Culture in the Age of Biopower

Maslov, Gordan

SVEUČILIŠTE U ZADRU

POSLIJEDIPLOMSKI SVEUČILIŠNI STUDIJ
HUMANISTIČKE ZNANOSTI

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TEMELJNA DOKUMENTACIJSKA KARTICA

I. Autor i studij

Ime i prezime: Gordan Maslov

Naziv studijskog programa: Poslijediplomski sveučilišni studij humanističke znanosti

Mentor: Prof. dr. sc. Mario Vrbančić

Komentor: Dr. sc. Kruno Martinac

Datum obrane: 28. listopada 2022.

Znanstveno područje i polje u kojem je postignut doktorat znanosti: Poslijediplomski sveučilišni studij humanističke znanosti, interdisciplinarni humanistički studiji

II. Doktorski rad

Naslov: Kultura u doba biomoći

UDK oznaka: 130.2

Broj stranica: 219

Broj slika/grafičkih prikaza/tablica: 0

Broj bilježaka: 159

Broj korištenih bibliografskih jedinica i izvora: 239

Broj priloga: 0

Jezik rada: Engleski

III. Stručna povjerenstva

Stručno povjerenstvo za ocjenu doktorskog rada:

1. Prof. dr. sc. Tomislav Pletenac, predsjednik
2. Prof. dr. sc. Nebojša Blanuša, član
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Stručno povjerenstvo za obranu doktorskog rada:

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UNIVERSITY OF ZADAR

BASIC DOCUMENTATION CARD

I. Author and study

Name and surname: Gordan Maslov

Name of the study programme: Postgraduate doctoral study in Humanities

Mentor: Prof. dr. sc. Mario Vrbančić

Co-mentor: Dr. sc. Kruno Martinac

Date of the defence: October 28, 2022.

Scientific area and field in which the PhD is obtained: Postgraduate doctoral study in Humanities, interdisciplinary humanities studies

II. Doctoral dissertation

Title: Culture in the Age of Biopower

UDC mark: 130.2

Number of pages: 219

Number of pictures/graphical representations/tables: 0

Number of notes: 159

Number of used bibliographic units and sources: 239

Number of appendices: 0

Language of the doctoral dissertation: English

III. Expert committees

Expert committee for the evaluation of the doctoral dissertation:

1. Prof. dr. sc. Tomislav Pletenac, chair
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Izjava o akademskoj čestitosti

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Zadar, 28. listopada 2022.

1

Introduction

As *the earth falls into the sun:* life and capitalism in the 21st century

> "Capital (...) allows its actual movement to be determined as much as little by the sight of the coming degradation and final depopulation of the human race, as by probable fall of the earth into the sun"
>
> Marx 1990: 380-1.

1.1. Marx's low twelve[1]

Karl Marx had evoked the destructive potential of capital accumulation throughout his work but nowhere as poignantly as in the quote above, evoking a strong sense of apocalypse already on the way. Capitalism did start from multiple instances of "localized" apocalypses, as the turn of events must have felt for the 18th and 19th century workers in industrial cities in England such as Liverpool or Manchester; or even more so for the colonial subjects of Spanish and later British Empire, be it in Potosi mines of the 16th century or during the Great Indian famine of late 19th century (Davis 2017; Patel and Moore, 2018). But what Marx hints at here is something altogether different - and not only in scale. Notice the adjectives "coming" and "final"; Marx collapses the historicity of capital accumulation by dragging the future

[1] The term freemasons used for midnight. See: Albert G. Mackey (2016) (1873). *Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences, Volume 3: M-R.* Loschberg: Jazzybee Verlag

into the present, making accumulation an ominous movement always already destructive - from its very start, irreversibly apocalyptic. According to him the accumulation of capital, in no uncertain terms, poses the absolute danger for the survival of humanity, leading to its "degradation" and "final depopulation". He refers to a certain force of accumulation, its potential evoked counterfactually as a non-possibility, even an absurdity - which might turn out to be anything but. What makes the experience of reading this passage far more sinister today than ever before is the imagery Marx evokes. As I am writing these lines in the summer of 2021 whose months proved to be the hottest on record in human history, it seems if the Earth had not yet fallen into the sun that it is certainly getting closer to it and fast: numerous records being shattered and different climate catastrophes coming in a seemingly endless long sequence (from flooding, droughts, to wildfires), itself following upon decades of climate events across all continents - from Asia, North America to Australia. All these instances of local catastrophes provide Marx's metaphor with a concrete, palpable force. Nonetheless, however horrifying, the everyday experience of climate change lags behind the climate and biological science and the predictions of our planets' (near) future. The 6th Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report released in August 2021[2] and its follow-up, the UN Synthesis Report by the Secretariat on the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)[3] - themselves criticised by some climate scientists as "frustratingly conservative", giving "insufficient attention (...) to the importance of tipping points, feedback loops and outlier predictions" and at the same time "marginalizing more extreme scenarios"[4]. The reports forecast that the planet is on the path to be at least 2.7 degrees Celsius warmer from pre-industrial levels by the end of this century (this projection includes not yet existing carbon extracting technology and so-called "negative emissions") *even* if all governments abide by the 2015 Paris Agreement - a finding that UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in no uncertain terms called catastrophic.[5] What will happen if the governments don't abide by the Paris Agreement? Then we move from catastrophe to

[2] Available at: https://www.ipcc.ch/2021/08/09/ar6-wg1-20210809-pr/ (accessed August 9, 2021)
[3] Available at: https://unfccc.int/news/full-ndc-synthesis-report-some-progress-but-still-a-big-concern (accessed August 9, 2021)
[4] Philip Blump, "You should not be surprised that climate predictions may have been too conservative". *The Washington Post,* July 19, 2021. Available at: https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2021/07/19/you-should-not-be-surprised-that-climate-predictions-may-have-been-too-conservative/
[5] Matt MacGrath "Climate change: IPCC report is 'code red for humanity'". *BBC,* August 9, 2021. Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-58130705

apocalypse itself, as predictions for the end of the century rise the average temperature to above 6.0C pre-industrial levels. This is the point at which most densely populated parts of the planet will become almost completely inhospitable, causing suffering, deaths and migration, with unimaginable consequences for the rest of the globe. Returning to Marx's most prescient formulation, from the perspective of those affected the earth is *about* to fall into the sun. We've come to experience the start of effects of the climate catastrophe far earlier and with far more force than previously predicted. This knowledge of the finitude of our species is slowly starting to find its way in all aspects of our daily experience, affecting even the logic behind the discussion around the name that should be given to the following geological epoch. We had swiftly moved from the epistemological (and ultimately political) debates which aimed to narrow the scope to the determining agency responsible for climate change - from Anthropocene to capitalocene - to a more sinister practice of naming which itself is devoid of any attempt at linking the name to the determining factors driving these changes, as if resigned to accept them as a quasi-mythical force - in name at least. We are thus entering "Pyrocene", "a planetary fire age".[6]

But let us return to Marx and his prophecy of the "ultimate" destruction of human species. If we take Marx for a masterful dialectician - as he certainly was - he was trying anything *but* to make bad puns. In a full reversal, the absurd image he evokes becomes not only probable but almost *inevitable*, as the law of gravitation clashes with the laws of the accumulation of capital; when set in motion, the laws of accumulation become more forceful even than that of physics. Behind this fantasy of the "ultimate" destruction and "depopulation" of human race, Marx *avant la lettre* seems to open - although in somewhat muted fashion - the problematic of capital as *a form of power over life and its conditions*, as well as the inverse of this "productivity" aimed at affirmation of life - its destructive potential. This is precisely the topic and the problem which will more than a century later preoccupy French philosopher Michel Foucault, as he will define contemporary power as that which "make(s) live" and "let(s) die" (Foucault 2003: 219-220). Foucault was acutely aware of the problematic of murder and genocide in the age of biopower as a new "form of power that fosters life", going so far as to claim, that it represents an "irresolvable

[6] Steve Pyne, "Welcome to the Pyrocene: Fossil Fuel Combustion Has Thrust Us into a New Fire Age". *Common Dreams* (accessed September 21, 2021). Available at: https://www.commondreams.org/views/2021/09/19/ welcome-pyrocene-fossil-fuel-combustion-has-thrust-us-new-fire-age

contradiction". There is no better materialization of this "irresolvable contradiction" than the recent trend in the weapons industry of producing "environmentally friendly weapons". These range from the US Department of Defence - whose army is one of world's biggest polluters and emitters of C02 - sequestering from biological scientists the development of the "greener explosives and rocket fuels" to the British Aerospace (BAE) which aims to make more "environmental" and "collateral-friendly" weaponry: for example "lead free bullets" that "cause no further harm", "bang-free bomb (...) re-engineered so the risk to the user of exposure to the bomb's fumes is reduced," and "the explosives that eventually turn into manure" thereby regenerating "the environment that they had initially destroyed."[7] In the last decades the focus has somewhat shifted from the environment to the climate, opening the research in "microwave weapons", "solar-powered submarines", all with the aim of investing in technologies that are either "low carbon or do not require as much fossil fuel."[8]

But what sticks out is the way Foucault introduces this reversal which, just as in Marx's case, is both most sudden and almost complete, literally leaving no survivors. This contradiction between "letting die" and killing, "letting live" and "protecting life" for Foucault was manifested by nuclear power and atomic bomb. This is deepened and exacerbated today with the ongoing climate change. Speaking about the destruction of life in the age of biopower, Foucault swiftly moves from the proposition of "letting die" - by way of transforming the milieu of the living - to more "direct" ways of ending life. What is striking is the fact that he comes up with most extreme forms of violence; with acts of destruction that are overwhelming, total, and present the complete reversal of powers ability to "protect" life: genocides, holocaust, nuclear annihilation. He even indulges in a bit of sci-fi thinking; "the excess of biopower" appear when it "becomes technologically and politically possible for man not only to manage life but to make it proliferate, to create living matter (...) and ultimately, to build viruses that cannot be controlled and that are universally destructive" (Foucault 2003: 254). In this moment the absolute productiveness of power -

[7] The attempts of BAE were in the end abandoned due to high costs of development. See: "BAE goes big on 'green' weapons." *BBC*, October 26, 2006, available at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/6081486.stm; Bob Carlson and Daneil Grushkin, "The Military's Push to Green Our Explosives." *Slate*, Jan 19, 2012. Available at: https://slate.com/technology/2012/01/synthetic-biology-environmentally-friendly-weapons-and-the-biological-and-toxin-weapons-convention.html

[8] Joe Sandler Clarke, „How weapons manufacturers are preparing for climate change". *Unearthed*, May 26, 2020. Available at: https://unearthed.greenpeace.org/2020/05/26/climate-change-weapons-manufacturers/

of which he was often accused - reverses into its opposite, just as for Marx the unmitigated productiveness of capital - being "(...) the first to show what man's activity can bring about", accomplishing "wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals", conducting "expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades" (Marx and Engels 2000) - reverses into indifference towards life in general leading to its "degradation" and, ultimately, "final depopulation". But what about all those "in-between" phenomena - not as spectacular as the planetary destruction that would be brought by nuclear war or a runaway climate change - that go down all to the level of what Lazzarato and Alliez call "daily destruction" (Lazzarato and Alliez 2018: 355), the minute and continuous acts of the most mundane and banal destruction which can be ascribed to (over)consumption with incredible and fast accumulating societal and planetary costs, which undermine our own conditions of biological existence? What about the acts of destruction of different forms of life and senses of "what we are", which are the object of Foucault's work, but somehow remain silent, stifled by the incredible productivity to which he focused his gaze toward?

While there is little to no chance that the contradictions between power *over* life and power *of* life, as well as power's ability to preserve *and* destroy life will ever be resolved because this contradiction - or better perhaps to say agonism - is both epistemological as well as ontological. Life as an object of political intervention bifurcates in its universality: it is both that which makes power, but also that which is being extinguished by that very same power and its seeming limitless capacity. It is for reasons stated above that this thesis moves us in another direction: to inquire more into these movements of destruction, its different forms, the relation between "make live and let die" over which Foucault and even Marx merely gloss over. What strategies of preservation of life are undertaken in the context of climate change and by whom? How will destruction and preservation of life play out? Do these movements of destruction merit their own concepts, their own logic, and their own thought; do they follow certain strategies, or betray certain logics which can be identified? Or should we leave them to an afterthought and understand them as effects and "by-products", a mere "cost" of the immense productive capacities of modern societies? What forms of destruction are present and necessary for biopolitics to operate, and how contemporary relations of power transform Foucault's own understanding of this relation? While these problems might seem to be purely epistemic as we posit them just as we enter

the era of the first effects of climate change and the possible catastrophe, in the context of contemporary globalized capitalism of extremely unequal geographical and class distribution of power to act they do open up crucial questions. In the end, these pertain to the effects of Foucault's ground-breaking intervention in the theories of power, underscoring as a distinct character that what was, in his accord, more or less neglected or even repressed – the essential and unescapable productiveness of power relations. But if we are to ground our approach less in a theory or an ontology of power and more in an attempt to develop its "analytics" – one of Foucault's lasting methodological contributions – this necessitates the refusal of an attempt abstract such an endeavour from the historical grounding in a specific "conjuncture" of relations of power. As I argue, these have radically shifted from Foucault's time as technological, economic, ecological, and political transformations – famously anticipated by none other than one of Foucault's most known critics, Jurgen Habermas as "re-feudalization" (Habermas 1989), and more recently described under the name of "techno-feudalism" (Varoufakis 2021).[9] What comes out of this new complex of power relations is the need to rethink Foucault's proposition on the analysis of power: if asymmetric power relations are the milieu within which counter-power and counter-conduct are to emerge, just as the destruction of the biosphere and climate change in the coming decades might favour more and more "letting die" to the preservation of life, how are we to think and use Foucault's analytics of power?

1.2. Why think of destruction in the age of biopower?

This work is an intervention into a field of biopolitics with the explicit aim of re-thinking and returning this moment of destructiveness back into the spotlight of contemporary analysis. The question of destruction, especially that resulting from the accumulation of capital, has been pushed aside in favour of investigation of capital's violence. Why had destruction and its language been almost disqualified from critical thought, especially since humanity faces a possibility of destruction on the scale which preoccupied Foucault, albeit perhaps far less spectacular and quite a bit slower? A tentative insight, which will be elaborated throughout the thesis is that destruction necessarily "stinks"

[9] For a critical engagement of the growing literature on techno-feudalism see: Evgeny Morozov (2022) „The Critique of Techno-Feudal Reason." *New Left Review*, 133/134. Available at: https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii133/articles/evgeny-morozov-critique-of-techno-feudal-reason

of theology, of a generalization that necessarily fails to consider the intricacies of different phenomena? But what about production, is its sin not greater? Can this repression of destruction at least partially be attributed to what Alberto Toscano identified as Foucault's victory, a fact that "(...) a kind of ambient Foucaultianism seems to have become the untranscendable horizon of our own academic present", citing in favour of his thesis the "inflated fortunes of 'biopolitics'; the rise of governmentality to the status of a paradigm in those (post-)colonial contexts Foucault largely ignored; the preference for resistance over revolution; the 'historical nominalism' which baulks at any thinking of totality and trades in discontinuity, archives and events" (Toscano 2015: 27). But, the miasma of destruction should not deter us from taking seriously the relationship between production and destruction of Life, this unattainable object of contemporary analyses whose demise has the end writ large.

While there are some prominent interventions with the aim of reintroduction of destruction – the work of Giorgio Agamben, Roberto Esposito, Achille Mbembe, to name just a few – I will try to argue that they are lacking in different ways. Two most grave errors is that they either designate this destruction as a prerogative of "sovereignty" - just as Foucault seemed to - and focus primarily on what they perceive as the enclosed sphere of the political; or they completely disregard phenomena of destruction as a simple "by-product" of capital's extension and intensification of accumulation, often resolving it in teleological terms as something that will almost necessarily be superseded by future incarnations of 19th century proletariat under different names (multitude, precariat etc.). Both of these positions are lacking since they either completely exclude the role of capitalism in the genealogy of productive power of biopolitics and discipline, as in Esposito's and Agamben's work[10] or they completely close off the sphere of economy to any outside influence, thinking of capital accumulation through the lenses of a mode of production and its own eternal laws now slightly bent to satisfy its slightly transforming character.

It seems to me that the return of destructiveness into biopolitics can only be written as a *speculative reading* of specific points of contact between the works of Karl Marx and

[10] For example, of this exclusion of capitalism and economy see the collection of essays which deals with the problem of destruction and biopolitical discourse: Francois Debrix and Alexander D. Barder, eds. (2012) *Beyond Biopolitics: Theory, Violence, and Horror in World Politics*. London: Routledge.

Michel Foucault, an attempt made necessary by the radically different context of the 21st century and the specific challenges it poses both in political, theoretical, and even existential terms. These new conditions force upon us the necessity of a new approach to both authors, to avoid a constant reimagining of Foucault and Marx *without the specific experience of the present* - or, as we will see in some cases, even *against* the experience of the present. I ask a simple question: if Foucault's legacy is usually subsumed by the idea of "productiveness of power", what would the power of destruction mean from Foucauldian perspective? To what agency would it be tied to, what forms would it take, with what objects would it interact with, what objects and subjects would it destroy? How could it think this destruction? What sort of "debris" would be "produced" by it? Are different concepts of destruction even a possibility within a Foucauldian horizon, as he was unwilling to claim even for power the status of concept? Though one should reject the idea to look for the "truth" of Foucault in his short pieces and interventions, rather than in his published works, a 1978 interview with Colin Gordon and Paul Patton seems to define his position regarding conceptuality of power rather clear

> "I never spoke of Power, I never did an analysis of Power , I never said what Power is, which was interpreted by certain active minds to mean that I was making a kind of absolute of it, of transcendental power, of hidden divinity (...) That is to say that I am the most radical enemy that one can imagine of the idea of power, and I don't ever speak about power, and I speak from the possibilities of intelligibility given by the analysis of mechanisms of power on the condition that one never speaks of Power, but rather speaks of different instruments, tools, relations, techniques, etc., that allow for domination, subjectification, constraint, coercion, etc. I hate power, I hate the idea of power, and that is what people don't understand, you get these completely naïve critiques that say "aha, he doesn't define power." I say, power is not to be defined; it is not to be defined because it does not exist" (Foucault 2012b: 105-106).

If the answer is that power truly cannot be defined - and it might as well turn out to be, though we must have in mind that this negation can come in multiple different forms - of what use to us is Foucault today or tomorrow, when it seems that we might have to face the destruction of both life and its milieu on an unprecedented scale, Marx's falling of the earth into the sun? How can this question be opened inside of the existing dialogue that takes

place between Marx and Foucault, the authors of *productive conceptualisation of power* for whom destruction is seen merely as an afterthought? If both Marx and Foucault saw destruction and violence primarily as an effect of productivity and not a force in itself, how can their work be used to grasp destructiveness or different strategies of destruction, without succumbing to the entrapment of what could be called *productivist ontology*? The circumstances we find ourselves will soon require us to think beyond the discourse where both Foucault and had Marx stopped; what does "letting die" mean, what do Marx and Engels mean when in *Manifesto* they write of "the mutual destruction of competing classes"? What happens to life when it is no longer a focus of politics, but becomes a resource like any other, reduced to its biological reproduction? At all these moments their discourse skip forward, taking these events as an obvious fact, as if in no need of an explanation, their phantasmatic and Biblical character proving as predominantly a discursive ploy, a simple oratorical tool. Be as it may, it is at this place where we will start.

1.3. Foucault on Marx and Marxism

Though Foucault was probably questioned more on his relationship to Marx than to any other philosopher, he remained notoriously ambiguous in his answers: shifting his position from dismissing Marxism as *the* philosophy of the 19th century, unable to create anything more "(...) than storms in (...) children's paddling pool" of the 19th century (Foucault 1994:262); all the way to proclaiming, among others, Marx's insights in army, discipline and the body fascinating and claiming that he already, albeit covertly, uses Marx

> "I often quote concepts, texts and phrases from Marx, but without feeling obliged to add the authenticating label of a footnote with a laudatory phrase to accompany the quotation. As long as one does that, one is regarded as someone who knows and reveres Marx and will be suitably honoured in the so-called Marxist journals. But I quote Marx without saying so, without quotation marks, and because people are incapable of recognising Marx's texts, I am thought to be someone who doesn't quote Marx" (Foucault, 1980e: 54)

Foucault's relationship to Marx's work became more complex when in the early 1970's he started his inquiry into transformation of contemporary relations of power. Concepts such as discipline and biopolitics, whose introduction was at least partially an answer to what he saw as the theoretical deficiency of Marxist discourse at the same time

were an attempt to refine and deepen some of Marx's own insights. In the end these took a life of their own, migrating across academic and political boundaries into general culture. Regardless of biopolitics being the "least" Foucaldian of all concepts - displaying from its very start an anti-nominalist character and eluding attempts all attempts at clear definition – it will migrate to Italy, where a group of philosophers and theoreticians will use it to re-conceptualize and revitalize their own specific Marxist approach to "late capitalism". Though there is some work that predates it (Mardsen 1997; Poster 1985), it is the publication of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's ground-breaking *Empire* in 2001 that will shift the tide in the perception of the relation between Marx and Foucault work for the first time since early 1980's and open up a whole new theoretical field and language. Regardless of their (considerate) philosophical differences, Foucault's work will come to be almost thought of and used *in conjunction* with that of Marx, in the process this profoundly transforming the way we read and use both Marx and especially, Foucault.

This work proposes another meeting point for Marx and Foucault and a different *problematic.* I will argue that the predominant theoretical discourse which attempts to supplement Marx with Foucault, exemplified by the work of Hardt and Negri and certain currents of Italian post-autonomism, fails to conceptualize aforementioned movements of destruction in a whole variety of its forms. One of the fundamental tenets of the discourse of Italian Foucauldian-Marxism is the doubling of Foucault's productive power with Marx's teleological conception of capitalism's development, ending up, in the case of Hardt and Negri, in the terrain of real subsumption (Hardt and Negri 2001). In an openly oppositional move, I will propose a *non-productive* axis for Marx and Foucault; not that of production of surplus value, political rationality or the production subjectivity, but rather that of *subtraction*, *anti-teleology,* and *primitive accumulation*.

Regardless of the confrontational character of this intervention, I do not argue here for an either-or position. My approach is formed as a speculative inquiry (a heterodox reading, see below and Chapter 3) which is driven by the growing problem of *violence* and *destruction* of capital accumulation. This reading which rests upon and pushes forward Étienne Balibar's proposal for "disjunctive synthesis" of Marx with Foucault (Balibar 1992), posits the following question: to what extent can Marx and especially Foucault, *the* philosopher of the productiveness of power, contribute to the project of analysing capitalism not as a mode of production but as a "mode of destruction", a proposal put forward by

Lazzarato and Alliez (2018)? Can one speak of capitalism which has no future; or, is it necessary to speak of capitalism which makes future unthinkable/unliveable? Does this future entail, as it seems it always does, a promise of biopolitics as well as a transformation of capitalism? Or is there a more prosaic route of violence and destruction which are productive and transformative but far from being affirmative of Life and its politics? Against the background of highly financialised global capitalism, and the ecological crisis and looming climate catastrophe, it will be different movements of destruction - rather than productivity - by which Marx's and Foucault's theoretical legacy will be measured, and also through which the very emancipatory practice of politics will form.

1.4. *What's culture got to do with it?* Culture in the age of biopower

As analysis of culture either tends to universalize human practises as a totality in human inter-actions or focus on a specific thread of meanings among members of a certain group this thesis will not try to attempt to delineate an area of culture. This is not to void culture of content or research interest but to evoke strands of human activity as they are becoming more and more impeded in a culture. The focus follows, to an extent, Marshall Sahlins' claim that "(...) what had been confidently called "the economy" or "the political system" is being rethought as "the culture." (2017: IX) Rather than a separate sphere of existence, economic activity is therefore perceived as encompassed by cultural order. In the way Sahlins proposes that our systems of production and exchange and our relations of governing are being thought of as cultural; my thesis pushes this Sahlins' conclusions forward, claiming that our conceptions of productivity and governmentality should not be approached *as* culture but *are* culture: we can hardly unravel our economics from our cultures. As Sahlins (2017: XXI) elaborates "Production is an onto-logic of people, places, and things that brings to bear the entire cultural scheme on the most elementary material activities." The question which Sahlins fails to pose: what is the place of destruction in this "onto-logic"; can we think of destruction as a post-productive force? This production as "onto-logics" is my focus, or more precisely, I focus on its slowdown, its hiccups, and the possibility of its ultimate breakdown. Culture of destruction would lead us on a path of theology, and the only link this thesis has to this is a speculative interrogation into the political theology of the effects of Armageddon on our contemporary life. To be more precise, how does a field of political intervention into life, the power almost exclusively

focused on the care for life, bring us to the brink of "prompt and utter destruction", as the conclusion of the Potsdam conference warns the still surrendering Japanese government.[11]

My aim is not to identify an epoch with specific cultural practices in need of description and comparison, regardless of admirable projects such as Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. While one might think that this confession denotes a way for an author to side-track or outright negate the title, it is just at first glance. The culture in the title denotes a Foucauldian refocusing of the research question from what biopower is to *what it does* and what *effects it produces;* likewise, the age of biopower in the title denotes less a distinct, historical epoch as such, and more a series of interventions which now form a specific body of though with two poles, one Marx and the other Foucault, as harbingers of a productive power which infinitively creates, destroys and then creates anew, in an unending dialectics. This body of thought posits as its internal precondition the possibility of something new; be it technology, new cycles of accumulation or subjectivity, before us there is always a never-ending horizon of possibility to produce, a never-ending potentiality. But it seems that contemporary our culture has a problem with this never-ending production of the new. Putting aside the question of are we "living in the end times" (Žižek, 2010)[12] or not, at least for now, our focus is on multiple series of destructive events, not only locally but globally, which can be tied to capitalist accumulation and the ways in which they relate to perception of power and or force. It was David Graeber (2007) that pointed out how "We are at a moment, after all, when received definitions have been thrown into disarray. It is quite possible that we are heading for a revolutionary moment, or perhaps a series of them, but we no longer have any clear idea of what that might even mean."[13] Graeber's work has, among other authors such as Balibar (2016), Caffentzis (2013), Frederici (2004) and Mbembe (2019), to name but a prominent few, focused on violence;[14] what sets him apart from above mentioned, with whose work I will engage throughout, is the anthropological scepticism on ontology. Although he re-introduces it through the back door by proposing it as a structural condition, whereby those "with" and "those" without power are locked in an ever-perpetual one-sided relation of force. Graber

[11] *Potsdam Declaration*. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/event/Potsdam-Conference
[12] Slavoj Žižek (2010) *Living in the End Times*. London: Verso.
[13] David Graeber (2007) "Revolution in Reverse", *The Anarchist Library*. Available at: https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/david-graeber-revolution-in-reverse
[14] David Graeber (2004) *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology.* Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press

does not propose a criticism of a political teleology of violence as a *spiritus movens* of history, but a reading against the usually defined role of violence. I will focus on a much more insidious aspect of our "revolutionary present", the destruction of life itself.

As Clara Sachetti (2013) points out in the introduction to *The Economy as Cultural System,* capitalism is "a set of interrelated ideas and practices that are unproblematically passed along as a natural, universal way of making a living" (Sachetti 2013: 7). She continues "As a major factor in our everyday lives, however, we need to consider why capitalism has become so much a part of global consciousness, so much a part of the ordinary order of things" (Sachetti 2013:7). Surely a coincidence, but at the very end of the sentence Sachetti evokes one of Foucault's major works. Though it forms the pinnacle of the so-called archaeological period, for Foucault the previous Sachetti's proposition would surely need amending, if not outright refusal. Following on the materialist road from which Marx himself steered off from time to time, Foucault's work on subjectification points out to the possibility of not grasping these ideas by way of ideology, alienation, consciousness, or subjectivity, but rather through practices, strategies, and tactics. It is not that one excludes the other, but a Foucaldian materialist approach can only comprehend consciousness as an effect of relations of force coming from outside itself – or, as he puts it, "the soul is the prison of the body".

I approach culture primarily as a set of practices understood as forming capitalism which creates, distributes, or destroys the value of the subject and life in a way which eschews representations as a primary field of possible research. More precisely, in a rather materialist gesture it posits the sphere of representations firmly *into* a strategic field of forces and relations of power, with which they are interlocked and form a crucial part of. While the analytical value of interlocking Marx and Foucault in the study of culture - especially since culture it is not a phenomenon and concept rarely discussed by either author - is debatable, my aim is rather to re-think culture and situate it within the aspect of different *strategies* of capitalism and against capitalism as a global phenomenon. I approach it thus as it is understood by many who use capitalism to denote the times we live in[15]. What, in a sense Terry Eagleton warns in an interview when he states "(...) it's rare that negative aspects of

[15] Jule Nash (1981) "Ethnographic Aspects of the World Capitalist System", *Annual Review of Anthropology,* vol. 10, pp. 393-423. Available at: https://www.jstor.org/stable/2155722

culture are emphasized. Culture can be a more dangerous concept than we think."[16] But how can "the concept of culture" become "a more dangerous concept"? It seems that the only way is to radically *de-dematerialize* it once again, to reject the practice of subsuming it to a representational plane, a practice of which post-Marxist theoretical left is often itself guilty of. This thesis follows the trajectories of biopolitical (or late) capitalism as a cultural system which by now delimits the universal conditions for acting and thinking itself, and to focus on the ways in which Marx and/with Foucault (and possibly beyond) help us understand this incessant creation of the conditions of life and its own destruction, as well as the production of the subjectivity relinquished of its productivity. We can revise Jameson's famous quip that "It is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism"; it seems that we can witness the attempts to imagine capitalism by way of imagining the end of the world, as by now the actual possibility of destruction of conditions for the complex life on Earth brings to attention the destructive impetus of capitalist mode of production from its start.

1. 5. Neoliberalism and the changing strategies of accumulation

At the very time in which Foucault presciently and somewhat uncharacteristically took interest in a contemporary theme of neoliberalism, globalisation started to emerge as the answer to the deadlock of capital accumulation and "the profit squeeze" of the 1970s, consequently irreversibly changing the relations between capital and labour. But as more and more economists seem to argue, the creation of the world market had only opened the possibility for an even bigger crisis as it had decreased the ability to govern and to coordinate the management of economic downturns.[17] According to Marxist and Keynesian view, it had merely postponed the structural crisis of capitalism**,** whose many facets seem to drive these anxieties and their different expressions. The persistence of the discourse of the crisis is at least in part since while changes since circa 1970 in the way capitalism functions have been widely noted their precise nature and logics is still a matter of some debate, even

[16] David Ebony (2016). "What is Exactly Culture: Interview with Terry Eagleton by David Ebony". *Yale University Press Blog*. Available at: http://blog.yalebooks.com/2016/08/26/what-exactly-is-culture-interview- with-terry-eagleton-by-david-ebony/

[17] See for example: Graeme Wheeler "Thoughts on Globalization and the Global Financial Crisis", *The World Bank*, November 13, 2008, available at: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/speech/2008/11/13/ thoughts-on-globalization- and-the-global-financial-crisis. For analysis of an "unforecasted storm" (8) of 2008 financial crisis which aims to introduce a new model for understanding global financial system see: Adam Tooze (2018) *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crisis Changed the World*. London: Penguin Books.

amongst those which could be situated on the Marxist left (Arrighi, 1994; Harvey, 1989). This is the regime of accumulation which Ernest Mandel, one of the most influential Marxist economists of the 20th century, infamously described as *late capitalism*, "(...) an epoch in history of the development of the capitalist mode of production in which the contradiction between the growth of the forces of production and the survival of the capitalist relations of production assumes an explosive form" (Mandel, 1975: 562). Writing at the end of revolts in France and Italy in '68 and, respectively '69, and at the very start of transformation of capital, for Mandel this crisis was not only a crisis of "(...) capitalist conditions of appropriation, valorisation and accumulation, but also of commodity production, the capitalist division of labour, the capitalist structure of the enterprise, the bourgeois national state, and the subsumption of labour under capital as a whole" (Mandel 1973: 571).[18] While Mandel managed to presciently think through capital's possible adaptive strategies, he ends up dismissing them, arguing that they at best present a temporary solution to the crisis of accumulation. From state investment in research, since conditions for valorisation of capital have deteriorated to the point that it makes the investment in R&D unprofitable, thus enhancing the capacity to compete against other capitals; the "permanent inflation" of money and credit; the growing socialization of labour and knowledge production with the growing reach and intensity of private appropriation backed by the state and institutions and organization of global capital; the contradiction of privately produced foods and chemicals which are destructive of environment; the continuing growth of arms industry (what Mandel calls "forces of destruction"). Mandel had drastically undercut capitalism's ability to respond and adapt to this crisis, ending up paradoxically listing all the strategies that *did* manage to defend the accumulation of capital; technical and scientific revolutions *did* find their way into production process, regardless of its "immaturity" in regards to "relations of production" (570); "permanent inflation" of credit and money did only present an obstacle, but in a way they opened up a whole new venue for accumulation, in the end transforming

[18] Though capitalism was always followed or preceded by adjectives in order to denote its temporal or spatial specificity, Mandel's intervention opened up true floodgates. Moving beyond designating its specific structure and the constellation of different social forces that it makes up and in return that transform it (exemplified with Mandel's "late" capitalism) – from "surveillance capitalism" (Shoshana Zuboff), "platform capitalism" (Nick Srnicek), "(agro)extractive capitalism" etc. – all to adjectives which abstain from designating its logic and which aim to capture its effects - "gore" (Sayak Valencia), "carceral" (Jackie Wang) – to those which aim to abolish all those different adjectives by proclaiming "the real subsumption of society by capital": this capitalism is either "pure" or "absolute" (Etienne Balibar, "Critique in the 21st century: Political economy still, and religion again", *Radical Philosophy* 200, available at: https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/critique-in-the-21st-century).

the regime of capital accumulation *in total* (571); "forces of destruction", which Mandel rightly connects to war-like powers, were used not only in order for state to fund the technological research, which then trickled down into private commodity production, but was used to create the conditions for resource extraction, propping up the process of accumulation and making it ever more war-like. While understanding that "(...) partial rationality and overall irrationality of late capitalism (...) acquires such explosive potential that (...) it threatens in medium term not only the existing form of society, but human civilization altogether" (Mandel 1973: 575), what Mandel was unable to free himself from is the eschatological vision of the relation between men and History, which will - in one way or another - resolve this contradiction.[19] Mandel was unable to think in line with what Gopal Balakrishnan calls the "stationary state" (Balakrishnan 2009). Situated within historical sociology of Giovanni Arrighi, Balakrishnan points out the most probable way "the long 20th century" might end: while financialized neo-liberalism is usually seen as a strategy to prolong the geo-political domination of US, it's long prophesied end might not lead to a new successive hegemonic re-ordering of the world around SE Asia and China, but in a "permanent systemic chaos"

> "(...) a concert of powers to stave off financial meltdowns, but incapable of orchestrating a transition to a new phase of sustainable capitalist development (...) The end of history could be thought to begin when no project of global scope is left standing, and a new kind of 'wordlessness' and drift begins. In the absence of organized political projects to build new forms of autonomous life, the ongoing crisis will be stalked by ecological fatalities that will not be evaded by faltering growth" (Balakrishnan 2009).

What does this ongoing reordering without a stable order of global capitalism consist of? Building and further developing on interventions in contemporary Marxist thought and heterogenous economic discourse, it is necessary to characterize contemporary capitalism not by a singular mode of accumulation, but as a contingent formation of different, sometimes complimentary, sometimes contradictory, sometimes even heterodox forms of

[19] According to Foucault this intertwining of historicity and anthropology via labour and the concept of scarcity is the hallmark of the 19th century economics, of which Marxism is a fully-fledged member: "What is essential is that at the beginning of the nineteenth century a new arrangement of knowledge was constituted, which accommodated simultaneously the historicity of economics (in relation to the forms of production), the finitude of human existence (in relation to scarcity and labour), and the fulfilment of an end to History – whether in the form of an indefinite deceleration or in that of a radical reversal." (Foucault 1994: 285)

extraction of surplus value. Contemporary strategies of accumulation that we will observe deem necessary to take Foucault's comment about there being "no single but only multiple logics of capital" seriously, in all its consequences. This proposition necessitates rethinking the character and logic of relations of power upon which these different strategies are erected upon and which in return they support, transform and reproduce, as well as what *sort* of subject effects - if any - they can effect.

What seems to emerge as a theme amongst heterodox economists of the last decade, certainly under the influence of different strands of Marxist economics, are multiple forms of accumulation which can be traced to Marx' primitive accumulation. In a Foucauldian rendition of Marxist account of primitive accumulation, it represents a coagulation of different powers including direct relations of force and violence, which Marx opposed to "(...) accumulation (that) now proceeds as expanded reproduction (...) under conditions of 'peace, property and equality'" (Harvey 2003: 143-4). Regardless of its dialectical insight that the way of peaceful trade will not lead to shared prosperity, Marx nonetheless relegated primitive or "original" accumulation to a precondition of development of capital mode of production.[20] What Marx relegated to history with primitive accumulation are different forms of violence and extraction as well as the role of the state as its purveyor, leading to quite problematic analytical and political consequences. In the 10th chapter of *Capital I* ("Working day"), Marx claimed that violence and state played a far greater role in what he calls "embryonic state" of capital "(...) in its state of becoming, when it cannot yet use the sheer force of economic relations", i.e. before the time when "'free' worker, owing to the greater development of the capitalist mode of production (...) is compelled by social conditions to sell the whole of his active life, his very capacity for labour" (Marx 1990: 382). Underused by Marx, concept of primitive accumulation was rethought by Rosa Luxemburg (2003) who "localized" it in inter-state relations between capitalist and other, "non-capitalist modes of production"; it's specific methods in "colonial policy", "international credit system" and, most of all, "war":

[20] This "evacuation" of original violence did not mean that Marx will foreclose his interest in the violence of accumulation; it only meant that it will be conceptualized in a certain way. This move parallels that of Foucault, abandoning nominalism, he opts to relegate sovereign power to the prehistory of the modern productive power.

> "Force, fraud, oppression, looting are openly displayed without any attempt at concealment, and it requires an effort to discover within this tangle of political violence and contests of power the stern laws of the economic process." (Luxemburg 2003: 453)

More recent interpretation by David Harvey, who followed in Luxemburg's tracks, continued to divorce primitive accumulation from its inauguratory role to which Marx condemned it, transforming it into a strategy for accumulation that runs concurrent with "classical" capitalist production of surplus value (Harvey 2003; Luxembourg 2003). As a strategy today it is intimately tied with the global monopoly over legitimate interstate violence held by the US, as well as the fact that the US is the home to the most important nodes in the world's financial infrastructure pumping out money supply. According to Harvey, since the 1973 Oil Crisis, it's more and more becoming a prominent strategy of accumulation, in part as a compensation for "(...) the chronic problems of overaccumulation arising within expanded reproduction," and in other part as for opening new territories for capitalist development (Harvey 2003: 156). Regardless, Harvey, sees it as a backup plan in the case of the failure of "the official rhetoric" of

> "(...) complex of institutional arrangements that now mediate flows of capital around the world (...) geared to sustain and support expanded reproduction (growth), to ward off any trend towards crises, and to seriously address the problem of poverty reduction" (Harvey 2003: 135-6)

By divorcing Luxemburg's interests in the combination of finance, war-making capabilities and extraction of natural resources, his concept of "accumulation by dispossession" opened up a whole new field for research.[21] from financial capitalism (Lapavitsas 2013) to the so-called "extraction economy" or "extraction capitalism", latest among works that of Martin Arboleda which focuses on the mining industry and what he calls transnational "infrastructure of extraction", the basis on which the fourth technological revolution of biotechnology and digital industries is founded upon (Arboleda 2020). Italian

[21] Harvey, David (2004) "The 'new' imperialism: accumulation by dispossession," *Socialist Register* 40: 63-87; Harvey, David (2003). *The New Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.

journalist Stefano Liberti chronicles "land grabbing", a form of food and crop production that rests upon privatised appropriation of arable land in the southern hemisphere (Stefano 2013). Saskia Sassen's work goes perhaps furthest and attempts to further push the concept of primitive accumulation (Sassen 2013). Sassen attempts to analyse the strategies of accumulation in what she calls "extreme zones for economic operations" (Sassen 2013) as the driving force behind what Etienne Balibar calls "ultra-objective violence" (Balibar, 2016) and the ways in which people and communities are affected by it: by being removed from their social and economic networks and societal environments, displaced due to wars and natural disasters and destruction of natural habitats or because of the simple lack of job opportunities in a given geographical area (Sassen 2013). Sassen goes even a step further and claims that what Balibar will call "pure capitalism"[22] maintains its rate of profit accumulation not only by expulsion of people and communities, but also expulsion of economic structure - jobs, infrastructure etc - and nature itself – animals, resources, water, land etc. We are back to *Communist Manifesto* and reminded of the underside of the "unimaginable productive forces" brought about by capital, the power to reorder and re-organize both communities and nature in an unimaginable scale. The end-result of this process, at its most extreme, means "(...) immiseration and seclusion of growing numbers of people who cease being of value as workers and consumers" (Sassen 2013:10), production of what Zygmunt Bauman will call "human waste" (Bauman 2003).

Within this profound transformation of the dialectic of production and destruction we stumble upon one "unwilling" dialectician, situated awkwardly within the discourse and logic of power he devoted his criticism to. Of what use can Foucault, a professed nominalist wary of abstractions, one whose whole philosophical edifice was built on the refusal to equate power with violence be today?

