pretending to master this linguistic black hole (this *void*), one can be but engulfed by the Real of the divine violence, paralyzed and rendered split from within, put in a schizoid position. Such pretension can only be hubristic and,

hence, bring in tragic demise of a paradigmatically tragic character – that of the revolutionary subject carrying out divine justice. My contention here is not that the revolutionary political change or a revolutionary subject is impossible. I will claim quite the contrary. I will, however, argue that the revolutionary stance is not determined in the last instance by the divine violence. It is rather determined by/as radical political positioning – one “affected by immanence.” (Laruelle 2000, 48) The latter implies that the grounding political concept is correlating with the Real, that it is conditioned by and shaped according to the “syntax of the Real.” (Laruelle 2000, 48) However, the Real in itself is inaccessible, uncontrollable and impossible to produce either an agency or an instrument – a “weapon” – of political struggle. The political agency is always the Subject, and it is one linguistically constituted; or, put in Laruellian parlance, constituted by Thought whose agency is the “Stranger.” (Laruelle, 1995) The Real of the divine violence can intervene into the discursive world of the political struggle – it can be the thrust that is the impetus for introducing a revolutionary political stance. While the latter constantly correlates with the Real, it is not the Real itself. It is rather a heterogeneous occurrence, a hybrid which is the product of the intersecting between the Real and the Discourse.

Therefore, revolution is *always already* that which contains a certain form of violence inasmuch as it incessantly correlates with the Lived, with the purely eventual

or experiential – with the Real which is always already traumatic. Revolution also strives to not only bring justice (strike as “divine violence”) but also establish new laws. It is hence law-making. The latter is, as Benjamin has shown, always already determined by violence. Introducing a law is an act of sovereignty which is constituted by the sheer event of a decision, the occurrence of determination and imposing of will. It is the fruit of an unadulterated exercise of power. Yet again, it does not take place in the form of divine or pure violence. Namely, it immediately institutes – and, hence, participates in – the heterogeneous linguistico-experiential *topos* of the political by way of introducing the new Law, and the new horizon of that which is politically thinkable.

Any revolution aims at inaugurating new laws – it is about installing a new political order; therefore, it cannot be reduced to pure – or for that matter, divine – violence.

4. Pure Violence originating from Human vulnerability rather than Divine Justice

If we adopt the position that any imposing of will, any winning of one will over another is a form of violence, it will be impossible to claim the possibility of a politics and, for that matter, a world without violence. Is the difference between a peaceful politics and aggressive, mili-

tary politics only one in quantity – or level of intensity, on of degree – as far as the presence of violence is concerned? Is it a difference in modality or is there, rather, a difference-in-the-last-instance? Is there an immanently non-violent politics?

I believe that the latter is possible, although it does not imply that there could be a political order or a world which is entirely and in the absolute sense – “violence-free.” Violence must exist in the event of a sovereign decision, i.e., of introducing, imposing and enforcing a certain political will. Yet again, this type of violence, in its last instance, is non-political. It is one of a transcendental – or, perhaps, metaphysical – status, one which concerns the relationship established by the World-of-the-Language and the Domain-Beyond-Language. It concerns the ontological abyss out of which a sovereign decision stems, namely – the fact that a political “making-sense” and an introduction of a law are *a posteriori* with respect to the “taking-place” of a decision, to the enactment of force (will or power).

Violence (its presence/absence or form) is not the political determination in the last instance of a political order, regardless of whether violent or non-violent. Embracement or refusal of violence is not the “Thought-Force” (Laruelle 2000) that drives a political *logos* and a system of laws. Yet again, there are violent and non-violent political regimes, within which the instance of violence holds a specific position in relation to the Dis-

cursive or to the political Logos, and to the Law. In a “non-violent” political world violence does not use the laws as its means. Reversely to Benjamin’s claims, I will argue that repressive regimes are determined in the last instance by the reducing of the laws to mere means of violence. (In other words, since violence is always already “divine,” and it is in fact the “divine violence” that is law-making, the mark of a violent politics is the law functioning as “violence-producing,” rather than violence acting as “law-making.”) I will however concur with him that a degeneration takes place when one of the two (either violence or laws) is rendered means to the other – or simply, when the violence becomes something else than the inaccessible Real that has grounded the lawmaking and logos-making processes of the Political.

Still, it is not merely the violence that degenerates when rendered means of the Law (or vice-versa), but another vital force that may be derived from that of violence or be of similar origin – the (anta-)agonism as that which defines politics. Political enmity as the interplay, as the competition and the dialectics between different and opposed political wills is a form of violence. And it is so in that aforementioned transcendental (or metaphysical) sense – violence as a transcendently minimal instance⁵ which acts as the force of sovereign decision. This force can be destructive, but is not so necessarily; namely, the *Desire* which is its determination in the last instance is life-bringing. The act (the event) of producing

a sovereign (political) decision is a gesture of a “unilateral affirmation of difference” (Deleuze), it is life’s auto-affirmation (in Spinozian-like infinite expansion). Thus, it is an enactment of sheer Will, an instance of violence, but one which precedes Language and Politics. The utter legalization of the dynamics established by opposed political wills, the suffocation by discursive control of the free and unpredictable circulation of the (anta)agonism which defines the Political is that which is endangered through relentless legalism.

In *Violence* (2008) Žižek interprets Benjamin’s concept of “divine violence” as explosion of “retaliatory destructive rage” (187), as “unjust, as an explosion of divine caprice” (ibid.). Further on in the text, Žižek claims that the only human and political renditions of divine violence today would be forms of “violent explosion of resentment” ranging from “mob lynchings to organized revolutionary terror” (2008, 193). Let us recall that we have already established that the divine violence takes place as the pure *Advent* of the Real. Along the lines of a similar logic, Žižek equates the divine violence with the Badiouan “Event” (2008, 208). Consequently, when one unleashes pure violence, it is done in radical solitude – without the presence of the “Big Other;” or, in Žižek’s own words:

Divine violence should be thus conceived as divine in the precise sense of the old Latin motto *vox populi, vox dei*: *not* in the perverse sense of “we are doing it as mere

instruments of the People's Will," but as the heroic assumption of the solitude of sovereign decision. It is a decision (to kill, to risk or lose one's own life) made in absolute solitude, with no cover in the big Other. If it is extra-moral, it is not "immoral," it does not give the agent license just to kill with some kind of angelic innocence. When those outside the structured social field strike "blindely," demanding and enacting immediate justice/vengeance, this is divine violence. (Žižek 2008, 210)

Enacted in radical solitude, without the support of the "big Other," pure violence, conceived as blind attack "demanding immediate justice," seems indeed to be carried out as divine. It is an inherently hubristic stance.

Namely, the revolutionary subject having the status of the "divine-justice-brining Subject," adopts a godlike stance and perspective – s/he strikes as God would strike since there is no Law s/he fears. The revolutionary subject exercising divine violence is marked by the pretension to directly represent the Law itself. Even if the latter means that there is no longer any law to be respected, the event of executing *justice* is a result of a *decision* (in Benjaminian or Schmittian sense) based upon a judgment according to which something is *unjust* or *wrong*. Such decision is a gesture of "undoing a wrong" and it is enabled by the distinction between right and wrong. The act of discrimination between right and wrong, accompanied by an action of punishment, is in itself lawmaking and law-preserving. The justice and vengeance brining violence is never pure in the sense of being devoid of

any relation to the Law. The territory of “divine violence” as such – just as any instance of the Real – is impervious and it must be mediated through Language and, thus, by the Law.

I will argue that, if it is immediate justice or vengeance which is being executed by way of divine violence, the latter is not an event in the Badiouan sense as Žižek would have it. Badiou’s “Event” is something which simply occurs and one is never really in control of. If, contrary to this, the divine violence were indeed justice that is carried out, it would not be something which merely *happens* to the subject-executor of justice. As justice made, the divine violence would be the product of the Subject, its invention and its creation – not the unpredictable, stupefying, beyond-sense, ungraspable occurrence of the “Void” (that the Badiouan Event is).

The Event, in Badiou’s theory, always and by definition precedes the Subject. The latter is produced through the relation of fidelity with the former.⁶ Thus, pure violence *happens* to us, the “human animals.” It is not something we can carry out. It emerges as a “void” amidst a “situation,” and it commands a new “subjectivization,” according to Badiou. Or, as an incursion of the Real, it radically destabilizes the Subject and generates fundamentally new subjective configurations.