1.6. On the discourse of crisis and its failings

While Foucault was proposing his new and never fully elaborated concept of "productive power" – a move that abandons "methodological nominalism", already at play in his shift from analysis of discipline to the proclamation of "disciplinary society" (Balibar

[22] Balibar, Etienne (2016) "Critique in the 21st Century: Political economy still, and religion again*", Radical Philosophy*, 200. Available at: https://www.radicalphilosophy.com/article/critique-in-the-21st-century

1992) - which provided a non-nominalist background to his work and political activity in the late 70ies, a growing feeling of unease and dread started to emerge in the West following the 1973 Oil Crisis, geopolitical turmoil and the unsatisfying end to the promising political turmoil of late 60s, not to mention the Cold Wars' MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction).[23] We can almost randomly choose between different and distinct phenomena, from pop culture to academia, all pointing to a return of the Malthusian nightmare. On one side, a group of statistics and model driven scholars of complex systems published their *The Limits to Growth* (1972), arguing that almost exponential population growth and lack of changes in resource consumption worldwide would lead to the "rather sudden decline in world population and industrial output".[24] On the other side, a post-apocalyptic-all-in-leather-on-a-motorbike- Malthus in *Mad Max,* a global indie blockbuster premiering in 1979, merely a week after Foucault had finished with lectures that would later be published under the title *The Birth of Biopolitics*. In *Mad Max,* Club of Rome's long-term prognosis for the humanity in the 21st century took the form of a far more immediate warning. The movie is set in post-apocalyptic Australia with society collapsing in an outright Hobbesian "condition of mere nature" (Hobbes 2017) by the year 1983, viewers given only a vague background of nuclear war over natural resources such as oil.[25] It seemed that while Foucault correctly defined *the* problematic of the 21st century – entanglement of power and life – his proposition of productiveness of power was at odds with the popular imaginary that no longer seemed to believe in the dialectical play between the productive capacities of capitalist mode of production to overcome the barriers it itself produces in order to expand infinitely.

Regardless of philosophical or political allegiance, regardless of academic field or religious affiliation, in the last 50 years many turned to the concept of crisis in order to describe our contemporary predicament. But, as Giorgio Agamben presciently points out, the concept of crisis

> "(...) has two semantic roots: the medical one, referring to the course of an illness, and the theological one of the Last Judgement (...) Crisis in ancient medicine meant a judgement, when the doctor noted at the decisive moment whether the sick person

[23] https://www.britannica.com/topic/mutual-assured-destruction

[24] *The Limits to growth; a report for the Club of Rome's project on the predicament of mankind.* Available at: https://archive.org/details/limitstogrowthr00mead

[25] Nafeez Ahmed. "MIT Predicted in 1972 That Society Will Collapse This Century. New Research Shows We're on Schedule", *Vice*, July 14 2021. Available at: https://www.vice.com/en/article/z3xw3x/new-research-vindicates-1972-mit-prediction-that-society-will-collapse-soon?

would survive or die (...) It is exactly the same with the theological sense; the Last Judgement was inseparable from the end of time" (Agamben, 2013).

While *krisis* has "for a long time (been) a part of normality in any segment of social life", Agamben argues that the present understanding refers to "(...) an enduring state", which divorces judgement "(...) from the idea of resolution", transforming the decision into an "(...) endless process (...) that never concludes" (Agamben 2013). The curious temporality of crisis, the moment of decision which never comes, deprives the future of its perspective and extends uncertainty *ad infinitum* into this very future; or perhaps it is *vice versa*, the reduction of future "to probability and predictability" (Berardi, 2019), the hallmark of the discourse of securitization that makes it impossible to act. Regardless of the causes, this specific temporality is interwoven and provides a background of all contemporary phenomena of *impotence* - a lack of capability to act - from governmental refusal to meet economic problems head on, be it on problem of debt (private, student, corporate etc.), inability of the global community to act on the existential issue of climate warming, or the recent global epidemics of chronic procrastination, which is harming both the health population and its productivity.[26]

But this for sure is not enough to properly understand our predicament. For once, as Foucault reminds us in *The Order of Things*, crisis is not only a defining characteristic of a Marxist discourse; capitalism's eschatology was defined by crisis and catastrophe from its very beginnings. Even when many of the countervailing forces to capital's circulation were either weak or entirely non-existent, political economy of David Ricardo and Robert Malthus imbued the discourse of capitalist economy with the fantasy of an almost inevitable prospect of its catastrophic failure. According to Foucault, Ricardo's and Malthus' prognosis was – unlike that of Marx - fundamentally pessimistic to say the least, not only on account of the future of capitalism but humanity altogether which in their work become

[26] By some accounts, the percentage of people with problems of procrastination rose from 8 to 25 percent in the last 40 years. See: "Psychology of Procrastination: Why People Put Off Important Tasks Until the Last Minute. Five questions for Joseph Ferrari, PhD." *American Psychological Association*, 2010. Available at: https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2010/04/procrastination; Association for Psychological Science (2015, May 5). "Better Get to Work: Procrastination May Harm Heart Health". Available at: https://www.psychologicalscience.org/news/minds-business/better-get-to-work-procrastination-may-harm-heart-health.html

intertwined to the point of indiscernibility. Whether this inaugural pessimism of bourgeoisie economics – which Frederic Jameson will mistake for an altogether contemporary symptom - makes contemporary doomsday prophets on the historical side of the capital, whether willingly or not, will be left upon the reader to decide. What is undeniable is that these different fantasies of the end had once more taken a firm grip on the cultural production of the last couple of decades, but for an altogether different sets of reasons than for their predecessors.

1.7. A short overview of the Foucauldian problematic of power over life

A shift towards the politics of securitization, identified in the last couple of decades, was already prophesized by Foucault in the 1970's (see his 1977-78 lectures *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault 2007). But this shift towards question of security, risk and chance, which by now seem to overtake contemporay politics and society is prejudicated on a more fundamental shift in the operation of power (though Foucault would definitively refuse this image of different tiers of operation of power) - the emergance of a new imperative to protect life which trumps anything else, a transformation for which Foucault would famously propose the term biopolitics (Foucault 1978, Foucault 2008).

Foucault's takeover of the concept from the early 20th century North European theoreticians of *Staatsbiologie,* which by the end of WWII had fallen well into obscurity, served primarily as an act of calling out, an act of provocation and open hostility towards the political philosophy due to its continuous use and defence of the juridical concept of power well beyond its expiration date. What was needed, Foucault proposed, was an elimination of the "Hobbesian hypothesis" which dislocated a specific historical framework for political analysis of power relations into a perennial political structure. Foucault claimed that the radically different historical context, defined by the rise in medical and biological sciences, requires "(…) a new technology of power (...) [that] exists at a different level, on a different scale, and [that] has a different bearing area, and makes use of very different instruments" (Foucault, 2003: 242). He will soon formulate this clearly

> "For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question." (Foucault 1978: 143)

But even as Foucault himself was delivering lectures at the College de France in the late 1970s, a series which will posthumously be published under the deceptive title *The Birth of Biopolitics,* another shift was underway, one that will redefine the context for the operation of power he was describing at that very same time. At this moment biopolitics started to slowly drift outside Foucault's scope of interest, to be substituted by another topic closely connected to the preservation of life. It is definitively up to discussion whether Foucault delivered on the promise when he stated that "(...) only when we know what this governmental regime called liberalism was, will we be able to grasp what biopolitics is." (Foucault 2008: 22). Especially since this project itself was abandoned or transformed into something else – the problem of governmentality – and since more than four decades separates us from these lectures and the world we inhabit today as both juridical subjects and living, breathing beings is fundamentally different. These lectures seem to mark the beginning of the historical sequence whose political logic Foucault attempted to grasp, and at whose end we might be approaching today - or not, as the jury seems still to be out on the death of neoliberalism (Dardot and Laval 2019; Slobodian and Plehwe, 2019; Brown 2019). While Foucault attempted to propose the crucial contours of its *problematization* he does not deserve to be blamed for our inability, after more than 40 years, to designate whether neoliberalism is over - and therefore, what it really was. But regardless, Foucault managed to detect one crucial aspect of this new form of power, and that is its relationship to life. What Foucault made highlight this ancient relationship crucial for contemporary power, is that it fundamentally defined *both* life *and* power, something which, only with hindsight, we can now ascertain to be irreversible. In the last couple of decades with the advent of different technology this intertwining had become so all-pervading and mundane to the point that it lost its unfamiliarity. We have come a long ways from Foucault's study of demographics and "(…) ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population, and so on" (Foucault 2003: 243), managing of the public hygiene through vaccination, medicine and planning of urban housing, to the contemporary wars, different military actions and so-called "humanitarian interventions" taken under the imperative of protection of life and

human rights (Brown, 2004), reinvigoration of the struggles for reproductive rights, all through to the self-management and optimization of our own bodies through diet plans, calorie calculators and smart watches that track our bio-data and energy expenditure (Ajana 2017; Hepworth 2019). This obviously opens the question: what is the precise nature of this entanglement of power and life? Can we merely reduce it, as Foucault seems sometimes to do, to a medical overtake of life and its reduction to different biological functions, in order to administer, control and prolong them by means of different political and medical technologies? Or is there something more to this grip, something which Foucault himself understood but was unable to conceptualize, what Roberto Esposito will call the "black box of biopolitics" (Esposito, 2013b)? The almost infinite proliferation of different uses of biopolitics today can be traced at least partially due to the way the concept was introduced, although there is a fundamental ability of both life and power to resist linguistical fixation as philosophical concepts. This internal antinomy of Foucault's use of biopower cuts across the discourse of bio-political studies, regardless of our own definition or use of the concept. The idea of power entering a relationship with life as

> "(...) a set of mechanisms through which the basic biological features of the human species become the object of political strategy, or (...) how (…) modern Western societies took on board the fundamental biological fact that human beings are a species" (Foucault, 2007:1)

This definition enters antinomy with the idea of power as an "affirmative", "productive" force. As we will see, Foucault never managed to resolve this antinomy, and seems to shift from one position to another, sometimes seemingly incognisant of its operation in his own work. This "productive" concept of power that "fosters life" and "let's die" is a form of power that exerts a positive influence on life, "(…) that endeavours to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations" (Foucault 1978: 137). By introducing this antinomy between biopolitics as a "mechanism" and a "strategy" and biopolitics as a "productive", "affirmative force", between nominalist and historical approach to study of biopolitics and the proclamation of the productive character of power, Foucault irreversibly opened the concept of biopolitics towards a plethora of semantic and discursive contexts which will probably never

completely exhaust its different and conflictual meanings. Even though Foucault will soon abandon biopolitics - as if acknowledging his teacher Louis Althusser's proposition according to which philosophical problems are never worked through but merely abandoned to be exchanged for another set of problems (Althusser 2017) - alongside with a whole interest into the thematic of relations of power, in the end it will prove to be one of his most influential philosophical interventions. Together with Foucault's move from repression to productivity, biopolitics forms a sort of generalized theory of Power - theory which he both rejected and explicitly refused to propose - a cornerstone of contemporary Foucauldian legacy.[27]

But what defines the contemporary context in which this Foucauldian legacy operates, what social, economic and, it needs to be added, ecological forces? While these had mutated in ways Foucault wasn't able to foresee, in one of his first public talks on biopolitics he unhesitatingly tied it to the historical emergence and functioning of capitalist economy. In one of five lectures delivered in Rio de Janeiro in May 1973 Foucault drew a direct connection between capitalism and power over life

> "(…) for capitalist society it is the biopolitical that is important before everything else; the biological, the somatic, the corporeal. The body is a biopolitical reality; medicine is a biopolitical strategy" (Foucault: in Esposito 2013a: 364).

I will argue that while his "problematic" of biopolitics more than holds up, many of its facets remain yet to be developed and reconceptualized. As Patrice Manglier correctly points out, the concept of the "problematic", which Foucault inherits from Gaston Bachelard and develops further has, at the same time, both "ontological" and "constructive" dimensions

> "This hints towards a pragmatic ontology for which *to be* does not mean *to be finished*, but on the contrary to be *in the making*. That problems are in fact vectors of structuration, while structures are always in the making, are just some of the wider

[27] A staple of Foucault's approach or as Ewald (2016) quotes from Foucault's journals from the time of writing BOP "...Foucault writes about the fight against "*les bons sentiments théoriques*…" "François Ewald on Foucault & Neoliberalism", available at: http://blogs.law.columbia.edu/foucault1313/2016/01/24/ewaldneoliberalism/

> implications of Bachelard's concept of 'problematic', which are only today beginning to receive their full meaning." (Manglier 2012)

Rather than criticize Foucault for his failures, the shifting relations of forces that make up conjuncture necessitates an almost constant re-conceptualization of Foucaldian tools to remake them for a new use, for a new problem. One of those tools that needs reconceptualization is that of "affirmative power" (Esposito 2013a) or what Foucault, randomly slipping out of his nominalist language, calls "productive power". This new form of power, which Foucault formed and developed in opposition to "juridical", or "sovereign" concept of power (manifested in his concept of "repressive hypothesis", Foucault 1980), is both *determined* by the economic utility of human beings as at the same time, it aims to make them even more productive. As Foucault argues, it opens a completely new problematic, a new rationality of power

> "It is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility. Such a power has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendour; it does not have to draw the line that separates the enemy of the sovereign from his loyal subjects. (Foucault, 1980: 144)

As I will show in the following chapter even those who think and work within a loosely defined Foucauldian field and use this perspective on power, cannot do this without inserting one or more of the asterisks to their use of Foucault's concepts; there is yet to be written an overview of biopolitical studies made up only of these exclusions and exceptions. While Foucault spoke about the new power as not only being a power "over" life, over biological processes and population but as one which aims to "foster life", exerting a positive influence over life, administering it, optimizing it, multiplying it with the aim to distribute "the living in the domain of utility", another premonition was concurrently forming, with another set of questions and problems, of which Foucault was either aware of and had to ignore, or that he started to answer in, for himself, an unsatisfying way.

1.8. Biopolitics between Foucault and Marx

Regardless of philosophical and analytical similarities between Foucault's and Marx's work, what made their philosophical meeting almost inevitable - for better or worse - was the fallout of the 68' and the counter-revolution that resulted in the transformation of global capitalism from the 1970's. The failure of Left politics of the 60'ies led revolutionary left to a political and a philosophical dead-end, the way out which was definitely not by backtracking through the well-travelled road of Marxism alone. It is not by accident that the most prominent philosophers that opened the dialogue between Foucault and Marx were the generation that was either actively involved and philosophically subjectivised by the experience of the 68' and its fallout – Jacques Bidet, Pierre Macherey, Antonio Negri, Paolo Virno. But the philosophical sequence that followed was not without its own profound aporias which, under the pressure of contemporary conjuncture, weigh even more heavily than those of the past. The challenge is far greater this time.

According to one of earliest Marxist interpreters of Foucault's work, Dominique Lecourt, in the late 1960's there was almost a necessity, a *fait accompli*, according to which Foucault was to meet historical materialism. According to Lecourt (1973), Foucault's work was just one among many celestial bodies that, while at that precise moment distant from the centre, was being pulled in by the gravitational pull of materialist epistemology: and the solar-like body doing the pulling was, of course, that of historical materialism. Due to different reasons this encounter was not to happen, at least in the way Lecourt envisaged it. Foucault will soon abandon terrain of epistemology in favour of that of power, primarily – but not exclusively – *power over life*. Contrary to Foucault's own interpretations and criticism of Marx's own work – criticism which, though both ambivalent and somewhat misaddressed, will prove to be fundamental in formulating his own problematics - this encounter will become possible at this moment since the concept of productive power Foucault intended to introduce had already operated in Marx's own work. In opposition to the question of knowledge, the question and problematic of life presents itself as more direct encounter, implying a certain demand, a certain *emergency*. While Foucault's work – especially that undertaken in the late 1960s until the mid to late 1970s, a period ending with *The History of Sexuality: The Will to Knowledge* (1976) and *The Birth of Biopolitics* (1978-1979) - never referred and engaged explicitly with Marx's concepts, in contrast to Foucault's previous decade of work, it takes as its object the "architecture" of power which enabled

this transformation to take place, transformation whom Marx primarily attempted to grasp as that of the mode of accumulation. According to Foucault, starting in the 19th century, it was conditioned on and enabled by an emergence of a new apparatus of power, consisting of a whole new field of knowledge (statistics, demography, biology etc.), institutions that enabled that knowledge and relations conceptualised together as biopower (Foucault, 1978; Foucault 1980b). For Foucault the proposition of biopolitics is intimately and irrevocably tied to the faith of capitalism, arguing that it was not until "(...) the second half of the 19th century, when the problem of the body, health, and the level of productive force of individuals was raised" (137) with the growing necessity of enhancing the individual and collective economic utility of working bodies.

Among other things that distinguishes Foucauldian analysis from Marxist one is, at least according to Balibar, most prominently his insistence on nominalism (Balibar 1993). The apparatus of power that followed capitalism was "(…) invented and organised from the starting points of local conditions and particular needs", taking shape in a "piecemeal fashion, prior to any class strategy" (Foucault 1980: 159). But Foucault had started to be more often used in a manner alien to his predominantly nominalist philosophical undertaking. In that process he became what he publicly denounced - claiming that "there is no such thing as power (as) a totalising phenomenon in (my) work" - a "philosopher of power". It seemed that his nominalism - unlike his preoccupations with productive power, subjectivation and population - was not in line with the times which themselves seemed progressively more *totalising*: what the defeated left needed were concepts which rose to the occasion of the radical character of times. Enter biopolitics; a conceptual innovation which seems peculiarly of a non- and even anti-Foucauldian nature. The publication of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* in 2001 had irreversibly changed the trajectory of biopower in the field of philosophical and political practice. By drawing Foucault into Marxist philosophy and its specific use in the analysis of contemporary capitalism and accumulation it expanded its use well beyond Foucault's initial attempts: the floodgates had opened. These facts on the ground thus necessitate a paradoxical move of *de-conceptualisation* of biopolitics, in order to introduce much needed philosophical and semantic clarity. Following the cumulative effect of its predominant use, I will approach biopolitics not as a concept but as a *field* of struggle for different conceptual clarification, field that merely indicates that power takes hold over life in a myriad of different forms.

While this conclusion might seem at the same time both provocative and a somewhat underwhelming - if theoretical intervention can be truly thought of as "provocative" - it seems that one can arrive to it by simply following Roberto Esposito's insight that object of biopolitics "drags" sovereignty and law not only outside their language but apparatuses – i.e., philosophical as well

> "Biopolitics has to do with that complex of mediations, oppositions, and dialectical operations that in an extended phase made possible the modern political order, at least according to current interpretation. With respect to these and the questions and problems to which they correspond relative to the definition of power, to the measure of its exercise and to the delineation of its limits, it's indisputable that a general shift of field, logic, and the object of politics has taken place." (Esposito 2013a: 351-352)

If we accept Esposito's conclusions, then the question about Marx's and Foucault's "meeting" shouldn't be "why here?" This opens other - by no means easier – questions. One of more obvious is what is the effect of one of Foucault's more underdeveloped concepts staging this interlocution? As we already ascertained, as well as Esposito himself, Foucault's use of the biopolitics is wrought with different problems

> "What remains clear is its negative value, what it is not or the horizon of sense that marks its closing (...) How are we to comprehend a political government of life? In what sense does life govern politics or in what sense does politics govern life? Does it concern a governing of or over life? (…) Compressed (and at the same time destabilized) by competing readings and subject to continuous rotations of meaning around its own axis, the concept of biopolitics risks losing its identity and becoming an enigma" (Esposito 2013a: 352).

1.9. Foucault and Marx, one more time? An outline of an argument for heterodox use

Having in mind these aporias we shouldn't be surprised that Foucauldian language of biopower seems at once so close and so distant with regards to our present situation

defined by the coming climate breakdown, proliferations of different types of wars and conflicts, the expropriation of natural resources such as land, water and minerals; migrations initiated by wars and other armed conflicts of low and high intensity, and the sovereigntist response these movements elicit globally, especially in the Europe and Global North. But we will argue that the problem with biopower and its conceptual extension to "cover up" all these and other phenomena, is based on a rather narrow interpretation of Foucault's work. During the 1970's Foucault experimented with and tried to think through different concepts of power - be it sovereignty or power as war - which he will ultimately abandon and exchange with governmentality, before moving away from the question of power altogether. It is to this period and all these different Foucault's projects and concepts that that I will return to in the following chapters.

The trajectory of the capital accumulation and its ability to affect the conditions of life of different populations in different ways – summarised by the famous opposition between "fostering" and "disallowing" life – is the object of this study. Like others I will attempt to show that in the light of current transformations of the relation between economy and the domain of life, Marx's work was destined to cross paths with Foucault as one of the most 'unwilling' Marxist ever to be mobilized in his ranks. Regardless of their differences, reasons for this were both obvious and numerous. Foucault and Marx were both essentially philosophers of the new form of power that emerged with the capitalist mode of production, yet they focused on their own set of questions. At once connected and still different; according to Balibar (1992) this focus on different aspects of power resulted in two different concepts of materialism. This novelty of "capitalist power" (Foucault) was predominantly tied to its application, operation and embeddedness in technology and science. Both Marx and Foucault viewed this not as a result of a reified technological and scientific evolution, but as a process deeply embedded in the power relations of industrial capitalism. The new power carried a complex relationship towards the old hierarchies and dominations, in some situations subverting them and at other times literally being erected upon them – notice, for example, how Foucault's disciplinary institutions usually occupied former institutions of the *ancien* regime.

Where this work will diverge from now a pretty significant philosophical tradition that emerged from different ways in which the works of Marx and Foucault were made to work together – either by trying to "rethink Marx through Foucault" (Macherey, 2015), vice

versa, or simply by combining the two as in a kind of a philosophical 'puzzle' (everything from Jacques Bidet's "theory of structuration" (2016) to Hardt and Negri's supplanting of Marx's analysis of capitalism with a theory of subjectivity (Hardt and Negri 2000; Negri 2017) – is in attempt to rethink the grounds on which these philosophical traditions meet. Pushing forward critical interventions by the likes of Silvia Federici (2004), George Caffentzis (2013), Mike Hill and Warren Montag (2015), Eric Alliez and Maurizio Lazzarato (2018) and others, I will argue that the meeting between Marx and Foucault must take place in the long shadow cast by the industrial capitalism of the 20th century.[28] While this may not seem too controversial a statement - as writings on financial capitalism and different types of subjection and subjectification it introduces had been a part of Marxist theory for some time (among other, see the work of Christian Marazzi (2009) and Maurizio Lazzarato (2013)) - the following proposition might. Not only will this necessitate leaving behind the usual vista we've come to expect from Marx and Foucault meeting, one made up of the army of the industrial workers, be they social or not, employed or unemployed, the background of barracks and factories, concepts of discipline, production of surplus power and exploitation etc., but more importantly, the whole *ontology* of power erected upon the idea of ultimately progressive character of capital's dynamic nature, a view held somewhat unsurprisingly by Marx and - as I will argue - more surprisingly by Foucault. In other words, the encounter that we will stage will thus not be centred around the productiveness of power and the Marxian corollary - the revolutionary character of capital accumulation (exemplified by Marx's famous quip that "all that is solid melts into the air") - and it will necessitate critical re-reading of the work done in this tradition, most prominently by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, 2001, Richard Marsden, 1999, Mark Poster, 1985, Pierre Macherey, 2015, Jacques Bidet, 2016. In the light of contemporary transformations that capitalist mode of production, Marx's and Foucault's discourse can retain their critical impetus only by *deviating* from the classical interpretations of their work coagulated in the discourse of "Foucauldian-Marxism" (Balibar 1992), whose basic tenants were put in place by Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000) and the school of cognitive capitalism (Boutang 2012). Rather than supplementing Marx's theory of capital accumulation with Foucault's theory of subjection

[28] The work of Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams on deindustrialization and automation of manufacturing work is essential. See: Srnicek, Nick and Alex Williams (2015). *Inventing the future: Postcapitalism and a world without work*. London: Verso.

– an explicit part of Negri's theoretical programme (Negri 2017) – the current re-ordering of the world in the making undertaken by capital necessitates a heterodox reading of Marx *with, through* and *against* Foucault. This approach necessitates rejecting an implicit but all-too strong romantic impulse that a synchronous and supplementary reading of Marx and Foucault is both a theoretical possibility and a political necessity.

Instead, I will propose three minimalist but *necessary* conditions for a new reading and a new use which do not attempt to coagulate into a single discourse. This reading consciously affirms margins of Marx's and Foucault's work and is therefore *marginal, especially* in relation to their established oeuvres. Its objects are marginal texts or margins of the (great) texts; it reads between the lines and continues long after full stops, beyond the point where both authors stop or abandon the enunciation of their thought; it aims to develop less that what is present and more that what is potential. It's construction and use can be only speculative since this is the requirement of our present situation. Its speculative - and contrarian - character comes also from the fact that it aims to conceptually grasp the non-productiveness and destructiveness of capital accumulation, from within a discourse which aims precisely at the opposite. As these propositions are formulated against the background of a now well-established reading of Marx with Foucault, they present interventions into discourse and will be formulated as affirmations against *specific* aspects of this discourse: *affirmation of contingency in place of eschatology, the shift of the focus on accumulation rather than production* and *affirmation of multiplicity of powers in place of Power.*

1. *The affirmation of contingency* in place of eschatology at once might seem both too banal and obvious but misguided as well; leaving Marx aside, as his relation to teleology is far more complex, hasn't Foucault's work as a whole been aimed *against* teleology in its many different forms? Following Louis Althusser and his materialism of the encounter (Althusser 2006), this proposal affirms not only the contingent nature of capitalism - its birth and also its subsequent historical transformations - but the contingency it affirms also refers to the practice of both reading and using Marx and Foucault which would refuse interpretation of their work as possessing and being driven by a closed-off, interior "teleological" motor. While obviously applicable to Marx, this surprisingly holds also for different interpretations of Foucault's work, usually driven, as Jacques Ranciere notes, by

> "(...) the hope to ascertain in Foucault's trajectory a *principle of finality* that would assure the coherence of the whole (...) They want to see in him a confirmation of the idea of the philosopher who *synthesises knowledge* and teaches us the rules of action" (Ranciere 2013: 387; emphasis added)

Rather than seeing Foucault's work as a "synthesis", or driven by a certain telotic principle, we should approach it as a work in progress, reacting to certain questions and problems as they spring up. Both Marx and Foucault's work is contingent and conjunctural, and therefore so should be their use.

2. Affirmation of accumulation in place of production goes hand in hand with the refusal of "a single logic of capital" (Foucault). Ironically, as we will see, Foucault himself was unable to follow through with the consequences of this refusal. Nonetheless, what follows from this proposition of multiplicity of powers are multiple logics of accumulation, something which certain strands of Marxist thought attempted to reassert by historicizing Marx capital and its inherent singular logic. This necessitates a shift from mode of production to that of mode of accumulation. In accordance with Marx's own introduction of unlimitedness into the sphere of production, capitalism is driven by the need to accumulate, not produce, and should be approached as such. This would open up to thought different contemporary phenomena (for example, climate change), different movements, discourses and strategies (of extractive economy), be they non-productive, anti-productive or outright destructive. Following the work of different authors, among others most prominently the joint work of Alliez and Lazzarato (2016), the transformation of capitalism that leads to ecological destruction, climate change and the structural roles taken on by the globalization of war and vast forms of extractive practices, I will attempt a philosophical intervention into capitalism as a "mode of destruction" (Lazzarato and Alliez 2018).

3. Refusal of "Power" and its "Ontology" and the affirmation of *multiplicity of powers*, Foucault's own proposition which - not unlike that of refusal of single logic of accumulation - he was unable to completely commit to, as concepts of "disciplinary society" or "society of control" remind us. Nonetheless, circumventing the usual interpretations of Foucault's work as being primarily focused on the concept of productive power, I will try to reaffirm

his proclamation of different modalities of power operational in *Capital* and turn to his own "minor" concepts of power – power as war as well as sovereignty and its power of subtraction – in order to grasp different regimes of extraction and capital accumulation. Redefined in this way, our vocabulary will move on the edges of the discourse defined by the concepts of discipline and governmentality, general intellect and real subsumption. While these are still potent, the discursive logic behind them harbours teleological grasp aiming to overtake our understanding of capital's multiple logics. They also exclude a different meeting place for Marx and Foucault, this one on the grounds of contingency, anti-eschatology, counterproductive power and subtraction. This enables us, among other things, to reassess the concept of primitive accumulation as something else than merely a transitory historical movement towards capitalist mode of production. If we take teleological role of primitive accumulation out of the equation, we are left *without* the productive aspect of either capital relations or relations of power; is power of subtraction (Foucault) (of time, work, minerals, gas, resources) in the long run revolutionary by itself, or only if it leads, in the Marxist schema, to the accumulation on the expanded scale further pushing the class conflict?

At this point one might quite reasonably object on several accounts. First, who in his right mind would question the revolutionary character of capital accumulation pushing forward the technological revolution we witness daily, which in return perpetually transforms social relations? With what end? What is precisely the usefulness of turning to Marx and Foucault if, at the same time, we reject or question that what is usually deemed the most "productive" aspects of their discourse, especially since it is fundamental to their politics as well - the way by which their thought assumes its "critical" form? In another words, if we identify the revolutionary character of accumulation of capital as the ontological openness of contemporary global political and economic relations or if we refuse to heed Foucault's warning and opt to return to the repressive hypothesis of power (Foucault 1978), are we not burning the bridges and enclosing ourselves in contemporary relations of "capitalist power" (Foucault)? If propositions of revolutionary character of capitalist accumulation – itself an ontological and eschatological precondition of almost all strands of Marxist and socialist politics for now nearly two centuries - or productive character of power – relations of power ultimately defined by freedom and therefore open to change – are

questioned, are we not closing, even if only in thought, openings for different forms of subjectivation and different type of politics?

1.10. An overview of chapters

The first chapter entitled "From Concept to Field: A short overview of biopolitics" gives a highly specific overview of biopolitics not as a concept, but as a certain problematic, in Foucauldian sense. In this way, one retains its contradictions and agonisms (what Roberto Esposito (2013a) will call "the black box of biopolitics"), while refraining from conceptual lack of clarity which is often attributed to it. Within this field I will designate two distinct streams of thought, which conceptualize biopolitics in a rather different way, both lacking some of its moments; either its relation to capitalism as a mode of production, or its destructive capacities, which were all present in original Foucault's proposition, in all its contradictions.

Second chapter "Marx's power, Foucault's capital: On productivist ontology" aims to rethink Foucault with, through and against Marx. In this chapter I attempt a trajectory of Foucault's concepts of productive power - biopower and discipline - which leads to his interest in the formation of labour power and primitive accumulation. While mostly in interviews and given talks Foucault often highlighted this connection, it was usually repressed in his written work, alongside with his theoretical debt to Marx which on certain occasions he underscored. At the very end of the chapter I propose an alternative to the predominant readings of Foucault with Marx which I call *heterodox,* built around three minimum requirements: the idea of contingency, multiplicity of regimes of accumulation and multiplicity of modes of power. This reading enables us to use Marx with Foucault in a way which avoids the mistakes and dead ends of previous readings which lead to entrapment of what I propose to call *productivist ontology*.

The last chapter "Towards a political economy of destruction" follows upon the previous one as it attempts to put this heterodox reading to use in contemporary cultural, political and economic context defined by "stationary state" (Balakrishnan 2009), low growth economies and the encroaching climate crisis. By focusing on different contemporary phenomena of destruction - destruction of nature, forms of life, commons,

and the milieu of life – I attempt to put to use Foucault's and Marx's underutilized or misunderstood concepts – such as primitive accumulation and power of subtraction. In the end I propose an outline of post productive subjectivity as a subjective form of post-industrial, globalized capitalism, through different logics of this form in society and culture.

2

From a Concept to a Field: A strategic overview of biopolitics

2. 1. *Hysteron proteron*, or how Marx and Engels (almost) invented the concept of biopower

> "(…) the first fact to be established for the study of history is the corporeal organisation of human beings and their consequent relation to the rest of nature"
> Marx and Engels 1978: 149.[29]

It is often noticed how *The Communist Manifesto*, the work of capital's most dangerous enemies, starts off in a surprisingly less adversarial tone than readers might expect of a work of such notoriety. After the initial inaugural salvo of combative announcement of communism and after proclaiming the historical role of class struggle, Marx and Engels take a left turn focusing on the historical accomplishments of the enemy of the working class - the bourgeoisie. What becomes obvious quite soon is that *Manifesto* is less a book about the worker's movement, and primarily a theoretical and political

[29] J. Fracchia rightly insists on the misleading translation of the German original "körperliche" with "physical" rather than "corporeal" or "natural." See: J. Fracchia (2014), "Organisms and Objectifications: A Historical-Materialist Inquiry into the "Human and Animal", *Konturen*, vol 6. Available at: https://journals.oregondigital.org/index.php/konturen/article/view/3509/3269

inauguration of capitalism as a global mode of production - and a force of a very specific nature. What is more, Marx and Engels seem to be enamoured by it. In by now a well-known order they invoke this globalized capitalism through a series of images – of global production, consumption, and markets - intended to shock and awe the reader in face of the unprecedented and previously "unimaginable productive forces" of capitalism. There can be no guessing at the effectiveness at the time when these images pertained their powers all up to our time when globalisation of capital relations had become a fully established and lived fact. Credit is given where credit is due: crossing the boundaries of territories and continents and riding the railroad of history Marx and Engels list the successes of capitalism in producing "(…) the wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals" (Marx and Engels 2000). These previously "unimaginable productive forces" of the bourgeoisie "(…) during its rule of scarce one hundred years, has created more massive and more colossal productive forces than have all preceding generations together". But just like in any drama – and Marx and Engels can be accused of a lot of things but not for a lack of proclivity for the dramaturgy – there comes a twist. "Man", being behind this unprecedented process of the reordering and the subjection of Nature, is at the same time, being subjected by the very processes he had set in motion and in the end losses control over this "unprecedented" and "colossal" productive forces escaping his grasp not unlike a "(…) sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells" (Marx and Engels 2000).

Although we lacked the ending in the *Manifesto* itself, as authors only hinted at what might come out of this lack of control over "unimaginable productive forces", it seems as if the postscript is being written today before our very eyes. In the light of the coming climate emergency and the ecological, social, and political crisis it will engender, what one may read from these pages today – at the same time refusing the temptation to read *into* them something which isn't nor could be there – in opposition to all the interpretations of the past is a different form of power. Emerging from the capital's need for self-valorisation this power manifests itself in a rather different way than that "unimaginable productive force" behind the "(…) subjection of Nature's forces to man, machinery, application of chemistry to industry and agriculture, steam-navigation, railways, electric telegraphs" (Marx and Engels 2000). This is the power to re-arrange life of what just a couple of years ago in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* Marx called a "species-being", a conceptual

proclamation which one could easily take as Marx's own *birth of biopolitics*. Rather than a form of power "species-being" as a form of life characterized by assuming "(…) the species (his own as well as those of other things) as his [i.e. Man's] object" and treating "(…) himself as the actual, living species." Marx only touched upon this possible Hegelian and humanist precursor to Foucault's infamous concept since he hastily shifted his focus to the question of labour and production. The same gesture of shifting away from the question of life is evident once more in the *Manifesto,* where Marx and Engels take head on the more general power of "(…) the subjection of Nature's forces to man", to "(…) clearing of whole continents for cultivation, canalisation of rivers, whole populations conjured out of the ground" (Marx and Engels 2000). It is evident that from the very start Marx and Engels' capitalism presents itself not only as an unprecedented force for the production of commodities through the constant revolution of technical, scientific, and engineering means. More profoundly it manifests itself as a *force re-ordering* the conditions of *life* of individuals and biological species, both human and non-human alike, transforming natural landscapes, uprooting, shifting – and in the process sometimes destroying whole communities and forms-of-life. Marx and Engels would hardly be scandalised by the ongoing Holocene extinction of animal and plant species (what Elizabeth Kolbert calls "the sixth extinction")[30] or by something like the latest discovery of meth addicted brown trout in North America or the cocaine induced shifting of the migratory patterns of European eels.[31] While Marx's conceptualisation of power over life is vastly more general and less precise - being less of a concept and more of a background of his and Engels writings on capital accumulation - it is nonetheless necessary to draw attention to the fact that his power of accumulation almost exclusively manifests itself as the power of abandoning to death, or what in contemporary terms might be called "necropolitics" (Mbembe). As we saw in the introduction, according to Marx, accumulation of capital is indifferent to the plight of humans and their "coming degradation and ultimate depopulation." More than a hundred years before it is properly inaugurated as a conceptual tool, biopolitics is therefore preceded by the "irresolvable

[30] Elizabeth Kolbert, „The Sixth Extinction", *The New Yorker*, May 25, 2009. Available at: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/05/25/the-sixth-extinction

[31] Shi En Kim "Meth Pollution in Waterways Turns Trout into Addicts". *Smithsonian Magazine*, July 9 2021. Available at: https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/meth-pollution-waterways-turning-trout-addicts-180978133/; Capaldo A. et al. "Effects of environmental cocaine concentrations on the skeletal muscle of the European eel (Anguilla anguilla)". *Science of Total Environment*, 2018 November 1: 862-873.

contradiction", this time of capital accumulation; the problem and the eventual promise of the destruction of life by power itself.

2.2. Biopolitics, *take two*: On the least Foucauldian of all Foucault's concept

Biopolitics and biopower have an interesting history of "Could he have…?" or "Should he have…?". Foucault first introduced the concept in 1976 (1978 in English translation) in the *History of Sexuality I*. Even in its advent the proposition of biopower was almost put forward as an afterthought in the last chapter of the book. Correspondingly, Foucault addressed the question of biopolitics in a lecture series *Society Must be Defended*, again, almost as an afterthought in lectures almost exclusively asking other questions. Campbell and Sitze (2013: 4) comment how the concluding chapter of *History of Sexuality* on biopolitics, "(...) text's concluding passages on biopolitics (...) seemed anomalous if not aberrant: apparently unconnected to the pages that preceded them." It seems Foucault himself was cognisant of the problem, so he spent the next two years of lectures trying to elaborate, only to set the stage with *Security, Territory, Population* and then almost abandon the question in the interestingly but somewhat misleadingly titled lectures *The Birth of Biopolitics*. As if paying a debt to the work of Georges Canguilhem, Foucault thus opens and just as soon abandons a whole series of questions about the relationship between politics and life, which will explode almost more than a decade later in what we now refer to as the "biopolitical turn".

Therefore, in opposition to interpretations that treat biopolitics on an equal conceptual footing with "discipline" and "governmentality", there is not much in Foucault's work on biopolitics to back it up; it seems that for him it was always of a somewhat of an in-between concept, never an object of a singular dedicated volume, defined in different ways and relegated to a single abruptly ended chapter. It will nevertheless prove to be one of the key concepts in developing a Foucauldian theory of power, even beyond the above mentioned biopolitical turn. Perhaps it is indicative that in one of the most comprehensive accounts of Foucault's late studies on power and government by Thomas Lemke, biopolitics takes only 15 or so pages out of almost 400, while at the same time he understands that, as a new perspective, it "(…) permits Foucault both to re-evaluate the concept of discipline and

to view sovereignty in a new light" (Lemke 2019: 135). The significance of biopolitics for Foucault and his legacy can be ascribed perhaps to the fact that it seems to betray a sort of non-Foucauldian or even anti-Foucauldian character, as it is at odds with his self-professed nominalism. For sure, nominalism is in his work even if only to analyse the effects of such a power, but the way Foucault approaches power over life as that which "(...) has to qualify, measure, appraise, and hierarchize, rather than display itself in its murderous splendour" (Foucault 1978: 144) seems to warrant a small but significant intervention from a distinction to at least a certain conjunction.