Conceived as Badiouan event, pure or radical violence can be – let us resort to Žižek’s own words – but an “explosion” of anger, originating from the most rudimentary

survivalist stance: “I am striking against you in revolt, because I must stay in life!” It is the “explosion” of physical, bodily rebellion of the subjugated body against another, subjugating body. Its determination in the last instance can be defined as life-expansion not destruction (in the form of punishment) in spite of the inevitable presence of destructive effects.

Revolutionary violence stems from the conatus of survival, from the (Spinozian) appetite for life and desire for pleasure. It is an incursion of one’s desire to affirm life and annihilate pain – revolutionary violence is an occurrence of the expansion of life, of the unstoppable appetite toward pleasure and/or an “increased level of life.” (Spinoza) Hence, revolutionary violence is but a rendition of the life force aspiring – putting it again in Spinozian terms – toward its infinity which consists in life’s relentlessly reaffirming life. It is a strike of force aiming against all that which introduces pain into life as an instance of immanent infinity (in spite of the fact that it is embodied by finite beings.) Infinity, understood as the mode of intensity not of temporality or spatiality, consists in incessant aspiration, appetite, in life endlessly feeding itself with life. Revolutionary violence as an expansion rather than destruction of life is an expression of the desire to “increase the level of life” (Spinoza) and acts against all that which threatens this immanently unstoppable tendency by becoming obstacle to the auto-generative force life is.

Revolutionary stance is one which is established in fidelity to the event. The latter is a pre-subjective experience, or rather – pure experience. It is the lived prior to its linguistic mediation. Its linguistic rendition is however inevitable, truth-generation as discursive process is unavoidable. Revolutionary discourse is one which is constantly checked by the sense of fidelity to the event, to the “truth” (=bearing witness of) the experience of the event represents. In its capacity of pure experience, fidelity to the event is an almost bodily knowledge – or rather, it is also bodily. It takes place beyond discourse, in a domain where the distinction between bodily and psychic does not apply – in the domain of the Real. The occurrence of the Uncanny, the thrust of the Real into a political situation happens at a point when political discourse is shocked by a “radical crisis” (symptom of the Real that can no longer be accommodated by the existing Symbolic) demanding radical political reversal. The thrust of the Real destabilizes the political subject and provokes in the human animal a sense of threat of physical annihilation. This experience is the source of unheard of and unexpected discursive reversals and for radical re-inventions of the political language. Such life-expanding stance which is radically human (inherent in the human animal) rather than divine is one of revolutionary potential.

PS Questions about the “Transition” from the Radical Lived to radical Revolutionary Concepts

Laruelle, Badiou, and Žižek argue for a political thought that would correlate and succumb in the last instance to the authority of the *lived*, the *event* and the *real* rather than to a “transcendental universe.” All the three authors insist that albeit the correlation with the Real is necessary – at least for the generation of a revolutionary political truth and event – it is always *in* (by way of and also for) the Language that the revolution takes place.

The question they do not seem to attempt to answer is that of the transition from the mere correlating – an ontological positioning and epistemic posture – with the Real to a Thought which is affected by the immanence the Real or the Event is. The radicality of a concept – a foundation of a potentially revolutionary horizon of thought – is enabled precisely by its affectedness by immanence. Is there a possibility to check the factuality of affectedness by the Real, to provide confirmation that the concept we deem radical (potentially revolutionary) is indeed radical, one produced in a process of faithful correlating with the Real? If we could imagine the transition, if we could create the possibility and invent ways of thinking this process of transmutation of the Lived (the Real, the Event, the Pure Experience) into Thought, per-

haps we could also conceive ways of providing confirmation (for a concept's affectedness by the Real).

The Real is a void. It is "unthinkable" in itself. The Real or the Lived necessarily undergoes a process of auto-alienation in order to become thinkable by, for and *as* the Stranger (Laruelle). This, however, does not mean that the Real is unthinkable, impossible to be "touched" by Thought, described by it, i.e., mediated by the Language. The Real cannot be thought in itself since this is a logical and ontological impossibility. Thought is mediation. Ergo, the Real, or the In-Itself, is not accessed directly. To think the Real means to mediate it, i.e., to incessantly alienate it in order to correlate with it. And it is for this reason that the transition cannot be thought, and its "truthfulness" evaluated. Radical concepts are the product of the sovereignty of the thinking (and revolutionary) subject, they issue from his/her decision to "follow the syntax of the Real" (Laruelle).

The only confirmation of a concept's radicality, i.e., affectedness by immanence, there can be, does not take place on the level of the Language. It is not the product of Thought. It is unthinkable and reason is not its "identity-in-the-last-instance." It is purely experiential, it is lived – in the Event of Revolution. If a concept and the horizon of thought whose foundation it serves generate an event that will produce a reversal, radical destabilization and re-structuring of the Symbolic order or the World (in Laruelian sense), the pure Lived of this Event can serve

as the confirmation of its radicality. Yet again, this confirmation is not linguistically rendered. It remains unthinkable (in-itself.) The only domain in which we can experience “the proof” is the domain of the Experiential itself – the Event, the Lived, that is, the Real. To the Thought it represents a *void*. And out of this void only a revolution can be born.

CHAPTER VI: THE ADDENDUM

The Project of Non-Marxism: The Political as Thought-Force

1. Intro: François Laruelle's Project of Non-Philosophy

The project of François Laruelle's *non-philosophy* consists in producing an epistemic stance which situates itself beyond Dualism, in any of its forms, but first and foremost beyond that "primordial" dualistic split between the Thought and the Real. Abandoning the pretension to reflect – that is, to *mirror* – the Real by Thought is the precondition of the theoretical posture advocated by non-philosophy, one which goes beyond – or rather, does not go into introducing – the fundamental dualistic split (Thought/Real). On the other hand, to claim that the Thought always already fails to describe the Real is merely a "romantic, Nietzschean escape in advance into fiction" (Laruelle 1989, 231). It is an escape in advance from the failure that only the pretension to fully reflect the Real can bring about. Receding from any aspiration to think the Real, to speak of it, to mediate

it (i.e., create knowledge of it), declaring any such ambition as fundamentally unattainable, only unravels the hidden pretension of thought to establish absolute possession over the Real/ity. This pretension is by definition philosophical, explains Laruelle (1989). The ambitions of science are less pretentious. Science tends to describe the “workings” of the Real without attempting to grasp its “substance” or its “essence” (Laruelle). The “In-Itself” of the “Out-There” is not of interest to the scientific mode of thinking. Laruelle proposes a non-philosophical mode of thinking which will consist of use of philosophical concepts, of “transcendental material” pertaining to philosophy (the questions inherent to it and the categories in which it thinks them) albeit adopting that stance of “non”- contained in the prefix. It is a “non-” to the pretension to reflect the Real. And it is philosophy insofar as it correlates with the Real by way of the conceptual tools and desires (the transcendental material) inherent to (or rather, inherited from) Philosophy.

Philosophie et non-philosophie (1989) represents a theoretical endeavor of systematic radical interrogation into the universal epistemic foundations of Philosophy. The universal category which is purely formal – non-philosophy does not advocate universality of any philosophical horizon of thought, but rather, proves that all or any philosophy is contingency – which is the grounding minimum of all (western) Philosophy, is based on a constitutive split produced by the process of reflection as

its defining cognitive tool. Philosophy is trapped, claims Laruelle, in the vicious circle of “auto-mirroring.” One of the axioms the non-philosophical methodology of stepping out (the non-philosophical “Ausgang”) from the *aporia* of auto-reflexivity is based upon is the “Thought-in-terms-of-the-One.” The latter is a concept which consists in the epistemic procedure generated by a “posture of Thought” that correlates with the Real of the object of investigation rather than with other concepts, part of philosophical “uni-verses” (=doctrines). In this respect, non-philosophical interrogation (of philosophical phenomena) resorts to copying (“cloning” as Laruelle would put it) the model of modern scientific thinking.

Laruelle’s *Théorie des identités* (1992) departs from the presupposition that the object of non-philosophical investigation is always already of “transcendental material,” that is, it is a concept, a creation of Thought. The ways in which one attempts to think a concept non-philosophically is conditioned by its correlation to the Real, rather than by another concept participating in a multiple conceptual construct (a “discourse” or doctrine) and its position – placement, status, inter-conceptuality – within this (doctrinal) construct. One thinks the concept in correlation with the (or: its) Real behind the Transcendental (or the Language), and in this process it looks for that focal point within a concept of affect-ness by immanence (Laruelle 1992, 92-93). Thought always already aspires to reflect – establish possession –

of the Real. Non-philosophy simultaneously affirms and suspends this aspiration, surrendering to the imminent touch by the Real. Non-philosophical *theoria* succumbs to the Real as its authority in the last instance (Laruelle 1992, 93).

The Real, on the other hand, is the elusive instance that each concept strives — while, in the last instance, always already fails — to discipline and reduce to meaning, to Language. The non-philosophical Real is close in meaning — yet not identical — to the Lacanian Real; it is rather the result of its (non-)Euclidean turn. Instead of declaring it “unthinkable,” Laruelle argues for a thought which always already correlates with the Real. While it always already fails to render it thinkable in its totality and reflect its identity-in-the-last instance without a remainder, the Thought which is non-philosophically positioned *describes* the Real by virtue of admitting its radically different structure (*vis-à-vis* that of Thought), and the syntax the latter imposes which is immanently different from any syntax of the Language. In other words, the Real and the Thought never “speak the same language.” What Laruelle proposes is to attempt to reflect the Real “without a mirror,” without the pretension that the Thought in its constitution could ever be the direct reflection of the Real and vice versa. However, Laruelle insists that Language can *describe* the Real “without reflecting it exactly or reproducing it” (Laruelle 1989, 50).

Correlating with the Real is theoretical attuning with the “radical immanence” of the “Identity” (in Laruelle’s terminology, it refers to the concept-object of investigation), which is postulated as the “real object” of the non-philosophical research. The “real object” of research is a *postulate*: it is from the realm of the Transcendental. The “real object” of non-philosophical theory is conceptual/linguistic reality. And it is not considered *the* direct reflection — in spite of the pretension immanent to the Thought — of the Real of the “Identity” that is subject to investigation. There is a distinction between “the Real” as “the finitude of Identity” and “the real object of research” (Laruelle 1992, 92-93). The latter, being an extrapolation from the World (the “transcendental” Universe or the Discursivity in which we are all inevitably born and live in) contains “theorico-technico-experimental ingredients,” claims Laruelle (93,1992). The two objects, “the Real” and “the real object” of (non-philosophical) research, contain the “the same representations, but of an entirely different status” (ibid.). The distinction between the two, insists Laruelle, “is not epistemological [...], but only of-the-last-instance, that is to say, either *transcendental or immanent* [...]” (ibid.). Furthermore, it does not imply the distinction between “experience and concept, the concrete and the abstract, the experimentation and the theoretical — nor any of their ‘dialectizations’ or ‘couplings,’” insists Laruelle (ibid.), which are all philosophical concepts. The distinction is precisely the one between philosophy and non-phi-

losophy, i.e., philosophy bearing – and being determined by – the prefix “non.”

It is important that the Thought *correlates* with the “Real” and it is this process that brings us to the “real object” of investigation. It is the result of acknowledging the Real as the identity-in-the-last instance of that which has been subjected to theoretical investigation, as that to which the cognition succumbs as to the ultimate authority. In sum, this posture of thought suspends relationism, cancels the authority of a discourse to determine the status of the “real object” of investigation by the position it holds inside its own doctrinal universe, and renders the singular – elusive and undisciplined – reality the ultimate authority of Thought.

2. The Project of Non-Marxism

In *Introduction au non-marxisme* (2000) François Laruelle engages into the elaborate task of creating a methodology that will enable critical re-reading of Marxian doctrine in a way which will bring forth its “source of immanence” and “power (of) thought.” At the same time, claims Laruelle, this sort of critical positioning is of the kind that makes possible the exact identification of the reasons for the “failure of Marxism.” What Laruelle argues for is a theoretical positioning that is, in its fundament, a posture of thought succumbing to its source

of immanence (or rather, to its immanent source) — it is a thought of the immanent mode (*de manière immanente*) (2000, 10). As the result of thought's relentless attuning to the immanent, the latter being the intrinsic corrective of the possible detours of falsifications of the first, this is a mode of thinking which enables the most precise identification of the Doctrine's failure. This is a simplifying summarization of one of the central arguments of Laruelle's *Introduction au non-marxisme* (INM), namely to establish a thought of immanence which will enable both a satisfactory explanation of "the failure" (*l'échec*) of Marxism and rediscover the potentiality of its thought-force. The "failure" of Marxism that Laruelle seeks to explain is merely a *symptom*; and he explicitly refuses to open the question of whether this failure is "real" or "supposed," whether this is a fact or not — he is interested only in exploring the universality of this *symptom* (2000, 7).

In order to arrive at the source of immanence of Marxism, and in that way establish a relation of fidelity to the revolutionary core of Marxian political vision, one has to first evacuate not only the Dialectics but also Materialism, and undertake afresh the elucidation of Marxism's Determination-in-the-last-instance (or *la Détermination-en-dernière-instance*), argues Laruelle (2000, 10). The formula of Determination-in-the-last-instance (*la Détermination-en-dernière-instance*, hereafter referred to as DDI), exists in the Marxist texts themselves, says

Laruelle (*ibid.*). The DDI of Marxism is also a DDI of the cause of Marxism's failure. This is not an equation, but a claim that the ultimate and irrevocable reason for the failure of Marxism is inherently related to its "essence," or rather to its source of immanence which is also its origin (in-the-Real, or at the juncture of the Real's cloning into a concept). According to Laruelle, there has to be a cause-in-the-last-instance of the failure (2000, 13), namely one that can be explained but by a determination-in-the last-instance of Marxism.

The determination-in-the-last-instance is dictated by and necessarily correlates with the source of immanence, whereas the latter, in the context of non-philosophy and of non-Marxism, is always already the Real. This is neither the Lacanian Real nor that of philosophical realism. Neither is it an equivalent to the Marxian idea of praxis or matter nor to any other concept of the Real that originates from Philosophy. (According to Laruelle's any concept of the Real other than that of the non-philosophy, or those referred to in science, is a philosophical one). The Real of non-philosophy is Real that is forclosed to Thought, but can still, as an instance of its immanence, "affect" it (or even dictate it by way of assuming the status of the "authority to which thought succumbs"). The non-philosophical notion of the Real is neither a materialist nor an idealist one. It cannot be grasped as (or: by) any form of transcendence. The Real of which Laruelle's non-philosophy speaks is an instance

that is immanently and inalterably indifferent to either Thought or Language. Nonetheless Thought is never indifferent to the Real since its determination in the last instance is to grasp (both as understand and possess) the Real. By virtue of retreating from this ambition, the non-philosophical thought sets up the goal of succumbing to the Real as the authority in the last instance.

The Real and the Thought are unilaterally alien to one another. One cannot establish any form of reciprocity between them. They do not establish any reciprocity whatsoever. They do not even relate to one another — except unilaterally. The Real and the Thought do not “have a relationship,” since the Real is fundamentally indifferent to the Thought.

The non-philosophical Real is without ontology. Therefore it is in no way to be understood as “the Being.” Quite to the contrary, as a transcendental which has always already been circumscribed by Language, coiled up within reflexivity (or “speculation” in Irigaray’s sense of the word), the Being is one of the chief philosophical terms that the non-philosophy aims to dismantle (Laruelle 1989). The Real is quite simply a number or a “number” — it is “the One.” In its unilateral indifference to thought, to our World-of-discursivity (the Laruelian *Monde*), it can be but a certain “something,” which purified from any imagined content, reduced to a formal category, can be but a certain “one” to the Thought (as the effect of *tuché* in the *automaton*). Yet again, the

Thought is not indifferent to the Real: it is the workings of the Real that thinking and/or theory *always already* attempts to grasp, fixate and explain. And what non-philosophy proposes is that the Thought attempts to unilaterally correlate with the Real, a mode of thinking which will respond to the symptoms of the latter without the pretension to encompass it in entirety and exhaust its “meaning” without a remainder; without the ambition to “integrate” it into the Universe of Thought explaining its “essence,” without the ambition for reciprocity (between Thought and the Real.)