While inaugurated by Foucault, biopower or biopolitics - a naming mashup Foucault was rather characteristically never bothered to resolve[32] - thus have a long afterlife after their initial use, in which Foucault's own introduction seems to just become a rather long footnote or a starting point for interpretations that go in an almost countless number of directions. The object of this chapter is to return to their initial use in the context of Foucault's inauguration of the productiveness of power and to critically reflect on the nature of their use after Foucault. But all this does not lead us to an extensive overview of the uses of the concept – the aim is not so much to provide an extensive overview of different uses of biopower but to see in what way can in help us to both understand the aim of Foucauldian project in the context of capitalism as we enter the 21st century. For this to happen we need to think the movement of destruction within the "power of life". In the concept of biopower, "a productive power fostering life", is something that attracted philosophers to its use; its plasticity, ability to be used in different contexts, and the potential to grasp something which seems as if undefinable, resistant to the capture of language – the almost infinite potential of capitalism to intervene in every pore of life, individual and collective, psychic, and biological, corporeal, and spiritual. This rise to conceptual prominence was of course helped

[32] The name itself had affected considerable debates and interventions. By keeping to the letter of Foucault's work Lemke (2019) and Elden (2017) do not distinguish between biopolitics and biopower and use them interchangeably. On the other hand, Hardt and Negri (2001) not only distinguish between the two but elevate this distinction to a political and emancipatory difference already present in Foucault's work – something for which there is dubious backing. Referring to the work of Walter Benjamin and Carl Schmitt, which distinguish between "constituent" and "constituting" power, biopolitics becomes a structure of power relations while biopower is the innate ability of the multitude, forever refusing to be completely constituted and structured. One can also find this distinction, albeit formulated differently, in Maurizio Lazzarato (2002). Just like Negri, Hardt and Lazzarato, Roberto Esposito – though, characteristically for him, with far more caution - acknowledges the conceptual distinction between biopolitics and biopower: "By the first is meant a politics in the name of life and by the second a life subjected to the command of politics. But here too in this mode the paradigm that seeks a conceptual linking between the terms emerges as split, as if it had been cut in two by the very same movement." (Esposito 2013a: 352)

by the fall of socialism and the discrediting of the Marxist discourse as a source of critical power. For a supposedly nominalist Foucauldian concept, biopower seems to come with loads of caveats. Among others, even authors we could put in the category of those that use it – and are thus at least sympathetic to its explanatory potential - are critical and wary of its use. Paolo Virno thus argues that "(…) (concept) has become fashionable: it is often, and enthusiastically evoked in every kind of context. We should avoid this automatic and unreflective use of the term" (Virno 2013b: 269). Roberto Esposito's comments are even more polemical, as they seem to refer to Foucault's own use and the inaugural act of the concept, which seems to be problematic in itself. As he puts is

> "What remains clear is its negative value, what it is not or the horizon of sense that marks its closing. Biopolitics has to do with that complex of mediations, oppositions, and dialectical operations that in an extended phase made possible the modern political order, at least according to current interpretation. With respect to these and the questions and problems to which they correspond relative to the definition of power, to the measure of its exercise and to the delineation of its limits, it's indisputable that a general shift of field, logic, and the object of politics has taken place (...) No other politics is conceivable other than a politics of life, in the objective and subjective sense of the term. But (...) How are we to comprehend a political government of life? In what sense does life govern politics or in what sense does politics govern life? Does it concern a governing of or over life? (…) Compressed (and at the same time destabilized) by competing readings and subject to continuous rotations of meaning around its own axis, the concept of biopolitics risks losing its identity and becoming an enigma" (Esposito 2013a: 352)

From its introduction it seems it was destined to be less than a concept (like discipline) and more like a philosophical proclamation of intent; this seems to be the only way one can interpret Foucault's claim that biopolitics has two poles, anatomo-politics (discipline) or power over singular bodies and biopower, i.e., power over multiple bodies, i.e., population. However one posits it, it seems that biopolitics has both more meaning than needed and less (clarity) than required to be an operational concept. It seems to offer theory a set of questions which are far more productive than, for example, ideology, yet it lacks

basic tenets of explanatory power. Still, one should be careful to suggest such changes as treating something that was used as a concept and proclaiming it for something else - a field. As a concept biopolitics affirms or denotes a reality in its fidelity to life but as a field, biopolitics resonates - perhaps closer to Foucault's initial intent – different processes and strategies by which life becomes a political problem. As Foucault states "For millennia man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question" (Foucault 1978:143). Biopolitics is then not, or is not exclusively *a* form of power, but it more denotes a historical field within which politics focuses its attention on life; as such, it opens new vistas for its "unresolvable" contradictions. One is the aforementioned anti-nominalist nature of the concept itself. To proclaim that Life has a central place in the formation of strategies of knowledge and power is an altogether different thing from proclaiming that this political process through which it enters field of power is reducible to the function of continuation or termination of life – putting aside that it represents not a slight step outside nominalism! The other problem, which may prove to be even more impactful, is the problem of *destruction*. Unlike violence, destruction presents a theoretical problem for Foucauldian ontology since it forces Foucault into a dead-end street of dialectics – an unacceptable road to take for a Nietzschean. On the one hand he is either forced to conceptualize life as if through or by something that is extrinsic to itself, to make it into something which biopolitics can address as a phenomenon which morphs that which it sustains; or, on the other hand, he addresses not a question of milieu but life that morphing into something else. Foucault is thus literally forced to turn to "nuclear" option: how is it that atomic power, the one which fosters life by providing it with an abundance of energy necessary for its proliferation, ends up endangering it in ways in which it completely overshadows any specific historical forms of this destructive potential of power? Though he goes on to extend this atomic contradiction to different "genocides" and other acts of violence, this promise of ultimate destruction of life itself completely overtakes any prospect of a Foucauldian power of destruction. This problem is today compounded by another phenomena, or it would be more precise to say, by an ongoing reversal and transformation of the "nature" of the milieu of life, becoming less and less susceptible to providing life all the conditions necessary for its reproduction. This latest manifestation of the contradiction of biopolitics, itself on the scale of the destructive potential of nuclear weapons - but in slow-

motion and a far less spectacular manifestation - is of course that of climate change and the prospect of the destruction of biosphere. While the prospect of this development is still a relatively long way in the future, its very possibility and actuality transforms the relation between milieu as the set of pre-conditions of life and its flourishing, by seemingly pushing it in the way of economics of scarcity of political economy. In what ways does climate catastrophe and its aftermath challenge the inauguration of power "that fosters life"? Is this form of power the predominant mechanism through which we can understand the dynamics that will take play?

2.3. On Nazis and A-bombs, or how (not) to think destruction

The period from late 1960's to late 1970's was a crucial period for Foucault's work. *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and *History of Sexuality: The Will to Know* (1976) represent the end of a momentous project of redefinition of the analytic grid for contemporary understanding of power by distancing from the concept of sovereign power as "power of death" and "subtraction" (Lemke 2019). In the end this project spanned over what proved to be Foucault's' last decade, consisting of many detours, theoretical contradictions, and dead ends (of which biopower was not the first, but perhaps the most striking in Foucault's radical abandonment and later silence on the theme). In two of dozen lectures given annually at College de France, first printed in 1977 in Italy under the conspicuously unimaginative title „Two lectures" (*Microfisica del Potere,* Einauldi 1977) Foucault laid out the methodological basis for the analysis of power which would be an alternative to what he saw as two dominant historical models of analysis: juridical-sovereign model and the model of war (Foucault 1980b). These lectures present an overview of the agonistic nature of the work he started almost a decade ago, in which he once more juxtaposes two forms of power in their relation to the subject and its effects on subjectivity, adamantly arguing for the approach that will attempt to grasp power as a „productive force". In order to bring this much needed shift in focus of political science and open up a new field and a „theoretical grid of analysis" - which Foucault, on other occasions will call, somewhat deceptively, "methodological" (Foucault 2012b) - one must leave behind the model of sovereignty. Without assuming any grand arch to Foucault's work, from his very beginnings Foucault attempted to document

the primarily material characters of the process of subjugation – whereby assuming a position of the subject occurs via the intermediary of the body. This radical insistence on materialism seems to disqualify sovereignty and its juridical-legal apparatus as a model of power which according to Foucault is always ultimately defined by a potential to "produce subjectivity". Addressing the audience at College de France in 1976 he put it in clear, even programmatic terms: „This is our theme: the manufacture of the subject rather than the genesis of the sovereign" (Foucault 2003: 46). Biopower, as the form of this new productive power, shares some of the mechanisms with discipline, though there is a fundamental difference: one is a part of the power relation which includes *subjectivisation* as its effect, a distinguishing mark of discipline which will be disregarded in later interpretations of Foucault's work (Elden 2017: 40). Elden refers to Foucault's own contextualization of his work on biopolitics in *Society Must Be Defended*, in which he is keen to stress that "(...) there is no clear separation of institution and state here: the disciplines tend to overflow their institutional context; the state is involved in the disciplines" (Foucault 2003: 250). And yet: "The series body-organism-discipline-institutions; and the series population-biological processes-regulatory mechanism-State. An organic institutional ensemble: an organic-discipline of institution, if you will, and on the other side, a biological and statist ensemble: bio-regulation by the State" (Foucault 2013: 250).[33] As Elden concludes, "(...) there is not a separation of these two understandings of power – as discipline and normalizing bio-power – in Foucault's work. They are not independent of each other, or one successive to the other, but rather are two conjoined modes of functioning of knowledge/power" (Elden 2017: 41). Thus, biopolitics has a place besides anatomo-politics, as "population can be usefully conceived as bodies in plural, and while discipline works on the individual body, a multiplicity dissolved, the new technology of power works on the bodies accumulated, as a multiplicity" (Foucault 2003: 245). Regardless of the differences, these new forms of productive power, their two poles, operate in a radically different way from the "arcane" ways of the sovereign

> "(...) Deduction[34] has tended to be no longer the major form of power but merely one element among the others, working to incite, reinforce, control, monitor, optimize

[33] This „bioregulation by the State" will later become the problematic tackled in the work of Giorgio Agamben.
[34] As it is understandably not recognized as Foucault's "proper" philosophical intervention but more as a leftover of discarded sovereign concept of power without a proper theoretical role in authors *oeuvre*, the French

and organize forces under it: a power bent on generating forces, making them grow, rather than one dedicated to impeding them, making them submit, or destroying them" (Foucault 1978*:* 136)

Since these two processes involve different ways of the operation of power – sovereignty as a "zero-sum" game of power in which the sovereign is revitalized by its power of "deduction" (*prélèvement*), as it deprives its subjects of their lives – *and* livelihood – by "making them submit, or destroying them", while discipline and biopower imply a productive view of power (power as multiplication) springing up from the immanent nature of population and market or the optimization of the body – for Foucault they are not only historically but even *ontologically* distinct.

And yet in the last lecture of *Society Must Be Defended*, dated 17th March 1976, Foucault stumbles upon the paradox of his proposal for the new form of power over life and therefore opens up a sort of non- or *counter*-possibility together with the discourse of power which he seems to inaugurate. In hindsight, it seems that for a slight moment now well-known theoretical edifice is at stake; too dangerous a precipice from which Foucault will eventually walk away from, when in the late 1970's he will abandon his interest in the problem of biopower and move to governmentality. What is the nature of this paradox? As mentioned, the seizure of life by power which started to take place in 19th century societies of Western Europe and which resulted in what in one the lectures of the same series he called "normalizing society" (Foucault 2003: 253), was made possible by encounter of two types of power – one that controls over individual bodies and one that takes control over populations. This results in two registers in which modern power, assisted by mathematics, statistics, biology, and medicine, operates: anatomo-politics of the body (discipline) and the bio-politics of the population (biopower). As Thomas Lemke underscores, though these two different registers of power "arise at different points in time, have separate objectives, implement different means (…) and occupy different sites" (Lemke 2019: 137), for Foucault the difference between them is "primarily heuristic" (Lemke 2019: 138). At the very end of *History of Sexuality* Foucault takes theoretical distance via sovereignty this time not via different mechanisms of power (for example by juxtaposing law to discipline) but via "a

original *prélèvement* Foucault consistently uses has no set English standard, usually being translated either as "deduction" or as "subtraction".

radically changed goal". Against sovereignty's "power of deduction" ("laying claim to goods, services, and so on") which "(…) in a limit case (…) had the potential to do as it wished with the lives of the subjects", and whose mechanism one could ultimately subsume as the right of the extreme command "to intervene and expropriate" (Lemke 2019: 136), Foucault "progressively superimposed" new form of power: against such "power of death" Foucault proposes power that aims to "administrate, secure, cultivate and manage life" (Lemke, 2019: 136). Thus, in spite of his best nominalist intentions, Foucault ends up with a broad stroke of power that "(…) takes a hold of the whole surface that lies between the organic and the biological, between the body and the population" (Foucault 2003: 253). That this was not a one-time fluke is attested by his proposal of "disciplinary society", a society of generalized mechanisms of discipline one finds in his most famous work (Foucault 1995).

But, while arguing that biopower played a role in subduing the distinction between sovereign power and discipline, only a couple of pages later Lemke seems to argue to the contrary:

> "In contrast to sovereign might, which either put to death or let live, the new power let die and granted life. Power over death transformed into power over life – biopower – which did not bear on legal subjects so much as living beings. Foucault identifies 'two basic forms' along which the entire political technology of life evolved (…) on the one hand, *the disciplination of the individual body* and, on the other, *the regulation of population*" (Lemke, 2019: 137)

Lemke continues with his analysis by juxtaposing biopower to Foucault's previous concepts of power, not only sovereignty, but also war paradigm and, its closest form of power, discipline. The relationship between biopolitics and discipline is somewhat made more complex with the introduction of "the norm" as a specific technique of power which Foucault defines as

> "The element that circulates between the disciplinary and the regulatory, which will also be applied to body and population alike, which will make it possible to control both the disciplinary order of the body and the aleatory events that occur in the biological multiplicity" (Foucault u: Lemke 2019: 140)

Lemke argues that Foucault, even after introducing the concept of biopower, "(…) continued to understand the process of power primarily in terms of domination and subjugation" (Lemke 2019: 141). He continued to employ the same analytical instruments he had applied to disciplinary institutions, but now applied on different techniques, with different means and ends.[35] The introduction of biopower and discipline in the mid 1970's thus stages a conflict not only in historical terms but also one within Foucauldian discourse: the new form of productive power clashes with the old power of the sovereign who "(…) exercised his right of life only by exercising his right to kill, or by refraining from killing (…) The right which was formulated as the "power of life and death" was in reality the right to *take* life and *let* live" (Foucault 1978: 136). This conflict between sovereign and the biopower is none other than that between *productivity* of power and its *destructivity,* its "arcane" ways and the new; it is the conflict between the power of "subtraction" (*prélèvement)* – power as "a right to seizure: of things, time, bodies and ultimately life itself" (Foucault 1978: 136) – and the power of multiplication and "production", a conflict and an interplay which, as we are about to see, would leave Foucault without a proper solution.[36]

At the same time while proclaiming this transformation of power as the "the threshold of modernity" (Foucault 1978: 143), in an effort to pre-emptively extricate himself

[35] Lemke's interpretation betrays a kind of *naïve* Kuhnian epistemological microcosmos, one definitively unexpected of a Foucauldian scholar; the 'discovery' of biopolitics and the shift from the war and disciplinary approach to power relations was due to the increasingly apparent shortcomings of these models of power, especially that of war.

[36] What gets lost in his discussion of sovereignty, due especially to the fact that Foucault himself seems uninterested to differentiate between them, is that contemporary state form is supported by an apparatus of power which should be distinguished further. In other words, the state is defined both by power as a repressive mechanism and power as a subtractive mechanism. In *History of Sexuality* and the final lecture of *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault links "the right of the sword" to Roman right of *patria potestas*; when it was formulated contractually in the 17th century, even by the likes of Hobbes, it was already in a "circumscribed" and "diminished" form, expression of which is the modern notion of juridical power. Juridical power, although going back long into Roman history, finds its ultimate expression in the French revolution - "the victory of the contract". I argue that it is theoretically useful to distinguish between at least two different elements or more precisely two different logic of operation one can identify in Foucauldian concept of sovereign power; one of these logics is "repressive", famously baptized by Foucault as "repressive hypothesis", referencing his historicization of the concept of sexuality. The other aspect of sovereign power which for our intents and purposes is far more important remains nameless in Foucault's work as he had not ascribed to it an independent specific logic of operation. One can find it in his descriptions of state action (usually when he deals with primitive accumulation) and different verbs among which Foucault most consistently uses "prélèvement" (Harper-Collins English-French Dictionary translates it as "deduction", "withdrawal" or "taking"). This operation of state-power aims not to so much to "repress" as to "deduce" or "subtract", either money, commodities, objects, people, or in the most extreme cases life itself. This, and not repression – whereby which the relation of power remains as if "frozen" – seems to be the opposite of the power of multiplication, be it in the form of discipline or biopower. It seems that this form of *power of deduction* – which does not necessarily take a "juridical mantle" – forms a crucial aspect of biopower, coming to the foreground when it requires murder and genocide, in return betraying Foucault as a surprising "closet" Schmittian.

from evolutionary or historicist point of view whereby one form of power is exchanged for another Foucault turns to the problem of death and the right to kill. Foucault himself asks: if biopower is the power to "foster life" how is it then possible "to call for death, to demand deaths, to give order to kill?" (Foucault 2003: 254). And yet according to Foucault the contemporary world is full of murder: "wholesale slaughters" and "massacres" are playing out, while political regimes visit "holocausts on their own populations" (Foucault 1978: 137). In the process of extrapolating the concept of biopower he stumbles upon a paradox that is "difficult, if not *impossible* to get around" (Foucault 2003: 253) – the *nuclear bomb*. Nuclear weapons, one of the gravest existential threat humankind has ever faced – at least, until climate change – for Foucault represents primarily an *epistemic* problem since, in his own admission, it puts into question the distinction between biopower that nurtures and sovereignty which kills:

> "The power to manufacture and use the atom bomb represents the deployment of a sovereign power that kills, but it is also the power to kill life itself. So, the power that is being exercised in this atomic power is exercised in such a way that it is capable of suppressing itself. And, therefore, to suppress itself insofar as it is the power that guarantees life. Either it is sovereign and uses the atom bomb, and therefore cannot be power, biopower, or the power to guarantee life, as it has been ever since the nineteenth century. Or, at the opposite extreme, you no longer have a sovereign right that is in excess of biopower, but a biopower that is in excess of sovereign right" (Foucault 2003: 253-4)

Foucault's admittance triggered by a paradox of the atomic bomb leads to different questions: in what ways can the sovereign demand death in the context of power that "guarantees" or "protects" life? Does sovereignty continue in its old murderous ways or is it irrevocably changed and transformed by the emergence of biopower? What is the relation between these two forms of power?

As we will see, these questions are shunned aside in Foucault's attempt to proceed onto his quest for a non-repressive hypothesis of power which will lead him to altogether abandon this avenue of thought. And yet, these questions today matter far more than ever since the association between capitalism and biopower as its *pre-condition* (though this sort of functionalist argument was of course something which Foucault was continuously

distancing himself from) is fundamentally and *irrevocably* transforming. As Foucault stated biopower was an "indispensable element in the development of capitalism" since "(…) the latter would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes" (Foucault 1978: 140-141). It was industrial capitalism of the 19th and 20th century – characterised by mass production, workers discipline, exploitation, and extraction of surplus value, the production of "cheap nature" (Moore and Patel 2018), the idea of unlimited progress and growth etc. – that relied on the discipline of the body and the optimisation of population's behaviour, movement, growth rates, health etc. Capitalism therefore represents not only a historical difference but more importantly an *ontological* one. Regardless of his protestations to the contrary (Foucault 2012b), for Foucault, just as for Marx, capitalist power is ontologically distinct as it does not operate by subtracting but by *multiplying*: commodities, money, power, bodies. But what this approach silently excludes are alternative forms of accumulation to that of the production of surplus value, for example those defined by colonisation and primitive accumulation (which Marx fails to acknowledge as *contemporary* modes of accumulation in themselves) and which operate on distinctly different infrastructures of power (as we will see in following chapters).

Foucault's escape from this "impossible paradox" of atomic bomb is as unexpected as is more than slightly puzzling: although it is ultimately sovereign that kills, now it is done under a whole different complex of power and under a whole different logic. Foucault puts forward the idea that it is class conflict of late Middle Ages Western Europe (especially France) that opened up a way for more biological and warfare-like character of modern racism.[37] In return, what biological and medicinal forms of 19th century racism provided is the scientific legitimacy of the action of the *sovereign* in order to *protect* life that was deemed worthy; it was science and medicine that drew the line between those that deserved to live and those that should die. What consequences does this have on Foucault's approach to destruction of life through its milieu defined as a "(...) certain number of combined, overall effects bearing on all who live in it" (Foucault 2007: 21), life's "artificial" and "natural givens"? It seems that ultimately, he resolved it by relegating it to the *mechanisms of the state*, a modern phenomenon ultimately abided by medicine and racism. It was thus

[37] Foucault distingusihes between „racist discourse" and discourse of „race war". See his lectures on *Society Must Be Defended*, chapter 3 and 4.

the invention of what Balibar termed "state racism" that introduces the distinction between life worth living and unworthy of living that solved the paradox of biopower as that which exclusively fosters life (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991).[38]

The role of racism is to inscribe into the domain of life - "the continuum of the human species" - the line between those that are not deemed worthy of living: for some to live, others must die. Foucault will take the a somewhat unique historical experience of German National socialism and what one of the most prominent contemporary historians of Holocaust Saul Friedlander called "redemptive antisemitism" and generalize it into a sort of universal form of racism, in the process not only suppressing but denying any other form of racist relations as relation of power, for example those of exploitation and domination characteristic of chattel slavery and colonialism.[39] By universalizing Nazism as a kind of general form of racism, Foucault will necessarily draw particularly grim conclusions regarding wars in the age of biopolitics

> "Wars are no longer waged in the name of a sovereign who must be defended; they are waged in the name of the existence of all; entire populations are mobilized for the purpose of wholesale slaughter in the name of life necessity. Massacres have become vital. It is as managers of life and survival, of bodies and the race, that so many regimes have been able to wage so many wars, causing so many men to be killed (…) The existence in question is no longer of sovereignty, juridical; but that of population, biological. If genocide is truly the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a return today of ancient right to kill; it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of the population" (Foucault 1978: 137)

This is a relation of war within the field of productive power,

[38] Binding, Karl and Alfred Hoche (2012) *Allowing the Destruction of Life Unworthy of Life: Its Measure and Form.* Suzeteo Enterprises, 2012.

[39] Friedlander distinguishes between "ordinary" brand of racial antisemitism aimed at political, social, and economic segregation of Jews from German racial community, and specific and historically speaking aberrant redemptive antisemitism which posits a metahistorical struggle between two races as forces of Good and Evil (mixing medicinal, evolutionary, biological and religious imaginary), whereby the preservation of Aryan race and humanity in general is dependent upon the destruction of the Jew. See: Friedlander 1997.

> "But that which takes not a warlike or confrontational but biological a relation: "the more inferior species tend to disappear, the more abnormal individuals can be eliminated, the less species will be degenerated, the more I – not as an individual but as a species – will live, will be strong, will be vigorous, will be able to proliferate" (Foucault 2003: 255)

Foucault claims that "these are new solutions to old problems" – therefore, "if the power of normalization wishes to exercise the ancient sovereign right of killing, it must become racist" (Foucault 2003: 256). By the end of the 19th century the two phenomena combined: war as a biological relation is fully formed when the idea that the elimination of degenerate or lower races helps to secure its survival, and even more importantly, "regenerates it" (Foucault 2003: 228-30). Foucault was here speaking of Nazism, in which both the normalizing discourse and the sovereign power to kill traversed the whole of society, power which was ultimately "democratized" (Foucault 2003: 259). According to Foucault, every part of Nazi society was exposed to death since through this exposure the life of the race was vitalized, strengthened. The Soviet model, while using socialist language, operated in a similar way – state took control over life, reproduction, and risk in these countries also (eliminating political adversaries, class enemies, degenerate classes), all in the name of protection of life.

Defining life and living as a continuous and mutually shared condition of all of humanity, state racism thus introduces "a break in a domain of power between what must live and what must die" (Foucault 2003: 254), providing a precondition for exercising the power to kill - which, as Foucault underscores, includes not only murder but other complex forms of (in)action: "exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or quite simply political death, expulsion, rejection and so on" (Foucault 2003: 256). Foucault's stages destruction that plays out on two juxtaposed levels – from sovereign power that "yields the sword" we move to biopower's capacity to "disallow life to the point of death" (Foucault 1978: 137), a lethal operation of power whereby power "lets die" not through action but rather by *refraining from* action, by withdrawing and abandoning life to different conditions which are not susceptible to its prolongment and continuation. We witness thus a complete reversal where power - a productive force protective of life - turns into its opposite by *not* acting. At this point, we are knee deep in the Foucauldian ontology,

where what was defined as sovereignty, i.e., power of subtraction (*prélèvement*) yielding destructive effects, is defined merely as an absence or outright *refusal* of its productive capacities.[40]

What concerns us now is to try and set a course through multiple different readings of Foucault's conceptual invention of biopolitics, which will follow different entanglements of biopolitics into contemporary politics and economy. Rather than focusing our attention to a grandiose overview of all major contributors of biopolitical field, however warranted this project might sound, I will rather attempt to pinpoint several issues necessary for an analytical approach of rethinking "the contradiction of biopolitics" for our times, starting from those who had already provided us with an interpretation of Foucault's "least Foucauldian concept", in the process turning it into a sort of anti-nominalist, generalized discourse on modern society. As mentioned in the introduction, these could be divided into two groups, with all the caveats that go with these sorts of bifurcations. The first would be Italian post-autonomists, who took Foucault's concept of biopower and used it to "update" Marx for post-Fordist times, by rethinking concepts of subjectivity and power. The other group of authors, slightly more heterodox, I call somewhat provocatively the "other Italians". These are the authors who, in an attempt to provide a more genealogically truthful use of the concept of biopolitics, ended up in, for Foucault, an even more dire straits - those of political theology. My main motivation between this grouping was to identify two strands of Foucauldian theory which have built their understanding of biopolitics and their respective discourses by respectively disregarding either economy or politics. We will see how these "blind spots" enabled the enclosure of their discourses by making them disregard, in different ways, the predominant traits not only of contemporary globalized capitalist society but also that around which Foucault's conceptual innovation revolves. Thus, on one side we have "the other Italian(s)", Roberto Esposito and Giorgio Agamben, while on the other Michael Hardt, Antonio Negri and Paolo Virno.

[40] It is this distinction between „killing" and „letting die" and therefore the (changing) role of the sovereign that is the basis of critical engagement between Warren Montag and Achille Mbembe. See their respective chapters in: Adam Sitze and Timothy Campbell (ed.), *Biopolitics: A Reader,* Duke UP, 2013.

2.4. Biopolitics in the absence of capital

Roberto Esposito, just as Giorgio Agamben - who will not be the primary focus of our intervention - starts by engaging with the "catastrophic" in Foucault's work. Esposito argues that the object of biopolitics goes further beyond the object of "the old disciplinary apparatus", taking control of single body or multiple bodies as collection of single bodies. Biopolitics is more than just 'collectivized' discipline since population is more than a sum of its parts. Although for Esposito "it is in the body that life can remain what it is and even grow, be strengthened, and reproduce", in order to be conceived it "(…) needs some type of organic representation binding it to reality, or at least the potential of a bodily structure (Esposito 2013b: 318). Esposito thus sees the body as "the liminal zone" where the presence of both life and death are most visible – the body is "both the instrument and the terrain" of the battle to push death furthest it is possible" (Esposito 2013b: 318). But for Foucault discipline, as a way of "capturing" individual bodies, was not so much about "pushing death furthest it is possible" as singular life and its reproduction played no role in the disciplinary apparatus - as both Foucault and Marx (and Engels) were more than aware of. On the contrary, discipline was an apparatus whose goal was to utilize the body and its operations to its furthest point regardless of the effect this maximisation of bodies capacities had on singular workers; its goal is to automate her movement, to economize her body's operation, disregarding the health and even the life of individual workers. The life to be protected, according to Esposito is that of *the Leviathan*; biopolitics is thus only instrumental since "(…) the power of the State coincides literally with the survival of the individuals who bear it in their bodies" (Esposito 2013b: 339-40).[41] In this way biopolitics turns out to be an endgame of the discourse of the sovereignty and the body politic

> "What characterizes the horizon of biopower is rather the way the whole sphere of politics, law and economics becomes a function of the qualitative welfare and quantitative increase of the population, considered purely in its biological aspect: life becomes government business, in all senses of the word, just as government becomes first and foremost the governance of life" (Esposito 2013b: 340).

[41] Similiar to Espostio's interpetation of the relation between the body of the sovereign and democratisation can be found in the work of Eric Santner. See his *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty.* Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2011.

Thus, what starts off as an attempt to provide a more nuanced concept of biopolitics than its contemporaries, by returning it to a more ambiguous and complex Foucauldian interpretation, seem to end up in something opposite. Regardless of Esposito's protestations to the contrary by claiming that the answer to Foucault's questions of the contemporary politics is "enclosed within the boundaries of life" Esposito historicizes Foucault's concept in a way explicitly rejected by Foucault himself.

> "That life is the primary object-and purpose-of politics? What is the horizon of meaning that is given to biopolitics as a result of this co-belonging?") "(…) should not be sought in the folds of a sovereign power that includes life by excluding it" but that it should rather "(…) point to (…) an epochal conjuncture out of which the category of sovereignty makes room for, or at least intersects with, that of immunization" (Esposito 2013b: 341).

But yet again for Esposito the constant circulation of the metaphor of body politic is impossible to disentangle from biopolitical concerns since the very aim of "(…) protecting [life], strengthening it, and reproducing it, in line with an objective that goes because it concerns the very existence of the State in its economic, legal, and political "interest" (Esposito, 2013b: 339). What is different is that with biopolitics body-politic ceases to be simply a metaphor and finally takes "its own body", becoming a "biological reality and a field for medical interventions" (Esposito, 2013b: 339). While life is attached and predicated upon the body, which meets death "only for a short time", biopolitics aims to *affect* that which always take place between bodies, in the life processes of the species or genus. While in the end Esposito does not make this analytical move, it was undertaken later by Eric Santner who argues that in the biopolitical dispositive, body politics becomes a materialized – or better to say *incarnated* – metaphor. As life is thus no longer situated merely in individual bodies, with the incarnation of the metaphor of body politics we witness a somewhat paradoxical parallel move of *de-biologization* of life, its decoupling from individual bodies in which it resides, and its consequent *theologisation* (Santner 2011). But how come that in his fidelity to Foucault's thought - recognized by even the staunchest of critics, such as Hardt and Negri (2013a) - Esposito ends up at this end point, one that could be claimed to be the furthest possible from Foucault?

While according to Esposito biopolitics addresses the body, it does so in a rather different way than according to the likes of Paolo Virno or Antonio Negri. For the latter two, which came to Foucault's work via the fundamental philosophical, historical and political experience of the Italian autonomist Marxism, biopolitics as a form of power over body as a productive power, i.e. *potenza* (Virno), represents an extension of the power over the worker in the workplace, i.e., factory. When the walls of factory extended upon the streets and cities (the co called post-industrial or "cognitive capitalism") so did its power, while in the process of this extension changing its form. In a certain sense biopolitics is an *extension* of disciplinary power as a technique that, in the context of the factory, aimed to optimize the working of the body and economize individual potential. In this operation one can find a semblance or echoes of Marx concept of operation of power as that which ultimately aims to individualize in order to fight against the collectivization of action superimposed by the capital's own organization of the workplace; something, which, with the informatization of the work, work-from-home, is under further attack. Esposito, on the other hand, aims to preserve Foucault's idea of biopower as an umbrella term which extends from the discipline over body to that over population. Biopolitics thus aims at the body as "(…) an *individual* one because it belongs to each person, and at the same time a *general* one because it relates to an entire genus-with the aim of protecting it, strengthening it, and reproducing" (Esposito 2013b: 339). Esposito aims to continue Foucault's own view of productive power as extending from that over a single body and population in both its genealogical sense, since discipline preceded it as a term with which Foucault was occupied with, and as an apparatus of power. And yet, Esposito's own approach lends itself to a movement which is dialectically opposed to that of Negri and Virno. His own genealogy of the modern intersection of medicinal, biological, and political discourse, necessitates the focus on the concepts of the species and population; but this intersection of medicine and politics is not that of political economy, a discourse and dispositive of power which Foucault explicitly connected to the rise of biopolitics. For example, in "The Birth of Social Medicine" (2000b), Foucault argues that capitalism, whose development dates to the end of the 18th century, started by socializing its first object, the body, as a "factor of productive force, of labour power". Society's control over individuals was accomplished thus not through consciousness - as it did for Marx - but *in the body* and *with the body*: "for capital, it was biopolitics, the biological, the somatic, the corporal, that mattered more than anything else

(...) The body is a biopolitical reality; medicine is a biopolitical strategy" (Foucault 2000b: 137). In stark contrast with Marx - as we will see in the forthcoming chapters - for Foucault capitalism relies on a certain "infrastructure of power" to raise the economic productiveness of individual bodies, which implies the health of the working population. Esposito claims that the pedantry around what precise point Foucault introduces the concept of biopolitics is irrelevant since his whole work from around the mid '70s leads him to the same problematic. This enables him to decouple his reconstruction of the emergence of the problem of biopolitics from Foucault's explicit genealogy of biopower and his decision to move towards the concept of productive power, something which in a profound way influences his own concept of biopolitics. One of the consequences is that his philosophy tends towards ahistoricity, claiming that

> "Life as such doesn't belong either to the order of nature or to that of history. It cannot be simply ontologized, nor completely historicized, but is inscribed in the moving margin of their intersection and their tension" (Esposito 2013a: 368)

But how this specific "tension" and "intersection" of history and nature figure in Esposito's immunitary paradigm, contemporary life being defined for example by more and more market relations, by structural impositions, by human interactions with its milieu and surroundings etc. is far from clear. In fact, Esposito's discourse fights against this thought actively. As he completely overlooks the fundamental genealogical ties that Foucault explicitly draws between the apparatus and knowledge of biopolitics and capitalism,[42] Esposito ends up, somewhat unsurprisingly, in thinking biopolitics by encircling it in the sphere of the political, by enclosing it from the economy, and ending up in a self-referential circle of political theology.

Though it might be hard to open up Esposito's discourse to see in what way political economy or capitalism, even on the level of discourse, would figure in his work, we might attempt to do the very same; or perhaps how would Marxism and its critique of capitalism

[42] These will be the object of my analysis in the next chapter. In short, Esposito's interpretation of Foucault's concept of biopolitics actively disregards any work on the theme by Foucault *aside from* the inauguration of the concept in the last chapter of *History of Sexuality*.

as a mode of production figure in his work. For Esposito, Marxism – and Marx's discourse itself - can and should be viewed through the lenses of the flesh and immunitary dispositive.

In Esposito's analysis, Marxist critique of political economy takes a back seat to its political consequences. Esposito's discourse can produce two sets of questions regarding Marx. First sequence of questions relates to Marxist discourse itself: how does Marx's discourse, in its attempt to grasp society and its historicity, arrange the body politic? Is there something already present in it which resulted in totalitarian incorporation of the body politics with its specific immunitary reaction to what it perceives as a danger, but also as an opportunity? It is easy to read *Manifesto*'s proclamations of the successes of capitalism and its revolutionary role for the modern proletariat the following dynamic; at the same time a poison, one of most barbarian and deadly challenges to humanity, but also a historical opportunity for abolishing history.[43] Esposito is quick to shift from Marx to Marxism and back, seeking in it the entanglement of medicinal and the political (for which surely there is enough evidence in Marx's own writings), which could therefore end up only in a totalitarian catastrophe.

The other sequence of questions leads us away from Marxist discourse to Marx' *problematic*, a potential line of Esposito's thought which, while being harder to reconstruct – if at all possible – is far more pertinent to our current situation of globalized, financial capitalism and the blowback it produces around the globe in different forms. This would produce some of the following questions: in what ways does capital entangle within the metabolic processes, within the relationship between immunity and community (*co-munus*)? Does it "speed up" this relationship, does it transform it, and in what ways? In what way does it transform the historical sequences of incorporation/disincorporation, different ways in which flesh relates to the body? Can Esposito's "modernity", to which he ascribes this dialectic, be completely subsumed by capitalism and the contradictions it produces? Or is capitalism itself subsumed in modernity, an important but only *one* aspect of this dialectic?

[43] Disease and health no longer lie along "the axis of a frontal opposition", but in a dialectical relationship which naturally makes one the opposite of the other, but also and above all, the instrument of the other. Along these lines, Marx seems to think of capitalism in a long line of Paracelsus's descendants, who says that "(...) every single thing is double. Where there is disease, there is medicine, where there is medicine, there is sickness," since "at any one time, a medicine is often a poison and often a drug for a disease. (Esposito 2013b:328). Esposito thus claims that "(…) the return to the organismic metaphor of Rousseau and Marxist opposition to the alienation of the social body created by capital actually represent a counter-reaction to the modern processes of individualistic disincorporation" (Esposito 2013b: 324).

Marxism approaches accumulation of capital as a machine for alienation of social body, resulting in its individualization; according to Esposito, it can thus be seen as a part of a long line of discourses of community, and therefore one among many different answers to the fact that "(…) the semantics of the flesh (German Leib, French chair) do not coincide with those of the body (German Karper, French corps) to which it is nevertheless linked by a close relation of implication" (Esposito 2013b: 324). According to Esposito, it is around this semantic problem that contemporary politics and economics are organized. It seems that capital circulation adds to, what Esposito is hesitant to call "the primordial characteristic of the flesh", which (…) like a hiatus or an original break (…) resists incorporation, reversing it into the opposing movement of disincorporation." (Esposito 2013b: 324). Instead, he attempts to supposedly dissolve the ontological presuppositions into the proclamation of the "co-munal" character of the flesh which never transforms into the community or communism of the flesh: "The flesh is neither another body nor the body's other: it is simply the way of being in common of that which seeks to be immune." (Esposito, 2013b:325)

This is Esposito's alternative carnal version of *Manifesto's* "All that is solid…", but not undone by "melting away" but by more of a medicinal or biological *disincorporation* of the body politic, political historicism of the body politics' disincorporation and incorporations. While it seems a straightforward analogy, it is thus hard to claim that the problem which Esposito opts to tie to modernity (Esposito 2013b: 323) just mirrors that which in another discourse is defined simply as the crisis of capitalism (in all its different guises and forms)

> "(…) this stubborn resistance of the flesh to being made body cannot come about without aporetic consequences. It generates a series of phantasmic figures of laceration and dislocation that return to the flesh, threatening to drive it back into a place of absence resembling a true disembodiment: as if the crisis of the chiasm affecting the body proper or the body of others-gives rise to a non-flesh within the flesh, an abject object, destined to suck it into a deadly maelstrom or prompt it to self-expulsion". (Esposito 2013b: 323)

Totalitarianism, just like Marxism or liberalism, is only one of the ways in which we try to organize this relation between the flesh and the body, *corpus*. And yet, capitalism and

the circulation its prompts seem to add up to a specific and destructive *catabolic violence* of *disincorporation*, at least if we approach this by the effects and even more violent reaction it produced in the 20th century Europe. Distinguishing trait of totalitarianism (though Esposito writes primarily on Nazism, he does seem to, like Hannah Arendt, not distinguish the two) is that it reacts to this process of "disincorporation" by giving rise to the "(…) phantasm of stripped flesh (…)" which "(…) are redoubled in the most catastrophically destructive way" (Esposito 2013b: 323). On the other hand, individualism itself is unable "(…) to grasp the unquenchable need for social bonding", ending in the "(…) self-centring concept of the individual (…) itself born from a corporeal hypostasis that overlaps onto the pluralistic character of carnal existence" (Esposito 2014b: 323).

2.5. Who still reads *Empire*? A curious and enlightening case of post-autonomist thought

Esposito's interpretation of Foucault's concept of biopolitics, as well as his reconstruction of Foucault's genealogy of productive power was heavily criticised, especially from post-autonomists position. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri identify two different streams of reception of the concept of biopolitics, which *both* fail to grasp the dual nature of biopolitics as a "power over life and a power of life to resist". From the very start their interpretation is driven by a contradiction Esposito completely overlooks due to its non-Foucauldian character: that of political resistance within power over life. Though the first stream approaches biopolitics as an „(...) ambiguous and conflictive terrain" (Hardt and Negri 2013a: 238), it sees resistance only at its most extreme limit, on the brink of impossibility

> „This stream of interpretation thus does to a certain extent distinguish biopolitics from biopower but leaves biopolitics powerless and without subjectivity. These authors seek in Foucault a definition of biopolitics that strips it of every possibility of autonomous, creative action, but really fall back on Heidegger in these points of the analysis to negate any constructive capacity of biopolitical resistance" (Hardt and Negri 2013a: 238)

Second reception is represented by those who analyse the terrain of biopolitics primarily as the normative management of the population, focusing primarily on the actuarial administration of life from the perspective of statistics, classification, and medicine. While Hardt and Negri grant some "philological" fidelity to this interpretation, they argue that it leaves us with „liberal Foucault", and no way out of this grasp of power over life. The heaviest criticism is reserved for Agamben and Esposito as the most prominent authors of the "Italian theory", for their transposing of biopolitics in a „theological-political key": this interpretation claims that „the only possibility of rupture with biopower resides in „inoperative" activity" (Hardt and Negri, 2013a:239). Negri especially pulls no punches: "the neo-Heideggerian critique and the mysticism of the *Krisis* thinkers" (97), those that put forward "arguments of individualism (...) both *zoe* and *immunitas*", and are "(...) alien to any vision of biopolitics and of the production of subjectivity" (Negri 2017: 97). "Italian theory" thus appears as a "weak historiographical schema", unable to grasp "the contradictory phenomenology of biopower", ending up necessarily in the idealizations and reifications of political theology. It "empties out every historically determined point of view, ethically situated and politically oriented in knowledge" (97); it seeks out "pacifications", excluding any possibility of "emergence-insurgence of new autonomous potentialities" (97); and is, finally, unable to think of both production of subjectivity but also of production in-common, as "a cooperation of singularities," "a productive multitude" (Negri, 2017: 98).

According to Hardt and Negri, none of these interpretations capture what is most important in Foucault's notion of biopolitics

> „Our reading not only identifies biopolitics with the localized productive powers of life – that is the production of affects and languages through social cooperation and the interaction of bodies and desires, the invention of new forms of the relation to the self and others, and so forth – but also affirms biopolitics as the creation of new subjectivities that are presented at once as resistance and de-subjectification" (Hardt and Negri 2013a: 239)

So, what is the way out of this dead-end street, both philologically, philosophically and - most importantly - politically? Hardt and Negri argue for an active infidelity towards Foucault; if one sticks too closely to the word of the letter of Foucault's definition of biopolitics and empirical research or how it works for and against subjects, one might miss

„(...) the potential for the production of alternative subjectivities“ (Hardt and Negri 2013a: 239), as this point is „implicit“ in Foucault's claim that „freedom and resistance are necessary preconditions for the exercise of power“ (Hardt and Negri 2013a: 239). As a mode of action upon action, being exercised only over free subjects, „(…) biopolitics appears in this light as an event or, really, as a tightly woven fabric of events of freedom“ (Hardt and Negri 2013a: 239). But, even without going into the minutiae of the argument - the tendency of contemporary relations of power to turn into relations of force, and the highly problematical Foucauldian idea of freedom as a precondition of power, both analysed in chapter four - Foucault here speaks primarily of biopolitics. If this is so, why had Foucault not even attempted to rethink the process of subjectivation in the line of biopolitics? It could be argued - with some philological pedantry that might be averse to the avid readers of *Empire* - that although this is true, that Hardt and Negri here rely far more heavily on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and their insistence on the productivity of bodies and desires, something of which Foucault was far more vary. For example, in a discussion with Gilles Deleuze in March 1972 (“Intellectuals and Power”), while agreeing that “(…) relationship between desire, power and interest are more complex than we think”, Foucault nonetheless disagrees with Deleuze on account that “it may happen that masses during certain periods (...) desire that certain people assume power” even if they exert it “at their expense, to the extreme of their death, their sacrifice, their massacre” (Foucault 1996: 80). On other occasions, he was far more forthright

> “I will say in passing that the definition [of desire] fabricated by Deleuze and Guattari is absolutely singular. But it’s a matter of knowing whether, despite the difference in meaning and against their very intentions, they risk nevertheless allowing the reintroduction of those medico-psychological ‘assumptions’ that the traditional sense of desire carries.” (Grace 2009: 74-75).