The Real is, thus, “a” or “the” One, because it is undivided by a constitutive split that can be introduced, insists Laruelle, only through reflection, speculation, or simply — by the Thought. Non-philosophy conceives the Real as ultimately “untouched” by Thought and, hence, does not constitute it on the basis of a defining division consisting in its relation (of any kind) with the Thought. The Real of non-philosophy is lived, *experienced* while remaining within itself, foreclosed, without the need to alienate itself through representation, says Laruelle.

The identity of the real is lived, experienced, consumed while remaining in itself without the need to alienate itself through representation.¹

The method or the procedure of establishing determination-in-the-last-instance is an act of thought which rigorously observes the dictate of the experienced, lived, undivided identity (the Real) by striving to “clone” it into

a minimum of the transcendental (a concept). It radicalizes the concept, by way of isolating it from the referential web with which the doctrine that has engendered it surrounds it. This process is enabled by a non-philosophical procedure of turning philosophy into a deliberate *chaos* or *chôra* of transcendental *material*, instead of an organized transcendental or philosophical universe, a *cosmology* (2000, 18).

The non-philosophical principle of observance of the expressions of the Real through symptoms, the principle of refraining from any intervention of a “divisionist” kind by a thought that would attempt to constitute the Real, is made operative through the method of determination-in-the-last-instance (DDI). DDI is a theoretical procedure that is the product of the non-philosophical Vision-in-One (2000, 37ff) and an act of “cloning” the Real. The latter is a unilateral gesture which renders the DDI essentially non-dualistic. But at the same time it is the product of the pure Dyad, that is, the two components of the binary are not “mixed” which is the characteristic of philosophy. It is pure since it admits, radicalizes the immanent division as well as the inevitability of the act of transcendence. Transcendental operation is necessary for the process of thinking/theorizing, it is its determination in the last instance. Yet again, this does not mean that transcendental is the only possible “reality” for us and that we are inevitably deprived from any access to the Real – hence, that there is no “Real” for the (Laruellian) “Stranger,” just “discourse.”

The Lived determines the transcendental operation – the use of Language, Signification – unilaterally.

It is important to reiterate that, in non-philosophy, the Transcendental does not have the meaning it has in any philosophical system, including Kant's. It is a radically descriptive concept, following the "syntax of the Real," and it refers to the experience of Thought in the broadest and common-sense meaning of the word. Quite differently from the philosophical dyad, as interpreted in its universality by Laruelle, where immanence duplicates itself by way of appearing as also "transcendental immanence" (presupposing that the *a priori* transcendental ought to participate in the immanence),² in the non-philosophical pure dyad the immanence remains implacably mute. In non-philosophy, the Thought correlates with it, without any pretension to incorporate it into itself, by way of affirming its radically different status (that of transcendence as tenaciously irreducible to immanence), attempting to merely describe immanence rather than "express" it.

The determination in the last instance of everything is the Real. And while remaining enclosed in the world of "transcendence," not only the determination in the last instance is affirmed but also the radicality, insurmountability, the implacable dividedness between the two instances. It is only by virtue of admitting and affirming the constitutive gap between the Real and the Thought that the non-philosophical *theoria* can begin. It

is around this void of the sheer act of admission, around the empty gesture of affirmation, or rather, out of the emptiness of this gesture that the thought in terms of the pure Dyad can emerge. Radical duality is the fruit of dualism which is intended, as gesture which is unilaterally (and inevitably) introduced on the part of the Thought. The Real remains immanently and inalterably indifferent to the workings of the Thought, and the non-philosophical thought “knows” this and, therefore, leaves it “unmixed” with itself.

[...] this thought would not, could not be any longer a divided Identity such as the philosophical one. It would be, on one hand, by virtue of its real fundament or its essence, nothing-but-an-Identity, it would be rigorously identical to the real without passing through a division or a Dyad; and on the other hand, it would be a pure Dyad, a radical duality, not obtained through division and not re-mixed with the Identity. The first would have the latter as its fundament, issuing from it without being reciprocally determined by it.³

In order to arrive at that which determines Marxism in its last instance, the non-Marxist needs to transform Dialectic Materialism and Historic Materialism into a transcendental material, to dismember that self-enclosed discursive organism and render it non-philosophical *chôra*. This procedure is necessary in order to bypass the Real’s determination by the Doctrine’s (that of Dialectic Materialism). Once the role of the Marxist “cosmology” in constituting the Real — or rather, its pretension to

constitute it, inevitably resulting into an establishing of an “amphibology” of the Real — has been cast aside, one can engage in a search for the DDI “in an immanent way,” *de manière immanente* (Laruelle 2000, 10).

The immanent way of re-reading Marxism or its non-Marxist re-appropriation consists in the search for the cause-in-the-last-instance of Marxism by way of using its transcendental material in accordance with the pre-established goal of isolating the radical concepts.⁴ The non-Marxist resorts to Marx and to the Marxist “body of text” only in order to establish a symptomatology of the Real present in the text, to identify the points of affect-*edness* by immanence on the body of transcendence. By way of identifying the radical concepts, it should arrive to its determination-in-the-last-instance.

If it [non-Marxism] would seem to go back there [to Marxism], it would be more to its problems rather than to its texts, and to problems whose solution implies treating the texts as symptoms, by way of suspension of the philosophical authority. [...] It is impossible, even in Freud and in Marx, and even more so within a philosophy, to find radical concepts of the Real and the universal — solely the unconscious and the productive forces, desire and labor. As soon as one arrives to this discovery, psychoanalysis and Marxism gain one utterly new sense — a transformation of their theories into simple material [...] These sorts of disciplines require more than just a simple theoretical transformation — a discovery from within a “non-” that would be the effect (of) the Real or its action.⁵

In an immanent manner, the non-philosopher traces the symptomatic manifestations of the Real and identifies the “sample” of transcendental material which is then disorganized for the purposes of revealing the underlying “radical concept” which has been “cloned” from the Real. The most radical concept the Marxist corpus provides is “productive forces” or “labor,” claims Laruelle. It is the closest to “cloning” the Real into the Transcendental. Labor is indeed the *lived*, the purely experiential instance (of suffering, *passion* in the Spinozian sense, and vulnerability).

The Real — at least for Marxism, which is a humanist hybrid of theory-science, but also for non-Marxism — is the Human-in-Human. The latter is a Laruellian term referring to that instance in the human which is only lived, experienced, and indifferent to the prescriptions of the Transcendental. It is the mute instance within which each of us, the “Humans,” lives and which is always already beyond the reach of Language. An entire “science of humans” — which is not a humanist science but rather a radical subversion of it — is developed throughout the non-philosophical opus of François Laruelle. One of its most meticulous elaborations can be found in *Théorie des Étrangers*,⁶ and one of the central arguments of Laruelle’s “science of humans” is that the kernel of “humanity” is the Ego-in-Ego, an instance of the lived and of the “Joui” insofar as non-reflected experience.⁷ The Real which Marxism, as a humanist project *par excellence*, in-

vokes and correlates with is but the instance of the Real of the Human — or, in Laruelle’s words, the Human-in-Human.

What non-Marxism seeks to create knowledge (theory and/or science) of is one of the mode/s in which the Real of the Human(-in-Human) is affected by Capitalism as a concept which “affects” our lives with immanence, that is, in its status of the Real. In line with the new knowledge thus created, also new, non-Marxist ways of liberation from capitalist oppression and grounds for a new political utopia should be proposed. Or, in different words, non-Marxism is about establishing an immanent mode of thinking that will correspond with the immanent aim of Marxism stemming directly from the most radical needs of the “Proletariat” or the “productive forces.” The formula of the immanent mode of re-thinking Marxism, the mode of non-Marxism, is proposed by Laruelle as follows:

The “real” solution to the problem of the DDI as the object and cause of its own theory should avoid Hegelian idealism better than it has been done by the materialism. Neither a cause in exteriority nor a dialectical identity of contraries, the Real is the cause by virtue of immanence and determines cognition of its own syntax, of its own causality, through a process that one would call “cloning.” [...] Suppose there is an object X to be cognized. Provided it is affected by immanence or susceptible to DDI, that is seen-in-One, it also can clone “itself” from the material that is its transcendence.⁸ (Laruelle 2000, 47)

The object X is to be seen-in-One, as Real or in-its-Real, and then “cloned” as concept/s, as the Transcendental, by way of resorting to the transcendental material at theoretician’s disposal. The process of cloning also implies an (auto)establishing of a unique syntax dictated by the Real itself of the object of cognition.

3. The Real of the “Force de Travail:” Marxism Determined in the Last Instance?

Determination-in-the-last instance of Marxism is to be looked for in its cause-in-the-last-instance: the Real of the (“Human-in-Human’s”) repression in the World of Capitalism. There is another real cause or cause-in-Real and another source of immanence in the Marxist Project: the Real of the Marxian Desire to liberate the “productive forces” from the constraints and repression of Capitalism. The latter, however, is not the cause *in the last instance*, since it has been caused by the Real – or “affected by the immanence” – of the capitalist repression.

When the DDI is the cause or the immanent object of its own theory, one would say that this theory *is* the *force (of) thought*, the theory of the force (of) thought is itself in-the-last instance [...] Object to knowing, while remaining the known object, should also be capable of determining its cognition.⁹

The cause-in-the-last-instance is what determines in the last instance any Project of Transcendence, that is to say, any philosophy or any “philosophy-science.” The latter is a category under which falls Marxism (and for that matter, also psychoanalysis), claims Laruelle (2000). The DDI is what makes a certain philosophical, scientific or theoretical project unique. It is what defines (or rather, determines in the last instance) that project. DDI’s analogy in classical philosophical terminology would be *differentia specifica*. The analogy is however only seeming, since DDI is opposite to the “second substance” – it is not a transcendental (not a definition) but an immanent (a determining real) determination. The Real, the cause in the last instance of any theory, “clones itself” as a radical concept. It is this radical concept and its auto-development into a transcendental conceptual “tool-kit” incessantly corresponding with the Real, which is the force (of) thought or thought-force. Laruelle illustrates this point in the following way:

Let us suppose that the “labor force” is finally capable of its own “proletarian” theory, without the Hegelian idealism, or has become the restricted model of the universal instance of the force (of) thought.¹⁰

“Labor force” (*force de travail*) is *already* a concept, but a radical one, correlating with the Real of the condition of the “Proletariat” as labor force that is non-reflected, lived, experienced.¹¹ Even the linguistic construct itself, the concept of “labor force,” is merely descriptive

of a real condition, consisting of a minimum of transcendence. And it is precisely the method or style of descriptiveness that Laruelle invokes as the non-Marxist and non-philosophical approach *par excellence*.¹² The minimally descriptive concept, the radical concept, the one in which the Real has “cloned itself,” is the causality in the last instance of a certain theory — its Determination-in-the-last-instance (DDI).

Labor force is the DDI of Marxism, argues Laruelle, and the method of immanence of the process of developing or creating a theory guarantees that the DDI will condition that process, determine it, without becoming itself a mere constituent of the transcendental universe of non-Marxism. Indeed the radical concept is the product of the Transcendental, it is a concept, but an impoverished one — minimally transcendental and “affected by immanence.” It will not enter into a process of its own rationalization by means of transcendence, the “lived” (*le vécu*) rather than the relating to a “philosophy” will be what grounds the radical concept as a DDI. In other words, it will remain on the plane of pure exposure to the immanence, and will continue to be that point in Language where the symptom (the Real) occurs. DDI is capable of its own cognition without co-participation in the process of (non-)philosophical truth generation.

The identity of the DDI signifies that it is capable, without a philosophical operation, of its own cognition. The old problem of the possibility of cognition is resolved

not through appealing to a transcendental subject or fundament but through being foreclosed of the Real to cognition, of every object to its cognition, being-foreclosed which does render possible yet determines cognition.¹³

The Thinking Subject takes upon itself the entire responsibility of observing the dictate of immanence and, in that process, the trajectory of symptoms produced by the pulsating Real will be the ultimate test of the corresponding of the first to the “needs” and laws of the latter. It is precisely in this sense that the DDI is both the instance which can provide the answer to Marxism’s failure as well as act as the source of its force (of-) thought or thought-force. The latter can surface only as the result of Marxism’s transformation by virtue of the non-philosophical procedure, only as the fruit of the prefix of “non.” In this sense, one should assume that a theory or a vision of the “liberation” of the Proletariat (or of the productive forces) which has been created by way of applying an immanent mode of thinking, a theory determined by the Real (of that which is subject to theorizing) and co-responding to the real conditions, would not have failed — as Marxism did, insists Laruelle (having in mind, I suppose, the collapse of the communist societies in Eastern Europe).

Laruelle states explicitly that it is precisely the layers or the transcendental constructs of Materialism and Dialectics, assuming the “false” (i.e., “mixed” with the Real) status of determinations-in-the-last-instance, that

have created the critical detour from the initially immanent determination of Marxism. Dialectical Materialism is determined by a purely transcendental instance which is the concept of “matter.” It is the latter which has substituted the initial source of immanence as a determination in the last instance. Dialectics is again purely transcendently determined, product of a philosophical the World, the result of a philosophical decision (a Hegelian one). Dialectics has been mixed with Materialism, and Materialism has “mixed” itself with the Real — the assumed Real has ceased to determine Marx’s project the moment the concept of “materialist matter” has been implanted inside of it.

And indeed, according to Laruelle, Marxism has embarked upon its mission of constructing a new World with the ambition to answer to a *real* condition, to respond to a source of immanence rather than to philosophy, and its departure point has been the radical concept of “labor force.” After all, it was young Marx who so insistently posited the question of an Exit (*Ausgang*) from philosophy in order to arrive to the Real (or produce theory which succumbs to praxis as its authority in the last instance) as the founding goal of his entire philosophico-scientific project.

It is precisely in this respect that Laruelle insists that the statement that “Marxism has (most probably) failed as a bad practice of a good theory” is downright false.

[...] Marxism has been evaluated or tested only on the basis of its passage to act or to the real of history and of society. But perhaps there is a failure which is more profound, which unravels a transcendental illusion of which it is the sanction rather than an aborted realization [...] Theoretical failure or other-than-theoretical, that could not be measured according to purely theoretical criteria? Without doubt. But that failure is also practical and other-than-practical, and moreover cannot be measured according to criteria allegedly purely practical. In effect, the only criterion of theory and of practice is the instance of the real inasmuch as precisely it is not itself anymore a simple criterion but rather an immanence foreclosed to any theoretical or practical criterion, and moreover so as it is the cause-in-the-last-instance capable of determining a real practice and rigorous theory.¹⁴

There is something fundamentally defective both in the theory and in the practice. In fact, according to Laruelle's non-philosophy, there can be no essential, no real difference between theory and practice in the sense these terms are used by the neo-Marxists. "Practice" is but an operationalization of a "theory." Moreover, theory is *always already* transformed into "World" in Laruelian sense of the word ("le Monde," as the discursive universe we live in, a transcendental "cosmology" we inhabit), and this is done precisely through *practices*, which are mere acts of performativity (to use Butlerian parlance). In this context, theory and practice are indistinguishable, or at least difficult to distinguish and false to postulate as opposed and exclusive of one other.

4. The Workings of the Transcendental over the Real (of Human-in-Human):

Investigating the Transcendental Minimum of non-Marxist “Force de Travail” and the “Poor” of Negri and Hardt

The installment of communist systems of social organization in the countries of former Yugoslavia was a blatant example of implanting a purely Transcendental Construct upon the Real. Marxist Doctrine remained something virtually non-intelligible to the Proletariat. For the caste of Marxist scholars — which, apart from the scholars in the proper sense of the word also refers to the Party officials and the so-called “social-political workers” (the journalists, for example) — it has grown to be subject to their endless desire for scholasticism.

The university student and the university professor in the former Yugoslavia could derive unending pleasure from the impossible bravura of extracting the unimaginable from Marxism: ways of its reconciliation with philosophies that were in utter divergence or even contradiction with Marxism. These “reconciliations” had so often been examples of bizarre “para-rational” reasoning and served to satisfy a particular political demand of the party officials — to be open enough to the West and not to exercise complete censorship with respect to the liberal ideology and western culture. The form of censorship that was unavoidable was to render the reception of whatever theory coming from the West — as Marxist

as possible. (Cf. Žižek's *Znak, označitelj, pismo*, published in former Yugoslavia in Serbo-Croatian.)¹⁵

The factory worker, however, the one who *believed* in the Ideology of the State (or the “ordinary” person adapted to the ruling regime) did not care or understand much about Marx and Marxism. His or her belief was founded upon the unreserved admiration for the Leader of the State, Josip Broz-Tito, and upon the reverent respect and fear of the Party and its mechanisms of Control and Subjugation (the Police, and especially the Secret Police).