In explaining *lettre de cachet* and their role in “para-statist” and “para-juridical” apparatus of Ancien Regime Foucault “opens up” his concept of sovereignty. These letters were used by other individuals and not the sovereign himself, as they do not come from above but “from below”; though as Foucault says, they are not a “lightning expression of royal power traversing society” (Foucault 2015: 128) but includes different people in a

"circular process" to punish people who are unacceptable to local micro powers (128), they are preconditioned on certain acceptance of power and domination.[44] Hardt and Negri's whole promise of emancipation is thus built on a certain desire of the multitude to "rise up", basing their "materialistic theology" on the necessity of refusing to be governed, on the necessity of counter conduct. Hardt and Negri argue that biopolitical events pose "the production of life as an act of resistance, innovation and freedom" leading us back to the figure of „the multitude as a „political strategy" (Hard and Negri 2013a: 241). Trying to move away from "Italian theory" as far as possible, it seems that they come to the same conclusion via different roads, to the sense of inevitability and biopolitics as destiny, all dressed in a cloak of the language of class struggle; Hardt and Negri had not been able to precisely describe what „multitude as a strategy" would look like. „Biopolitics is a partisan relationship between subjectivity and history that is crafted by *a multitudinous strategy*, formed by events and resistances, and articulated by a discourse that link political decision making to the construction of bodies in struggle" (Hardt and Negri 2013a: 241). 20 years after the publication of *Empire* and yet no sign of multitude nor its strategies.

A somewhat different concept of the multitude, without all the strategic "intricacies" of Hardt and Negri, can be found in the work of Paolo Virno. Virno maintains that biopolitics refers to the fact that life "as a biological fact" (thus of species) became a matter of "political administration by the State" (Virno 2013b: 269). In line with Foucault's analysis of political rationality and its effects, Virno ascribes to biopolitics "a rational core" - unlike some, like Mbembe and hill and Montag. Virno argues that in the genealogy of biopolitics we should start from the concept of "labour power", which means "the potential to produce (…) potential, that is to say, aptitude, capacity, *dynamis*. Generic undetermined potential" (Virno 2013b 269). This mechanism of power has thus a "non-mythological origin" - a jab aimed at Agamben and Esposito - which

> "(...) can be tracked back, without hesitation, to the mode of being of the labour power. The practical importance taken on by potential as potential (the fact that it is

[44] This provides a possible glimpse into an alternative Foucauldian approach to the sovereign power as an intra-individual concept, a possibility which he will never develop. Recent publication of *Disorderly Families: Infamous Letters from the Bastille Archives* (2021) by Arlette Farge and Michel Foucault and its follow up *Archives of Infamy: Foucault on State Power in the Lives of Ordinary Citizens* (2021) edited by Nancy Luxon, will perhaps provide a possibility for expansion of Foucault's understanding of the operation of power during this period.

bought and sold as such), as well as its inseparability from the immediate corporeal existence of the worker, is the real foundation of bio-politics" (Virno 2013b: 271-2)

Virno quotes Marx: “Labour-power is the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical form, the living personality of the human being” (Marx in Virno 2013b: 270). Resonating Marx’s own work, Virno argues that capitalist buys potential for work, “the capacity for producing as such”, as labour power incarnates “(...) a fundamental category of philosophical thought: specifically, the dynamis” (Virno 2013b 270), as the “non-presence”, “that which is not real, becomes with capitalism “(...) an exceptionally important commodity” (Virno 2013b: 270), as the object of the purchase on the side of the capitalist

> “(...) is not a real entity (labour services actually executed) but something which, in and of itself, does not have an autonomous special-temporal existence (the generic ability to work). The paradoxical characteristic of labour-power (something unreal which is, however, bought and sold as any other commodity) are the premise of biopolitics” (Virno 2013b: 271)

Virno argues that we should read this purchase of the “potential” of labour-power to work as the purchase of “all capabilities”, be they “(…) linguistic competence, memory, mobility etc. Only in today’s world, in the post-Fordist era, is the reality of labour-power up to the task of realizing itself” (Virno 2013b: 270). Somewhat unsurprisingly, the real subsumption of labour power has thus brought about the conditions of “absolute capitalism” (Balibar); but equally, it had brought the conditions for the true emancipation of the multitude.[45] This form of labour which now combines the whole of Aristotelian tripartite

[45] Virno criticizes Marx's argument that the labour process is the purposeful activity aimed at the production of use-values and for failing to realize the necessity of worker-to-worker relationship as a precondition of socialized production. Virno is right to point out that Marx here describes the labour process as a „(…) natural process of organic renewal between humans and nature (...) without paying attention to historical-social relations“ (Virno 2013a: 261-262). And while right on this account, his own concept of post-Fordist general intellect and the role of language and communication of production seems to suffer from the very same affliction. It is unclear how the communication between workers – which according to Virno was „expunged“ from the model of capital accumulation by Marx – is itself not a historical phenomenon, mediated by a wholesome technological apparatus (everything from computers to programming languages, to different applications, big data etc.). These technologies would therefore form an element of the forces of production which themselves are, as Marx maintained, an effect of specific relations of production which gave birth to it – and are therefore an effect of specific relations of power. There is no „public“ in this relationship - only in a highly metaphorical sense, something Virno himself notices claiming that this public character is “also

conception of human activity, is *embodied* in the worker, in his whole faculties, constituting „a physiognomic trait of contemporary multitude“, biopolitics becomes a crucial aspect of capitalist accumulation

> “Capitalists are interested in the life of the worker, in the body of the worker, only for an indirect reason: this life, this body, are what contains the faculty, the potential, the dynamis. The living body becomes an object to be governed not for its intrinsic value, but because it is the substratum of what really matters: labour power as the aggregate of the most diverse human faculties (the potential for speaking, for thinking, for remembering, for acting, etc). Life lies at the centre of politics when the prize to be won is immaterial (and in-itself non present) labour power. For this reason, and this reason alone, it is legitimate to talk about “biopolitics” (Virno 2013b: 271)

Biopolitics within itself does not include “the management of labour-power”, “on the contrary: bio-politics is merely an effect, reverberation, or, in fact, one articulation of the primary fact – both historical and philosophical – which consists of the commerce of potential as potential” (Virno 2013b: 272) – when potential comes forward so does biopolitics, defending not speaking, but the ability to speak, not labour, about the potential for labour, etc. Following Marx's own intervention, when in *Capital* he proclaimed the coming of the age of industrial capitalism where only under 10 percent of English labourers worked in industries, Virno replicates the gesture. But he forgets to add that this talk of biopolitics due to the rise in immaterial labour power is far from certain. As the growth in exploitation rates and what could be called, however heretically from Marxist perspective, a return to formal subsumption which we witness around the globe today, this biopolitical strategy of capitalism - as well as its move towards an immaterial production - is *not* a one-way street. All these approaches of generally post-autonomist thought, as Maurizio

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inhibited and distorted” once intellect enters work - since as by now we attest to the fact that the whole production process Virno speaks about is *highly* privatized (the level of industrial espionage attests to this as does the further pressure of governments to push forward with the laws of the intellectual property, since the control of IP enables one to achieve the status of rentier). Virno himself concludes contrary to his own starting premise that “(…) general intellect manifests itself, today, as a perpetuation of wage labour, as a hierarchical system, as a pillar of the production of surplus value” (Virno, 2013a:263). Rather than “(…) annulling the co-actions of capitalist production” it figures as “(…) its most eminent resource (Virno 2013a: 263).

Lazzarato and Eric Alliez notice (2018), while correctly outlining the process of change of workplace and the role of the labour, make a fundamental mistake by approaching capitalism primarily a mode of production and not a mode of accumulation *by any means necessary*, including those strategies which Marx resigned to the prehistory of capitalism. This shift would make it impossible to draw political and philosophical conclusions from their insights as both Hardt and Negri and Virno do.

2.6. Conclusion

Whilst there are no contractual obligations in mentioning all who wrote about biopolitics, this thesis purposefully disregards several influential authors. This is done with reason and purpose. One of the first movements in this text was to create a "who's who" of biopolitics and the relationship he/she has with a specific reading of Foucault and Marx. This proved to be a step too far; one was creating an archive of constantly referential readings almost like entering a carnival mirror room. The room as well as mirrors seemed to be piling on and on creating reflections upon reflections. It is through this that I developed, as, among other issues, a method of heterodox reading. Instead of following the threads (analysing a logic), I tried to bring up front the Gordian knot not to sever it, but to situate it in relation to Marx and Foucault. This was the logic behind proposed authors analysed in this chapter. Not to diminish their importance or contribution but the limitation of this thesis as relating to specific questions about destruction and production in biopolitics. Any reading is a choice, but a heterodox reading is limiting and therefore exclusionary to a synthesis, but hospitable to a reading of relations. The relations of economy and politics towards life, when severed create analytical distinctions which provide possibilities of life as focal point of politics which leads Esposito to treat biopolitics as double-edged concept but an approach which can explain the dialectics of life and death but not it's destruction or the possibility of power retreating from life. The other exclusion of politics provides a specific political vitalism in economic production which through its mobilization creates a perpetuum mobile of activity; almost as a curse, productivity which creates but is almost closed of destruction. I will propose several other points of reference between Marx and Foucault which will delimit contemporary marriage of convenience between Marx and Foucault. This relationship will be far from productive, it will set ground for displaced analytics of power *over life*; a heterodox reading into the de-ontologizing of our understanding of violence which

presupposes a relation of force, where life enters as a set piece, towards an analysis into the fallout of destruction of life. All approaches historicise life and or contextualize life in its relaxation towards the future, but this is not the focus for a post-productive subjectivity. The following chapters will not open a possibility for an analysis of a subjectivity to come, but to reorganize our thinking about a reality already present. For this, Marx and Foucault need to be thought anew.

3

Marx's Capital, Foucault's Power. On productivist ontology

> "The Interest in Nietzsche and Bataille was not a way of distancing ourselves from Marxism or communism – it was the only path toward what we expected from communism. Our rejection of the world in which we lived was definitely not satisfied by Hegelian philosophy (…) Being a Nietzschean communist was really untenable and absurd. I was well aware of that."
>
> Foucault 1980: 249

> "It is impossible at the present time to write history without using a whole range of concepts directly or indirectly linked to Marx's thought and situating oneself within a horizon of thought which has been defined and described by Marx. One might even wonder what difference there could ultimately be between a historian and being a Marxist."
>
> Foucault 1980e: 53.

3.1. An untenable position of "Nietzschean communist"

The last couple of decades had seen a complete reinterpretation in the way Foucault's relation to Marx is viewed, resulting in 180 degrees turn. If we exclude the work done during

Foucault's lifetime, as well as a couple of outliers - mostly the work of Etienne Balibar, who tackled this relationship from time to time but not in a systematic fashion, as well as Mark Posters' *Foucault, Marxism, and History: Mode of Production Versus Mode of Information* (1985) - almost all the work on Foucault as reader and interpreter of Marx are of newer date: Bidet (2016), Mardsen (1999) Macherey (2015). One of the pivoting points in this relationship was the publication of Hardt and Negri's *Empire* in 2001 which transformed the image of Foucault from that of a staunch anti-Marxist of the governmentality studies in the late 1980s and early 1990s. What *Empire* also did is that it lay the groundwork for *a* specific reading of Marx and Foucault, the one in which Marx's analysis of the mode of production is supplanted with Foucault's analysis of subjectification, supposedly a "more" materialist theory of subjectivity than that provided by Marxism itself in its many different variants - from Freudo-Marxism to Althusserian Marxism. As I will argue, this reinterpretation of Foucault and Marx lays the path for the *almost* infinite productive capacities of capitalism - what Marx will call "the real subsumption of labour under capital", which as Balibar points out, in the end Marx decided to cut out of *Capital* due to its philosophical and especially political consequences (Balibar 2017). This analysis of capital's mode of production, while retaining its dialectics, views capital as constantly reinventing itself through the incessant production of subjectivities. The boundaries and deficiencies of this conclusion, both theoretical and political, are thought through by different authors working within same theoretical language, among others, most prominently by Maurizio Lazzarato and Franco Berardi Bifo.[46] These authors and some others seem to come to the precipice of something far more problematic which they do not formulate explicitly in all its consequences: the question of productivity itself as an *ontological presupposition* of the operation of capital in all its different variations. Everything from Marx's conclusion that capitalism creates its own gravediggers, to the idea that its drive towards production leads to multiple social "breaking points" (out of which accelerationism is born),[47] the incessant reinvention and re-ordering of societies that

[46] A couple of authors came to similar conclusions without Foucault's conceptual apparatus (which with its focus on productive character of power merely hinders these conclusions, see: Jacques Camatte, *Capital and community: the results of the immediate process of production and the economic work of Marx*. London: Unpopular books, 1988. An edited version available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/camatte/capcom/index.htm

[47] The first to introduce this idea was of course Karl Marx with his view that the introduction of market relations and free trade acts as an accelerator of social (class) conflict. See: Benjamin Noys (2014), *Malign Velocities: Accelerationism and Capitalism.* London: Zero books.

instigates resistance, are all permeated by this incessant movement forwards effectuated by capital accumulation. I will argue that this is a consequence of the fact that Foucault, in spite of his own claims and the usual interpretations, developed his own conceptual apparatus of productive power not in *contrast* to that of Marx's, especially the one he develops in *Capital.* As Feldman points out, it is thus necessary to move from "panopto-centric" reading of *Discipline and Punish* in order to rethink the emergence and formation of disciplines - and also biopolitics - in their relation to capitalism, as Foucault himself explicitly points out more than once (Feldman, 2018; Foucault, 2000b; Foucault, 2012a). Taking seriously Foucault's somewhat underdeveloped nominalist insistence on the existence of multiple logics of capital, these rethought concepts should be used to analyse not "capitalism" or "capitalist society" (Feldman) - terms neither Marx nor Foucault use (at least as concepts) - but power relations as *multiple strategies of accumulation* that coagulate and form something which can be called a capitalist mode of accumulation.[48] General logic of capitalism will thus be juxtaposed to Foucauldian "multiple" logics, underlined by different forms of power making up their infrastructure.

The aim of this chapter will be to disentangle the conditions and effects of the use of Marx *by* Foucault and (different) uses of Marx *with* Foucault. This work is built around the rejection of a painstaking "archaeological" reconstruction of an approach that Foucault supposedly held towards Marx. These endeavours, while of notable scholastic worth, would ascribe to Foucault a singular position towards Marx' work, regardless of current interests and projects he had. In place of this I will attempt to put forward an interpretation of Foucault's use of Marx to *certain ends* and propose a strategic and heterodox reading around the margins of theoretical edifices of Marxism and Foucauldianism: we will attempt to enter these not through the main doors but through windows, chimney and even by blowing the hole in its walls. Following pages will provide the theoretical groundwork for the next chapter by thinking through the discourse of "Foucauldian-Marxism" by disentangling the three knots where Foucault's and Marx's interests meet: singular body, multiple bodies (the population) and the question of time and temporality. These are not chosen randomly;

[48] At times one could almost mistake Foucault for Marx - sans Hegelian language of alienation, of course - when he argues that capitalist social totality arises out of "the mutual influence of conscious individuals on one another", as these interactions "(...) produce an *alien* social power standing above them, produce their mutual interaction as a process and power independent of them" (Marx 1993: 197). Just as there is Foucault that relinquishes his nominalism, from time to time, there is also Marx who embraces it in place of the logical structure of his work, such as in *Capital.*

according to both Foucault and Marx, these are the vectors upon which different technologies of power are exercised in order to "accumulate men" whose bodies are then to be made productive. This move is necessary in order to re-think the relation between Foucault and Marx in line with what Balibar proposed as a reading strategy that leads to "disjunctive synthesis": a new, almost always shifting grounds for a dialogue from which different concepts and themes may emerge that do not aim to relinquish their internal heterogeneity. At the end of this chapter these grounds will be defined by a couple of propositions: the refusal of teleology and the acceptance of contingency; the necessity to shift the focus from capitalism as mode of production to capitalism as *mode of accumulation*; and the focus on "the return" of the force and the sovereign power of "subtraction" (Foucault) in the guise of primitive accumulation - or, as Harvey proposed a new name and role for this old Marxist concept, "accumulation by dispossession" (2003).

3. 2. Stuck between Marx and Marxism

> "27 (September 1975), night of the protest in front of the Spanish embassy in Paris. A Spanish student asks Foucault for a lecture on Marx, to which Foucault angrily replies: "Don't mention Marx to me! I don't want to hear about him anymore. Talk to someone whose job it is. Someone who's paid for it. Someone who is a functionary of it.
> Me, I'm finished with Marx".
>
> Claude Mauriac, *Le Temps immobile*,
> Vol. III, p. 581, in: Foucault 1994b: 47.

Covering a wide field of interests, from medical history, history of mental illness, science all to antiquity, it seems that Foucault was trying as hard as possible to move away from those fields of interests shared by Marx and far more problematically, at least for Foucault, attributed to his multiple disciples. Tracing Foucault's relationship to the Marx's

work and legacy is thus difficult due to several reasons. As it will start to be obvious from the following pages, Foucault's ambivalence to Marx's work – partially due to his nominalism and partially to the unresolvable ontological issues – is impossible to be completely eradicated, and to be fully subsumed in a simple philosophical discourse, in which all the threads of his arguments would be woven into a single tapestry. Not only do we have to trace multiple ways in which Foucault developed his own conceptual apparatus in relation to Marx's work, but, when dealing with Marx's own writings he was also engaging with his historical, philosophical, and political legacy towards which he had different relations during his career. Another obstacle for this endeavour is posed by the now pretty large secondary literature. Taking a quick glance one can discern two tendencies in the literature that aims to situate Foucault in regards to Marx; one dominant in the 70's and resurging again, in a completely different form and context, in the early 2000's. Exemplified by the seminal work of Hardt and Negri's *Empire* (2000), which either attempts to find a strong Marx(ism) in Foucault, provide a Marxist reading and interpretation of his concepts or, as Hardt and Negri attempted to, produce a new theoretical discourse that would more or less seamlessly combine the work of the two (Negri 2017). The opposite tendency is present in the predominantly Anglophone academic reception that attempted to divorce Foucault from any kind of Marx and interpreting his work as a counter-discourse to Marxism, of which the seminal example is the publication of the massively influential *The Foucault Effect* in 1991.[49] As is the case with the governmentality studies in general (Weidner 2009), one does not have to engage in symptomatic reading to notice the obvious: the above mentioned edited publication dealing mainly with Foucault's work on governmentality and imprisonment (undertaken between 1977 and 1979), strongly posits indifference of Marx's work to Foucault to the point that it bundles the far and between references to Marx and Marxism under the same index (303), disregarding the intricacies of the details emerging from Foucault's detailed and attentive reading of Marx and even (certain) Marxists. But more importantly, it completely divests Foucault's problematic from that of Marx, a move that deprives his most famous conceptual innovations such as "disciplines" or "biopolitics" of historical, theoretical, and even genealogical context.

[49] All these attempts have to be situated not only within the general socio-political context but also intellectual one, defined by post-Autonomia in Italy and Britain's New Labour of the 1990's.

Nonetheless, if one starts checking the index of Foucault's published works for Marx' name, there is a clear discrepancy between the number of times Foucault refers to Marx and the number of times this connection is attributed by editors of his posthumous work or from those that conducted the interviews. Of course, this does not mean that Marx was unimportant to Foucault. In the 60's and 70's, Marxism was, if not outright dominant or hegemonic than at least one of the most important philosophical and intellectual discourses in Europe and France.[50] Foucault himself describes the pre-68' political and public life of France as one of "generalized hyper-Marxification", a period of an "inordinate glorification of Marx" (Foucault 2000c: 270):[51] "(…) before 68', at least in France, you had to be as a philosopher a Marxist, or a phenomenologist or structuralist and I adhered to neither of these dogmas" (Foucault 1996d: 375). In another interview, he mockingly comments the French intellectual life as that of continuous wedding ceremony: the most sought-after bride - Marxism - "marrying itself" to "different suitors", such as phenomenology, structuralism, psychoanalysis etc. (Foucault 1996: 348-361).

If one was to search for places where Foucault took upon himself to comment – though rather reluctantly and usually with some obvious annoyance – on different aspects of Marxist philosophy, it seems that, with some obvious exceptions - from, on one hand, a damning condemnation of Marxism in the *Order of Things* to an engaging dialogue and development of Marx's own insights in *Discipline and Punish* - it would certainly be his interviews and public talks. For example, in the above cited interview conducted by an Italian Marxist journalist Duccio Trombadori in late 1978 and first published in Italian journal *Il Contriburo* in 1980, Foucault distinguishes between "Marx's economics" and "Marxism in general", of which he supposedly "never spoke" of or, if he did, he used it only as a reference to "the economic theory" of Marxism (Foucault 2000c: 269). Collection of these interviews will be translated to English in 1991 under the deceptive title *Remarks on Marx,* since within these interviews there are scant references to Marx himself, though at least Foucault does engage with Marxist discourse – its prominent intellectuals and philosophers, Italian and French Communist Parties, as well as Marxist concept of politics and power etc. (Foucault 1991). As in other occasions, in these interviews Foucault goes on

[50] This theme of the problematic nature of the different „marriages" of Marxism is further developed by Etienne Balibar (1994, 2017).
[51] Balibar refrains from this diagnosis of pre-68 France, see: Bartold and Balibar, 2019.

to differentiate not only between different strands of Marxism – be it "Maoist", "Marxist-Leninists", "Neo-Marxists" (1980: 268-9), "Freudo-Marxism of Reich and Marcuse", and in a confounding category of its own, "Marxist economics" (1980*:* 268) – as both theory *and* practice. In these interviews Foucault reverses the relationship between practice and theory, arguing that one of most important roles of European communist parties was to define what is (was) Marxism. Thus in 1975, at the very end of a prolonged period of highly productive engagement with Marxism whose intricacies are our object, Foucault dismisses this grasp of political nomenclature as a set of "*communistological* rules" which define "(...) how you must use Marx so as to be declared by them to be a Marxist" (1980*:* 53). On other occasions he reserved a surprising praise for some of the Marxist "schools", whose particular theoretical inventions were an object of his critique: the case in point is his almost underserving praise for the Frankfurt school going so far as to argue that it was good that he didn't read them since then he wouldn't have written what he had, though its authors fall within the discourse of "the repressive hypothesis", the critique upon which Foucault "built" his productive concept of power. Regardless of his views on Marxism, a discourse whose complexity Foucault was well aware of - made up not only of different theoretical aspects, a complex of statements, movements, both academic, philosophical, and theological, in the end all referring to Marx as a "guiding principle", or a point of coagulation of meaning, what is of our interest is his relationship and use of Marx's work. For some, this differentiation between Marx and Marxism might seem strenuous and untenable; but it was certainly not for Foucault. And yet, just as with the discourse of Marxism, his ideas are not clear cut.

3. 3. Foucault *sans* Marx, Foucault *avec* Marx

For a long time, at least up till the publications of lectures of the early 1970s, *The Order of Things* was one of the rare places of Foucault's systemic engagement with Marx and Marxism at length. Situating it within the "general thought" or "episteme" of the 19th century, Foucault gave what seemed to be a definitive critique of Marxist discourse. *The Order of Things*, Foucault thus aimed to "(…) to react against a certain hagiographic glorification of Marxist political economy due to the historical good fortune of Marxism as political ideology" (1980*:* 269). In this regard there is hardly anything surprising, since

Foucault held these views for some time. In an interview given in 1967 following the publication of *The Archaeology of Knowledge,* Foucault doubled down on these comments. Now in a clear opposition to Althusser, Foucault claims that Marx does not mark the "epistemological break", especially in relation to political economy: regardless of the critical aim of his work and "(…) the importance of critical modifications Marx brings to Ricardo's analysis" Marx does not in any fundamental way escape "(…) the epistemological space inaugurated by Ricardo" (Foucault 1996:21). This "Ricardian" epistemological space will soon prove to be crucial and provide the ground for Foucault's own critique of political economy, distinct from that of Marx; political economy and liberalism will loom large and provide the background for his research in the early 1970's culminating in the *Discipline and Punish* and *Birth of Biopolitics,* and the new forms of power that rely on the idea of freedom.

The question to be posed about Marxist legacy then does not hinge on these "critical modifications" Marx introduced, but in what ways Marx fails to wrestle away from the grip of Ricardian epistemology? Situated within the same vision of historical trajectory, according to Foucault Marxism simply "reverses" the bourgeoisie "pessimism" of David Ricardo, for whom History, defined by perpetual scarcity (of resources), attains destabilization time after time. In Ricardo's grim prognosis

> "History will have led man's finitude to that boundary-point at which it will appear at last in its pure form (…) it will have no more effort to make to provide a future for itself, and no new lands to open up for future men; subjected to the great erosion of History, man will gradually be stripped of everything that might hide him from his own eyes" (Foucault 1994: 259)

For Marx, on the contrary, it is history which "plays a negative role"

> "It is History itself, in fact, that augments the pressures of need, that causes want to increase, obliging men constantly to work and to produce more and more, although they receive no more than what is indispensable to them to subsist, and sometimes a little less. So that, with time, the product of labour accumulates, while ceaselessly eluding those who accomplish that labour: these latter produce infinitely more than the share of value that returns to them in the form of wages, and thus provide capital with the possibility of buying further labour. In this way the number of those

> maintained by History at the limit of their conditions of existence ceaselessly grows; and because of this, those conditions become increasingly more precarious until they approach the point where existence itself will be impossible; the accumulation of capital, the growth of enterprises and of their capacities, the constant pressure on wages, the excess of production, all cause the labour market to shrink, lowering wages and increasing unemployment. Thrust back by poverty to the very brink of death, a whole cast of men experience, nakedly, as it were, what need, hunger, and labour are. What others attribute to nature or to the spontaneous order of things, these men are able to recognize as the result of a history and the alienation of a finitude that does not have this form. For this reason, they are able - they alone are able - to re-apprehend this truth of the human essence and so restore it. But this can be achieved only by the suppression, or at least the reversal, of History as it has developed up to the present: then alone will a time begin which will have neither the same form, nor the same laws, nor the same mode of passing" (Foucault 1994: 259-260)

In the revolutionary promise of Marxism history, "(…) by dispossessing man of his labour, causes the positive form of his finitude to spring into relief (…)", finally liberating him by his own "(…) material truth" (Foucault 1994: 261). Breaking with the classical episteme, Marxism continues in line of Smith and Ricardo and focuses on the problematic of labour and production, no longer focused on wealth, and needs. Moreover, since it defines labour as a prime mover and a force beyond other dominant concepts of political economy, capital, as well as a historical force of change, it seems not only to be a continuation of political economy but its most extreme expression, formed around the simultaneous ideas of "historicity of economics (in relations to the forms of production)", "the finitude of human existence (in relation to scarcity and labour)", and "(...) the fulfilment of the end to History - whether in the form of an indefinite deceleration or in that of radical reversal)" (Foucault 1994:262). Thus

> "(A)t the deepest level of Western knowledge, Marxism introduced no real discontinuity; it found its place without difficulty, as a full, quiet, comfortable and, goodness knows, satisfying form for a time (its own), within an epistemological

arrangement that welcomed it gladly (since it was this arrangement that was in fact making room for it) and that it, in return, had no intention of disturbing and, above all, no power to modify, even one jot, since it rested entirely upon it. Marxism exists in nineteenth century thought like a fish in water: that is, it is unable to breathe anywhere else" (Foucault 1994: 261-2)

In lectures delivered in Rio de Janeiro in 1973, during his research on penal systems of the emerging capitalist economies, Foucault broadened the scope of this project of critique of Marxism by moving away from the critique of the triptych history-labour-scarcity in order to focus on the process of subjectivation through work and its refusal

> "(…) labour is absolutely not man's concrete essence or man's existence in its concrete form. In order for men to be brought into labour, tied to labour, an operation is necessary, or a complex series of operations, by which men are effectively – not analytically but synthetically – bound to the production apparatus for which they labour. It takes this operation, or this synthesis effected by a political power, for man's essence to appear as being labour" (Foucault 2000d: 86).

And yet, once again the destination is the same; in no way does Marx represent the "break" with classical political economy, and Foucault is on the verge of proclaiming Marx a kind of silent partner of Ricardo & co. Hegel and post-Hegelians, classical economists and "Marx of a certain period" all share a view according to which labour represents man's essence, a primordial sin for a Nietzschean like Foucault. Even more, at this time Foucault had already turned to an inquiry into production of this anthropological "fact"

> "So, I don't think we can simply accept the traditional Marxist analysis, which assumes that labour being man's concrete essence, the capitalist system is what transforms that labour into profit, into hyper profit (*sur-profit*) or surplus value. The fact is that capitalism penetrates much more deeply into our existence" (Foucault 2000d: 86).

The conclusions that can be drawn from this: Marx himself was unaware of the extent to which capital and its power grasps men and produces effects to the point that Marxist whole counter-discourse is developed not only *within* the landscape of political economy - which

in part, Marx manages to question by submitting to critique some of its concepts, object, and myths - but is in the end nonetheless unable to detach itself from. Marx's own anthropology is therefore the end-product of relations of capitalist power. According to Foucault, discourse of Marxism is *fundamentally* flawed; its battle against liberalism and political economy was lost the moment it had accepted their epistemological terrain, defined by "scarcity," "labour" and anthropological truths, and history as a plane of realization of its essence. Marx's conceptual innovations, regardless how inventive, were realized on the already established terrain defined by the fundamental relation between Man and his work and history, a profoundly "doxological" - and one might even be tempted to say theological investigation. It seemed that by finishing with a damning critique, claiming that "(...) their (i.e., Marxist) controversies may have stirred up a few waves and caused a few surface ripples; but they are no more than storms in a children's paddling pool." (Foucault 1994: 262), Foucault banished Marxism back to the 19th century for good. Classical political economy and Marxism, which developed as its supposed counter-discourse, share a common epistemological terrain that defines the relationship of anthropology to History; one can hardly imagine a more damning critique and dismissal of Marx's legacy than proclaiming his "critique of political economy" - not only a subtitle of his most famous work, but also, what he himself held as his seminal contribution to political thought - a quasi-critique, dead on arrival. Marx does not end up breaking away from the same *episteme*, the same realm of knowledge instituted by David Ricardo (1996: 21). For Foucault of *The Order of Things*, Marx was less the name of the event and more of a continuation of Ricardo and the epistemological force of political economy, a verdict that will soon change.

And yet, regardless of what seemed to be a damning critique, Foucault will turn to Marx's work soon. It seems that 1968 and the blow it gave both to the politics of Communist parties of Western Europe, especially that of France and Italy, and its political theory, had "freed" Marx for different readings and another kind of use. Regardless of sometimes ruthless criticism of Marx, Foucault was always careful to distinguish the object of this criticism, Marx from Marxism; in a true Marxist fashion, he insisted not only on a clear distinction between different strands of Marxist discourse, but on different "types" of Marx. What posthumous publication of lectures at *College de France* and other minor texts (interviews, roundtable discussions etc.) show is that it he held parts of Marx work to be full of potential lines of thought, but that they were systematically extinguished in order for the

"discourse" of Marxism as a system and theory of politics, society, and history to emerge. It bears repeating that Foucault's use of Marx's underdeveloped ideas and concepts, as well as his comments, however off hand and haphazard, points out that for Foucault Marx's most important theoretical interventions are seldom recognized as such. This conclusion goes much further than the commonplace criticism that it was supposedly the Communist parties and its official intellectuals that decided upon whether one is Marxist or not; here it seems as Foucault addresses the *possibility* of Marxist discourse *as such*, as a system of rules and enunciations informing practice, that necessarily needs to either absorb or eliminate certain aspects of Marx's own work.

Among others, Foucault seems to be much less critical in relation to Marx's social theory and political practice he puts forward, somewhat more reservedly "supposing" that "(…) Marx introduced into the historical and political consciousness of men a radical break and that the Marxist theory of society inaugurated an entirely new epistemological field" (Foucault 1996: 21). By questioning the interviewers claim that in Marx one can find the idea of "(…) the harmonic space of totality" (Foucault 1996: 21), Foucault seems to follow his teacher Althusser, rejecting one of more commonplace approaches to Marxism as a discourse belonging to a post-Hegelian philosophy obsessed with the problem of totality (of the social). On the contrary, Foucault claims that Marx is first and foremost a philosopher of conflict - which, fortunately for Foucault, he failed to think through in all of its consequences since Marx was constantly returning to and emphasizing class *over* struggle. Nonetheless, Foucault's Marx introduces a radical *division* within the social, whose particular Marxian form - that of class struggle - according to Foucault emerged from the French racial wars of the 17th century. But even more surprising, in the *Archaeology of Knowledge*, as somewhat of a sequel to *The Order of Things*, Foucault goes so far to proclaim that, alongside Nietzsche, it was Marx and Freud that initiated "the decentring of the subject", one of the themes central to Foucault's philosophical project. It is at places like these that the project of Foucault's Marx falls apart; only a couple of years before, as we saw, Marxism was under attack as a vast anthropological project.

Therefore, the question of the decentring of subject, the central idea of struggle and conflict for understanding of social relations, focus on the body and the different modalities of power is what Foucault all finds in Marx; and all of these were underdeveloped or abandoned by Marx in his pursuit of the all-encompassing discourse on capitalist mode of

production. At the same time at this point one can see the contours of Foucault's project emerging as, what Etienne Balibar will propose, "a different kind of materialism".

As Balibar maintains, we should be wary of judging the role of Marx's work and Marxism for Foucault only by addressing and analysing those theoretical places where Foucault directly references Marx (Balibar 1992). Not only did he claim that "(...) there is also a sort of game I play (…) I often quote concepts, texts, and phrases from Marx, but without feeling obliged to add the authenticating label of a footnote (…) I quote Marx without saying so" (Foucault 1980e: 52). This "subterranean" Marxian "stream" broke the surface in 1970s, as was made obvious with the posthumous publication of Foucault's *College de France* lectures – from *Penal Theories and Institutions* (1971-72), through *Punitive Society* (1972-73), *Psychiatric Power* (1973-4) culminating in 1975 with what is usually considered his "most" Marxist work - *Discipline and Punish*. While up to the publication of *Discipline* Foucault opened the theme of "productive" power with the introduction of the concept of "anatomo-politics", i.e., discipline, he continued to think with Marx, as engagement with his work is palpable in *Society Must Be Defended* (1975-76) lectures and the *History of Sexuality* (1976), in which Foucault opened up the question of biopolitics. The translation of lectures Foucault delivered between 1971-76 proved to play an enormous role in redefining Foucault's legacy, opening different pathways to his published work by showing the process of production of his theoretical framework as we see how different themes emerge, as bubbles beneath the surface, often to burst much later through that very surface, now rethought and reconceptualised, formulated in a different theoretical language. In these lectures, Foucault took on, directly and indirectly, different aspects of Marx' thought, from the question of the role of the law and the primitive accumulation (Foucault 2015; Foucault 2021),[52] multiple conceptions of power in *Capital* (Foucault 2003), and the genealogical inquiry into the idea of class struggle (Foucault 2003, Foucault 2007). But the interests Foucault shows for Marx is unorthodox and far away from the aspects of Marx that make the cornerstone of Marxism; not so much the law of accumulation, rate of exploitation or surplus value, but the way capitalism is entangled in

[52] Foucault defines French Revolution as the "triumph of the contract" (Foucault 2015: 157) which takes down the "whole old armature of feudal rights" opening up the way for a "new system of juridical appropriation" and "massive purchases" that lead to the "disappearance of community rights, the heaths, and aims at a more intensive exploitation of the land" (Foucault 2015: 157).

and transformed by different relations of power, how different forms of capitalist power rely on another sort of "infrastructure" remaining "hidden" in plain sight for the gaze of Marxists.

Published lectures of the 1970's seems to cast a different light on Foucault's relationship to Marx, that point to a profound entanglement of interests and themes between the two (Balibar 1992). Some posit this shift of interest slightly earlier. According to one of the prominent earlier commentators on Foucault's relation to Marxism, Dominique Lecourt, the publication of *Archaeology of Knowledg*e in 1969 is "(…) a decisive turning point in Foucault's work", a juncture from which he started to carry out "(...) a certain number of analysis of astonishing value from the standpoint of historical materialism," reproducing "(…) in his own language (…) – but in displacement – concepts which function in the Marxist science of history" (Lecourt 1975:189-190). In Lecourt's interpretation, Foucault's move towards historical materialism was initiated predominantly due to the internal limits of his previous structuralist approach to the study of knowledge, spelling out a need for a new approach to the "materiality of the discourse", i.e., material relations, especially between (local) knowledge and bodies, that form the possibility of more abstract, general discourse and *episteme*. Now, whether this Foucault's theoretical move in analysis of the production of knowledge, which in the end, according to Lecourt, was faced with "difficulties (…) and eventual failure" can find the solution to its problems *only* in "(…) the field of historical materialism" (190), as he claims, is certainly up for debate. In the talk with Gilles Deleuze published under the title "Intellectuals and Power" (1996: 74-81), Foucault's own remarks - expectedly so - point to the opposite, claiming not only that "(…) Marx and Freud cannot satisfy our desire for understanding this enigmatic thing which we call power", but that, unlike power which "remains a total enigma", "(…) we now know with reasonable certainty who exploits others, who receives the profits, which people are involved, and we know how these funds are reinvested" (Foucault 1996: 79). While the second part of his statement about our "certainty" of knowledge on exploitation and its conditions deserves utmost scrutiny, we will return to it later. Having in mind Foucault's work up to late 1960's Lecourt's point might have a standing. But, once more having the luxury of historical hindsight, it is hard to completely disapprove the interpretation put forward by Balibar which argues that Foucault's work can be interpreted as a move toward "(…) a certain kind of materialism" (Balibar), but *not* that of Marx. What Foucault and Marx share is the view of

social relations as *relations of force*, and they approach power not as substance but *in relation.* But according to Balibar

> "(...) these arguments are not understood in the same way. One could say that Foucault understands them simply as having an external nature, which means at the same time that "the opposing aims" in a strategic conflict destroy, neutralize, mutually reinforce or modify one another, but do not form a superior unity or individuality. On the contrary, for Marx, the condition for the development of a conflict is the *interiorisation of the relationship* itself, in such a way that the antagonistic terms become the function or the bearers of the relationship (…) Marx conceive of class relations as being internally irreconcilable, as relations from which the dominated can escape only by destroying the subjugating relationship itself, and thereby transforming themselves into different individuals from those who "constituted" that relationship" (Balibar 1992: 52).[53]

Balibar claims that Foucault's theoretical movement is away from Marxism in order to make a "(…) tactical alliance with Marx" (Balibar, 1992: 53). Balibar goes so far to say that in *La volonté de savoir* in 1976 – and we might argue even sooner, already from the College de France lectures on *Penal Theories and Institutions* (1972) and *The Punitive Society* (1973) if not sooner – Foucault develops something which "would not be altogether wrong" to call *a* historical materialism. In the early 1970's Foucault started to work on the margins of historical materialism, neither leaving it completely behind nor definitively resolving to work completely and exclusively within its confines. The reason behind this *infinite moving away* and *towards Marx* – which will ultimately be resolved in the late 1970's by completely abandoning the themes and perspectives within which he worked through the problematics of power – are not so much due to Marxist epistemology and its problematic of ideology but due to incongruous ontologies, especially the question of nominalism (Balibar, 1992).[54] For Balibar it is impossible to create a "singular" theoretical

[53] Lemke argues that after *History of Sexuality* this observation does not hold up since Foucault afterwards develops his conception of social conflict in the direction indicated by Marx, that is towards an "interiorization of the relationship itself" (Lemke 2019:144), via concepts of "ethics" and "care of the self".

[54] This paragraph shows off Foucauldian nominalism by distinguishing between "capitalism" and "capital", a distinction present in Marx' work. Different ways in which clash between the process of capital's valorisation and the forms this accumulation takes in different places and times is conceptualized - resulting, for example,

discourse – what, following in the manner of Freudo-Marxism we could call "Foucauldian-Marxism" – without falling into theoretical contradictions, ultimately with serious political effects. According to him both Marx and Foucault lay claim to "historical materialism"; but they do this on radically different grounds since their understanding of the structure of conflict and (social) practice is fundamentally different and irreconcilable. While both claim that power relations are immanent and "that power comes from below", they understand this in a significantly different manner. While Marx regards practice as an external phenomenon, producing effects outside itself and only then, as a consequence, effects of subjectification, for a nominalist like Foucault power is productive since it primarily acts on *bodies* and only then produces effects of objective nature such as knowledge (Balibar, 1992).

3.4. On Marx(ian) beginnings of productive power: the "twin birth" of wage labour and prison

"Prison is, in a way, very close to something like a wage, but
at the same time it is opposite of a wage"
Foucault 2015: 71.

It all starts with a prison.

The Punitive Society, a series of lectures which Foucault delivered at College of France from January until March 1973, show fully why Foucault's posthumously published lectures had garnered such a prominent role in our understanding of his overall *oeuvre*. In the lectures of the previous year, *Penal Theories and Institutions* (1972-73), Foucault had begun a prolonged period of intensive engagement with Marxism, which would culminate in 1975 with the publication of S*urveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison.* Those that only

with the concept of "mode of production" – provides the axis around which different strands of Marxism coagulate. This, for example, led to those types of Marxist thought focusing on the historicity of capitalist accumulation, developed by the likes of Rosa Luxemburg and, later, Immanuel Wallerstein. At this point, as Feldman notices, Foucault was already under the influence of Balibar's work on the mode of production. (Feldman 2018).

read *Discipline and Punish* or are introduced to this publication via secondary literature would surely be surprised that Foucault's work on these themes starts with a surprisingly intricate dialogue with Marx. While this publication is rightly thought of as a crowning achievement of his work in the 70s, returning to his early lectures and "minor" publications - beside the two mentioned lectures, either untranslated, unpublished or left behind only in the form of lecture-notes - reveals an intricate - if sometimes jagged - dialogue, with multiple pathways sometimes leading into latter concepts and sometimes into different theoretical dead-ends. Though he will later describe this period as being defined by "repressive power", the next couple of years will prove to be fruitful as they will see the conceptual innovations that will come to define Foucault's work - major themes of productiveness of power under different forms and names.

Foucault starts of these lectures with a proposal to leave the 19th century classification of societies according to the way they "dealt with the dead" in favour of a

> "(…) the different fate they reserve for those of the living whom they wish to be rid of, according to the way in which they bring those who seek to evade power under control, to how they react to those who in one way or another overstep, break, or get around the laws" (Foucault 2015: 2)

This paragraph bridges Foucault's interest from the 1960's, the discourses about those unwanted, the mad and the diseased, with what is to come in the following decade. In the process this opens up the theme of the "living" which – juxtaposed with the "dead" – conjures up in the mind of a reader a quite unexpected Marxian overtones, which will prove not to be the last ones in these lectures. Most obviously, by intertwining the themes of law and punishment – themes at the same time both close to Marx and distant from the discourse of Marxism – with "underclass" and "vagabondage", a class that shares many facets of its 19th century corollary, Marx's lumpenproletariat", "(...) the lowest sediment of relative surplus population (…) [which] dwells in the sphere of pauperism" (Marx 1990: 797), it seems that Foucault starts his prolonged engagement with Marx in the late 1972 - early 1973.

Other themes and concepts, well known to even the Foucault's reader, are discussed in different order: "law" and "penal tactics", the emergence of "criminal social enemy" and the "delinquent"; civil war as a "framework for power struggles"; "sequestration of time"

and “disciplinary power”; “moralisation” of “the working classes” and their “subjection”. Underpinning all that, there is the emerging theme of the “non-repressive” concept of power for now dubbed as “productive power” (Foucault, 2015), a somewhat amorphous concept that will take shape in the coming years. And yet around halfway through *On Punitive Society*, following lectures on different juridical forms and historical forms of punishment Foucault abruptly shifts to the theme of primitive accumulation and the emergence of abstract labour.[55] This is unexpected due to the fact that, when addressing primitive accumulation, Foucault always highlighted its inherent *destructiveness* – of communities and previous modes of subjectivation – which preceded its productivity, which seemed to be highlighting the repressive role of the law and state apparatus. A very non-orthodox start for the development of analysis of productive power, a period upon which Foucault will later reflect on as being still defined by the repressive concept of power: somewhat surprisingly, Foucault starts on his trajectory towards his most known themes of the 1970s via *the* Marxist concepts of primitive accumulation and *abstract labour time.* It thus seems that the critique levelled at Foucault for supposedly ignoring this violent beginning of capitalism by Maurizio Lazzarato and Eric Alliez (2018) as well Silvia Frederici (2003) is more or less unwarranted or should be followed with an asterisk. In hindsight this point of bifurcation will prove to be crucial in the development of Foucauldian analysis, since from this moment on Foucault seemed to be set on the path of “productive power”. Rather than returning to this fork in the road and asking the dreadful “what if” question, I will rather attempt to think to what extent did this refusal of both repressive and war model of power diminish the capacity of Foucauldian discourse to explain the developments of contemporary capitalism and all its different forms of accumulation? Are these models truly antithetical, as Foucault himself sems to think, or is it possible that these be thought and used together?

To return to the problem of the prison: why this concern with vagabondage and why this proposed solution? In what way does it relate to both primitive accumulation and

[55] It is interesting to note a sort of “preventive” warning against Giorgio Agamben’s concept of *homo sacer* and *bare life* (Agamben 1998) in Foucault’s firm refusal of the abstraction of the practices of exclusion into a single concept which “remains within the sphere of representation and (...) is unable to take into account (...) the struggles, relations and specific operations of power on the basis of which, precisely, exclusion takes place (...) In other words, we not only lack the historical, political mechanism of power, but we risk being led astray regarding the instance that excludes, since exclusion (seems) to refer to something like a social consensus of rejection“ (Foucault 2015:3). Once again it is Foucault's nominalism that gets in the way of grand theoretical gestures and proclamations; though, as we know, from time to time he is eager to leave his nominalism behind.

abstract labour? To answer at least one of these questions Foucault will turn to physiocratic thought, to which he ascribes a fundamental shift in the perception of work and value. The novelty of the discourse of physiocrats - which he already addressed in *The Order of Things* - is that it identifies work as being defined by an *overabundance* of opportunities; at this moment in time, to speak the language of the science of the emerging economy, the supply of labourers was bay far outmatched by the demand. This leads physiocrats to the conclusion that "(...) work should precede and provide for subsistence, not the other way around" (2015: 47). Unemployment thus does not exist as a collective problem and is almost exclusively seen as a personal "refusal of work", of which vagabondage as labour's mobility is one of most toxic forms. But, in return, the economy is under the influence of vagabonds as their unlawful mobility produces mostly negative effects: making shortage (or excess) of labour in different parts of the country, avoidance of personal taxes, leaving their own children behind and therefore re-producing an "idle population" etc. As the importance of economic "performance" gains hold, we witness the shift in the legal discourse of the emerging liberalism and the concept of the "criminal social enemy", marauding the lands and wreaking havoc on the economy by introducing disbalance in the quantity of work, etc. Starting points for Foucault's analysis of punishment and recodification of law in the 18th and 19th century, period which will culminate in publication of *Discipline and Punish*, is therefore the question of labour and its absence, and different forms of individual and collective strategies of refusal and subversion of labour process as a form of or aspect of *refusal of capitalist subjection*.

A roundtable held in 1972 on the topic of capitalism, confinement, and police (printed in *Esprit* 413, April – May issue), sheds light on Foucault's view of capitalism's relation to imprisonment and subjection, which will be more thoroughly explicated in *Surveiller et punir* a few years later. Discussants start off by addressing the role of confinement within capitalist mode of production; according to one participant, its various modes being a "substitute for previous closed societies" (Foucault 1996e:86). Foucault somewhat counteracted this statement, claiming that the forms of confinement such as "prison" or "asylum" represent "(...) an important technique in the *growth* of capitalism, much more so, in fact, than at its budding stage" (1996e: 86). The strict division between capitalism and its prehistory, which Foucault shares with Marx, leads one to conclude that Foucault developed his "non-juridical", "productive" power against the background of a

Marxist conception of capitalism which is ultimately that of the factory and production line, of industry and of wage labour. One should not miss a twist of irony in all of this since it was Foucault himself who relegated Marxism back to the 19th century, refuting the "epistemological break" that Marx supposedly brought to political economy. By failing to think through his own claim of the multiple logic of capital, most obvious that of *finance, war-making, and colonialism*, all concurrent with industrial capital but underpinned by different logic, he failed to see the contemporaneity of a completely different "infrastructure of power" to that of "anatomo-politics" and biopolitics.

This centrality of confinement in its different forms and the disciplinary apparatus leads the discussion to the question of lumpenproletariat. The lumpenproletariat had for a long time been one of more problematic places in Marx's oeuvre. According to the opinion of one of the participants at the roundtable, Jacques Julliard, Marx and Engels's often commented upon lack of interest in subproletariat is due to the fact that it "(…) is the by-product of the overall society, both of its dominant as well as it dominated part" (Foucault 1996e*:* 90). At the same time, they profess both a lack of theoretical interest since subproletariat is only marginally and occasionally exploited in the production of surplus value. As Julliard states programmatically, this "(…) productivist logic" identified in Marx's and Engels writings "(…) is what we [i.e., participants] are presently questioning" (Foucault 1996e: 90). Of course, for Foucault it is only way too easy to agree to this critique of Marx since it was Foucault's work which in a way opened up the possibility of this type of critique of Marxism, especially on the ground of its class focused analysis. But here Foucault especially insists on what may seem like an insignificant point of posing the identity of subproletariat in terms of class identity as a consequence of its role in the production process

> "(…) where I don't follow you [i.e., Jacques Julliard] is when you say: here is the proletariat on one side, and on the other, the marginals (…) Shouldn't we say instead that there is a split between the proletariat on the one hand and the extra proletarian, non-proletarianized plebeian on the other? (…) We should say: there is in the overall mass of the plebeians a split between the proletariat and the non-proletarianized plebeian, and I think that institutions like the police, the courts, the penal system are some of the ways that are constantly used to deepen this rift which capitalism needs" (Foucault 1996e: 90)

The *rift of subjectification* between the proletarianized and non-proletarianized is "constantly reproduced" since capitalism, "(…) rightly or wrongly" fears "(…) insurrection and riot: the guys who take to the streets with their knives and their guns, who are ready for direct and violent action" (Foucault 1996e: 91). The mechanisms whereby this necessary division is perpetuated and reproduced are institutions and organisations of disciplinary society, and the mechanisms of the Law, which make up apparatuses of power that effectuate a proletarian as a *subject*.[56] Subject is used here in a double meaning that Foucault gave to it, both as a "subject to someone else by control and dependence" and a state of being "tied to (…) own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge" (1980: 331). Foucault evokes Friedrich Nietzsche's proposition of subjectification in his *On the Genealogy of Morality* whereby conscience *precedes* consciousness (Nietzsche, 1998). In Foucault's work one can find a co-substantial existence of two different discourses of class formation; one "inherited" from what Foucault refers to as the "economic Marxism", where one's class identity is defined in an almost positivist socio-economic terms and is taken for granted as an *a priori*. The other one whereby class identity is an effect of power relations and subjection which, by default, necessarily *crosses* the socio-economic divide while not necessarily making it inoperative. We could further analytically divide this one in two processes, one in which Law and disciplinary mechanisms subjugates workers and the other in which subjugation through discipline is the effect of labour process itself. However these might be important – as they are, since they posit the process of labour as being subjugating in and of itself, while on the other hand the subjugation rests upon a whole apparatus of Laws and institutions – the thing on which we will focus here is that in the previous discussion Foucault introduces the concept of class as *internally divided*. This, at least to Etienne Balibar, gives a completely different meaning to Marx's concept of class struggle (Balibar, 2017). Taking cue from Foucault's observation according to which the conceptual limitation of class struggle is that it lets the identity (class) determine the concept of struggle, Balibar maintains that conflict

[56] For Foucault, what we called the rift of subjectification between proletariat and lumpenproletariat proves to be an important strategic element in the way the repressive state apparatus of authoritarian states operates. Foucault argues that in order for it to function it must be tolerated, which can be done in one of two ways: either in the case of fascism or Second Empire by a transfer (of power or ability to act) from state apparatus to a marginalized stratum of population (Lumpenproletariat), or in other case, in keeping state apparatuses in the hands of limited numbers while also serving local and particular interests. Foucault claims that what we have is a phenomenon of "investment and counter-investment" of the State apparatus by the dominant "class interest" and lateral interests", and not a phenomenon of splitting and transfer of the apparatus" (2015: 126) – among the first signs that Foucault is doing away with the statist schema in the explanation of power

occurs not among pre-established identities but *across* them: the dividing line between the non-proletarianized and proletarianized plebeians - what we previously called the rift of subjectivity - is itself not the cause but the *effect* of s*ubjection*. Though Foucault refrains from formulating it directly in this way it seems that lumpenproletariat is the subjective position resulting from the *refusal* of the process of inculcation of a "(…) certain number of values, principles, norms" which result in "accepting unquestioningly values that are ultimately bourgeoisie values" (Foucault 1996e: 91).[57] Foucault accentuates that the rift is that of social justice and of the subjection of the law and the state; it is on the refusal of this that the possible alliance between the insurgent plebeian and the proletariat which accepts "the ideology of the bourgeoisie", "(…) preferring bourgeoisie justice to social struggle" (Foucault 1996e: 92) hinges upon. Foucault dates this preoccupation with the plebeian to Le Trosne and the fantasy of "(...) a vagabond counter-society as well as the feudal society that the bourgeoisie wanted to get rid of".

> "In fact, from the moment society is defined as a system of relationships between individuals that make production possible and permits its maximization, one has a criterion that makes it possible to designate the enemy of society: any person hostile or opposed to the rule of maximization of production" (Foucault 2015: 52)

With the emergence of criminal – social enemy imprisonment appears as a new form of punitive tactic. Foucault is quite clear that we should be careful to delimit and distinguish between these discourses: "Imprisonment cannot be derived as a practical and discursive consequence of penal theory and juridical justice" (2015: 66). But when it comes to the connecting prison form and wage form Foucault moves away from his nominalism and readily proclaims them to be "(…) historical twin forms" (Foucault 2015: 71). Without explaining in detail, the exact nature of the relationship between these two forms of "doing time", he is nonetheless explicit that this relation is "(…) not simply a metaphor" (Foucault 2015*:* 71). All this further complicates the usual interpretation by which Foucault's interest in capitalism is underscored by his interest in power, since it is the relations of power, "biopower", "the accumulation of men", that, as if, were a structure of the accumulation of

[57] We should note here that the subjection of lumenproletariat thus obviously occurs outside the labour process itself.

capital, a view put forward by Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow: "Foucault places the two major accumulations in a non-causal parallelism but clearly indicates that the development of political technologies, in his interpretation, preceded the economic" (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983: 135).[58]

That is definitively his topic in *Punitive Society*, where he attempts a genealogy of the slow shift from juridical state apparatus of Ancien Regime supplanted with "coercive and penitentiary institutions" towards the "disciplinary society" he will proclaim only a few years later in his *Discipline and Punishment*. Somewhat undermining Dreyfus and Rabinow conclusion about the relationship of determination between political and economic, Foucault situates this transformation within the historic context of the rise of capitalism corresponding to a whole series of movements of "lower-class or popular illegalism" (Foucault 2015: 140). While this illegalism was tolerated in the past, Foucault argues, when lower strata shifted "from craft industry to wage labour" – and thus from "fraud" to "theft" as a predominant form of economic "counter-conduct" – with the increasing investment in fixed capital it was no longer possible for bourgeoisie to tolerate it. What one finds is thus the shifting of the focus away from the "seditious mobs", an object of both police and juridical apparatus, towards the workers, since "(...) every creation of the surplus value was at the same time opportunity, or anyway the possibility of a purloining" (Foucault 2015: 152, notes by editors). Furthermore, this changes the nature of the infringement of law and conduct; it is not only one's action but even one's inaction - for example, withholding one's labour power - can be qualified as illegalism or even theft. The great fear Foucault writes about in the *Punitive Society* is not only the fear of political agitation or resistance, but that of *undisciplined* and *un-optimised* bodies. Illegalism capitalist class fears come from the dangers of

> "(...) worker who does not work hard enough, who is lazy, who gets drunk, that is to say everything by which the worker practices illegalism, not in this case on the body of employer's wealth, but on his own body, on the labour power that the employer considers he owns since he has purchased it with wages and because it is the worker's duty to offer his labour power on a free market. Consequently, anything that may

[58] Of course, this statement is in no way a long reach from Foucault's position himself. For example, "It is impossible to get the development of productive forces characteristic of capitalism if you don't at the same time have apparatuses of power" (Foucault 1980f:158)

> affect not only the accumulated capital of bourgeoisie wealth, but the worker's body itself as labour-power, anything that may steal it from its use by capital, will be considered as that infra-legal illegalism (…) an illegalism that is not a breach of the law but a way of stealing the conditions of profit" (Foucault 2015: 173)

As workers' bodies come in everyday direct relation to wealth and profit, the penal system will become reorganized around this point of contact and focused on one force that is the very source of this illegalism: "the worker's body, desire, need" (Foucault 2015: 174). While Foucault's focus here is primarily the concept of illegalism and delinquency, it is impossible to think through these relations – both for Foucault as well as for us – without rethinking the history of capitalism. The illegalism Foucault is interested in is not the one that breaches the law and order in a great act of rebellion and revolution, but the one he will term "infra-legal illegalism" and a "great immorality" of the late 18th and early 19th century, the one that "steals the condition of profit" (Foucault 2015: 173). This immorality is directed not so much against the law of the State but more so against the law of the Market. The penalty system at the turn of the 19th century was transformed towards the "age of panopticism" emerged as a response towards this new forms of illegalism from "the inside" of the productive apparatus coming from those that need to put "this wealth" (i.e. mechanisation, "large factories with significant stocks of material", all the big centres for global exchange built for the needs of the globalized markets), "from the ones who have to handle this wealth in order to make it productive" (Foucault 2015: 259). While these "new" forms of the 19th century illegalism carry their own weight and meaning for our times, we can also pose the question about "old" illegalism that come "from outside" in relation to productive apparatus – Foucault lists food riots, riots against taxes or fees, refusal to conscription – which "(…) while challenging the representative of political power, leave its structures and distribution out of reach" (Foucault 2015: 259). Severely under-theorizing and not following up on his own proposition of different types of capitalism, Foucault seems continuously to equate specific capitalist mode of production - industrial capitalism - with "productive apparatus", ending up defining it primarily by its *productive* capacities. In turn, this will have profound consequences for the way he approaches subjectivity, as we will see in the following chapter. Foucault continues to describe the analogue process appropriation in the countryside where we witness the complete disappearance of the commons without

the same analogue process of proletarization or illegalism (lacking either in destruction of mode of production or the destruction of potentialities of labour). Foucault argues that the most dangerous illegality concerns "(...) less the body of the apparatus of production or landed property, than the very body of the worker and the way in which it is applied to the apparatuses of production", namely "absenteeism, breaking the "hire" contract, migration and the "irregular" life (Foucault 2015: 260). The objective of apparatuses of power of sequestration, i.e., discipline then becomes "(...) to fix workers to the production apparatus, to establish them in one place or move them to another where they are needed, to subject them to its rhythm, to impose them the constancy or regularity it requires, in short, to form them as labour force" (Foucault 2015*:* 260). The goal is to produce a "concentrated, applied worker's body adjusted to the time of production, and supplying the exact force required" (Foucault 2015: 260). What this introduced into the problems of the time, according to Foucault, was the issue of bodies and materialism, leading him to call for the necessity of writing a "Physics of power" (Foucault 2015: 262).[59]

3.5. Capitalist capture of time

As we already stated, reading work and research that preceded the publication of *Discipline and Punishment*, one continuously stumbles over different beginnings of later, far well-known Foucault's themes and concepts. But one surprising theme that emerges and plays an important role in development of further investigation is the one which is almost completely absent from the Foucauldian toolbox – time and temporality.[60] So much so that

[59] This physics of power Foucault attempts to write at this point seems as a corollary or oppositional discourse to that of historical materialism, focused more on bodies than on ideas, morality, and ideology. "(…) a new form of materiality has taken by the apparatus of production, a new type of contract between this apparatus and those who make it function; new requirements imposed on individuals as productive forces" (Foucault 2015: 261) - this materialism, unlike that of Marx, does not move to *representation* and stays within the realm of bodies and energies. This view is highlighted for example by interview between Rille Rapper and Mark Olseen, in which the interviewer states "We could therefore say that Foucault promoted a shift from traditional understandings of power in which power only presses on the subject from the outside (characteristic of Marxist views of power and oppression) towards an understanding of power as something that forms the subject by 'providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desire' (Butler, 1997:2): power is what subjects depend on for their existence" (Rapper and Olseen 2017: 99).

[60] Due to the sheer scope of Foucauldian studies, there are always exceptions to the rule and therefore evidence to the contrary. On time as an element in political counter-resistance in Foucault see: Mona Lilja (2018) "The politics of time and temporality in Foucault's theorisation of resistance: ruptures, time-lags and decelerations" *Journal of Political Power* 11(3): 419-432.

he even outright claims that "(...) control of time is one of the fundamental points of the hyper-power organized by capitalism through the State system" (Foucault 2015: 210). Time is a crucial element in the establishment of apparatuses of discipline. According to Foucault

> "(...) prison is the system in which the variable of time replaces all the variables envisaged by the other models (i.e., infamy, talion, slavery) We see a form appearing here that is completely different from that suggested by the new penal theory and a form that is not at all of a juridical or punitive order: the wage form" (Foucault 2015: 70).

Wage form and all that it implies – be it labour relation, money, commodity, private property, and power which traverses all these relations – is tied to an existence and operation of a measurable unit of time, which, although Foucault never mentions, seems to coincide with what Marx termed "labour time". Marx famously argued for a "socially necessary labour time" as a "(...) determinant of the magnitude of value of any article" (Marx 1990: 130) claiming that, as exchange values, "(...) all commodities are merely definite quantities of *congealed labour-time*" (Marx 1990: 130). The birth of the prison form is thus connected to, and determined by the birth of the commodity form, both referencing to and preconditioned by the abstract time as both a measurement and unit of account which enables one to exchange time of life into time of labour and vice versa, forming what we might call a *capitalist apparatus of time.* This capture of time starts earlier than the prison, with primitive accumulation as the destruction of previous communities and pre-capitalist forms of collective life and their rhythms of life and the imposition of "habits".

At this point Foucault once more subverts readers' expectations. Derived not from theory of law nor penal practice, for Foucault prison form represents a fundamentally "*capitalist* form of punishment" – "just as a wage is given for a period of labour, so a period of liberty is taken as the price of infraction" (Foucault 2015*:* 71). It seems to combine different aspects of capitalist mode of production; discipline and the focus on abstract time, exchangeable and measurable, a common measure of power's grasp on the bodies of prisoners and workers[61]. In a move following upon Marx's concept of socially necessary

[61] It is also at this point that Foucault, when speaking about the equivalence between fine, day's labour and prison time, refer to the reactivation of the old notions of Germanic law that ensures "the ideology of the

labour time, Foucault argues that the central move of penalty to incarceration is to equate the abstract concept of time (not that everyone's time is equal but that is measurable and exchangeable, in the sense that Fredric Jameson juxtaposes "quantity" than "quality" in *Capital*).[62] Though perhaps an attempt at drawing a line of distinction, for time in question Foucault reserved not the name of "labour time" but "time of life", "(...) an exchangeable material" (Foucault 2015: 83). The "power must take a hold on time (…) as a real extraction of time from people's lives: real condition of possibility of the functioning of the wages system and the system of imprisonment" (Foucault 2015: 83). These two are connected not in the way one derives from the other but that in they both rely on "(...) an apparatus of power that ensures the real extraction of time and introduces this into a system of exchanges and measures" (Foucault 2015: 83).

Foucault remarks that time enters into "capitalist system of power" and into "the system of penalty" – "for the first time one no longer punishes through the body of through goods, but through *time to live*. What society will appropriate to punish the individual is the time left to live. *Time is exchanged against power*" (Foucault 2015: 72, our emphasis). Through this "time of life", as that of unspecified (biological) existence, Foucault for the first time opens up the theme of biopower which emerges a couple of years before it is usually assumed – the first appearance on the scene of power over life is in the form of *power over one's time*; one's time of labour, and time at one's disposal. The problem the capital faced according to Foucault at this stage is how to continually transform "(…) the time of life into labour power" (Foucault 2015: 232). This problematic once more gives weight to Foucault's critique of the Marxist anthropology, and more generally that of political economy, which identifies man as working animal: as Foucault never gets tired of repeating, the time and life of man are not "(...) labour by nature; they are pleasure, discontinuity, festivity, rest, need, moments, chance, violence and so on" (Foucault 2015: 232). He will stop and observe that which Marx only glossed over, the enormous task facing capitalist apparatus of power: "(...) all this explosive energy (...) needs to be transformed into a continuous labour-power continually offered on the market. Life must be synthesized into labour-power" (Foucault 2015: 232).

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penalty of debt", one which was already undertaken by Walter Benjamin and Friedrich Nietzsche (Stimilli, 2018).

[62] Fredric Jameson (2013). *Representing Capital: A Reading of Volume One*. London: Verso

> "Now all this (…) actually signifies the integration of the worker's life into the time of production, on the one hand, and the time of saving, on the other. The time of life, which could be broken up by leisure, pleasure, chance, revelry had to be homogenised so as to be integrated into a time that is no longer the time of individuals, of their pleasures, desires and bodies, but the time of continuity of production, of profit. *The time of people's existence had to be fitted and subjected to the temporal system of the cycle of production"* (Foucault 2015: 210-211, my emphasis).

What Foucault aims to think here from the perspective of the worker's body are the temporal effects of the imposition of socially necessary labour time. Foucault's whole work from late 60s and early 70s up till and including *Discipline* could be approached as the attempt to think about the history of this process; its mechanisms, its objects and objectives, the strategies employed by capitalist power forming a fundamental aspect of "hyper-power organized by capitalism". This process of transforming "life" into "labour-power" is marked by violence as the imposition of the rhythm of work faces refusal and resistance. Having this in mind transformation is a somewhat "unfortunate" verb since it covers the fact that this imposition is preceded by the *destruction* of previous rhythms, connected to older modes of production. Foucault goes far further than Marx, as this imposition of specific rhythm of work is not the only aspect of capital's "capture of time" - Foucault will also underscore how this capture aims to change the workers relationship to chance, luck, future, and temporality as such.

For Foucault power of sequestration is basically a precondition for capitalist economy, "one of the constitutive elements of the mode of production and functions at its heart" (2015: 231). The basic aim or function, something which Foucault refuses fully to commit to

> "(…) is the subjection of individual time to the system of production and, quite precisely, to its three elements. The time of life must be subjected to the temporal mechanisms, the temporal processes of production. Individuals must be tied to a production apparatus according to a certain use of time that continues hour by hour and fixes the individual to the chronological course of the productive mechanism. Although they do not possess any means of production, they must be able to

> withstand periods of unemployment, crisis, reduced activity. This implies the coercive prescription of the savings (…) the individuals time must be subject to the time of profit, that is to say that labour-power must be put to use for at least as much time as is needed for the investment to be profitable" (Foucault 2015: 231-32)

And yet there is a profound transformation with the introduction of what Foucault somewhat obliquely calls "productive apparatus". The theme of productiveness of power here takes shape, as these apparatuses do not simply work *against* these bodies - as they do according to Marx - but *through* them; not against their productive capacities but in order to *intensify* them, to coordinate them, to focus them.

> "When a child is placed in an agricultural colony, when a young female worker is put in a factory-convent, when an individual is sent to a prison in which there are workshops, in reality they are fixed to a productive apparatus (…) In all these cases, the function of the apparatus in relation to marginality is quite different from the monotonous system of classical confinement: it is not a matter of marginalizing at all, but of fixing within a certain system of the transmission of knowledge, of normalization, of production (…) Machine works in order to demarginalize (…)" (Foucault 2015: 207-208)

Institutions of confinement according to Foucault function "adjoined to the apparatuses of production, transmission of knowledge and repression and they assure the kind of supplement of power the latter need in order to function" (Foucault 2015: 208). Foucault will call them institutions of sequestration, a power or "authority (…) that seizes something, withdraws it from free circulation and keeps it fixed at a certain point, for a certain time" (Foucault 2015: 208-9). Though these movements escape the State, at the same time they take State as its model, "they are all little States made to function inside the State" (Foucault 2015: 209). The point of sequestration and these "supplements of power" were to "(...) fix individuals to social, pedagogical, productive and other apparatuses" (Foucault 2015: 209). Foucault here presents us not with the power of circulation but of interruption, seizure, fixture, a power that manifests itself as that of immobilization in a society and economy defined by the circulation of goods, people, money etc. As a form of capitalist power, sequestration operates by entangling, holding up or by taking out of circulation. In

clear contrast to later theoreticians like Paul Virilio and Jean Baudrillard which, in different ways, argued that the power of capitalism is in its ability to continuously increase the speed of circulation of things, images and affects, Foucault claims that the crucial form of control in capitalist societies is that over "mass of time" of bodies; the rhythm and speed of capitalism can't be completely detached from the rhythm of life of the body, but it can guide it, alter it, imposed the tempo on it, subject it to its needs. Differing from feudalism, which operated by tying "people down" to a specific place, to "(...) an estate over which one could exercise one's sovereignty and from which one could take rent" (Foucault 2015: 211), capitalism does not tie individuals in geography as much as much as it "(…) captures them in a temporary mesh that ensures that their life is effectively subjected to the time of production and profit" (Foucault 2015: 211).

Foucault underscores the three functions of sequestration of time in capitalist society: first it is the "total acquisition of time by the employer" by which the latter "not only acquires individuals, but also a mass of time that he controls" (Foucault 2015: 210). Besides acquiring "the mass of time" of labour-power, sequestration also ties individual workers to the "productive apparatus" by forcing the rhythm of the work (of machines) upon them. At the start of the 19th century the policy of capitalism

> "(...) does not need full employment but a mass of unemployed workers in order to put pressure on wages; on the other hand, to ensure that some workers are not employed, it needs the full employment of time, and work of twelve to fifteen hours is not uncommon. Today, we have discovered the value, not of the full employment of time, but of full employment of individuals; the full control of time is assured by means of leisure activities, entertainment, consumption, which amounts to reconstituting the full employment of time that was one of the primary concerns of capitalism in nineteenth century" (Foucault 2015: 210)

What Foucault describes here, by "quoting/not quoting" Marx is the shift in the accumulation of capital and the change in the political technology of time that occurs when one moves from the production of absolute to production of *relative surplus value.* Control over time becomes much more pervasive as its operation moves from the factory into everyday life, into "leisure activities, entertainment, consumption". It is already here, and

not only later in the famous passages in *Discipline* in which Foucault pushes away nominalism in order to proclaim the coming of "disciplinary society" via the architecturally indiscernible "institutions of sequestration" such as barracks, prisons and schools' (Balibar, 1993; Foucault, 2015), capturing individuals in either "productive, purely disciplinary or leisure activities"

> "(…) the control, management, and organization of the life of individuals represents one of the main things established at the beginning of the 19th century. It was necessary to control the rhythm at which people wanted to work (…) It was necessary to hunt down festive revelry, absenteeism, gambling and notable lottery as a *bad relationship to time* in expecting money from *discontinuity* of chance rather than from the *continuity* of work. The worker had to be made to master a chance in his life: illness, unemployment. To make him responsible for himself until death, he had to be taught the quality of foresight by offering him a savings bank." (Foucault 2015: 210, our emphasis).

As a materialist philosopher focusing on the body, it is almost impossible to think of an alternative for Foucault; power is that *of* and *over* bodies. But this raises another question: what happens to these operations of "sequestration" and "capturing" in "the temporary mesh", what happens with the capitalist power over time and space when the relationship between industrial mass production and accumulation is irreversibly transformed?

3.6. Body as "a force of production"

> "In fact, nothing is more material, physical, corporeal than the exercise of power. What mode of investment of the body is necessary and adequate for the functioning of a capitalistic society like ours? (…) One needs to study what kind of body the current society needs (…) It's as though 'revolutionary' discourses were still steeped in the ritualistic themes derived from Marxist analyses. And while there are some very interesting things about the body in Marx's writings, Marxism considered as an historical reality has had a terrible tendency to occlude the question of the body, in favour of consciousness and ideology."
>
> Foucault 1980g: 58-59

The above quote manages to capture Foucault's relationship to Marx in just a couple of lines; after acknowledging Marx's intervention in the question of the body - only to a certain degree - Foucault immediately goes on to question its usefulness by opposing his with the "ritualistic" themes of Marxism. Foucault omits to state what these "interesting things about the body in Marx's writings" are, leaving us to speculate what he had on his mind: was he referring to Marx's immanent plasticity of the worker's body and mind, visible in his writing primarily by their vulnerability, their ability to be broken and damaged? *Capital* is full of places in which Marx considers the damaging effects of production under capitalism; going further from the immediate bodily harm that comes from the risk of industrial production, Marx aims to think the effect of social division of labour itself

> "Some crippling of body and mind is inseparable even from the division of labour in society as a whole. However, since manufacture carries this social separation of branches of labour much further, and also, by its peculiar division, attacks the individual at *the very roots of his life*, it is the first system to provide the materials and the impetus for *industrial pathology*" (Marx 1990: 484; our cursive)

In the chapter "Machinery and Large-Scale Industry", Marx considers not only the bodily harm and argues that

> "Factory work exhausts the nervous system to the uttermost; at the same time, it does away with the many sided-play of the muscles, and confiscates every atom of freedom, both in bodily and an intellectual activity." (Marx 1990: 548)

Relying on anthropology that identifies labour as "the essence of Man", Marx accentuates the ways in which "(...) means of production distort the worker into a fragment of a man" and "(...) degrade him to the level of appendage of a machine" (Marx 1990: 799). On the other hand, Foucault focuses on the ways power aims to intensify the operation of the body and its "economic utility". As he argues in "The Mesh of Power"

> "How to supervise someone, how to control his conduct, his behaviour, his aptitudes, how to intensify his performance, multiply his capacities, how to put him in a place where he will be most useful: this is what I mean by discipline" (Foucault 2012a)

There is an obvious disparity here, as Marx and Foucault attest to different moments of the workers entering the capitalist productive process; from the effects on the body and "the nervous system" of the worker, attacking the "roots of life" itself, to the techniques and knowledge needed to make workers bodies and minds more productive. In short, while Marx seems to be primarily interested in "industrial pathology" - the destructive effects of mass production on labourers - Foucault's focus on "anatomo-politics" aims to abolish the distinction between base and superstructure, making disciplinary techniques foundational in the production of surplus value. At this point we should radicalize Feldman's proposal. By situating Foucault within a (loosely defined) Marxist problematic of productivity of labour power, we should *re-evaluate* not only Foucault's relationship to Marx but his whole *genealogical period* and different concepts of power which he proposes. Foucault's proclamation of the productiveness of power was an end-product of his engagement with Marx's historical transition to capitalism; Foucault critiques Marx's anthropology which, as we saw, posited labour as "man's essence", by aiming to think how this "essence" was produced by a whole arrange of the "infrastructure of power".[63] Though using the much maligned language of base and superstructure, Foucault here seems to remain a follower of Nietzsche; defending his reversal of the Hegelian relationship between contingency and necessity, he refuses to posit the historical relationship between disciplinary apparatus and capitalism, between "accumulation of men" and capital, beyond claiming that each one implicates the other and refusing any relation of determination between the two which is non-contingent; or, as Althusser frames it in his later work, "freed" labour encounters capital, just as atoms crash in the void and create the world (Althusser 2006). Nevertheless, where there are signs of the quiet return of this "base-superstructure" language, it is in this transition to capitalism. Relying on Marx's own historical narrative of three stages, rather than being defined by the logic of commodity production for Foucault they are connected to

[63] Notice that "infrastructure" does not signify that power, in any way, is subservient to economy; on the other hand, Foucault shifts from the extreme of retaining Marx's model of base superstructure to a position of immanence, where neither power nor economy take a determinant role

and defined by the different mechanisms of power. First is that of primitive accumulation, detaching workers from means of subsistence and the creation of excess labour force; the second is that of production of absolute surplus value, the extension of work-day being the sole source of production of the surplus; and the last is the production of relative surplus value, whose historical sequence ran through the 19th and well into the 20th century, where Foucault's concept of productive power ("anatomo-politics") aims at increasing the economic utility of a singular body and a group of workers.

3.7. Interlude: Foucault's primitive accumulation

Foucault' inquiry into an *alternative* concept of power starts from the very place from which he will attempt to escape, later claiming that this period of his work was still defined by a "repressive concept of power".[64] His analysis of primitive accumulation will focus on the institutional and juridical forces which will aim to draw vagabonds and other vagrants into labour contracts and penalize any sort of non-productive or counterproductive behaviours. As Silvia Frederici (2004) rightly argues, the Foucauldian problematic of power is closely tied to the *beginnings* of capitalism and its subsequent rise. But it matters when and where this beginning is posited; and furthermore, what excites Foucault's interest. As we will see, Frederici's observation needs to be amended; at this ur-scene of capitalism, where force and violence meet, Foucault comes always-already *too late*. Regardless of his claim that this part of his work was defined by statist and "repressive" concepts of power, one thing must be granted to him: he was already looking for a way out, as is obvious as his major theme will be the discipline and the productivity of the new labouring classes. We could therefore argue that, regardless of the talk of "the accumulation of men", Foucault relies on Marx's conceptualization of primitive accumulation as the transformation of masses into labourers; for both, it lasts until the legal, statist and productive apparatuses are set up and start to operate automatically without the need of the external force.

[64] Foucault's conceptualization of primitive accumulation and the role it played in Foucault's thought will be the object of the next chapter.

3.8. Body, "a force of production" (cont.)

Foucault approaches primitive accumulation first and foremost as "the accumulation of men"; though this process is not made up of the destruction of previous forms of life, more important is that these acts of destruction are being followed up with the "moral training of populations" as "(...) their manners must be reformed so as to reduce the risk to bourgeois wealth" (Foucault 2015: 104-105). At first this wealth was non-productive; with the proliferation of "fixed capital" and the necessary increasing contact the labouring poor had with machinery and fixed capital necessitated the transformation of their conduct. Foucault nonetheless is keen to remind us that this transformation in the question of morals was itself an effect of something else – "the problem of bodies and materiality" and "(…) a question of physics" (Foucault 2015: 261). Primitive accumulation was thus followed by the (re)moralization of the public sphere as the need to address "(...) psychological propensities, habits, manners and behaviour such as idleness, gambling and debauchery" (Foucault 2015*:* 105).[65] Foucault claims that we live in a "society of disciplinary power, that is to say a society equipped with apparatuses whose form is sequestration, whose purpose is the formation of the labour force and whose instrument is the acquisition of discipline and habits" (Foucault 2015: 237). It is this project of "acquisition of discipline and habits" that emerges with primitive accumulation and is - unlike Marx's primitive accumulation - continual with capitalism: a whole ethics founded on habit emerges "(...) as something positive, something to be acquired" (Foucault 2015: 238). Habit and contract, two of immaterial forms of capitalist power, connect violence of the material relations with the silent working of ideology. While the contract is "(...) the link between individuals and their property, or the link of individuals through their property", the habit is that what links individuals not to their property "(…) but to productive apparatus (…) it is what links them to each other as members, not of a class but of society as a whole" (Foucault 2015: 238). Discipline is the ordering principle behind capitalist society, with habit linking – or tying –

[65] Foucault does not attempt a general argument here; as he claims, countries such as Great Britain followed a different path due to the lack of the strength of "central powers". But for certain reformers, such as Colquhoun, morality and law were inextricably linked, and the punishment had to have a moral dimension since it was only useful in this situation. ("Police is quite a new science in political economy" Foucault 2015: 109). Colquhoun formed a part of societies that attempted to link together "(...) morality, capitalist production and State apparatus" (2015*:* 112)

them “to an order of things, to an order of time, and to a political order” (Foucault 2015: 239)

At this moment of “generalized discipline” we are well into the very last part of this transition and “the socialisation of the labour process”. While Foucault was well aware of the socialised character of the capitalist production of surplus value - what Marx will call the “capitalist production proper”, his interest in this thematic will rapidly diminish. At this point, in *Discipline and Punish* he will introduce the work of Didier Deleule and Francois Guery, whose *Productive Body* will be one of the first attempts to rethink Foucault’s own analysis in the context of Marxian problematic, and the way it affects and changes it. In return, the book will be one amongst few contemporary authors Foucault will directly refer to in *Discipline and Punishment*. As editors of long-awaited English translation sum up “*The Productive Body* offers a model of subjectivity that does not rest on semiotics or the ‘linguistic turn’ (...) but rather on a renewed focus on a transformation of the experience through and typified by the capitalist workplace” (Barnard and Shapiro 2014: 5). Though, as we saw, the workers body – which Guery and Deleule define as that not characterized by its productive capabilities in general but by being both physically and somatically, individually and collectively organized in such a way to produce commodities or surplus value - is rarely put in direct relation to Foucault’s own interests and work, it was crucial in developing his idea of anatomo-politics, i.e., discipline - and even more generally, productive power itself. The rise of disciplinary apparatus and the form of the prison, as the *Foucauldian* theme, is tied to the emergence of capitalism and its specific preconditions. The “(...) adaptation of the juridical system to the mechanism of supervision (surveillance) and control that transformed the penalty at the turn of the century” (Foucault 2015: 258), was in response to new threats and illegalism from workers themselves; with the development of industry “the productive apparatus” comes into direct contact with those that make it work, transforming the nature of the threat from those coming from “the outside” (countryside, marauding vagabonds etc.) to “the inside”. The emergence of capitalism *as* the productive apparatus “incurs a number of risks arising from those in contact with it”, primarily those that are needed to produce surplus value, engaging in different mode of struggles (sit ins, slowing of the production line etc.), against being made more productive, against becoming a “productive force” (Foucault 2015: 174). Developing Marx’s famous phrase that “man produces man” (Foucault 2000c: 275), Foucault adds that

this category of production does not designate the production of man "(...) as nature supposedly designed him, or as his essence ordains him to be" (Foucault 2000c: 275). Pierre Macherey, a French philosophe closely aligned to the so called Althusser's group and one of more prominent interpreters of both Foucault's and Marx's work will designate this end-product as "second nature", an

> "(…) ambiguous plane of reality which is a nature without actually being one and has the paradoxical character of a nature that is not "natural." Hence it is a nature not given as such but produced, created, constructed from top to bottom, suited to become "productive," flexible, transformable, to comply with the objectives of growth" (Macherey 2015)

As several critics had observed Foucault himself had not a lot to say regarding the colonial and patriarchal character of capitalist relations of domination and exploitation. But, contrary to those critiques, this does not betray his supposed "Eurocentrism" or the refusal to think about the body of the women (Frederici 2003), but something else. His conceptualisation of capitalism primarily through the lens of the "mode of production" - in his own words, as a "productive apparatus" - and not as a mode of accumulation *by any means*, a mode of production which abolishes its own productivity in favour of accumulation. By refusing to heed his own critique against thinking capitalism as an emanation or unravelling of a singular logic and principle Foucault established himself as a theoretician of a profoundly Marxist character. Therefore, it could be only the worker - occidental, male, non-colonial subject - and his body which gave impetus to both *disciplinary power* and, subsequently, *biopower*: the *ur-body* of discipline is the worker's body, or that of the vagabond that is to become. It is also the reason why Foucault *approaches capitalism primarily as a "productive apparatus"*, failing to put to work own concepts of power in thinking forms of accumulation *beyond and before* the production of surplus value. But it is also that at the point of application on the body of the worker that this power doubles itself. Thus, as Foucault underscores, it is not only "the productive apparatus" that needs to be defended from the workers, as it is in constant proximity to them, becoming, as Marx famously put it, merely an "(…) appendage of the machine" (Marx 1990: 799). More fundamentally, it is the *workers body that needs to be defended from the worker*

himself. Foucault identifies this bifurcation of the worker – what Marx will call "alienation" – between the body that works and the worker that becomes the founding axis of a new punitive power: "It is around the worker's body in relation to wealth, to profit, to the law that constitutes the major stake around which the penal system will be organized" (Foucault 2015: 173). Of course, penalization is not enough by itself, as Foucault argues for the need of the history of habit, itself a part of a more general history of subjection.