The normalization of the citizen in the former regime (of the former state) of Yugoslavia was exercised though the severe mechanisms of external control (the Police and the Party) and though internalization of control (which was usually demonstrated through rituals of “self-critique” performed in front of the collective of co-workers or the so-called workers’ council). The first is nonetheless, in my view, more characteristic of the communist regime whereas the latter of the democratic one (the “liberal authoritarianism” Žižek writes about in *On Belief*, 121). Control and punishment in the “political imaginary” of the former communist regime came primarily from outside the private, from outside the home — from the secret forms of control: from the secret police, secrete informers and secrete prisons.

The channels of ideological normalization were those of clearly discernable and external instances of control

which had to remain veiled both visually (disguised: secret police, informers posing as friends and neighbors, secret hearings) and by silence (secret prisons, hearings and repression that one recognized as such but never spoke of). Certainly, normalization is impossible without internalization and, hence, the sentencing of the “verbal delict” (the very uttering of one’s thought which is ideologically inappropriate). On the other hand, the very existence of such punishment, the very fact of the State assuming the authority and “responsibility” of punishment speaks of the control and normalization-in-the-last-instance as external rather than internal.

Hence, the ruling collective pathology has been the paranoia, in particular with respect to the Institutions (of the State; or any Institutions). The paranoid mistrust was extended also to the ideology. (This is why today, in the countries of the so-called transition from the communist to the democratic regime, “ideology” is a bad, almost insulting term.) One was trained to agree with the public discourse about the indisputable perfection and superiority of Marxist ideology, one was expected to believe in it, but *not* necessarily to understand it. What mattered was to publicly agree with it. Control was external and belonged to the State.

It is more than clear that in former Yugoslavia, Marxist theory did not correspond with the immanent needs of the Proletariat. It did not even speak the same language. Dialectical and Historical Materialism were indecipher-

able to the ordinary representative of the Proletariat sacred doctrines and their slogans worked as ritual-magical formulas. (One did not discern their exact meaning, but nonetheless “knew,” even without understanding why, that they contained the supreme and indisputable truth. Only the “social-political workers” such as the scholars and party officials could and were capable of interpreting the doctrine’s meaning correctly.) Indeed it would be false to argue that Marxism in communist Yugoslavia ever correlated with its “source of immanence.”

It was a violent attempt to implant a ghostly, purely Conceptual Organism (a Transcendental) upon the Real (of the Human-in-Human) by virtue of ignoring and excluding the relevance of the symptomatology of the latter. Marxism, or rather its Dialectical Materialism, as a doctrine was alien to the Proletariat, as the Transcendental is alien to the Laruellian Real. It is precisely as the result of its failure to theorize and develop a “World” on the basis of the immanent mode of thinking, drawing legitimacy from its source of immanence, that Marxism and the communist system has failed in former Yugoslavia. Immanence is the territory of the non-reflected, the lived and the experienced “without the need to alienate itself through representation” (Laruelle 1989, 57) and Marxist Doctrine of the Yugoslav Communist Party did not correlate adequately with the instance whose Truth it purported to be, the state of the Proletariat. Successful correspondence with the source of immanence is the

one that will prove as such by means of the legitimizing symptomatology of the Real without the need to “alienate itself through representation.”

In this respect, it is worthwhile raising the question of whether the concept of “labor force” is sufficiently radical. Namely, does it correspond in an immanent mode with the Real of the Human-in-Human represented as Proletariat? The possible correspondence in an immanent mode can be “tested” only by the symptomatology provided by the Real. When a concept is “affected by immanence,” it touches on a traumatic spot. Hence the confirming symptom is the reaction of trauma, of pain, of a suffering – a passion, in its etymological sense. Even when the sensation is pleasure, in its rendition of the “Pure Lived,” of sheer *Tuché* devoid of any linguistic mediation, the Real takes place in the shape of trauma. Every instance of representation or of the thinking process is self-alienating with respect to the Real, but the question is: Is this self-alienation process an act of cloning (of the Real)? The immanent mode of thinking is accompanied by a legitimizing — although unilateral and, in the last instance, indifferent — response of the Real, but in a non-speculative and non-reflected way. (Just as in a scientific experiment, the real which is being researched “responds” in a way that legitimizes the original hypothesis of the researcher.) To return to the question: can those in whose name Marxism is professed today communicate, in an immanent way, with the term “labor force” in the sense of the Proletariat?

Following the main concern of the non-Marxist project, I would like to reformulate the question and ask whether “Proletariat” is a sufficiently radical term, sufficiently “impoverished” of philosophy. As Graham-Gibson observe, capitalism is no longer a monolithic category, but a heteronymous global phenomenon in a need of different lexis (and, a non-Marxist would add, in a need of a different syntax of thought, as well) that can speak of the diversity of forms of capitalist exploitation enabling its adequate explanation and critique, but also political action against it. It should be able to explain and provide grounds for action against a wide range of forms of social subjugation and capitalist exploitation: from gendered poverty (or the ever increasing feminization of the “proletariat”) to the production of a “global proletariat” (over 90% of the Third World population is the Proletariat to the First World). In *The End of Capitalism (as we knew it): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* by Gibson-Graham, we read:

Capitalism is an architecture or structure of power, which is conferred by ownership and by managerial or financial control. Capitalist exploitation is thus an aspect or effect of domination [...] Capitalism is the phallus or ‘master term’ within a system of social differentiation. Capitalist industrialization grounds the distinction between core (the developed world) and periphery (the so-called Third World). It defines the household as the space of ‘consumption’ (of capitalist commodities) and of ‘reproduction’ (of the capitalist workforce) rather than a space of noncapitalist

production and consumption. [...] Complexly generated social processes of commodification, urbanization, internationalization, proletarianization are viewed as aspects of capitalism's self-realization. (1996, 8-9)

Bearing in mind this picture of capitalism's "self-realization," it seems to me that "proletariat" is hardly a term radical enough to clone the Real, that is, the source of immanence of the (post- or non-) Marxist critique. The all-inclusive character of contemporary capitalism, its mutation into bio-politics, the hybridism it establishes with democracy (through the concept of free market economy) and the traditional liberal values points to a Real or a Lived that cannot be cloned by the concept of the Proletariat.

The subject-production in the post-industrial and neo-liberal capitalism points to another, paradigmatic category of the repressed – it is one which is global, present in all social and cultural strata. It is the neo-liberal subjectivity of the capitalist auto-oppression through self-modeling by way of internalizing the Desire of Capital as one's own, personal desire. Commodification is realized through the commodifying and commodified individual. Soul (in the Foucaultian sense), (post-)modern subjectivity, has claimed authority to represent and legitimize the needs of the "liberated" Body, i.e. the "material" concerns of the Self, and has, hence, become its most impenetrable and inescapable prison. It is the prison of capitalism which has convinced everyone that it is the only possible

world, an inescapability internalized by its subjects. The auto-generating force of capitalism lies in precisely the mechanisms of internalization, in the logic of subjection – in the sense of “subject-production” – rather than in the dialectic symbiosis of the classes of the oppressors and the oppressed. The classes, and hence, the proletariat is the mere result of the intricate and perpetual processes of generation of the capitalist subjectivity.

“Proletariat” and “class” are the product of the transcendently constituted syntax of capitalism: the term has a meaning only in and for the Capitalist-World. It is conditioned by the capitalist vision of the World and is, as a consequence of this, a term which “works” in favor of Capitalism as the World in Laruellian sense. Hence, it is not radically “uni-versal,” not sufficiently rid of the logic of auto-conditioning and auto-positioning of the Transcendental of Capitalism – as well as that of Marxism – as non-Marxism requires.