In opposition to Foucault, for Marx the subjectification of the worker runs through the commodification of his labour, taking place - if we were to reverse Marx famous start of *The Capital* – outside of the "hidden abode" of production, in the plain view of market-place and its abstractions.[66] As Ernest Mandel put it succinctly, "(…) in capitalism labour-power not only becomes a commodity for the capitalist but also receives this form *for the worker himself,* implying that this degradation of work is objectively and subjectively the fate of the industrial proletariat" (Mandel 1990: 65). Foucault's aim is to provide a materialist alternative to this approach to subjection via market, weighed down by the idealist and non-materialist concepts of commodification and alienation, as mechanisms of distortions and appearances. What Foucault underscores is the fact that market is grounded on the imposition of bodily discipline not only by "the productive apparatus" but by the worker himself. Thus, the duality of labour power for the worker, one that is appropriated by the capitalist power, hides beneath itself and is prompted up by the duality of the body of the worker himself, which results in the subjection of the worker *before* he is expropriated of his labour power via the market. It is here, once more, that we find a fork in a road of materialism. For Foucault, in rejecting the Marx's anthropology – which, inherited from Hegel, posits labour as "the essence of man" – we must understand that "(…) capitalism penetrates much more deeply into our existence" (Foucault 2000d: 86), than Marx and his focus on consciousness and ideology even considered. To explain hyper-profits, i.e., surplus value, Foucault turns not to the mechanisms of the market and its abstractions but to the process of extraction of work from the labourers themselves, a whole set of "political techniques" that make up "infrapower" (Foucault 1980: 68-9). This "infrapower", which Foucault claims is not a part of what is considered a "political power", nor a part of "a state

[66] The more general this commodification, the deeper and more pervasive the subjectification, exemplified by Marx's concept of "real subsumption of labour under capital", whose political and theoretical consequences were such that according to Balibar Marx had to omit it from the first edition of *Capital*. See: Balibar, 2017.

apparatus" or "class power", belongs to "(…) a whole set of little powers, of little institutions situated at the lowest level" (Foucault 1980*:* 69).[67] It is the very same ("technical") power Foucault saw in *Capital,* where Marx contrasted the power of the feudal lord or slaveholder to a non-personal and systemic everyday power of the buyer of labour power over its seller: what could be more boring, mundane and anti-spectacular than that! It is at this level, where "(…) man is tied to something like labour – a set of techniques by which people's bodies and their time would become labour power and labour time so as to be effectively used and thereby transformed into hyper profit" (Foucault 1980: 68).

For Foucault worker is doubling as both being subjected, i.e., being an object of power, transformed into a bearer of "labour power" to be appropriated by capital, and being *an agency of subjection of his own body* (what would Foucault latter dub as "the soul as the prison of the body"). The worker thus performs not only the industrial work, but is also working as an extension of the productive apparatus in his own subjection

> "The political investment of the body is bound up, in accordance with complex reciprocal relations, with its economic use; it is largely as a fore of production that the body is invested with relations of power and domination, but on the other hand, its constitution as labour power is possible only if it is caught up in a system of subjection (in which need is also a political instrument meticulously prepared, calculated and used); the body becomes a useful force only if it is *both* a *productive body* and *subjected body*" (Foucault 1995: 25-26)

3. 9. Working population and population beyond work

Is there an inherent "politics of life" of capital? In what way does accumulation relate to the workers and their life, them being the source of the production of surplus value? Marx himself seems to be contradictory on the issue, as his contradicting statements mirror the contradiction in accumulation itself. For example, reading the chapter "The Production of Absolute Surplus Value", the well-being of the worker is of no interest to capital "(...) which takes no account of the health and the length of the life of the worker" (Marx 1990*:* 381).

[67] If the "short-circuit" between politics and economy is one of the hallmarks of materialism, as Balibar claims, then this is one of the places Foucault mirrors Marx's move; Balibar, 2017.

> "Capital asks no question about the length of life of labour power. What interests it is purely and simply the maximum of labour-power that can be set in motion in a working day" (Marx 1990: 376)

And yet, the destructive effects of capital's indifference towards life of the individual worker are mitigated by the reversal in its strategy towards the living, necessitated by the need for the prolongation and expansion of the accumulation. Namely, in the production of "absolute surplus-value" capital can be accumulated on a higher scale only by continuously extending the working day of labourers and extracting more of the working day from "time of life" of the worker, thereby not only affecting a "(…) deterioration of human labour-power by robbing it of its normal moral and physical conditions of development and activity", but also by producing "(…) the premature exhaustion and death of this labour-power itself" (Marx 1990: 376). As he states

> "What experience generally shows to the capitalist is a constant excess of population, i.e. an excess in relation to capital's need for valorisation at a given moment, although this throng of people is made up of generations of stunted, short-lived and rapidly replaced human beings, plucked, so to speak, before they were ripe (...) *capitalist production has seized the vital forces of the people* at their very roots, although historically speaking it hardly dates from yesterday. Experience shows too how the degeneration of the industrial population is *retarded only by the constant absorption of primitive and natural elements* from the countryside, and how even the agricultural labourers, in spite of the fresh air and the 'principle of natural selection' that works so powerfully amongst them, and permits the survival of only the strongest individuals, are already beginning to die off." (Marx 1990:380-1, our emphasis)

Therefore, this production has its limits; these are the biological limits of labour power and its possibility to reproduce itself, defined by a set of specific historical conditions of science, medicine, and sustenance. Up to this point, Marx and Foucault's arguments seem to move almost in unison; though this co-togetherness, regardless of Foucault's own confession of Marx's influence on the development of his concepts, is both strange *and*

contradictory. This stems from the fact that, on the one hand, Foucault takes at face value the shift from the production of “absolute” to “relative surplus value”; on the other hand, Marx seems to take more serious than Foucault himself the problematic of capitalist mode of production as a form of political *rationality* - in all its consequences. What does this mean? As we already mentioned, it is impossible to understand Foucault's proposition of biopolitics, if one detaches it from its role as that which enables "the accumulation of men", which is the precondition for the accumulation of capital; by this accumulation Foucault of course does not mean only an amassing of unqualified bodies, but a disciplined, more an army like group of producers, inoculated with certain habits and morality. As Feldman notices, it is one of Foucault's interventions - the other, development of individual discipline, historically preceding it - aiming to rethink “the infrastructure of power" of capitalist mode of production. In “The Birth of Social Medicine”, Foucault argues that capitalist mode of production started by socializing its first object - the body - as a factor of productive force, or labour power, a form of accumulation which Marx will call the production of relative surplus value: “For capitalist society, it was biopolitics, the biological, the somatic, the corporal, that mattered more than anything else. The body is a biopolitical reality; medicine is a biopolitical strategy” (Foucault 2000b: 136-137). But Foucault argues that it was not until “the second half of the 19th century, when the problem of the body, health, and the level of productive force of individuals was raised” (Foucault 2000b: 137), arguing that capitalism relies on, depends on a certain type of politics of life to raise the economic productiveness of the working population. But there remains the question Foucault never brings up; what about the rest, what of non-labour, non-working “surplus population”, what of “reserve army of labour” in situations in which there is a small chance that they will be called by “capital to work” (Marx), what of colonial subjects which are in no relation to the centres of capitalist industry and its Empire in the 19th century? There is a fundamental difference about the way in which Foucault and Marx think about this transition, one which does not stop merely at “different materialisms” (Balibar) they develop and use. Marx’s argument about the transition to the production of “relative surplus value” does not refer to the nature of this transition or to the conditions of its possible reversibility; or, in an alternative - and predominant - interpretation of Marx’s proposition, it seems to fall into a sort of Hegelian “one-way street”, driven by a managerial *telos* that brings about the reversal of irrationality of capitalist accumulation into governmental *rationality*

> "If then the unnatural extension of the working day, which capital necessarily strives for in its unmeasured drive for self-vaporization, shortens the life of the individual worker, and therefore the duration of his labour-power, the forces used up have to be replaced more rapidly, and it will be more expensive to reproduce labour-power (…) It would seem therefore that the interest of capital itself points in the direction of a normal working day" (Marx 1990: 377)

But note the formulation "it would seem therefore"; Marx's construct which invites the reader, by now attentive to Marx's play between apparitions, the visible, the apparent and the hidden, to be careful not to take from this the wrong conclusion. In the end, according to Marx it was not even the "price" of reproduction of labour power that was crucial in establishment of "the normal working day", but it was due to the "(..) centuries of struggle between the capitalist and the worker" (Marx 1990: 382). Thus, "politics of life" is not something capitalists can achieve themselves and must be forced upon capital by the organized class struggle.[68] Rather than ascribing to it the logic of necessity coming either from political rationality of that of accumulation, what is crucial to take from this transition from the production of absolute to relative surplus value is that regardless of the limits it puts on accumulation of capital, its nature is *contingent* - and therefore ultimately *reversible*. From Marx's perspective, biopolitics as a form of power optimizing, sustaining and protecting life is not a precondition for the accumulation of capital; at the very best its effects which - it bears repeating, are *neither* guaranteed, universal or irreversible - "pushed" the accumulation of capital in a certain direction. Since Foucault's perspective on power was always tied within a certain territory and population, we are forced to extrapolate the following: since up to this point Foucault posits the infrastructure of power as a necessity for accumulation, it would be logical that the globalization of capital relations would be followed by globalization of the same "infrastructure of power" that aims to foster and protect life. While it could be argued that this conclusion is correct, as we witness the transformation of most populous world economy such as China to capitalist one and the

[68] This is why, in contrast to someone like Agamben whose work lacks the concept of struggle, the pandemics of the COVID 19 provided an opportunity for the (Marxist) left to claim biopolitics as a terrain of possible class struggle and "democratization" (see: Panagiotis 2020). Though we lack the space to develop this critique any further, perhaps we should move from the question whether democratisation and biopolitics are antithetical to each other, to questioning its status, as Eric Santner seems to do, as a form of democratised biopower. See: Santner 2005, Santner 2012.

developing biopolitical mechanisms for protection of life and its management - it seems that with simultaneous accumulation *both* through relative but also absolute surplus value, and by dispossession, this protection of life had *withdrawn* from other countries, some of them previous core of the capitalist world-system. But, more crucially, the need for over-exploitation (through different means) is followed equally by the fact of under-exploitation, by the production of non-labour, non-working surplus population. What is the politics of life towards "reserve army of labour", especially when the chance that they will be, as Marx formulates it, called by "capital to work" (Marx), is small to non-existent? Marx thus ends up with the proposition of the *thanato-political* character of capital accumulation, a background against which something such as politics of life *may* emerge. For example, as Marx observes, this preservation of the life of labour-power is not extended to the slave labour, driving the owners of slave labour "(…) in the shortest space of time the utmost amount of exertion it is capable putting forth," leading in places like Cuba and West Indies, to the "absolute destruction of a portion of its numbers every year" (Marx 1990: 377).

Chapter 25 "The General Law of Capitalist Accumulation" of *Capital vol I* (781-802) provides us with a complex and - once more - contradictory character of Marx's thanatopolitical concerns, surprisingly overlooked in the literature on Foucault's relationship to Marx; post-Marxism, either the school of "cognitive capitalism" or that of (post)Autonomism, usually refer and interpret Foucault as a reader of a Marx of the industrial factory and of general intellect, i.e. of both workers and capital in its different productive capacities. In this chapter Marx seems to deal with non-work and population beyond work as he aims to grapple with the effects of accumulation on *life itself* and population *outside* their activity and capacity as (industrial) labourers; but, while opening this theme on a couple of occasions, with haste he moves back to work, just as he defines relative surplus population, regardless of its forms, as something to which "(..) every worker belongs to during the time when he is only partially employed or wholly unemployed" (Marx 1990: 794). Marx identifies three types of relative surplus population: while the first two - the "floating" and the "latent" - are tied to either the cyclical nature of capitalist industry or to specific needs of its particular branches, what is of our interest here is what Marx calls "the stagnant" relative surplus population and its "lowest sediment", which is pauperism (Marx 1990).

While stagnant surplus population is still defined in relation to work (usually that of "maximum of working time and a minimum of wages"), the ranks of paupers are filled with "vagabonds, criminals, prostitutes, in short actual lumpenproletariat", i.e., those that do not produce surplus value, according at least to Marx. Among those "willing to work" and orphans, as well as "agricultural labourers " one can find the "victims of industry", those unable to work, chiefly people who succumb to their incapacity for adaptation (...) who lived beyond the workers average life span" (Marx 1990: 798). Unlike the transition from the production of absolute to that of relative surplus value, which brings to effect different attempts to protect life itself, beyond the factory capital operates less by overtaking life and its process and more by *abandoning it*, transferring these "*faux fais* (incidental expense) (...) from its own shoulders to those of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie" (Marx 1990: 797). Nonetheless, regardless of all the contradictions, Marx does seem to pose an "absolute general law of capitalist accumulation" with troubling thanatopolitical consequences.[69] Marx differentiates between "different forms of relative surplus population" which can at all times be "called upon the capital": this "calling upon" occurs usually in the form of cycles, something characteristic "only to modern industry". The violence of mass unemployment is thus a specifically capitalist form of violence. "Surplus population of workers" is both an effect of capitalist accumulation and its precondition, "its lever", as this population "(...) belongs to capital just as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost" (Marx 1990: 784). But behind this cyclical nature of industrial activity, its "periodicity", however destructive it might be, there is another truly thanatopolitical drive Marx attaches to capitalism and connects it to the tendency of profit rate to fall. As he states, "(…) the working population produces both the accumulation of capital and the means by which it is itself made relatively superfluous; and it does this to an extent which is always increasing" (Marx 1990: 783; our emphasis). The change in the composition of capital, especially the rise of its "organic form" (i.e. technology) requires less and less workers with time. Thus, "(...) the greater the social wealth, the functioning capital, the extent and energy of its growth, and therefore also the greater the absolute mass of the proletariat and the productivity of its labour, the greater is the industrial reserve army" (Marx 1990: 798). With

[69] These are historically specific only to capitalist mode of production, since as Marx puts it, "every particular historical mode of production has its own special laws of population, which are historically valid within that particular sphere. An abstract law of population exists only for plants and animals, *and even then, only in the absence of any historical intervention by man*" (Marx 1990: 784, our emphasis).

greater reserve army the greater is "the mass of a consolidated surplus population", and as he famously puts it "(…) accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, the torment of labour, slavery, ignorance, brutalization and moral degradation at the opposite pole" (Marx 1990: 799). Thus, the general tendency of rate of profit to fall poses a thanatopolitical tendency, either by exploitation or lack of thereof, as "(…) the overwork of the employed part of the working class swells the rank of its reserve, while, conversely, the greater pressure that the reserve by its competition exerts on the employed workers forces them to submit to over-work and to dictates of capital" (Marx 1990: 789).[70]

While *Capital* deals predominantly with British capitalism as an enclosed system, at the dawn of globalization of capital, there are certain things which we may extrapolate for politics of life today, in the somewhat different context of capital accumulation. As we enter the phase of accumulation of capital less and less defined by the industrial employment - driven by the declining rates of profit and by the automation of work or the rise in "the organic composition of capital" (Marx) - occurring in the context of the coming climate catastrophe, this recognition of the contingent and non-universal - and *non-universalizable* - character of politics of life might prove a terrifying realization. Regardless of how these different processes coagulate in a specific mode of accumulation, it all points to a change in the relationship towards life that defined capitalism of the last half a century or so, and Marx's fears about necropolitical character of accumulation come to haunt us again. In opposition to Marx, for whom capital accumulation leads to a one-way street of the domination of "dead labour" over "living labour" - which in the very end causes its self-destruction but not before taking out humanity itself out - according to Foucault capitalism deploys different strategies for the "optimisation" of the living labour. Foucault's

[70] Etienne Balibar in his 2019 talk "Exiles in the 21st Century: The New Population Law of Absolute Capitalism", rejects the Marxian idea of the rising inequality and progressive pauperisation of the working class that looms as a sort of "black hole", threatening not only working classes but society as a whole. To this "Marxian prophecy" Balibar opposes another Marxian concept, that of primitive accumulation as envisaged by Rosa Luxemburg. The periphery or world capitalism characterized by the destruction of the commons through primitive accumulation, is also defined by the process of "super-exploitation" or non-regulated exploitation – "overworking of population", as a Marx would have put it – which is necessary to support "lower" rates of "regulated exploitation" at the centre. Nonetheless, what Balibar fails to think is it possibility that what we get in these spaces of "semi-colonies", be they in the form of internal "islands" in the centre or semi-periphery, or on the outskirts of world system, is another form of cruelty emerging from not overexploitation but a "lack of" exploitation, a lack of possibility to be exploited, a lack of work resulting from the withdrawal of capital.

conceptualization of capitalism deprives it of the self-destructive, suicidal drive that Marx attributed it; armed with different forms of productive power it is able to prolong its life not only by "feeding" on living labour but - if we were to continue with the famous Marx's metaphor - by constantly transforming and producing new subjectivities, new acolytes, new "vampires", and by constantly optimizing the “natural” movement of populations, for Marx something that capital left - and needed to leave - to the whims of market. This is the way one should read Foucault's remark that Marx had taken for granted the depths at which capital “takes hold” of individuals, a form of control “(...) which was accomplished not only through consciousness or ideology but also in the body and with the body” (Foucault, 2005:137). For Foucault, the body - and therefore populations - cannot be abandoned by power for capitalism to “work”.

3.10. Foucault and Marx, again? An outline for a heterodox use

This chapter tried to defend the thesis according to which Marx and Foucault share if not epistemology (Balibar 1992), then a certain *topicality* or *themes,* which they tend to formulate in different theoretical language and - for a lack of better word - different *movements* of thought. Not all share Balibar’s strong reservations about the possibility of “Foucauldian-Marxism”, in the wake of what he called “the specific failure” that was “Freudo-Marxism”, nor somewhat less rejecting Bidet’s warnings according to which it still remains “(...) to find out (...) under which conditions this ‘assimilation’ [of Foucault into historical materialism] could be given *any* plausibility or coherence” (Bidet 2016). The themes that Foucault and Marx shared seem to be, in different manners, taken up by different authors. What emerged from this specific interpretation of Foucault with Marx is not a provisional theoretical alliance argued for by Balibar and Bidet, but rather a vast discourse and a field of theoretical language, one which in return seems to have fundamentally transformed Foucauldian – and Marxian – conceptual language. This chapter and its reading of Foucault *with* and *against* Marx, attempted to point out to the contours of what I propose to call *productivist ontology*, one which Marx and Foucault ascribe to capitalist mode of production. A consequence of equating capitalism with industrial capitalism as such - and thus focusing more on capitalism as a mode of production than that of accumulation - this productivist ontology is defined by “forward” driven movements of power and counter-power, incessant transformation, in which every activity one can scribe to process of

accumulation - or its refusal - is given a teleological spin towards productivity. Not only does this ontology prove to be inhospitable to any sort of non-productive forms of accumulation, relegating them to the past (for example the concept of primitive accumulation in Marx or, as we will see, different concepts Foucault attempt to produce, such as subtraction), it also fails to think other forms of power as forces in their own right, subsuming them under the auspice of productive forms of power. In the following chapter I will attempt to argue that there are different ways of reading and using these two, sometimes alongside, sometimes with and sometimes against one another. To avoid the traps of productivist ontology, the reading I propose will revolve around three simple preconditions: *affirmation of contingency in place of teleology, affirmation of accumulation in place of production,* and *the insistence on the multiplicity of forms of power.* In my mind, these do not go against the work of Foucault and Marx, but rather highlight and push forward interpretations which were unable to be formed against the background of productivist ontology, defined by focus on mode of production, teleology, and Power; as such they are starting points, and not an end in themselves.

3.11. Affirmation of *contingency* in place of teleology

First proposition at once sems both too obvious and banal *and* misguided; leaving Marx aside who had always struggled against teleology, hasn't Foucault's work as a whole at least partially been aimed *against* teleology? On the other hand, while Marx work, fraught with conflict about Hegelianism, but our refusal of teleology does not so much refer to the inevitable march of history as it does to something else, refusal of teleological interpretations of Marx and especially Foucault, refusal of teleology of concepts, a far stronger and more noticeable tendency within Foucault's reception than for Marx's. As Jacques Ranciere observes as regards to multiple, vastly different, and not seldomly opposed interpretations of Foucault's work

> "They hope to ascertain in Foucault's trajectory a *principle of finality* that would assure the coherence of the whole and provide a solid basis for a new politics or a novel ethics. They want to see in him a confirmation of the idea of the philosopher who *synthesises knowledge* and teaches us the rules of action" (Ranciere 2013: 387; our highlight)

In line with the idea that we should look in Foucault's life and work a "synthesis", rather than a work in project, seems to be parallel to a strong tendency to see in a long line of Foucault's superseding concepts and interests possessing an internal logic, where the last concept aims to be a certain antidote and corrective to the previous ones. This strikingly anti-Foucauldian approach to epistemology is present even in the otherwise succinct and usually clear-cut work of Thomas Lemke (2019). But at this point one might reasonably object on several accounts. First, who in his right mind would question the revolutionary character of capital accumulation pushing forward the technological revolution we daily witness, which in return perpetually transforms social relations? With what end? What is precisely the usefulness of turning to Marx and Foucault if, at the same time, we reject or question that what is usually deemed the most "productive" aspects of their discourse, especially since it is fundamental to their politics as well, being the way by which their thought assumes its critical form? In another words, if we identify the revolutionary character of accumulation of capital as the ontological openness of contemporary global political and economic relations, or if we refuse to heed Foucault's warning and opt to return to the repressive hypothesis of power, are we not burning the bridges and enclosing ourselves in contemporary relations of "capitalist power"? If propositions of revolutionary character of capitalist accumulation – itself an ontological and eschatological precondition of almost all strands of Marxist and socialist politics for now nearly two centuries - or productive character of power – relations of power ultimately defined by freedom and therefore open to change – are questioned, are we not closing, even if only in thought, openings for different forms of subjectivation and different type of politics?

3.12. Affirmation of *accumulation* in place of production

Acknowledgment of multiple logics of capital, as Foucault argues against "the" Marxist hypothesis and certainly against at least "one" Marx, leads him to conclude that "(…) there is no single logic of capital". Since Foucault does not further explain this statement, it is left to us to infer its meaning. It seems that this statement can have two distinct meanings; first, from a nominalist perspective capitalism does not show a singular logic since there is no identifiable centrifugal force to coalesce the multiple expression, vents into concepts and

certain laws which then we can apply to different contexts and societies. Or, and this will be our proposition, there are multiple different logics of accumulation, something which certain strands of Marxist thought attempted to reassert by historicizing Marx capital and its inherent logic. For once, by shifting our analysis to mode of accumulation we do away with any pretence to a humanist and universal foundations to capitalism which was provided to it by classical political economy; this enables us to, at the same time historicize capitalism, while interpreting it as not so much *one* mode of production among others – which it is – but as a mode defined by its own internal mechanism and logic which puts the imperative of accumulation *over* production, even that of the production of the conditions for the reproduction of capitalist relations themselves.

This necessitates moving away from the mode of production as a conceptual tool towards capitalism *mode of accumulation*, leaving behind multiple concepts which were deemed essential to Marxist theory such as surplus value etc. Inaugurated by Marx himself, and later restated as crucial for Marxism by the likes of Althusser, mode of production is an attempt at grasping the dialectical nature of capitalism and accumulation and a way to resolve the problem of Marx's tendency towards reducing the social formation to a simple logic of capital accumulation and its abstract laws. And yet it is within the concept of production that the movement of destruction and violence brought about by capital accumulation is situated. Realising this, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari posited that the "exteriority" to mode of production is not destruction, which plays a crucial but instrumental role within a "(…) metaphysical grounding of the socius in the production" (de Castro 2010: 13), but "anti-production". Thus, it is within this mode of production that we can situate both the productive aspect of capital accumulation – analysis in which the central figure is that of the worker, and perhaps even the capitalist – as well as destructive – for example phenomenon like colonialism and exploitation can be described as instrumental to capitalist accumulation as production. Following different works, among others most prominently that of Alliez and Lazzarato (2018), under the conditions of structural – not conjunctural! – transformation of capitalism that leads to ecological destruction, climate change and the structural roles taken on by the war and extractive practices, we will attempt a philosophical intervention by rethinking capitalism as *a mode of destruction*. This necessitates, it seems, a different interlocutor for Marx than Foucault, a philosopher of a productive concept of power. And yet there under the facade of "the philosopher of power", a etiquette Foucault

forcefully rejected, one can find a number of profoundly heterogenic concepts of power - to which we will now turn to.

3.13. Affirmation of multiplicity of powers in place of *Power*

Circumventing usual interpretations of Foucault's work primarily focused on the concept of productive power, we will try to reaffirm Foucault's proclamation of different modalities of power operational in *Capital* and turn to his own different concepts of power – power as war and the infamous concept of the sovereign power or the juridical concept of power – to grasp different regimes of extraction and capital accumulation. Redefined in this way, our vocabulary will move on the edges of the discourse defined by the concepts of discipline, governmentality, general intellect and real subsumption. While these are still useful, it seems that they occluded a different meeting place for Marx and Foucault, this one on the grounds of contingency, anti-eschatology, sovereignty, and violence; the meeting place of primitive accumulation rather than real subsumption. As Foucault claimed

> "(…) one power does not exist, but many powers. Powers, this means forms of domination, forms of subjugation that function locally, for example in the workshop, in the army, on a slave plantation or where there are subservient relations. These are all local and regional forms of power, which have their own mode of functioning, their own procedure and technique. All these forms of power are heterogeneous. We may not, therefore, speak of power if we wish to construct an analysis of power, but we must speak of powers and attempt to localize them in their historic and geographic specificity." (Foucault, 2012a)

What will be lost in his subsequent work is precisely this insistence on the multiplicity of forms of power in favour of predominance of "productive power", something evident in that very same talk. After affirming these different modalities of power, Foucault was asked to comment on the non-productive character of modern prison system; rather than attempting to inscribe contemporary prison system in some different type of power, Foucault, against his own warnings, will proceed on with *ontologisation of power as a productive force,* ending up describing this power in prisons not as "zero-productivity, but

rather negative productivity", settling in the end with the "counter-productivity" (Foucault 2012a). What is the difference between what he calls "counter-productive" power and power of subtraction, or different types of dominations and subjugation he identifies in *Capital*? This enables us, among other things, to reassess and rethink the concept of primitive accumulation not as a transitory movement towards capitalism. In the case of primitive accumulation, if we take teleology out of the equation, we are left without the productive aspect of either capital relations or relations of power; is power of subtraction (Foucault) (of time, work, minerals, gas, resources) in the long run revolutionary by itself, or only if it leads, in the Marxist schema, to the accumulation on the expanded scale further pushing the class conflict? Detaching it from the institutions of the state and its juridical apparatus, we can approach subtraction as a different set of strategies that aim to take something out, out of circulation, out of contact with its environment, and to extinguish something - in clear opposition to Foucault concept of power that aims to multiply. Moving away from exclusive focus on institutions and places from which this power classically emanates, I will propose to view sovereignty as a certain function and a relation of force which produces its own effects. For a long time, there was a prevailing tendency of interpreting Foucault's work on governmentality and biopolitics as a historical mode or even epochs substituting the era of sovereignty, something for which there is support in Foucault's own work. Among those working within the Foucauldian field it was Roberto Esposito who warned about rejecting a simple narrative of declining sovereignty and rising productive power

> "Anything but destined to weaken as some had rashly forecast (at least with regard to the world's greatest power), sovereignty seems to have extended and intensified its range of action beyond a repertoire that for centuries had characterized its relation to both citizens and other state structures. With the clear distinction between inside and outside weakened (and therefore also the distinction between war and peace that had characterized sovereign power for so long), sovereignty finds itself directly engaged with questions of life and death that no longer have to do with single areas, but with the world in all of its extensions." (Esposito 2013a: 350-1)

In what way could Foucault, who as Esposito claims at times came almost to proclaiming its decline, be of use us today? Another set of questions, of which Foucault can

be some use of, as I will argue counterintuitively, relates to another problem: is the sovereign power whose return is constantly proclaimed at least from 9-11 and the subsequent proclamation of War on Terror the same as that of yesterday?[71] If there are multiple logics of capital, does this multiplicity of logics of power extend also to sovereignty?

Foucault's conclusions on both biopolitics and on sovereignty – though somewhat less so – were contradictory; though at times he came close to equating sovereignty with the juridical *power*, in *Security, Territory, Population* he aimed to provide a genealogy of sovereign power and the state, arguing that the Hobbesian *Leviathan* was already a late comer, a juridical expression of different form of power. So, from a Foucauldian position, is it possible to say that we are witnessing the return of pre-Leviathan sovereignty? The Foucauldian one, relying on the corollary in the guise of the subject of rights, with the apparatus of the law? Or for someone like Agamben, for whom sovereignty never went away, its apparatus more than Foucault's discipline inclined to take over bodies. Not the one that is juridical, but the one relying on force and what Foucault termed "power of subtraction", now less operating under the guise of juridical apparatus but more as a part of *the apparatus of war.* The fight against the movement of the migrants, the refusal of their asylum claims, international conflicts over certain terrains, mines, locations or straits, such as that over China sea, all point to reversal of the free movement and globalization and can be ascribed as a part of set of strategies of subtraction. Our understanding is that Foucault's toolbox is useful only If one uses all the tools and moves away from the predominant use of a single concept of power, that as a productive relation. Foucault's idea of power as a relation that presupposes freedom is unable to capture the predominant tendency of contemporary capitalism towards the transformation of all relations of power into *asynchronous relations of force*, into that relation of power that Foucault will at one point assign to the prehistory of capitalism. It is here that Foucault meets Marx once more; "power of subtraction" rethought not as exclusive sovereign form of power but as capitalist mode of power puts it into the orbit of a more well-known Marx's concept of "primitive accumulation": not only

[71] Among others see: Michael Ignatieff, „The Return of Sovereignty". *The New Republic,* January 25, 2012. Available at: https://newrepublic.com/article/100040/sovereign-equality-moral-disagreement-government-roth; Matthew Coleman and Kevin Grove (2009) „Biopolitics, Biopower and the return of Sovereignty", *Society and Space* 27(3): 489-507, https://doi.org/10.1068/d3508; Wendy Brown (2008) "Sovereignty and the return of the Repressed", in: Campbell, David and Schoolman, Morton (eds.) *The New Pluralism: William Connolly and the Contemporary Global Condition*, New York: Duke University Press. https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822389149

due to the fact that they both play a certain role in their theoretical edifice as a background against the productive power of capitalist accumulation springs out, but in that they signal the tendency identifiable in both Marx and Foucault that pulled them away from materialism in the analysis of power towards a tendency to analyse power as in a historical sequence, one mode being supplanted and in the end being substituted by another.

4

Towards a political economy of destruction

4.1. Opening Foucault's "black box"

Biopower as a concept has seemingly met its expiration date. This statement might seem too radical, even outright misleading; it seems to be easily rebuffed by a simple act of "googling" or checking the index of published works on the topic of biopolitics. Nonetheless, as one of Foucault's most under-theorized concepts, biopolitics seems to pay this theoretical attractiveness - at least partially due to its initial semiotic openness - with epistemic clarity, as it seems that every further use and interpretation produces semantic blurring. Therefore, it seems to be destined to follow the concept of ideology which, as Ernesto Laclau maintained, through its overuse became at once both too strong and too weak a concept, with which one was able to explain everything and understand nothing (Laclau 1997). The similarities between discourse of ideology and biopolitics do not stop at this, since the perceived necessity of both concepts seems to stem from both theoretical and also a political dead-end - the problem of political subjectivation, which now seems to reach far deeper, beneath the level of mere consciousness, into the very neuro-biological core of late capitalist subjects, where it seems to operate. While it will be pushed further by authors such as Franco Berardi (2016), this was already a part of Foucault's proposition for whom capitalism transformed the operation of power from consciousness to that of the body;

> "(...) capitalism, which developed from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 19th century, started by socializing a first object, the body, as a factor of

> productive force, of labour power. Society's control over individuals was accomplished not only through consciousness or ideology but also in the body and with the body. For capitalist society, it was biopolitics, the biological, the somatic, the corporal, that mattered more than anything else" (Foucault 2000b: 136-137)

Foucaldian discourse of biopolitics is thus a theoretically far more radical proposition from previous theories of ideology - in this, it aims to merely follow what it perceives as continuous pervasiveness of contemporary capitalism itself. When speaking about his then just published *History of Sexuality I*, Foucault underscored how he attempted to show how this new form of power which he called "biopower or somatopower", "(...) can materially penetrate the body in depth, without depending even on the mediation of the subject's own representation. If power takes hold on the body, this isn't through its first to be interiorised in people's consciousness" (Foucault 1980d: 186).

The other, far more important reason comes from the fundamentally changed context in which this concept of power is to be used. It seems that the analysis of contemporary conjuncture, defined by populist movements, proliferation of wars of different scale, fundamental transformation of capitalist accumulation towards financialization, extractive economy, and monopolies, and most of all, the looming climate catastrophe which threatens to destroy the milieu of life – perhaps not only human life, but in its most extreme potential outcomes, the "biosphere" itself – challenges the use of biopolitics.[72] Life, in all its forms, is still at the centre of political activity – perhaps more than ever – but what seems less and less obvious is that this focus is driven by the political need to "foster", "augment" and "protect" life. The definition of biopower as power "dealing with living beings and the mastery it would be able to exercise over them (…) at the level of life itself" (Foucault 1978*:* 143) is not where Foucault had stopped. While characterizing this new form of power as that which "fosters life", Foucault was very quick to add that it can also "*disallow* it to the point of death" (Foucault 1978: 138). Furthermore, in just a couple of next pages Foucault passes from "disallowing life" – which seem to manifest itself as the retrieval of power and its life preserving effects, the abandonment of life to the conditions of death – to more *active* forms

[72] I refer here to a shift in focus of politics of life from that which takes life as it's object of intervention, towards a more radical politics which intervenes in the very conditions of life necessary for its survival. It is thus no longer a question of life spared or taken, but of intervention in the very *possibility* of life. For more see: Georges Canguilhem (2008). *Knowledge of Life.* New York: Fordham University Press

of "distribution" of death: "Wars were never as bloody as they have been since the 19th century", he continues, "(…) and never before did regimes visit such holocausts on their own population" (Foucault 1978: 137). This infamous birth of biopolitics was therefore immediately followed by a birth of a twin concept, one evoking a new capacity for collective destruction unparalleled in the history of humanity and far more destructive than sovereignty, which was paradoxically built upon the power over death. Only just finished with the introduction of a new paradigm of power's inherent productivity Foucault is quick to admit the existence of its counterpart, a "(…) formidable power of death" (Foucault 1978: 137), referring to phenomena of genocide and holocaust which occur when protection of life *turns* into its opposite. This is what Roberto Esposito calls "the black box of biopolitics", referring to its inaugural agonistic nature (Esposito 2013b). But there are fundamental problems with this striking invocation of dialectics; not only is it surprising coming from a Nietzschean like Foucault, with a strong disdain for dialectics, but the very mechanics and logics - and perhaps strategy, if one were to deal with this turnabout through the lens of political rationality - of this turning remain unclear. We should draw attention to rather than efface Foucault's strange formulation, "disallowing to the point of death". While he attempted to provide a historical logic to this turning in the form of "state racism" – both a surprising and as I will argue a somewhat lacklustre answer to the problem of destruction – Foucault fails to ask what different forms can this "disallowal" of life take, or in what way does death enter "the politics of life"? Foucault's conceptual formulation of this "formidable power of death" thus ended in a stillbirth; while on the verge of proclaiming it, Foucault never did so. What becomes manifest is that with this proclamation of the concept, Foucault's vast inheritance will also include the problem and place of destruction within his productive concept of power. In the end, it is precisely at this point of inversion of power of life into death that many of Foucauldian heretic wars are fought and a substantial theoretical intervention is introduced, opening its discourse towards many, often competing and mutually exclusive directions. Commentators such as Silvia Federici (2003), Giorgio Agamben (1998), Achille Mbembe (2019), Warren Montag and Mike Hill (2015) and Eric Alliez and Maurizio Lazzarato (2016) set for themselves the theoretical goal of re-thinking the destructiveness of contemporary power relations, which is seemingly less and less understandable within the biopolitical discursive apparatus. Some will nonetheless attempt to provide with an alternative, a new conceptual tool that aim to capture destruction in the

midst of life-preserving politics, called by many names: from "thanatopolitics" to "necropolitics" (Mbembe), "necroeconomics" (Hill and Montag, 2015) and, perhaps more in line with some of Foucault's own interpretations, "sovereignty" (Agamben 1998). Having in mind not only contemporary cultural expressions, but political, economic, technological, and ecological forces at play, the problematic that arises within the field of biopower - a "seemingly irresolvable" contradiction, present from its inauguration (Foucault) – is that of destruction and violence figure and their position within the "productive power". According to Foucault, in age of biopower it is racism that discursively enables destruction of certain human beings, an idea that will be transfigured and further developed by Judith Butler in *The Force of Non-Violence* (2021) and by Mark Kelly in *Biopolitical Imperialism* (2015). While for Marx there is a dialectical relation between production and destruction, for Foucault these processes occur simultaneously, without any sort of dialectical relation between them, though as we will see his take on violence is far more "Marxian" than Nietzschean.

In this concluding chapter I will argue that, far from his concept of productive power, it is this point of inversion into destruction that will prove crucial for Foucauldian reception in the coming decades. What sort of requirements does contemporary violence - that in contemporary theory goes by different names, from Sassen's "brutality" (Sassen 2013), still defined instrumentally, to Cavarero's "horrorism" (Cavarero) 2011 and Balibar's "cruelty" (Balibar 2016), forms of violence beyond rationality - put before Foucault and Marx? Are these discourses able to capture different tendencies of destructive phenomena? While both authors are usually thought of as the ones that pay specific focus on capitalism's productive capabilities – material in Marx' or subjective in Foucault's case – I will attempt to show another possible reading of Foucault with Marx, this time over the terrain of primitive accumulation and economy of extraction, focusing on capital's destructive potential and its *non-productive* capacities. I will turn to Foucault's "disavowal of life" as well as other "active" forms of distributing death to rethink different forms of contemporary destruction of life and its milieu. I will attempt to show in what ways these destructive strategies intertwine with current accumulation of capital by turning to Foucault's concept of power as war and sovereignty.

Building upon and against previous chapters this last section of the work will attempt to further radicalize Alliez and Lazzarato's insistence that Marx focused almost exclusively

"on the relationship between capitalism and industrialism" to the detriment of the phenomena of "strategic forces of destruction" (Alliez and Lazzarato 2016: 17).[73] I will attempt this not by reiterating what is usually perceived as strong points of Marxist and Foucauldian discourse, analysed in the preceding chapters, but by thinking through concepts and theoretical innovations that were either skipped over or left behind and abandoned, which usually led to later be perceived as those of less explanatory strength or usefulness (Ranciere 2013; Lemke 2019). This attempt may appear counter-instinctive – to read against the grain, to read scraps and blind points and dead-ends in order to come out with an outline of a discourse grasping the destructive character of modern power in its own right – and is not without risks. While not calling for an outright refusal of Foucault's insistence on productive capacity of power or Marx's idea of capitalism's revolutionary potentiality I will argue that the destructive capabilities of capital accumulation – which while present are usually underplayed in dominant interpretations of Marx' and Foucault's work – are crucial not only for understanding the history of capitalism but more importantly its future. It seems necessary to move not only towards a history of (capitalist) destruction, but even more so, towards the theory of its destruction.

We could supplant Antonio Negri's argument that real subsumption stands as a „dispositif of power in Marx" (Negri 2017), with another dispositif or another distinct way in which power "meets" life in capitalist mode of production. Contemporary capitalist mode of accumulation seems to be the radicalisation of two different, opposing and also reaffirming tendencies – that of "primitive accumulation" and "real subsumption". They seem to be defined by the narrowing of spaces of freedom and would thus represent the transformation from the mode of governing towards modes of domination, albeit in different ways. What form does the power over life take in primitive accumulation and how does it operate in the dispositif of real subsumption - which, as Balibar reminds us, Marx in the end decided to omit from the final version of *Capital* (Balibar 2017)? Are these connected and in what ways; are they just the same movements within capitalist mode of production at different moments of capitalist valorisation? Is there something antithetical, a different mode of operation of power or, it could be more pertinent to say different potential of capitalist power within these two dispositifs? If we are to follow Negri in his argument that Foucault's

[73] The problem of destruction is starting to become more visible and an object of philosophical investigation. For example see the latest work of Gil Anidjar: Anidjar 2019; also: Evans and Anidjar 2018.

work supplants Marx's by providing it with the concept of subjectivity, what sort of subjectivity does primitive accumulation denote? But more importantly what types of destruction do they bring forth and at what consequences and effects for subjectivities?

This inquiry will be done through what I will call the *phenomenology of destruction*, an attempt to chart an alternative pathway to modalities of non-productive and destructive power through different (subjective) experiences, strategies, and representations. Due to the obvious limitations this will be an exercise through the spaces of accumulation of "absolute capitalism" (Balibar), moving from the extreme spaces of "extractive economy" all to the "non-spaces" of "real subsumption" I will attempt to show in what ways capitalist power operates beyond productivity (even that of subjectivity) and the teleological vindication of its destructive tendencies. This exercise in phenomenology is necessarily post-Foucauldian as it rests on Foucault's critique of both transcendental and existential phenomenology (May 2005; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1983). It rejects the constituent role of the subject and refuses to ground experience in this "pure subjectivity" as it is built upon the refusal of what Foucault calls "empirico-transcendental doublet" (Foucault, 1994). Its object is therefore not so much the experience itself, but the (representational) categories with which it is articulated (May 2005; Dreyfus and Rabinow 1984). As such, my aim is to show the categories and ways in which capital accumulation is itself articulated and in what ways does it relate to the process of subjectification.[74]

Building on this reading, I will attempt to provide a somewhat tentative albeit provocative exposition of different vectors of destruction in contemporary Culture, which takes the form of destruction of subjectivities, climate, common forms of life, and in the most extreme cases, destruction of the possibility of politics itself (Balibar 2016). Having in mind the almost limitless capacities of "capitalist mode of destruction" (Alliez and Lazzarato 2018), this project is both extremely important and seemingly impossible. While there are excellent histories of capitalist destruction, of different objects – for example environment, climate, local communities and forms of life etc. – there are far less attempts to think this destruction systematically as a phenomenon-in-itself; at least this is partially

[74] In the course of it I will also rethink what it means for power to "produce" subjectivity; does this production necessarily presuppose rationality and intentionality? Foucault rejects that the omnipresence of power of which he speaks of - as power permeates every social relation - is usually mistaken for omnipotence of power, going so far as to claim that one excludes the other (if power is omnipotent then it can't be omnipresent). Yet it remains unclear if what is the consequence of this concept of power - if it even may be called a concept, as Foucault at times rejects outright. See: Foucault 2012b.

due to the supposed logical and strategic subsumption of destruction to the movements of capital accumulation. This chapter should nonetheless be seen less as an attempt to write the theory of capitalist destruction, and more as a genealogical inquiry into what I called the productivist ontology, a specific discourse which makes different forms of destruction unthinkable. I will first deal with what I propose to call *Foucault's nuclear reversal*, i.e., the way Foucault somewhat abruptly introduces the possibility of destruction in the midst of his politics of life. This will lead to an extended discussion of the relationship between the violence and destructivity in both Foucault and Marx, and the ways in which Foucault somewhat surprisingly continues in Marx's dialectical path. The second part of this chapter is devoted to different forms of destruction of contemporary subjectivities and the "production" of what I call "post-productive subjectivity", through its two forms-of-life: *the parasite* and *the sovereign*.

4.2. On labour-pains and midwives: Marx, Foucault and the role of violence and destruction in capitalist accumulation

Marx's capitalism, from its very inception to its inevitable demise, is destructive and violent: famously, it comes into being "(...) dripping from head to toe, from every pore, with blood and dirt" (Marx 1990: 925) as the history of its beginnings are "written in letters of blood and fire" and it is, in at least one of many predicted outcomes, prophesied to finish in the (presumably) equally bloody "mutual destruction of the competing classes" as Marx and Engels proclaim in *The Communist Manifesto*.[75] And yet, the way Marx and Engels approach this destructive potential is somewhat unexpected; the opening of *The Communist Manifesto* can easily take one back by the proclamation of one the most important characteristic of capitalist mode of production – not the destruction it brings but its profoundly revolutionary and transformative character. Even if we consider the historical moment in which *Manifesto* was written (see Stedman Jones 2018), Marx's conceptualisation of capitalism as a primarily dynamic system will remain present throughout his work. For Marx and Engels this dynamism was an effect of the drive towards

[75] As far as prescient prophecies go here's another: "Let's not flatter ourselves too much with our human victories over nature. For every victory like this it takes revenge on us. Everyone has first and foremost the consequences, which we count on, but in the second and third stages it has completely different unpredictable effects that only too often those first episodes pick up again..." Friedrich Engels (1876) "The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man". Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1876/part-played-labour /index.htm

accumulation through mass production, followed by staggering acts of destruction, which take different forms. For once, there are those acts of destruction we can ascribe to the operation of the market

> "In these crises, a great part not only of the existing products, but also of the previously created productive forces, are periodically destroyed. In these crises, there breaks out an epidemic that, in all earlier epochs, would have seemed an absurdity — the epidemic of overproduction. Society suddenly finds itself put back into a state of momentary barbarism; it appears as if a famine, a universal war of devastation, had cut off the supply of every means of subsistence; industry and commerce seem to be destroyed; and why? Because there is too much civilisation, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce" (Marx and Engels, 2000)

The "destruction" of the means of production and commerce and the "universal war of devastation" is an effect of "overproduction", according to Marx and Engels destruction brought upon by capitalist production is instrumental to production and exists not of itself but as a *movement of* and a *function of* production and capital accumulation. Since capital accumulation has no end-goals and always needs to occur on a higher level, these recurring acts of destruction also are progressively globalised and more and more universal in their reach and scope. This position had crossed the philosophical and political divides; it is only because of this that somebody like Joseph Schumpeter could within a single concept of "creative destruction" concisely capture "(…) the violent destruction of capital not by relations external to it, but rather as a condition of its self-preservation" (Marx 1993: 750). That Schumpeter was able to appropriate or produce this concept at the same time while negating most of the other tenets of Marxist economic theory – labour theory of value, concepts of exploitation or primitive accumulation, as the most obvious - would seem to vindicate Foucault's critique of Marxism in *The Order of Things*: regardless of all the differences, Marxism shares the same episteme and the vision of history with the discourse it aimed to criticise, that of political economy and liberalism. This may lead to the conclusion that, while the dialectic of production and destruction Marx will develop in *Capital* - "the most dangerous weapon yet unleashed against the bourgeoisie" (Engels) – it nonetheless provides a way out for the bourgeoisie thought, if not for Schumpeter himself who has far more pessimistic about the future prospects of capitalism. Of course, Schumpeter's dialectic

of production and destruction is not that of Marx, since it is limited primarily to the business cycles and annihilation by accountant's ledger books, only consequently spilling over into the social and producing effects such as unemployment. While in three volumes of *Capital* Marx closed them off in so many different ways, the way out for the bourgeois thought will be the productive drive of capital, the need for accumulation to ultimately continue further and further.[76]

This instrumentality of destructiveness and the violence of capitalist production followed the necessity of acquiring raw materials for the production *of surplus value*, of getting a hold of and over the bodies of the living and transforming them into working, labouring bodies. This transformation into "living labour" was to be undertaken at all costs, even at the cost of their destruction and death. But this initial brutality was confined to pre-capitalism and the act of capitalism's inauguration: *primitive* accumulation – original German *ursprüngliche* grasps more of its character as capitalism's precondition – was to be short lived, since its role as a "hot-house" was to "shorten the transition" between "the feudal mode of production into the capitalist mode" (Stedman Jones 2018). What seems to follow primitive accumulation is a different form of violence defined by contractual relation, a bloodless accumulation with threat of violence being only implicit; by this Marx banished capitalism's most excessive acts against human life either to its prehistory or to its - still unwritten - future.

More precisely, in Marx's work one seems to find two distinct forms and logics of capitalism's violence. One sees violence as a phenomenological manifestation of destruction it brings forth as a means to *an* end, an instrument; this is the road that leads from primitive accumulation across production of absolute to relative surplus value. Since excessive deaths or incapacitation of labourers leads to the suppression of their collective labouring capacity, it ends up subverting the process of "valorisation of capital" which it was supposed to vitalize. But the curbing of these destructive tendencies is not an absolute imperative, and it should not be avoided at all but only at a *reasonable* cost. Driven primarily not by the need to protect life as such, but by limits and obstacles it puts on accumulation, individual capitalists thus start to transform the mechanisms of the extraction of surplus value no longer dependent exclusively on the prolongation of the working day. This transformation will

[76] On Marx's three different conceptualisations of capitalism's decline and ultimate end see: Stedman Jones 2018.

“open up” the biological existence of labourers as capital will consequently exert its power not only in the workplace (discipline) but far beyond the production of surplus value to worker’s (biological) existence (biopolitics). This move from production of absolute to relative surplus value is, according to Marx, is driven by the biological threshold of sustainability of the labour force to reproduce itself at necessary rates: the solution is in the shift from the production that does not depend on the prolongation of the working day but on its "intensification". As we saw in the previous chapter this enhancing of the bodies economic “utility” is the point at which Foucault intervenes into Marx's work - and in return we find Marx interjecting himself into Foucault's work, providing a background against which he will develop concepts of “disciplinary power” and “biopower” (Foucault 2012b).[77] As a mode of production (of commodities) capitalism does seem to have a tendency towards a bio-political solution, preserving and protecting the life of workers. But this also sets a limit for our use of Foucault in thinking of contemporary capitalist violence, since it ties his own philosophical project - defined by the problem of knowledge and rationality - not only with the instrumental character of violence, but rationality of production. It is important to notice that Marx distinguished between the effects of these types of violence and their sublation; the predominant form of violence produced by capitalist mode of production - instrumental violence - as a means for a goal tends to be ultimately self-defeating, returning as its own *coup-de-grace*. For Marx, internal contradictions of capitalism thus manifest primarily as self-destruction as an inversion of its unlimited productive capacities, its other side, embodied in “the antagonistic character of capitalist accumulation” (Marx 1990: 799). As Lazzarato and Alliez (2018) notice, technological development driven by capitalist accumulation for Marxism yields an *emancipatory* force - in Marx’s famous words, capitalism gives birth to its own gravediggers.

But then there is another somewhat latent concept of destruction one finds in Marx in which capital's destructive potential loses its instrumental or rational character and can even escape the iron grip of the dialectical logic tied to the activity of production. From the perspective of circulation of capital, capitalism goes separate ways from the protection of life; at this point, accumulation - the paradigm of which is the financial circuit, M-M', which does not employ work or does not "pass through" commodities - becomes detached from

[77] Besides Marx’s historical writings, unencumbered by a strong theoretical framework and more of a “nominalist” nature, Foucault finds part II of *Capital* most interesting. See: Foucault 2012b.

protection of life and the body of the workers while it, nonetheless, continues to affect them. Besides the functional role that financial capitalism played in the inauguration of capitalist mode of production, it's ties to war and colonial expansion, Marx hints here at something else. The move from the C-M-C to M(C)-M' or financial accumulation, the one which for Marx was impossible - as for him industrial capital subjugates interest-bearing capital, becoming only its particular form - betrays a fundamental fantasy of capitalism: valorisation of capital beyond its dependency upon bodies that produce commodities and its self-emancipation from its dependence on human physiology and bodily needs as its perspective is not that of humans, its speed of circulation greatly outpaces that of biological processes; a dream of an accumulation not "weighed down" by bodies and their physiological limits, a fantasy of being delivered from bodies, breaking free from the confines of human biology - a fantasy of accumulation in a void. The formula M-M', or the form capital according to Marx takes in the stock market - today far more generalized, as is the logic of the market and finance - stands in for the *becoming metaphysical* of capital, its tendency to "decouple" from *physis* - both in the sense of commodity form and living labour that it is produced by.[78] As Marx had himself understood - but was unable to accept due to his labour theory of value and almost exclusive focus on industrial production - this decoupling of capital has destructive effects. At the height of the Cold War this destructive potential was noted by one of Marx's most important "classical" interpreters, Belgian Marxist economist Ernest Mandel. In his introduction to the Penguin edition of *Capital vol. I* where he argues that the fundamental contradiction between socialized production under capitalism and the private re-appropriation of surplus value

> "(…) implies the possibility of a steadily increasing *transformation of forces of production into forces of destruction,* in the most literal sense of the word: not only forces of destruction of wealth (crisis and wars), of human wealth and human happiness, but also forces of destruction of life *tout court* (Mandel 1990*:* 38).

Mandel unfortunately leaves us without even a hint of an idea of what would this destruction of "life *tout court*" look like and what logic, dialectical or otherwise, it would follow. Having in mind Mandel's activity in the antinuclear movement it stands to reason that he implies the possibility of nuclear war and annihilation, which even in the event of a

[78] Scott Lasch distinguishes between physical and metaphysical capitalism via Aristotle's four causes, see: Lasch 2007.

"localized" event would lead to nuclear winter.[79] But, rather than viewing the link between capitalism and nuclear power as purely contingent, one has to take into account Marx's later view that forces of production - including energy production - are themselves permeated by relations of power.[80] The atomic power than emerges as a necessity for a globalized accumulation, at the same time capturing Foucauldian agonism between productivity and destructiveness, between life "affirming" power and "forces of destruction" and the possibility of the ultimate "genocide". If we look beyond the crisis years of the Cold war and nuclear standoff, what is the logic of the reversal of productivity into destruction, from Mandel's "forces of destruction" to what Lazzarato and Alliez (2018) will call "mode of destruction"?

Following Marx, theoretical and political criticism of capitalism was usually derived from its capacity of over-production that leads to destruction of human beings, communities, and technologies. Living in an era of unprecedented productivity we are once more facing an almost limitless capacity for destruction - exemplified in the destruction of the milieu of the living and life itself, the point at which classical Marxist dialectic of production and destruction reaches its end point. But while this reversal of production into destruction – and ultimately a historical force of the creation of new ways of communal life - is not a surprise for Marx, it should be a different thing altogether for somebody with a well-documented disdain for dialectics as Foucault. Yet it is precisely this almost ontological re-doubling of the productivity of the capital in Marx with the productivity of power in Foucault that gave the foundation to the growing theoretical field of biopolitics, exemplified by the ground-breaking work Hardt and Negri's *Empire* who, as we saw, amplify Marx's tendency towards reductionist view of development of accumulation as an emancipatory force and supplant it with equally reductionist reading of Foucault's concept of subjectivation.[81] Hardt and Negri's work on multitude exemplifies the allegations thrown at Foucault of a different strand of "economism of power" – a term which he himself used to castigate both Marxism and liberalism (Foucault 2003: 13).[82] The critique of "economism" present in Foucault's

[79] See: Mandel 1984.
[80] For the inquiry in the relation between labour power and the energy crisis of capitalism see: Caffentzis 2013.
[81] Later Marx abolishes the distinction between the means of production and relations of production. Under capitalist mode of production every means develops as a part of and subordinate to the relations of production; power relations of accumulation - and the violence behind it - are thus manifest in technology itself.
[82] "Economism of power" designates a complex of critiques of Marxism and liberalism's concept of power. Though somewhat mutually distinct, Foucault identifies their refusal of concept of power as relational and as a productive force. Liberalism regards power as a right which can be possessed in the way one possesses a

work on power was undertaken from Lacanian position by Joan Copjec, starting by disentangling from Foucauldian position the necessary entanglement of knowledge with power

> "It is to the fact that power is disjoined from knowledge, that the force which produces the subject is blind, that the subject owes its precious singularity. For, if there is a lack of knowledge in the Other, then there is necessarily a surplus of meaning in the subject, an excess for which the Other cannot account, that is to say, there is something in the subject that escapes social recognition" (Copjec 2015)

Or when he declares that "there is indeed always something which in some way escapes the relations of power; something in the social body (…) which is the centrifugal movement, the inverse energy, that which escapes" (Foucault 1980c: 137-8), it seems that Foucault takes a step back from proclamation of power's unlimited productiveness. And yet, contrary to these declarations, one does not need to revert to Lacanian critique to adhere that Foucault falls prey to a dictum according to which power does not fail to ultimately reach its destination; power cannot be wasted, spilled, exhausted, squandered, spent, dissipated or ruined. For power there are no wrong turns or dead ends. It always ultimately meets its goal, arrives at its destination – this is the result of Foucault's fully immanent concept of power, which results in the circular logic whereby power is produced by society which is itself produced by power (Copjec 2015).[83] Echoing Copjec warnings that ultimately "power is

commodity and therefore can be transferred or alienated, while in Marxist conception power has an „economic functionality" that relegates to the power the role of perpetuating relations of production and class domination (see Foucault 2003: 13-14).

[83] In "Clarifications on the questions of Power", Foucault pushes back on the idea that he attempted a "true ontological circle, deducing power from power", arguing that it is "(...) stupid and ridiculous affirmation since I have always tried to do just the opposite" (Foucault 1996b: 259). Taking *Madness and Civilization* as an example, Foucault argues that he did not write of power with "capital P" insofar as he always rejected producing the ontology of Power by moving away from the analysis situated "(...) exclusively on the level of the institution and of the law, and on the power relationship, more or less regulated, with which the violence against madness or madmen would have been exercised (…) I tried to see, then, how this set of power relationships which encircled madness and defined it as a mental illness was something completely different from a pure and simple power relationship, from a pure and simple tautological affirmation of the following type: I, reason, exercise power over you, madness (…) It was precisely the heterogeneity of power which I wanted to demonstrate, how it is always born of something other than itself (…) All of this is born from out of something else; and there is now Power, but power relationships which are born incessantly, as both *effect and condition of other processes*" (Foucault 1996b: 259, our italic). Foucault continues, "If mine where the ontological conception of power, there would be on one side, Power with capital P, a kind of lunar occurrence, extra-terrestrial; and on the other side, the resistance of the unhappy ones who are obligated to bow before power" (260). According to Foucault, this ontology which privileges class as a formed identities over struggle, i.e., a process of *formation of* identity, is present in certain forms of Marxist discourse, in which "Capital" faces "the Proletariat" as in a great apocalyptic showdown - the narrative of Hardt and Negri's *Empire*.

blind", Balibar hints at a similar critique of a certain type of prolific Foucauldian discourse which, by moving away from nominalism, defines neoliberalism as a political project and an effect of political rationality (see for example the work of Wendy Brown, 2015). Buried within the endnotes of his *Citizenship,* discussing the theoretical tendency of identifying ongoing socio-economic transformations as aspects of neoliberal "rationality" that produces its own anthropological conditions, Balibar reverts to the Braudelian perspective of *longue durée* to ask whether we are not instead dealing with "(…) the negative symptoms of the dissolution (…) not leading to any tenable form of social life" (Balibar 2015: 105). Rather than approaching present conjuncture as an effect of the productiveness of power – the idea that the current neoliberal restructuring of society and economy, producing certain subjectivity (*homo oeconomicus*) as an effect of a discourse – Balibar hints at the (im)possibility of power to produce the conditions necessary for its own reproduction. This leads Copjec to pose a fundamental question, addressed to Foucault, but with a far more important addressee in the various receptions and uses of his work: "How is it, then, that Foucault continued to speak of the modern form of power, as though there were only one?" (Copjec 2015). One can easily find Foucault's statements that counter this criticism; for example, when in lectures from Brazil Foucault proclaims society "(...) an archipelago of different powers" (Foucault, in: Elden 2016: 56), it seems that Foucault's proclaims the irreducible multiplicity of power and its effects. And yet, as both Copjec and Balibar point out, there is a strong tendency in Foucault's work regardless of all his protestations to the contrary that drives him away from nominalism towards a historical sequencing of power; for example, present when he speaks not only of discipline but of "disciplinary society" (Foucault, 1980). Following Copjec and Balibar we will take into account the irreducible *multiplicity* of powers and the way in which they operate, including those defined by non- and counter-productive and even by an outright *destructive* potential. In other words, there is no epistemological vantage point from which we can draw the conclusion that the appropriate metaphor for contemporary global political condition is invention rather than disintegration; decomposition rather than production; and a possible dead end of power rather than its incessant multiplication.

To grasp Foucault's potential conceptualisation of these powers, including that of destruction, we must start from his predominant theme, power's productivity. Foucault distinguishes between the "production of men" and "the production of value, the production

of wealth or of an economically useful object" since the first implies "the *destruction* of what we are as well as the creation of a completely different thing, a total innovation" (Foucault 2000b: 275, our italic), while "the production of objects" appears destructive-less. This distinction between two types of production, one preceded by acts of destruction of previous forms of life and the other not, is no longer sustainable - if it ever was. Or, if we are to use Foucault's own reasoning, this difference can be only heuristic.[84] Relying on the ontological distinction between nature and society and on Marx's concept of productivity, Foucault nevertheless fails to think of the dialectical intricacies of the capitalist accumulation on the environment that were already apparent to Marx and Engels. Foucault's conceptualization of violence and destruction is therefore not fundamentally different from that of Marx; he conceptualizes it primarily in the form of violence of apparatuses and institutions unleashed on the mad, delinquents, workers and - just as Marx - makes destruction primarily a *by-product* of a dispositive of power driven by its impetus for production, be it of commodities (use-values), knowledge or subjectivities.[85] What Foucault does add to Marx's dialectic of violence of primitive accumulation of capital is the primitive accumulation of men, not only in the form of production of "vagabondage" - a class of men created by the destruction of commons and the refusal of common means of subsistence - but also in a form of force of "de-subjectivation" - a destruction of previous forms-of-life on whose grounds new subjectivities, more suitable for capitalism, were built upon.

Where does this leave us? What are the theoretical and political consequences of the productivist ontology of Marx and Foucault, and especially work they inspired? In what theoretical and ultimately political deadlocks does it force authors which combine their

[84] Criticism of the distinction between production of "man by man" and the production of "wealth and use values" which Foucault shares with Marx, is the object of the work of Jason W. Moore. According to Moore's interpretation, Marx's law of value and his views on the relation between Man and nature in the production of use values hides the fundamental productiveness of (capitalist) power in the creation of both "abstract nature" and "environment" that is to be exploited, or in the form of racism and sexism (discourses enabling cheap work and cheap care). Discussing ongoing primitive accumulation, Moore argues we need to find our way out of "the state-centric rendering of this process (...) brilliantly crystallized in (...) Foucault's wide-ranging discussions on governmentality and biopower. If the production of abstract social natures has often been closely bound to imperial and state power, such political structures have hardly been independent of world accumulation. State- and market- led simplifications reveal a process or remaking life-activity - entraining a range of processes aimed at standardizing and geometrically encoding and mapping natures in the interest of facilitating capital accumulation. The unpaid work of "women, nature, and colonies", in this perspective, are not merely plundered but actively created through symbolic praxis, political power and capital accumulation" (Moore 2015: 216).

[85] According to Foucault, he consistently refused in his work to conceptualize power since it always has impetus *outside* itself, both in its "conditions" and its "effects" (see Foucault 2012b). See footnote 79.

works? Should Foucault be "discarded" as an “anthropocentric” author, unable to think about the relation between humans and their environment?[86] To what extent should the context defined by environmental destruction and climate change alter our understanding of Marx’s and Foucault’s capitalism? If we leave behind the ontology of power’s absolute productivity – the continuing productive effect it has on bodies, discourses, institutions – as well as the idea of capitalism’s productivity which, however infernal, is driven in the end to abolish itself, what is left of their project? In other words, in what ways can their work be used to avoid falling into the same trap? In the following pages we will risk a sort of theoretical speculation by reading both precisely at the moments where it seems that they may have so little to say to each other and where their discourses are often thought of being the least strong[87] – non-productivity and destructiveness in its own right.

4.3. Moses and the prophets in the desert: Foucault’s theories of power and the accumulation of capital

As we saw, when speaking of violence and destruction of accumulation of capital, Marx and Engels were not only thinking about the annihilation of the means of production and their replacement on higher order to kickstart another cycle of capital accumulation now on an expanded scale. But the picture of capitalism which emerged forcefully in the last (couple of) decades is fundamentally different from that given to us by Marx - and Foucault. Under conditions specific to the circulation of capital - among others, the falling rates of profit as costs of production and global markets put downward pressure not only on wages but profitability (Roberts, 2016; Roberts and Carchedi, 2018; Streeck 2014); the slowing of economic growth and the role of financial capital (Marazzi, 2009; Lapavitsas, 2013);

[86] Petra Hroch argues that although Foucault is not concerned with human relations with non-human entities, which makes accusations of anthropocentrism justified - though redundant, one should add - it would be wrong to draw the conclusion that environment is forever excluded from Foucauldian discourse. This could be done by extending the concept of “the care of the self” - which would now involve understanding that “the self” includes other, non-human actors, such as environment and climate. But Hroch does not put forward a proposition by which the environment could play an active role in Foucault’s conceptualisation of power, whether that is even possible. See: Hroch 2013. Lemke’s reading, if pushed to its extremes, goes against the usual anthropocentric interpretations of Foucault by asking: if the goal of “anatomo-politics” is optimisation of Man’s movements and the transformation of labourer into a “man-machine”, does perhaps biopolitics as political technology of “an entirely new body” (…) the population”, open this “body” to its other, to its non-human surrounding, to its milieu? Regardless of its preoccupation with “dearth” and “famines”, it seems that Foucault nonetheless opted for a sort of “inward” opening of the “social body” towards its biological reality: “(…) conditions of variation, controlling matters of probability and modifying effects to avert or balance out the dangers that result from communal existence conceived as biological whole” (Lemke 2019: 138)

[87] For example, see Gros 2012.

mutually connected processes of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003) and expansion of different forms of rentier economy[88] with rising global inequalities[89] - together with what might be called conditions exogenous to it (only if we understand this outside "heuristically"), such as climate change, declining agricultural productivity and loss of arable land (Dar and Gowda 2013), the problem of waste disposal, loss of biodiversity, the energy problem as well as the transformation of capitalism's relation to democracy, it seems capitalism had abdicated its historical role as an agent of revolutionary transformation. To quote Marx: "No social order ever disappears before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have been developed" (Marx 1993). While the signs that productive forces have been exhausted are numerous, there seems to be no signs of the disappearance of contemporary order.[90] Regardless of whether we take this Marx's proposition as true, what seems to be needed today is a theory and concepts able to analyse what Gopal Balakrishnan (2009) called "the growthless stationary state" shaped by

> "(...) the convergence of a conjunctural crisis of accumulation with ongoing epochal shifts in world capitalism—in its technological bases, demographic patterns and international division of labour—that have diminished its capacities for sustainable growth" (Balakrishnan 2009).

Writing in the wake of Obama's administration bailout programme of 2009, Balakrishnan identified this lack of capacities throughout the world system – from then rising semi-periphery, i.e. China and other "BRIC" economies, who will be unable to form a new cycle of capitalist accumulation due to, among other, the lowering of the demand from the world system's "centre" (Japan, Europe and US) itself facing downward trends, defined by the general rise in indebtedness both of persons, firms and states; "the growing productivity of machines" and outsourcing of manual labour and the overall attempts to

[88] For a study of how the UK economy had become driven by rentier extraction see Brett Christophers' (2020). *Rentier Capitalism: Who Owns the Economy, and Who Pays for It?* London: Verso and his *The New Enclosure* (2019). London: Verso. On how intellectual property retains the form of a rent: Guy Standing. "The Age of Rentier Capitalism." *Al Jazeera*, September 7, 2014. Available at: http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/9/ the-age-of-rentiercapitalism.html

[89] See: Marazzi 2009 and Lapavitsas 2013. While both works are invaluable in understanding the shift to financial accumulation, they fail to draw a fundamentally Marxist conclusion from the rise of financial capitalism - its historical role not only in the rising rates of violence, but also in the growing rate of "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey) and in war and "war-like" activities.

[90] The idea of "green growth" or in a somewhat different manner that of carbon capture technology play a crucial part in providing a "bold vision for a new, ethereal frontier of capital accumulation". See: Malm and Carton 2021.

"decrease significantly the costs of health, education and age care without drastically reducing the level and quality of provision" of post-industrial service economy. Lazzarato and Alliez (2018) will try to understand this structural change of the last couple of decades as capitalism's shift towards "generalized logic of war".[91] I interpret this as capital's retreat from a single predominant strategy of accumulation - that via production of surplus value - and the infinite economic growth towards accumulation defined by what Foucault calls "subtraction" (*prélèvement*), strategies ranging from financial mechanisms of extraction (through debt financing, different forms of monopolies, financial derivatives, (big) data mining, etc.) to different forms of physical extractions (from rare earth minerals mining, logging, gas and oil, crops, food, water, all to the bodies and energy from these bodies in the form of work).[92] These phenomena should be approached as a set of specific and deliberate strategies deserving their own theoretical treatment, and not end up subsumed to teleological or inaugural role ascribed to them by Marx - or, in the end, Foucault himself.

What our contemporary situation and predicament require is to confront the long tradition of capitalism as a constantly revolutionizing mode of production, pushing forward history through its incessant transformation. Contemporary conjuncture, defined by the rise in the accumulation of capital in it's different non- and even counter- productive forms necessitates rethinking capitalism from the vantage point of its *destructive capabilities.* The other reason for this is to provide a counter-reading of Marx and Foucault which I call "heterodox reading", as a critical intervention into a discourse which could be provisionally called Foucauldian-Marxism. Following Balibar's (1992) and Foucault's (1978) critique of Freudo-Marxism and "repressive hypothesis", we might define this new discourse as that which aims to provide Marxian analysis with the analysis of subjectivity - only this time that of Foucault (Negri 2017). The combination of their work in this manner, regardless of the individual differences between various authors, ends up amplifying the productivist tendencies in Marx with an equally productive concept of subjectivity in Foucault, as

[91] Work of Lazzarato and Alliez (2018) aims to open the possibility of thinking of capital accumulation beyond industrial production to whose fortunes Marx tied it to. Though, while they attempt to rethink capital through its relation to war, they refrain from approaching all the aspects of accumulation as war-like.

[92] This is what Andrea Fumagalli calls "the becoming rent of profit". See: Andrea Fumagalli (2011) "Twenty Thesis on Contemporary Capitalism (Cognitive Biopolitics)" *Angelaki* 16 (3): 7-17. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0969725X.2011.626555

exemplified by the work of Hardt and Negri, this sort of reading proves ill-suited for understanding contemporary capital's movements of destruction.

But where can we find models, concepts, and ontology for this massive undertaking of critique and possible abandonment of the model and ontology of productivity, an attempt which goes against almost all traditional philosophical and political interventions? While at first glance it might seem that Marx and Foucault are ill suited for this task they provided certain concepts that may enable this endeavour. Foucault had, just as Marx, fallen into the "teleological" trap of accumulation; just as Marx's concept of "primitive accumulation", Foucault's concept of "productive power" should be confronted by *multiplicity* of concepts of power, to strike a sharp wedge between nominalism and anti-nominalism, teleology and contingency. To do so, we should utilize the "underside" of Foucault's and Marx's work and turn to concepts of primitive accumulation and alternative or "minor" models of power one finds in Foucault - war and sovereignty.

4.4. Subtraction, a capitalist form of power

For Foucault the role of sovereignty was specifically to play an antithesis to the new form of power emerging, power more dependent on bodies and productivity, distributed by surveillance and material coercion. If we aim to ontologize Foucault's proposition of power - something which he vociferously refused to do - then we may claim that Foucault differentiates between power of "multiplication" and that power which remains elusive, as it changes its operations from "appropriation", "deduction", "seizure" or "subtraction" (*prélèvement*); one that aims to enhance and multiply possibilities, while the other deduces or appropriates them. Power of multiplication, i.e., biopower, dealing primarily with living beings - both individually (bodies) and collectively (species) - was the subject of Chapter I. From the themes of this chapter what seems far more interesting is opening the possibility of the power of deduction, which was left underdeveloped as Foucault had felt that as a model of power as sovereignty was thought of as a historically dominant form of power and as such was already an object of significant philosophical and historical treatment. While it ("sovereignty") deals primarily with objects and things - be they land, taxes or commodities - Foucault leaves open the possibility of expanding its reach beyond the initial object into

the sphere of the living, even if by an act of (mass) murder and genocide.[93] In *History of Sexuality* he writes

> "(...) perhaps this juridical form [i.e., sovereignty] must be referred to a historical type of society in which power was exercised mainly as a means of *deduction* (prélèvement), a *subtraction mechanism*, a right to *appropriate* a portion of the wealth, a tax of products, goods and services, labour and blood, levied on the subjects. Power in this instance was essentially a right of *seizure*: of things, time, bodies, and ultimately life itself; it culminated in the privilege to seize hold of life in order to suppress it" (Foucault 1978: 136, our italic)

Dealing with nuclear war and the problem of racism to provide a possible answer to the contradiction about death in the age of biopower he himself observed, Foucault added another capacity to this power of subtraction - the power of outright destruction. In the case of nuclear war this form of power escapes dialectical reversal, if not in the logic of its deployment than certainly in its effects. Foucault here also draws a line between repressive model of power (what he calls "repressive hypothesis") and sovereignty which in age of biopower seems to operate devoid of its "juridical" garments; the act of murder and genocide, i.e., the destruction of lives, can in no way be subsumed under repressive power but seem rather to be the end result of the *maximization* of the logic of subtraction (*prélèvement*).

In the time of "stationary state" (Balakrishnan 2009) which, as we argued, seems to be a permanent state of global capitalism, it is precisely this aspect of sovereignty connected to the land and "(...) displacement and appropriation on the part of the power" (Foucault 1980b: 104) that will play a critical role in capital accumulation. The other crucial economical role of the state is in its relation to financial capital and the "rent extraction", whereby not only does contemporary state not "(...) retreat from the economic arena [and] assert the necessity to reduce its social role to the widening and strengthening of its penal intervention" (Loic Wacquant in: Bauman 2005: 68) but, on the contrary, its repressive apparatus itself becomes *economized* and a crucial vehicle for the accumulation of capital through destruction. The case of the US Military-industrial complex – the so-called

[93] As we had already seen, this is the object of Giorgio Agamben's critique and intervention, whereby sovereignty overtakes the mechanisms and logic of biopolitics, and not the other way around as Foucault had predicted. See: Agamben 1998.

Keynesian militarism – and US prison-industrial complex (Wang 2018) are best documented and most obvious rebuttals of Wacquant's conclusion, coming from the very state which he proclaimed as a leader of this process of state's supposed organised retreat from its economic role. State apparatus thus slowly becomes divested from the production of "productive subjectivity" (Macherey), while its repressive apparatus provides violence necessary for the appropriation of different resources, rent revenues and land. While subtraction as a mechanism of annulment of power and its potentiality belongs exclusively to sovereignty it seems that in contemporary context it has *detached* from it and operates as a form of "capitalist power", capturing, appropriating or sometimes destroying different objects and potentialities.[94] If subtraction was one of the historically exclusive marks of sovereignty, it seems that capital had *become sovereign*, a transformation whose consequences are yet to to be thoroughly thought through.[95]

4.5. Capital on the warpath

In *Wars and Capital* (2018) French-Italian duo Maurizio Lazzarato and Eric Alliez give one of the most important contributions in thinking through the theoretical and philosophical consequences of what I call *becoming sovereign of capital* by starting from a "theoretical void" of capital's relation to war(s). It seems that Foucault was right about Marxism all along as Marx and his progenitors were by and large unable to leave behind themselves the dead weight of the discourse of political economy and liberalism; but, as Lazzarato and Alliez argue, so was Foucault, whose work will due to this fact suffer serious consequences. As we had seen, the most problematic aspects of liberal discourse that bleed into the work of its would-be assassins is, in case of Marx that of teleological approach to history, while in Foucault's case the inability to fully take on board and think the violent and destructive character of capitalist mode of production. Lazzarato and Alliez criticize Foucault's understanding of liberalism, which has a profound consequence on his work due

[94] It might be even argued that this power of subtraction was the logic by which capital's power could be understood from its very start; does not in the production process power over bodies manifest itself by appropriating worker's energy (work) by subtracting from their "time of life", appropriating (general) intellect in the form of ideas, care in the form of services, not to mention more obvious examples of the appropriation of various resources through (colonial) extraction and processes of de-commonization.

[95] As Andrew Phillips and J. C. Sharman remind us there are historical precedents of the merging of state and capitalist power, the most obvious example being Britain's East India Company. See their: "When Companies Wielded the Power of States." *Wall Street Journal*, July 9, 2020. Available at: https://www.wsj.com/articles/when-companies-wielded-the-power-of-states-11594304429

to the fact that he detaches it from war-making - and violence in general - leading Foucault to problematic conclusions about the nature of capitalism, its relation to racism and colonialism and, most importantly, his conclusion about the productivity of power and the protection of life.[96] Unlike Foucault, Lazzarato and Alliez put sovereignty and different forms of war - from war of (on) subjectivities that, together with primitive accumulation kick-started capitalism, to Erich von Ludendorff's concept of total war ("Totaler Krieg") and the Cold War, both of which, in slightly different ways, mobilized productive capacities of society with the aim of increasing the productivity of social labour - latter inaugurating what Marx called "general intellect", leading to an era of the most explosive economic expansions in the known history (Lazzarato and Alliez 2018). For them sovereignty and war are fundamentally connected since war merely represents the "most deterritorialized forms of sovereignty" (Lazzarato and Alliez 2018: 36).[97] They proclaim

> "Our necessary point of departure for rethinking the entire history of capitalism - even in its most contemporary forms - is the close, constitutive, and ontological

[96] As for the closeness to the war paradigm, Lemke argues that this is primarily due to the concept of race and "race war". Foucault argues that during the nineteenth century politico-military conflicts were 'translated' into a biological-medical field (Lemke 2019). Lemke argues that discovery of biopower coincided with his questioning of the war (Nietzsche's) hypothesis; but rather than leading him back to the concept of juridical-sovereign power it only deepened its critique. Now transformed into "repressive hypothesis", a critique both of Freudian and Marxist concepts of power, Foucault now understood that neither juridical concept of power (which conceives of power in negative terms), nor power as martial relation could account "(…) for the productivity and positivity of biopower" (Lemke, 2019:143): "If we still wish to maintain a separation between war and politics, perhaps we should postulate rather that this multiplicity of force relations can be coded – in part but never totally – either in the form of "war" or in the form of "politics"; this would imply two different strategies (but the one always liable to switch into the other) for integrating these unbalanced, heterogenous, unstable and tense force relations." (Foucault, 1978: 93). We need to take an archaeology to Foucault and his concepts, in order to excavate different models of power, to rethink why they were constructed and abandoned, in order to rethink them in an altogether different context. According to Lemke "Foucault realised that this conception of power raised a 'whole range of problems': „Who wages war against whom? Is it between two classes, or more? Is it war of all against all? What is the role of the army and military institutions in this civil society where permanent war is waged? What is the relevance of concepts of tactics and strategy for analysing structures and political processes? What is the essence and mode of transformation of power relations?" (Lemke 2019: 143). Lemke argues that Foucault left military-strategic analysis of power due to two primary concerns: "(…) first, it is impossible to write 'the history of the vanquished' because, by definition, they are deprived of speech and must use a language imposed on them. Second, there is the question whether 'domination processes are not much more complex and ambiguous that war'". Foucault uses *lettres de cachet* a form of petition to the King seeking the incarceration of certain individuals, which for Foucault shows that subjects themselves perceived detention and other authoritarian measures as necessary. But is truly clear why this shows that war, as a model of power, is untenable?

[97] In this regard they are opposite of Deleuze and Guattari which, influenced by the work of French anthropologist Pierre Clastres, claimed that the "war machine" is not only the opposite form of the organization of society to that of statehood, but that historically it was actively engaged in staving off its emergence. See: Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Nomadology: The War Machine* and Pierre Clastres' *Archeology of Violence.*

relationship between the most deterritorialized form of capital, money and the most deterritorialized form of sovereignty, war" (Alliez and Lazzarato 2016: 36).

After decades of "dematerialization" driven by specific understanding of capitalism that runs the line following from the Frankfurt school, through Guy Debord and the Situationists, through Jean Baudrillard all to the latest work focused on information capitalism in its different guises,[98] there is something consequential in a vast theoretical attempt of *grounding* capital's abstractions in (geo)physical reality, an intervention which pays its dues to Karl Marx as it does to Carl Schmitt. Lazzarato and Alliez's Deleuzian concept of "capture", or what sifting through Foucault's conceptual toolbox we propose to call "subtraction" - an appropriation of different aspects of societal commons and nature - is shown to be a permanent and indispensable aspect of contemporary capital accumulation. As we had already shown, the possibility for this kind of approach to capitalism is opened up by the intervention of Rosa Luxemburg who was first to critique Marx's concept of primitive accumulation as a phenomenon consigned to capitalism's prehistory (Luxemburg 2003). But rather than merely opening up the theoretical space for primitive accumulation's conjunctural role, Luxemburg's intervention carried within itself another potential for an altogether different ontology of capitalism, one that does not rely so much on the metaphor of production but one of *war*, conquest and plunder, in which capitalism manifests itself primarily as a "war-machine" or a structure defined by a power of "subtraction" of everything from time, land, energy, wealth, commons etc. Thus, Alliez and Lazzarato point out to profound consequences of the transformation of both capitalism and consequently war making itself, whereby the evolution of war from its "classical" sequence "peace-war-solution" follows the "evolution" of capitalism beyond its industrial paradigm of "growth-crisis-recession" (Lazzarato and Alliez 2016: 327). This shift in sequencing of the war leads to the profound transformation of the relationship between war and peace: in an industrial war all of society and economy were halted until the coming of peace, but in a contemporary long war difference between peace and war are no longer obvious as war does not end in peace as much as in "policing." This transformation of war was first conceptualized in the ultra-conservative circles of Washington DC and Pentagon in 1989, merely weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the events of "Purple Revolution" and the beginning of the dissolution of the USSR; it should be of no surprise that the victory of capital and its

[98] See for example: Wark 2019.

subsequent global colonization was therefore proclaimed in the *Marine Corps Gazette,* a "professional journal of US marines", the very tip of the spear of early American imperialism. In the article entitled "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation" a group of former military personnel and strategists led by conservative author William S. Lind[99] had identified the coming of a new form of permanent wars defined by "the decentralization of logistics", focus on the "internal collapse" of the enemy rather that physical domination, manoeuvrability and agility of the engaged forces, all which lead to the blurring of the distinction between "civilian and military," "war and peace" "(...) to the vanishing point" (Lind et al. 1989). Taking in Lazzarato and Alliez's structural relationship between war and capital accumulation, this transformation of war is connected to a transformation in capitalism as a global regime of accumulation itself. Lazzarato and Alliez argue that to understand this new development we have to move away from the definition of war as an interstate affair to transnational war now indistinguishable from development of capital: with globalisation, war shifts to war amongst population as it is no longer the goal of the war machine (now overtaken from the state by capital – with strategic axis "credit-debt") (Lazzarato and Alliez 2018: 316).

4. 6. *Parasite* or the class(less) struggle at the end of neoliberalism

„Ki-woo, you know what kind of a plan never fails? A non-plan. 'No plan'. You know why? (...) With no plans nothing can go wrong. If you start out without a plan, even if something spins out of control, it doesn't matter."