In a search for what non-Marxism would call a “radical concept,” rereading Marx’s *Capital* (volumes I and III) along the “anti-essentialist” line of critique provided by Stephen Resnick and Richard Wolff,¹⁶ Gibson-Graham propose the following formulation:

When individuals labor beyond what is necessary for their own reproduction and the ‘surplus’ fruits of their labor are appropriated by others (or themselves), and when that surplus is distributed to its social destinations, then we may recognize the processes of class. (17 ,1996)

This is a sort of a descriptive formulation that non-Marxism, i.e., non-philosophy, favors as a method. It represents a “transcendental minimum” that is necessary to explicate — or provide a possibility of thinking/theorizing — a certain Real. It has been enabled by the twofold act of dismantling the doctrinal organization it departs from and attuning solely to the “dictate” of its source of immanence — the Real(-of-the-Human-in-Human) of labor. This is an attempt to “clone” the Real of a form of exploitation of the Human-in-Human that is immanently characteristic of Capitalism: the radical concept explaining the “form” of exploitation is “class,” whereas the radical concept correlating with the lived of exploitation (the Real of the Human-in-Human) is *labor*.

In order for non-Marxism to become an operational theory capable of both explaining immanently the “human condition” in Capitalism and proposing courses of action that can introduce change, it is in a need of identifying another instance of the Real, the one which immanently fuels its theoretical desire. It is an instance of immanence which is structurally situated on the side of the thinking subject (or the Stranger). It is the desire (theoretical, or Truth-Desire) of the Thinker unilaterally positioned and parallel to the cause-in-the-last-instance. Namely, an immanent cause of the Marxist theoretical project is also the Real of the Marxist desire to explain the human subjugation by Capitalism and to intervene into its Real (or Reality) in order to change it. Hence, in

order to construct a theory which also “behaves” immanently with respect to this second source of immanence, one is in a need of a more “adaptable” non-Marxist approach that can provide answers to the questions of the form/s of exploitation and subjugation, but also ground the political possibility of acting against it. Non-Marxism is, thus, a way of arriving to a revolutionary stance by way of getting rid of the doctrinal orthodoxy of Marxism, or rather of the doctrinal orthodoxy of “leftism,” i.e., of the “legible” (in Butlerian sense) discourses of critique of Capitalism. The radical consequence of such theoretical position would be that Marxism does not necessarily have to be the adequate response to Capitalism – not even the barred Marxism, that is, non-Marxism.

“Class” is yet another transcendently conditioned concept — it communicates well with the Marxist doctrine but insufficiently successfully with its source of immanence, i.e., the Real of the Human-in-Human subjugated by Capitalism. Class is an economically determined term and, as such, it is conditioned by a particular horizon of thought, a transcendental universe (a scientific doctrine) relying on sociology and its inherent positivism (in spite of all of its later revisions). It is unlikely that a citizen of the Third World who culturally belongs to the “upper-middle class” while, according to the internationally adopted parameters, living in a state of poverty will experience a sense of belonging to the same class with a laborer from the First World who may, com-

pared to him/her, culturally be “lower class” whereas, financially, “upper.”

The notion of “class” is hardly operative for the contemporary political critique since it is one which implies the enlightenment logic of classification – it is the product of the passion for classifying. Hence, besides its normalizing and disciplining effect, the category of class (as engendered by Marxism) fails to explain the multiple and complex character of identity positions conditioned by capitalism. What this concept fails to do is name/clone the Real/the Lived of the “human condition” shared by the socially and culturally heterogeneous category of the oppressed of the contemporary global capitalism. The latter signals that we are in a need of a more radical concept, one transcendently impoverished and purely descriptive of the Lived, one which is less constituted by a doctrine or the philosophy and which communicates a meaning on the basis of its source of immanence (Laruelle).

The radical term affected by the immanence of the *lived* is, again, labor. It implies the sheer state of Trauma, exposure to suffering (beyond the distinction between the physical and psychic) of the Body (which does not exclude the suffering “Soul”), an unending state of precariousness which is a purely experiential stance. Radical vulnerability is the lived of labor. Labor is a descriptive and transcendently impoverished notion and can, hence, claim the status of a radical term.

Another term, closely related to “labor” is the “poor” (as conceived by Rancière as well as by Negri and Hardt in the *Empire*). This is one of the many terms that can be assigned the status of a DDI by virtue of their being radically descriptive of the experienced (the Lived) and emptied of any reference to a transcendental universe that may structurally condition and determine their meaning. According to my own vision of the theoretical potentials and of the potential force for political action of the non-Marxist stance, there can be a virtually endless number of non-philosophical theories-practices in immanent correspondence with the Real of their causes-in-the-last-instance. In order to arrive at a thought-force or force-of-thought, one needs to depart from a radical term which is cloned from the Real of “the lived and the experienced without the need to alienate itself into representation.” As mentioned above, one such term is the Poor.

[...] the poor is almost always seen to have a prophetic capacity: not only is the poor *in* the world, but the poor itself is the very possibility of the world. Only the poor lives radically the actual and present being, in destitution and suffering, and thus only the poor has the ability to renew being. The divinity of the multitude of the poor does not point to any transcendence. On the contrary, here and only here in this world, in the existence of the poor, is the field of immanence presented, confirmed, consolidated, and opened. The poor is god on earth. (Hardt and Negri 2001, 157)

Poor refers to a wide category of multiple forms of precariousness related to the instance of mere survival and vulnerable exposure to trauma. Survival is an instance situated beyond the dichotomy of the “material” and the “psychic” or the “ideal.” Belonging to the category of the “Poor” is grounded by that fundamental vulnerability which is experienced both on the bodily level as well as that of the Soul, whereby the source of this vulnerability is determined (in-the-last-instance) as Capitalism. Terms that are radically descriptive, and their DDI lies in the Lived-of-Vulnerability, are also “gender,” “queer” and “race.”

The determination in the last instance is universal “once each time” (*chaque-fois-une-fois*: Laruelle 1992, 117). In other words, it is uni-versal in the formal sense and, also, it is singular: it is the DDI of a specific radical concept, and does not subsume (all) other forms of oppression and their respective radical terms under a singular, all-encompassing category. The DDI of oppression is *one* (uni-versal) not in the sense of totality but in the sense of radical singularity. Instead of colonizing and absorbing the multiplicity of differences and identity positions, identification with and fidelity to a DDI is a fundamentally solitary stance. The radical stance issues from the embracing of the unmitigated sense of the irreducible One.

The more radical, purely descriptive and corresponding with the Real the term is, the less theoretical rigor there

is to it (to the term itself). Nonetheless, paradoxically, it is precisely the non-rigorousness of the radical term which should guarantee the rigor of the non-philosophical, scientific development of a theory. Descriptiveness of the non-reflected and non-reflecting “lived” (*le vécu*, on which Laruelle repeatedly insists throughout his work) is something which is, by definition, on the verge of the Poetic. By the very imperative — the axiom which prescribes — that the radical concept “clones” the Lived-of-the-Real, it seems that the rigor itself of the theory is provided by the Poetic, as its point of departure. Following Vico, I would say that the bordering of the two types of languages, the “scientific” and the “poetic,” produces a form of discourse that could be called “monstrous.” Radical concepts produce “monstrous” discourses: “monstrosity” of political thought and action is that which can radically undermine capitalism as the only possible World and bring forth a completely different and new utopia and horizon of political thought and reality.

Notes:

CHAPTER II

1. When referring to Nietzsche's works, the author-date system is replaced by reference to a title, a section or fragment, chapter and a section within a chapter.
2. Nicole Loraux explains that mourning for a female child achieves a level of excessiveness which cannot be in anyway inscribed into the polis, into the "civilized" – it is the opposite of civilized. It belongs beyond the ordered, the cosmos, i.e., the world inasmuch as meaningful organization. The son is designated by the word *lókheuma* referring to a born one which is (always) already separated from the mother through the civilizing gesture of paternal recognition. The daughter is *ōdís*, "a word that refers to the act of childbirth, in its length and in its pain, just before the separation between mother and child is accomplished [...]" (Loraux 1998, 52).

CHAPTER V

1. According to Laruelle, it is precisely the radical dyad of thought and the real conveying the unbridgeable fissure between the two terms that, in its most fundamental impossibility, determines the possibility of thought. Laruelle writes: "It is impossible, even in Freud and in Marx, and even more so within a philosophy, to find radical concepts of the Real and the uni-versal – solely the unconscious and the productive forces, desire and labor. As soon as one arrives to this discovery, psychoanalysis and Marxism gain one utterly new sense – a transformation of their theories into

simple material [...] These sorts of disciplines require more than just a simple theoretical transformation — a discovery from within a ‘non-’ that would be the effect (of) the Real or its action;” or in the French original of the text: «Il est impossible, même dans Freud et dans Marx, à plus forte raison dans une philosophie, de trouver les concepts radicaux du Réel et de l’uni-versel — seulement l’inconscient et les forces productives, le désir et le travail. Mais cette découverte faite, psychanalyse et marxisme en reçoivent après coup plus qu’un nouveau sens — une transformation de leurs théories comme simple matériau. [...] De telles disciplines exigent plus qu’une refonte simplement théorique — une découverte en ‘non’- qui soit un effet (du) Réel ou son agir. » (2000, 61)

2. Benjamin, *Briefe* 2 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp), 1966, 206/138, quoted in Agamben’s *State of Exception* (University of Chicago Press, 2005), 61.
3. Quoted in Agamben’s *State of Exception* (University of Chicago Press, 2005), 61.
4. *Idem*.
5. Radical concepts are descriptive of the Real, “affected by its immanence” and, hence, minimally determined by the transcendental; or, put in Laruelle’s words, the radical concept is established according to the following procedure: « On dira que la représentation, dans la vision-en-Un, est un reflet non-thétique ou non-positionnel (du) réel, qu’elle est descriptive, en dernière instance du moins, et non constitutive comme prétend l’être la philosophie.» (Laruelle 2000, 57)
6. “I term subjectivization the emergence of an operator, consecutive to an interventional nomination. Subjectivization takes place in a form of a Two. It is directed toward the intervention on the borders of the eventual site. But it is also

directed towards the situation through its coincidence with the rule of evaluation and proximity which founds the generic procedure. Subjectivization is interventional nomination *from the standpoint of the situation*, that is, the rule of the intra-situational effects of the supernumerary name's entrance into circulation. It could be said that subjectivization is a *special count*, distinct from the count-as-one which orders presentation, just as it is from the state's reduplication. What subjectivization counts is whatever is faithfully connected to the name of the event." (Badiou 2005, 393)

CHAPTER VI

1. François Laruelle, *Philosophie et non-philosophie* (Liege-Bruxelles: Pierre Mardaga, 1989), 57: « L'identité du réel se vit, s'éprouve, se consomme en restant en elle-même sans avoir besoin de s'aliéner dans une représentation. » (Translation from French: K.K.)
2. Cf. Ray Brassier, *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 123: "For Laruelle, a philosophical decision is a dyad of immanence and transcendence, but one wherein immanence features twice, its internal structure subdivided between an empirical and a transcendental function. It is at once internal to the dyad as the empirical immanence of the datum coupled to the transcendence of the *a priori* factum, but also external as that supplement of transcendental immanence required for gluing empirical immanence and *a priori* transcendence together. Every decision divides immanence between an empirical datum which it supposes as given through the *a priori* factum, and a transcendental immanence which it has to invoke as already given in order to guarantee the unity of a presupposed factum and a posited datum."

3. Ibid., 56 : « [...] cette pensée ne serait pas, ne pourrait plus être alors une Identité divisée comme la philosophique. Ce serait d'une part, par son fondement réel ou son essence, rien-qu'une Identité, elle serait rigoureusement identique au réel sans passer par une division ou une Dyade ; et ce serait d'autre part une Dyade pure, une dualité radicale, elle aussi non obtenue par division et non re-mélangée avec l'Identité. Elle aurait son fondement en celle-ci, mais découlerait d'elle sans se déterminer réciproquement avec elle. »
4. Laruelle, *Introduction au non-marxisme*, 21: « Le problème d'un traitement nouveau du marxisme est d'isoler ce noyau d'une universalité seulement symptôme mais dont l'isolation soit aussi sa détermination en dernière instance, sa 'radicalisation.' »
5. Ibid., 61 : « S'il [non-Marxism] paraît y revenir [to Marxism], c'est à ses problèmes plutôt qu'à ses textes, et à des problèmes dont la solution implique de traiter les textes comme des symptômes, par le suspens de l'autorité philosophique. [...] Il est impossible, même dans Freud et dans Marx, à plus forte raison dans une philosophie, de trouver les concepts radicaux du Réel et de l'uni-versel — seulement l'inconscient et les forces productives, le désir et le travail. Mais cette découverte faite, psychanalyse et marxisme en reçoivent après coup plus qu'un nouveau sens — une transformation de leurs théories comme simple matériau. [...] De telles disciplines exigent plus qu'une refonte simplement théorique — une découverte en 'non' - qui soit un effet (du) Réel ou son agir. »
6. See: François Laruelle, *Théorie des Etrangers*, (Paris: Éditions Kimé), 1995; and also: François Laruelle, *Théorie des identités*. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1992).
7. The Real can be rendered as Language and mediated to and through the World only through an instance other than

that of the Real, and instance of Real's self-alienation — the Stranger (*l'Étranger*); See: Laruelle, *Théorie des Etrangers* (Paris : Éditions Kimé, 1995), 74-82.

8. « La solution 'réelle' à ce problème de la DDI comme objet et cause de sa propre théorie doit éviter l'idéalisme hégélien encore plus que ne le fait le matérialisme. Ni cause en extériorité, ni identité dialectique des contraires, le Réel est cause par immanence et détermine la connaissance de sa propre syntaxe, de sa causalité, par un processus que l'on dira de 'clonage.' [...] Soit l'objet X à connaître. S'il est affecté d'immanence ou capable de DDI, c'est-à-dire vu-en-Un, lui-même peut alors 'se' cloner à partir du matériau qu'est sa transcendance. »
9. Ibid., 48 : « Lorsque la DDI est la cause ou l'objet immanent de sa propre théorie, on dira que cette théorie *est la force (de) pensée*, la théorie de la force (de) pensée est celle-ci même en-dernière-instance. [...] L'objet à connaître, tout en restant l'objet connu, doit être ainsi capable de déterminer sa connaissance. »
10. Ibid. : « Comme si la 'force de travail' était capable enfin de sa propre théorie 'prolétarienne,' sans idéalisme hégélien, ou devenait le modèle restreint de l'instance universelle de la force (de) pensée. »
11. Laruelle, *Philosophie et non-philosophie*, 56-57 : « [...] le réel se vit, s'éprouve, se consomme en restant en elle-même [...] »
12. Ibid., 57: « On dira que la représentation, dans la vision-en-Un, est un reflet non-thétique ou non-positionnel (du) réel, qu'elle est descriptive, en dernière instance du moins, et non constitutive comme prétend l'être la philosophie.»
Descriptiveness as the method favored by non-philosophy

is argued for also at many other places in *Philosophie et non-philosophie*, and is often referred to in *Introduction au non-marxisme* as well.

13. Laruelle, *Introduction au non-marxisme*, 49 : « L'identité de la DDI signifie qu'elle est capable, sans opération philosophique, de sa propre connaissance. Le vieux problème de la possibilité de la connaissance se résout non par l'appel à un sujet transcendantal ou un fondement mais par l'être forclos du Réel à la connaissance, de tout objet à sa connaissance, être-forclos qui ne rend possible la connaissance mais qui la détermine. »
14. Ibid., 17: « [...] le marxisme n'a été évalué et testé que sur l'argument de son passage à l'acte ou au réel de l'histoire et de la société. Mais peut-être y a-t-il un échec plus profond qui relève d'une illusion transcendantale dont il est la sanction plutôt que d'une réalisation avortée [...] Echec théorique et autre-que-théorique, qui ne peut se mesurer à des critères purement théoriques ? Sans doute. Mais cet échec est tout aussi pratique et autre-que-pratique, et ne peut davantage se mesurer à des critères prétendus purement pratiques. En effet le seul critère de la théorie et de la pratique, c'est l'instance du Réel en tant que précisément elle n'est plus un simple critère mais qu'elle est une immanence forclos à tout critère théorique et pratique, et capable d'autant plus, comme cause-de-dernière-instance, de déterminer une pratique réelle et une théorie rigoureuse. »
15. Slavoj Žižek, *Znak, označitelj, pismo* [*Sign, Signifier, Textuality*], (Beograd: BIGZ, 1979).
16. Richard Wolff and Stephen Resnick, "Power, Property and Class," *Socialist Review* 16 (2), 97-124.

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KATERINA KOLOZOVA
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