Parasite, 2019

There is a striking episode in the documentary *We Come as Friends* in which Austrian documentary filmmaker Hubert Sauper visits a Chinese oil refinery in South Sudan during

[99] One of William S. Lind's most lasting interventions, overlooked at the time of writing (1998) was that the introduction of the concept of "cultural Marxism" into US and thereby international public discourse, claiming that the main proponents of "cultural Marxism", i.e. the members of Frankfurt School after fleeing Germany "(...) established itself in New York City" where "(...) it shifted its focus from destroying traditional Western culture in Germany to destroying it in the United States". Lind posits goals for "the next conservatism" in strategic and warlike terms since, according to him, a war is already waged against "Western culture" and "Christian religion": it should "unmask multiculturalism and Political Correctness and tell the American people what they really are: cultural Marxism. Its goal remains what Lukacs and Gramsci set in 1919: destroying Western culture and the Christian religion". Available at: http://www.marylandthursdaymeeting.com/Archives/SpecialWebDocuments/ Cultural.Marxism.htm

the Civil war for independence against the government of North Sudan;[100] the improvised housing, tools and food of the locals in a polluted and destroyed landscape present a stark contrast to a high-tech refinery and its interiors. With this Sauper introduced a complete reversal in our perspective of accumulation itself. When asked about the incredible amount of different waste around the refinery, the Chinese chief engineer that runs its operation answers "(...) it is their problem". Stepping into a refinery one steps into a fantastical frictionless space devoid of all life, something of which interviewed Chinese workers are themselves aware. While in the background we watch TV with reruns of old science-fiction classic Star Trek TV series, one of the interviewed Chinese workers comments on their and the company's relations with the locals: "You must find a place where nobody lives, then exploit it. That's the idea (…) A place with nothing there, only energy, only mines. And you just extract energy". A fantasy both of extraction and real subsumption in one, strikingly at odds with the situation on the ground, just outside the refinery. Cognizant of this fact of the conflictual nature of extraction he adds, with the obvious nod to TV series, "You cannot go into space without arms. It can be dangerous. It is necessary to defend yourself". His colleague adds "If we really want to survive, we need to be prepared. When there is an encounter there is conflict. Where there is conflict there is war".

In his famous 1917 book, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism,* Lenin argued that imperialism forms a critical stage in the historical development of capitalism.[101] Following the work of other Marxists as well as non-Marxists, most prominently English economist and social scientist John Hobson - who as journalist witnessed first-hand the destruction brought by Second Boer War - Lenin characterized imperialism as the development of not only rentier and financial classes but even rentier states and societies. The somewhat "neutral" title of the book ("the highest stage") betrays a far more potent *biological* imaginary on its pages; that of the "decay of capitalism" - as if it were a biological matter - that leads to the formation of "parasitic states". But most of all, what is usually excluded from the interpretation of Lenin's approach is the fundamentally all-pervasive effects of imperialism, leading to "(...) the circumstance which *cannot* fail to influence *all*

[100] For an introduction to the South Sudanese civil conflict see: Council on Foregin Relations, „Civil War in South Sudan", available at: https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/civil-war-south-sudan; Marina Ottaway and Mai El-Sadany, „Sudan: From Conflict to Conflict", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, May 16, 2012. Available at: https://carnegieendowment.org/2012/05/16/sudan-from-conflict-to-conflict-pub-48140

[101] Available at: https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/ch08.htm

the socio-political conditions of the countries concerned (our emphasis)." For example, Lenin argues that the effects of imperialism are "(...) to split the workers, to strengthen opportunism among them and to cause temporary decay in the working-class movement", impacting the upper strata of the working class of England to become "bourgeoisie". To become bourgeoisie is, according to Lenin, to become parasitic, since the bourgeoisie of imperial states "has definite features of parasitism" - as those that run rentier economy, "usury" and form monopolies. Lenin's work opens up the potential of understanding imperialism not exclusively as a theory of inter-state relations, but the relation between classes and even within classes, as his clear distinction between "upper" and "lower" proletariat makes clear. Imperialism – or "parasitic capitalism" – could be a way of describing the extractive nature of capitalist economy that takes part not only between states, but between classes and even individuals themselves, a further decomposition of extractive relations of which Lenin could not even speculate about at the time of writing. In what way does Lenin's idea of "parasitic capitalism", now detached from the historical context of its initial use and re-conceptualized as a specific type of relationship of extraction, regardless of the capitalist agencies between which it plays out, transform the nature of class struggle? Is the classical Marxist discourse of class struggle even able to capture the multiple relations of extraction that permeate global economy and form what Lazzarato and Alliez call "globalized civil war" (Lazzarato and Alliez 2018)?

There is perhaps something surprising about the public praise South Korean director Bong Joon-Ho's latest movie *Parasite* (2019) received in the media, which can at least partially be ascribed to the fact that it gives a portrait to a topic virtually banished from the public discourse for almost a couple of decades. Not only is poverty and class an issue, but *Parasite* seems to allude to conflict that in the era defined by warfare, be it metaphorical or literal, has long been relegated to a dustbin of history - class conflict. In the neoliberal interpretation, Bong Joon Ho's movie shines light on the ongoing erosion of the classic capitalist meritocratic principle; the failure of modern capitalism is precisely that it is not capitalist *enough*, as we witness the erosion of its most potent mechanism of free market both in economic – signalled by the growing number of monopolies – and social sense – since upper social classes consolidate their power and retain a host of different and intertwined privileges of education, employment, cultural, environmental and health resources by actively excluding the working classes. Modern capitalism thus fails since it is

not the lower classes that are parasites – defined as such in neo-liberal tropes of former working class as "leeches", discourse that lends this image to the powerful new right anti-immigrant rhetoric in Europe – but the upper classes. Bong Joon Ho's *Parasite* boldly moves away from this sort of neo-Schumpeterian portrayal. The movie follows a four-member lumpenproletariat family living in Seoul who are by chance presented with the opportunity to start working for a young affluent family. The only obstacle to this is already employed household workers, driver, and a housewife, whom the family decides to get fired in a series of complex ways by eroding the confidence of the head of the family, Dong-ik Park, and his wife Yeon-kyo. Topics the movie presents us with are global - which would explain its far appeal, the era of global financial capitalism, neoliberal reconstruction of social relations, transformation of the nature work and the rising problem of permanently unemployed, urban disintegration etc. But the theory of subject formations that *Parasite* presents us with should not be understated: it presents us with one of the most interesting reinterpretations of Lenin's work for the 21st century so far, pushing his work on imperialism not only in trajectories that weren't accessible for Lenin at the time of writing, but extending his interpretative framework for contemporary capitalism. While obviously lacking the proper language and philosophical concepts, Lenin is once again here useful as with the help of Joon-Ho he seems to open up the question of what Balibar calls "the intra-class" nature of class conflict (Balibar 2017) and as equally as important the question of the production of subjectivity.

In his essay "A Journey to Seoul", Italian (post)autonomist thinker Franco Berardi Bifo narrates his trip to Seoul. Driven from the airport to the lecture hall after a long flight, Bifo describes the feeling of being slowly "overtaken" by what he alludes to as "the ultimate abstraction" of the city's landscape. He also provides a brief speculative recapitulation of the city's history

> "By the end of the 20th century, after decades of war, humiliation, starvation, bombings and destruction of its cities, the physical and anthropological landscape of this country was reduced to a sort of devastated abstraction. Then, in a matter of years, human life and the city were entirely and profoundly transformed by a form of contemporary nihilism at its most advanced degree" (Berardi 2015: 186)

This Korean experience "marked by an extreme degree of individualization and simultaneously by the ultimate immaterial cabling of the collective mind" (Berardi 2015: 193) that presents – as Bifo prophesied – "a blueprint for the future of the world" - is

precisely what *Parasite* aims to capture. More generally, it could be said that South-Korean cinema of the last couple of decades is defined by "the ultimate abstraction" of Marx's "real subsumption"; it could be said to be a *first national cinema of real subsumption*. So much so that it is credited with the first post-apocalyptic movie in which the end of organized society is not brought about by atomic war or climate or ecological catastrophe - but a fiscal apocalypse, a consequence of failure to service one's national debt. The Greek debt crisis of 2007 and 2015 and Asian financial crisis of 1997 were the main influence on the 2020 South Korean movie *Time to Hunt*. While the movie does not provide us with a clear narrative of events (details of which seem to be unclear to its protagonists also), what we can understand is that the collapse of South Korean society was brought about by a chain of events kicked off by international talks about South Korean national debt. At a certain point the IMF, which coordinated debt relief talks, withdrew, and tanked the possibility of a bailout deal: the complete crash of the Korean won ensued, leading to the use of the US dollar as a kind of substitute currency. Regardless of the lack of a clear chain of events - or perhaps due to it - the movie nonetheless captures the fear and the fantasies of a highly financialized economy of real subsumption, in which even the apocalypse emerges as a failure of monetary politics. Regardless of Korean cinema, there is a fundamental optimism to which even someone like Bifo succumbs; ultimately, this cabling of "collective mind", an abstract and alienated Marx's general intellect, is a blueprint that is hard if not impossible to be globalized. With the onslaught of global financial capitalism in Joon-Ho's vision we end up not with a narrative of „predatory" capitalism – a concept born out of 2008 financial crisis whose potency and global reach are both strengthened by and itself invoke images of almost Hobbesian natural state of generalized war – but of *parasitic* capitalism. But what do we achieve when we move from one to the other metaphorical capture of capital?

For one, this pushes to the extreme Balibar's proposition that class struggle is not something that occurs between well-defined and delimited social entities, but instead that it crosses over them, turning them inside out. The movie attempts to grasp the current mode of class subjectivation in the *absence* of class relation itself. Impossibility of representing "classical" class conflict with all its institutions – unions, welfare state, parties, exploitation etc. – is tied to the disappearance of the "orderly" class structure. What we get with *Parasite* is a sort of "anti-Marxist" Marxist interpretation of contemporary class struggle. South Korean "contemporary nihilism" (Berardi) is an expression of "lived" experience of

completely fulfilled capitalist fantasy - one in which *real subsumption* takes place of the formal one – in which there is no possibility of representing not only the conflict but the very terms of class and their relations. Just as primitive accumulation, these apparatuses of capitalist power, through different means, aim to dissolve or decompose subjectivity. What we are left with in this fantasy of "absolute capitalism" (Balibar) is not some Hobbesian universe of an open battle for survival taking place in suspension of socio-economic laws, one whose portrayal we usually get in post-apocalyptic fiction. We get a depiction of an intersubjective relation of what can only be described as interpersonal imperialism or *generalized parasitism*. What Fred Jameson would call the power of „cognitive mapping", for him always tied to practice of class politics, is now completely absent. Therefore, while the movie centres around class and inequality – as most commentators' state – it does not portray any sort of discernible *class* relationship – i.e., what *Parasite* depicts is the substitution of "classical" class relationship with *non-relation* driven by rage and envy, absent even of class hatred and resentment – as if these were impossible without the necessary cognitive background. This also seems to reverse the classical distinction Marx develops between "impersonal market relations" and "relations of personal dependence", in which direct personal relationship of domination takes a backseat to impersonal forces of the market.

This world is devoid of any discernible "order" defined by relation of cause and consequence – riches or poverty strike down protagonists like natural calamities, randomly and seemingly without any reason whatsoever. With the beginning of the movie, we are literally thrown into a sort of obscure theological order, as it begins with one of the main protagonists Kim Ki Woo receiving as a gift a strange stone that is believed to "bring material fortune and promotion to the family". With the stone also comes a business proposition: while his former colleague is abroad on study, he is to take over his place as an English tutor to the young Park Da-hye, an upper class high-school student. The stone "resurfaces" a few more times, especially when our protagonist and his family are at their lowest; for example, when father and son are taking shelter in a school gymnasium after a catastrophic flooding of a slum had destroyed their basement apartment. After the father asks him how, amid all the chaos he had gotten a hold of the stone, the son answers vaguely that "it keeps following" him around, that "it clings to him". Against the background of an opaque world of *Parasite*, it is hard not to see the stone as a *fetish*, "(...) a material thing

which seems to belong to the earth, to nature while exerting an irresistible power over individuals" (Balibar 2017: 76). Director opts for an animistic approach in bridging the gap between the individuals – themselves in a state of "extreme isolation", as Bifo would have put it – and abstract forces of the market that govern their lives, both distant and yet ever-present in dispensing out riches and misery in their cruel indifference. The stone stands for the unknowability of the cause and effect; for the fact that there is no direct link between success and strategy or talent – "Ki-woo, you know what kind of a plan never fails? A non-plan. 'No plan'. You know why? (...) With no plans nothing can go wrong. If you start out without a plan, even if something spins out of control, it doesn't matter." The destructive legacy of neoliberalism as a discourse and practice was of the dissolution of class identity, and, more importantly, class politics. In the absence of class strategy, we are left with tactics – such were, for example, the experiment of the Occupy movement in the US, heavily criticized by some predominantly Marxist authors due to their lack of political leadership – at the same time lauded by some as their strong point, a sort of multitude to become Negri and Hardt were writing about, an immanent non-organization. What *Parasite* shows us is that this obstinacy of class tactics is, as much as it sounds deterministic, a sort of optimistic residue of long-gone language, imagination, and subjectivity. *Parasite* presents a fantasy of power relations devoid of politics; there is no semblance of strategy and tactics that relate to the class. In some sense, there is not even a clearly defined enemy – if we define enmity as a relation which involves a certain programmatic approach – call it tactics or strategy – is addressed not so much to the wealthy owners of the house but to other workers seen as competition.

From this stem another, more profound consequence; with a metaphorical move to the figure of the parasite the 'end game' ceases to be death. If "beasts of prey" (Hobbes) is *the* figure of the sovereign power, parasite is essentially a *biopolitical* figure, intertwined in the life processes of the host organism to the point when, although differing in identity, these are almost indistinguishable - the survival of the first is contingent upon the death of the Other, while for the latter it is related to the continuation of Other's life. *Parasite* activates different meanings and discourse for social relations under capitalism, one that Marx himself employs but merely as a substitute for economic categories - rather than dealing with economic concepts such as exploitation, a metaphor and discourse that talks in quasi-

biological - or more precisely vitalist - terms, as Marx's famous concepts of "living" and "dead" labour, and that of vampire nature of capital attest to.[102]

4.7. Phenomenology of destruction in Hubert Sauper's *Darwin's Nightmare* and *We Come as Friends*

As Frederici argues, the Foucauldian problematic of power is closely tied to the beginnings of capitalism and is developed in reference to it, as Foucault himself acknowledges. Foucault does not situate the beginnings of capitalism with mercantile capitalism of Italian city-states but with the juridical and disciplinary transformation of the "seditious classes", giving his account of capitalism a more physical beginning, closer to that of Marx. Frederici's proposition needs to be supplanted: at the moment of the scene where force and violence meet Foucault seems to be only *slightly* late. Driven by the focus on power's productiveness, Foucault's writings on primitive accumulation swiftly move to the question of the discipline and productivity of the new labouring classes, newer lingering too long on the acts of dissociation or appropriation that make the inaugural act of primitive accumulation; once again, the violence and appropriation only lead to the establishment of the productive apparatus of power. Of course, Foucault does not exclude *violence* - on the contrary, he accentuates it, to the point that he will later argue that this period of his work was still defined by "the repressive character of power". But in excluding the colonies and their role in the beginning of industrial capitalism, Foucault fails to think of violence in the *absence* of its dialectical transformation into its other; in the colonies this dialectic of violence is inoperative - there, violence of accumulation is a permanent state. The "accumulation of bodies", an inaugural act of capitalism linked to the great "confinement of the poor" ties Foucault's theory primarily to materialist aspects of capitalist power – as he states one neither tied to "the silent fashion of violence" or to the "discursive and wordy fashion of ideology" (Foucault 2015: 233). Focused on the transformation of the pre-capitalist time and form of life into capitalist time – i.e., labour power and all its name imply – Foucault is stuck not only in a certain specific Marxist conception of primitive

[102] The title of the movie raises different meanings, from the obvious ones, that the poor are the parasites leaching from the wealthy - at least in the first part, somewhat naive and therefore innocent - family, to its inverse meaning, that the affluent family are themselves parasites – their housekeeper's missing husband turns out to be hidden in the basement of the house, performing completely superfluous and menial tasks easily automated (such as lightning up the stairway lights when the father of the family returns from work).

accumulation – but, more importantly, in a certain teleology of capitalism. All this regardless of his protests to the contrary, stating that capitalism only exists in the plural, i.e., that there is no single logic of capital but that there are only different forms of capitalism. What we will propose is exactly the reverse of Foucault's move; with the shift towards post–productive financial capitalism we must shift our focus from exclusive focus on the materiality of bodily relations of "sequestration", "discipline" and biopower towards the territorial issues and extraction – power as subtraction.

A number of authors had recently attempted to rethink different aspects of Marx's concept of primitive accumulation, among them Harvey (1998), Frederici (2003), Mbembe (2019), Lazzarato and Alliez (2018).[103] Regardless of differences between them, they see primitive accumulation not merely as a means of dissociating people from their means of subsistence, a force manifested not "as a midwife of history" (Marx) but as a direct and constant means of appropriation and accumulation-in-itself. From this perspective, even the supposed descent of "fossil capitalism" (Malm 2016), a driving force behind large part of global inter-state violence of the last couple of decades and the rise of the so-called new green capitalism might not usher the era of "post-extractive" capitalism as some believe, but an era of geopolitical tumult as new zones of extraction is battled over, this time not driven by the need for oil but different resources. Among such resources needed to turn towards "green energy" for so called "green growth" are rare earth elements (REE), which while abundant in earth's core are not concentrated in a single area and are hard to extract, as the process of extraction takes a "big environmental toll" (Meyer 2012).[104] This necessitates rethinking of the role of force in the history of capital accumulation, and not only its economic role, but also its effects on the construction and destruction of subjectivities. Our approach chooses to side neither with Marx, for whom force in the end is consigned to being the "accelerator" of history (it's "midwife" or its "hothouse") - as was manifest during

[103] For example, Silvia Frederici also questions Marx's concept of primitive accumulation and its identification of the rise of capitalism with free wage labourers, completely ignoring the sphere of reproduction. See: Frederici 2003.

[104] For example, the biggest REE mining facility in China - the global leader in extraction of REE - produced in the process of extraction an additional 70,000 tons of radioactive thorium, slowly drifting towards Yangtze River See: Jaya Nayar "Not So "Green" Technology: The Complicated Legacy of Rare Earth Mining," *Harvard International Review*, 12 August 2021. Available at: https://hir.harvard.edu/not-so-green-technology-the-complicated-legacy-of-rare-earth-mining/; Michael Meyer "Industrial Vitamins". *Distillations*, 21 March 2012. Available at: https://www.sciencehistory.org/distillations/magazine/industrial-vitamins

primitive accumulation, in which it lay the ground for the accumulation by turning "the social means of subsistence and production (…) into capital, and immediate producers (…) into wage-labourers" (Marx 1990: 874) - nor with Foucault who often discards it and turns it into a simple background for his conceptualisation of productive power. Turning to primitive accumulation today it is necessary to absolve it of any sort of teleological or even genealogical endpoint. I tried to outline its possible use in order to re-think contemporary accumulation of capital and the formation of subjectivity. Turning to and generalizing Foucault's "power of subtraction" I attempted to understand this shift towards the mode of accumulation by extraction, closely connected to the growth of different forms of violence.

It is perhaps contemporary cultural and artistic practices that lead the charge in attempting to grasp this return of relations of force that both Marx and Foucault consigned to capitalism beginnings – mass incarceration, new waves of enclosures, wars, extreme levels of poverty and inequality - questioning the supposed progressive and ultimately theological concept of capitalism as a historical power of modernisation. Within these stands out the work of filmmaker Hubert Sauper. His so-called "African trilogy" focusing on contemporary Sub-Sahara covers the civil war that led to the partition of Sudan, Rwandan genocide and its refuge crisis and the economy of one of one of the biggest lakes in the world, Lake Victoria, should nonetheless be seen as far more than an attempt at representing the problems peculiar to contemporary Africa. It does come close to capturing what Achille Mbembe calls "the postcolony", a "chaotically pluralistic" conjuncture which nonetheless shows an "internal coherence," made of a peculiar combination of "corporate" and "state" institutions and forming "a distinct regime of violence" (Mbembe 1992: 5). But further than grasping "the condition of powerlessness" of the dominated, Sauper work situates Mbembe's postcolony within the global space of capitalism *drawing* the rest of world through its supply chains - of commodities, people and ultimately violence - *into* postcolony while at the same time *extending* it beyond its narrow geographic location. In both *Darwin's Nightmare* (2005)[105] and in *We Come as Friends* (2014), Sauper subverts the genre of the

[105] The movie itself was controversial, some critics attacking its "discursive construction of particular ideologies of development" as it aims to represent the reality of Tanzania by "fabricating" and "sensationalizing" its story and subjects. See: Molony, Richey and Ponto 2007. We will not question the merits of these criticisms as our aim is to put Sauper's work in the context of the project of phenomenology of destruction. For an overview of criticism of Darwin's Nightmare see: Olivier Barlet "The Ambiguity of Darwin's Nightmare". *Africultures - les mondes en relation*, March 21, 2006. Available at: http://africultures.com/ the-ambiguity-of-darwin's-nightmare-5745/

documentary first by questioning its form - refusing to understand his work as documentarist, holding the genre to be an imperialistic tool "(...) document(ing) the Other for the purpose of the powerful" (Hynes 2015).[106] As Sauper himself states: "the film (*We Come As Friends*, e.g.) is not about Africa, but is set in Africa – the film is populated by the Chinese, British investors and evangelists and Jesus Christ". When speaking about his earlier work, *Darwin's Nightmare,* Sauper admits that he could have made a film about "some different continent" or "on bananas and shrimp" (Barlet 2006). His movies are about global supply chains, both of men (pilots, mercenaries, sex workers etc.) and of commodities, such as fish, money or weapons ("In this country you find things all over the world. British Mines. American mines. Chinese mines. Yugoslavian mines," states an American soldier working in mine clearance).

This subversion of the documentary form, ending with something which at the same time is both more and less than a simple visual document, comes from Sauper's political character of filmmaking as it attempts to represent something which refuses to be documented.[107] Sauper is interested in a specific form of the *catastrophism of the present* which - not unlike Foucault's "history of the present" which intervenes into contemporary relations of power by showing how "we became what we are" - starts from the catastrophic itself as *fait accompli* and documents its destructive outcomes devoid of their dialectical reversal. All movies of the so-called African trilogy share a palpable sense of fatality: *Far from Rwanda* follows the consequences of the Rwandan genocide by focusing on the migrant crisis following genocide, *We Come as Friends* begins with an already settled conflict between South and North Sudan and *Darwin's Nightmare* with the long-term consequences of biological experiment in the 1950s and Tanzania's inclusion within the global chains of food supply.

The Nile perch, a fish introduced in lake Victoria in the 1950's as a part of scientific experiment, turned out to be a predator exterminating local sorts (other fish, shrimp etc.) at an alarming rate, irreversibly destroying the biological system of the lake so fast that by the middle of 1980's it was projected to make up more than 80 percent of lake's complete

[106] Eric Hynes "Interview: Hubert Sauper". *Film Comment*, August 10, 2015. Available at: https://www.filmcomment.com/blog/interview-hubert-sauper-we-come-as-friends/
[107] Alberto Toscano and Jeff Kinkel (2015) *Cartographies of the Absolute*. London: Zero Books.

biomass.[108] Its growing numbers in return became the basis of the booming Tanzanian industry that will, in the end, probably lead to the extinction of the Nile perch itself due to the fact that, as the owner of the processing plant argues, the export industry of the fish driven by a rising demand from EU markets made people "totally dependent on fish". Nile perch plays a double role as an agent of destruction. First destruction is that of the biomass of Lake Victoria, leading to the extinction or near extinction of more than a hundred of other species, undermining in the end its own conditions of existence. The parallel process of destruction takes place by proxy of fishing-induced economic boom and targets local communal forms of life and the surrounding ecosystem, as the newly emerged export economy requires a large number of firewood exacerbating the ongoing desertification and soil erosion.[109] At this point Sauper introduces the global market play in the undernourishment of the local population – literally left to feed on the carcasses of the processed fish, which due to its high fat content is hard to dry using the available traditional techniques – as he introduces another of the global supply chains, that of weapons, smuggled into the country by the same Russian cargo planes that later export the processed fish. According to the owner of the fish factory, the local airstrip sees two Russian planes per day, as they smuggle weapons for the ongoing civil conflicts in Angola, Congo, or Rwanda. Drawing in potential workers to the shores of the lake in search of employment in the fish industry, many end up becoming severely ill, returning to their villages in the countryside before dying - because, as the night guard of the fish factory informs us, "when you die the price of [transport] changes". Sauper shows how integration of Tanzania in the global market does not exclude the extractive nature of contemporary economy, where the zones and regions of extraction are the very ones in which Foucauldian distinction between "murder" and "letting die" (Foucault 1978) - which stems from his distinction between power of subtraction and power of multiplication - is intertwined to the point of indiscernibility.[110] These are the zones of accumulation in which different forms of violence

[108] See: "The Nile Perch question: A general review". *The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN*. *www.fao.org*. Available at: https://www.fao.org/3/T0037E/ T0037E09.htm. Retrieved September 2, 2021.
[109] *Ibid*.
[110] The latest among many examples is the work done to uncover how the consequences of the war on terrorism in the Middle East, especially carcinogenic depleted uranium, which by the estimates of The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 1991 may lead up to 500 000 deaths just from the Gulf War operations. See: Sydney Young (2021) "Depleted Uranium, Devastated Health: Military Operations and Environmental Injustice in the Middle East". *Harvard International Review*, September 22, 2021. Available at: https://hir.harvard.edu/depleted-uranium- devastated-health-military-operations-and-environmental-injustice-in-the-middle-east/

- against persons, communities, peoples, cultures, land, and ultimately nature itself - coagulate to the point of indistinction.[111] According to Balibar these acts vary from one extreme of the "ultra-subjective" violence - one that "animates" and "passes through" different subjectivities and is often experienced as irrational, an expression of the surplus of one's attachment to identity - to "ultra-objective" forms of violence, often unrecognized as such due to its perpetrators being either unknown, unknowable or altogether absent, a form of violence seemingly devoid of any sort of individual human agency and which can only metaphorically be traced to a perpetrator, ascribed to different socio-political structures, culture, or "the market" and its laws – i.e. different forms of *abstractions* (Balibar 2016).[112]

Sauper's work seems an attempt at what I call a *phenomenology of destruction*, a visual chronicle of the destruction of subjective "forms of life" from the perspective of those subjects themselves, that is accompanied by the accumulation of capital devoid of teleological "company" of capitalist subjectification proper. To reiterate this point once more, for Marx and Foucault primitive accumulation is an inaugural act of violence which "opens up" the possibility for a production of capitalist subjectivity. Reasons for this are multiple; not only does it detach producers from their means of production, transforming the first into "surplus labour army" and the latter into means for production of surplus value, but it also destroys any collective "form of life" incompatible with the needs of capital accumulation.[113] In an interview conducted at the end of 1978 with Duccio Trombadori, Foucault used the concept of destruction to draw a clear line of distinction between production of "men by men" with that of commodities or "use values"

> "(...) I don't agree with those who would assume that this production of man by man occurs like the production of value, the production of (...) economically useful object; it's the *destruction* of what we are as well as the creation of a completely different thing, a total innovation" (Foucault 2000c: 275, our italic)

For now let us put aside the potentially problematic distinction Foucault maintains between two types of production, especially in the light of the ecological limits and

[111] The body of work around ecological Marxism attests to this. See for example: John Bellamy Foster (2000). *Marx's Ecology.* New York: Monthly Review Press.
[112] It is no coincidence, as David McNally underscores, that the emergence of "the monsters of the market" thus go hand in hand with the introduction of the market and the accumulation of the capital, as an attempt to grasp this "abstraction" in corporeal fashion. See his McNally 2012.
[113] While Foucault at numerous times posited the inter-conditional relation of capital to bio-power and discipline, he would surely reject this sort of functionalist statement.

enormous destruction which was a precondition for commodity production.[114] Though Foucault speaks with the language of production it seems that on account of productive capacities of capitalism Nietzsche's influence is at least strong as that of Marx'; this is especially obvious as he substitutes the concept of production with "creation" and the idea of "total innovation", a sort of *annus nullus* which was untenable for Marx. He goes on to argue that this was his theme in the *Order of Things*. Foucault admits that proclaimed "death of Man", an attempt to "(...) put an end to everything that would set a rule of production, an essential goal for this production of man by man" (Foucault 2000c: 275) had been an error since it confused a particular death, itself a "small scale phenomena", for an epochal shift: "(...) in the course of their history men have never ceased to construct themselves in an infinite, multiple set of different subjectivities that will never have an end" (Foucault 2000c: 276). Thus, it seems that there is no historical vacuum in the production of subjectivity; according to Foucault the death of *a* Man - be it "a slow disappearance" due to natural causes or a more violent death, perhaps even a murder - is therefore just the beginning, in an endless series of constant "displacements", "transformations" and "transfigurations" of subjectivities.[115]

Sauper's work questions this Foucauldian idea of incessant productivity of subjectivity, as he seems to document (or present) another possibility - the possibility of *exhaustion* of power's productive capacities. As "accumulation by dispossession" (Harvey 2003) becomes a permanent and crucial aspect of capitalist accumulation – at least in certain geographical zones, which arguably seem to be growing, upending the classical "centre-periphery" scheme of accumulation – it opens up the path to an almost continuous process of "destruction of what we are" (Foucault), an ongoing displacement of subjective positions, with no tenable and sustainable process of subjectivation in its wake. Thus, in Sauper's work one can find not only that what Lazzarato and Alliez (2018) call "the civil war of subjectivities" one which we can discern clearly in the contemporary US, with a potential to morph into a *total war* by drawing in rapidly from every and all kinds of societal and extra-societal "resources" - be it climate change, COVID vaccines and masks, gun laws, abortion

[114] For an insightful re-thinking of Foucault's idea of "government of things" and the way in which Foucauldian thought can answer the objections of "new materialists" and "object-oriented ontology", especially regarding the problematic relation of man to nature see: Lemke, 2015.
[115] A proposal for another, alternative history of capitalism waiting to be written from the vantage point of its subjectivities and their production.

ban etc. But there is also an even more catastrophic outcome, one identified but left underdeveloped by Etienne Balibar in his *Violence and Civility*: the possibility of destruction of conditions for politics or what Foucault calls the incessant production of "Man by Man" altogether.[116] The "extreme" character of contemporary violence, especially that which is both a precondition and that follows in the wake of more extreme forms of accumulation by dispossession Sauper documents, has more to do with its fundamentally un-productive and potentially irreversible effects, most critical being the "(…) destruction of the conditions of possibility of politics, beginning with the very possibility of struggle or *agon*" (Balibar 2016: 142). While seemingly in contradiction with the first proposition of war of subjectivities, which may manifest itself as a proliferation of the political, this destruction of the conditions for politics is merely an underside, the other side, of an ongoing politicization of everything.

This "destruction of the conditions for politics" forms limit situations in which individuals and collectives suffer "(…) an extreme degree of weakness or incapacity to act on their own conditions of existence" (Balibar 2014: 200). What Balibar has here in mind is the return of the force, or the conditions of radical asymmetry of relations of power which tend to suspend or minimize the freedom needed for the practice of politics.[117] Unlike

[116] Sauper tends towards this position himself, as he acknowledges that in his long research previous to filming *Darwin's Nightmare,* he failed to find any sort of organized resistance to the extractive economy set up around Tanzania's shores of Lake Victoria. See: Lidya Papamitridou (2015) "On Colonialism, Access and Form: A Discussion with Hubert Sauper". Senses of Cinema. Available at: https://www.sensesofcinema.com/2015/feature-articles/on-colonialism-access-and-form-a-discussion-with-hubert-sauper/

[117] Foucault distinguished between force and power since the latter, unlike the former, is defined not by radical asymmetry of power but by freedom of action which is its precondition. While never fully elaborating on this, Foucault had clearly distinguished between "relations of domination" and that of power, since only the latter are defined by freedom as its precondition. This distinction itself is not unlike the one that can be found in Marxist tradition itself, which is also fundamental as it is for Foucault since it forms the basis of what is usually understood as one of Marx's most crucial contributions to the critique of political economy. The production of surplus value by the worker is preconditioned by the ability of the worker to refuse work: thus, machines by themselves are unable to produce surplus value, but merely transfer already produced value (for further explication of freedom as a precondition for the production of the surplus value see Caffentzis 2013). But, Foucault pushed this distinction even further: according to him, even slaves were fundamentally free as they had always had the option to commit suicide: "Even when power relation is completely out of balance, when it can truly be claimed that one side has "total power" over the other, a power can be exercised over the other only insofar as the other still has the option of killing himself, of leaping out of the window or of killing the other person. This means that in power relations there is necessarily the possibility of resistance because if there no possibility of resistance (of violent resistance, flight, deception, strategies, capable of reversing the situation) there would be no power relations after all (...) there are power relations everywhere because there is freedom everywhere" (Foucault 1996c: 441). Foucault's position seems at the same time both common-sense and problematic. What does it mean to claim that one is fundamentally free since one can always take his or her life; what are the fundamental ontological presuppositions of this concept of freedom? Does this act of freedom - for example, exemplified in the act of suicide - not contradict Foucault's own view of power as a fundamentally "social relation" which, in his concept of government, takes the form of "the conduct of *others*" as distinct from that of oneself? Regardless of the position one takes in regard to this example, its evocation

Foucault, Balibar thus avoids either vitalizing or decontextualising the very possibility of struggle or the practice of (counter)power. On the other hand, contrary to contemporary Foucauldian discourse which identifies the ongoing social transformations as a crucial aspect of certain political rationality that is (re)producing its own conditions of possibility via anthropological production in a kind of unending line of substitutions,[118] Balibar asks whether today, by invoking the neoliberal subjective production, we are instead dealing with a "(…) negative symptom of the dissolution of traditional structures of domination and resistance to domination (…) not leading to any tenable form of social life" (Balibar 2015: 105).[119] Does this equate to a barren landscape of subjectivity, or some kind of desert of subjectivity? Or perhaps to a landscape of ill-produced and unsustainable subjective formations, whose very production resembles an activity without a clear result, itself more a by-product rather than an effect of a certain form of political rationality? If the latter is true, it might seem that Foucault was right at claiming the incessant attempts of Man to constantly build himself, though it does little at making his own perspective at the conditions for the production of this subjectivity any clearer. In our present conditions these attempts take the form of a mixture between grotesque and horror, as captured by the news crew of *France 24* in October 2021 from Lake Tanzania.[120] The report on the ecological catastrophe surrounding the biggest African lake documents the rapidly dwindling numbers of the lake's

opens a far more pertinent question: does this certain pre-assumption of a universal, unclassified and indistinctive act of freedom form a necessary precondition of power which Foucault had to leave unthought? While for Foucault power relations can only exist in the context of freedom - since it implies the ability to respond in different ways to the demands of power – what can we make of the radically unequal global contemporary distribution of conditions of freedom to act, and even to survive. How can Foucault help us think of the freedom of action as not a pre-given but rather *produced* condition of one's actions?

[118] For example, see Balibar's amicable but critical engagement with the work of Wendy Brown in Balibar 2015.

[119] Foucault's work contains scattered references to this possibility. One of the most obvious is the panopticon's ultimate fantasy, formulated in the aim of disciplinary mechanisms to "(...) discipline the body, optimize its capabilities, extort its forces, increase its usefulness and docility, integrate it into systems of efficient and economic controls" (Foucault 1995: 139). In short, what Foucault attempted to show is that discipline aims to avert bodies potential from that of politics to that of economy, from that of producing counter-subjective practices to that of producing use value. The disturbing tranquillity and resignation Sauper portray is also caught in the 19th century work of French economist Villenueve-Bargemont, quoted by Foucault in his 1973 lectures *Punitive Society*. Villenueve-Bargemont gives an account of the Flemish population which "(…) live in the most complete destitution, and yet they are rarely guilty of serious offences against persons and property; they suffer without revolt and almost without murmur, and would be, thus, much more an object of pity than a subject of alarm and mistrust" (Foucault 2015: 192). Yet Foucault refuses to systematically deal with the question of pre-conditions or the possible absence of conditions for the practice of freedom, leaving it to his specific historical works.

[120] "Lake Victoria's massive pollution: Africa's largest lake is dying", *France 24*, October 25, 2021. Available at: https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/focus/20211025-lake-victoria-s-massive-pollution-africa-s-largest-lake-is-dying?

fish due to pollution ("two thirds of the fish are to disappear in the coming years") and the growing numbers settling on the lake's shores ("in recent years 15 million people have settled near the lake and that number is to double in the next 30 years"). The answer to the problems brought about by colonialism and globalization and the climate change - which plagued Sauper's documentary - is to strengthen civil society and change the individual behaviour, starting from changing the behaviour and consciousness of those who lack the very "capacity to act on their own conditions of existence" (Balibar) and on whose existence is usually acted upon; members of the Kenyan NGO "Osienala - Friends of Lake Victoria" (funded by, among others, the government of Denmark and the EU) are filmed "talking to the locals about the impact of the plastic on the environment", thus raising their awareness and changing their habits.[121] But the members themselves are aware of their own inability to change on their own the problem, but "doing all they can to bring change". The other prominent NGO related to Lake Victoria is "Flipflopi", a 10-metre, seven-tonne traditional sailing boat ("dhaw") made entirely out of recycled plastics and 30,000 pairs of flip flops from Kenyan beaches, with the stated mission to "(...) end single-use plastic and lead a plastic-reuse revolution through *education*, sailing expeditions, *positive storytelling* and *campaigns*" (our italics).[122] Rather than viewing "zombie neoliberalism" as simply a zombified economic or political strategy, or an economy of "zombie firms",[123] one might apply this discourse to the production of subjectivity itself.

Sauper's approach refuses a narrative structure that would give background to what one sees, opting rather to depict the experiences of individuals anchored in certain situations as well as their attempts at coming to terms with their own subject-positions which global flows of money, capital and resources affect in different ways. These are the perspectives of those whom Zygmunt Bauman called "(...) wasted humans (the 'excessive' and 'redundant',

[121] OSIENALA is a part of "Sustainable energy project", a "politically independent and membership-based organisation working in Denmark and internationally for a sustainable world". See: https://osienala.net/; https://www.sustainableenergy.dk/.

[122] The construction of Flipflopi started in 2017 and the boat was finished in 2020. See: https://www.theflipflopi.com/. See also: "A sailboat, made partially from flip-flops, takes on Africa's biggest lake". *UNEP*, September 22, 2020. Available at: https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/story/sailboat-made-partially-flip-flops-takes-africas-biggest- lake.

[123] On zombie firms, i.e. those unable to sustain their debt financing by relying solely on their profits, see: Giovanni Favara, Camelia Minoiu, and Ander Perez-Orive. "U.S. Zombie Firms: How Many and How Consequential?", *Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System*, July 30, 2021. Available at: https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/notes/feds-notes/us-zombie-firms-how-many-and-how-consequential-20210730.htm

that is the population of those who either could not or were not wished to be recognized or allowed to stay)", which for him present an "(...) inevitable outcome of modernization" (Bauman 2003: 5). Bauman argues that globalization, leading to "the new fullness of the planet" and therefore the loss of "refuse dumps and the tools of waste recycling", leads to an acute crisis "of the human waste disposal industry" (Bauman 2003: 7). This is most obviously exemplified by the constantly expanding migration crisis on the southern borders of both the EU and US, followed by the formation of zones of extreme violence. For this one need to move no further than the latest acts of The US Border Patrol (USBP) on horseback whipping Haitian migrants or the even more deadly tally in the Mediterranean defended by Frontex, an EU border and security agency parallel to USBP.[124]

In another theoretical intervention, conceptually closer to the problematic Foucault - and political economy raises - these are the same for which Warren Montag and Hill reserve the name "homo Malheureux", "the malnourished man" (Montag and Hill 2016). With this specification we get something which we miss with Bauman's, and that is the central place of food and preservation of life and its relation to power which was a focus of the discourse of political economy from its very beginnings. This of course does not mean that there were no famines before the introduction of capitalism, but that with biopolitical turn famines became something that was to be managed, controlled, planned. If we are to believe the projections of the UN and WHO, climate change is going to dramatically exacerbate the ongoing food insecurity problem for people in SE Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, making "the homo Malheureux" and the problem of food insecurity once again central not only to the political economy but politics itself. Certain research had linked droughts - especially that of 2006-7, one of the longest and most severe ever recorded - supposedly made more severe by climate change, to the exacerbation of the Syrian civil war, a proposal that was met with strong rebuttals.[125] The question of famines was a topic addressed by Foucault in detail. What is often forgot in accusation of anthropocentrism, is that Foucault dealt with natural

[124] Bill Chapell, "U.S. Border Agents Chased Migrants On Horseback. A Photographer Explains What He Saw," *NPR*, September 21, 2021. Available at: https://www.npr.org/2021/09/21/1039230310/u-s-border-agents-haiti -migrants-horses-photographer-del-rio; for deaths of migrants and asylum seekers in Mediterranean Sea: *Missing Migrants Project*, October 26, 2021. Available at: https://missingmigrants.iom.int/region/mediterranean

[125] See: Madhuri Karak, Climate Change and Syria's Civil War", *JSTOR Daily*, September 12, 2019. Available at: https://daily.jstor.org/climate-change-and-syrias-civil-war/; Henry Fountain, "Researchers Link Syrian Conflict to a Drought Made Worse by Climate Change", *New York Times*, March 2, 2015. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/03/science/earth/study-links-syria-conflict-to-drought-caused-by-climate-change.html. For a rebuttal of the thesis of original research see: Selby, J. et al 2017.

calamities - for example droughts and consequent famines - but that his interest is in the way in which these occurrences ("natural givens") are mediated by relations, of power and knowledge ("artificial givens").[126]

When it depicts local populace, it depicts what Bauman called “human waste”, or the population which is truly outside the process of exploitation - but not the effects of capital accumulation. Sauper documents a strong contradiction that runs through the movies – the desire for work and the need of work as a precondition of living - “If you don’t sweat you don’t live” South Sudanese politician declares to population on local radio - and the abject state of work and labourers. Sauper depicts subjects for whom exploitation – not the activity of labour – is merely a hope. This holds true even for better-off Russians as one pilot puts it „without our work (...) how would we provide for them [i.e., families]. It's true for every nation, in every era. *If there’s work it's good*“. A nameless villager points to the large sign he wrote: “To be poor is to be old!” Sauper depicts not only unemployed or unemployable, but the conditions of those unexploitable which fundamentally differs from those whom Marx designated as “a surplus labouring population”, “(...) a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis (...) the lever of capitalist accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production” forming “(...) a disposable industrial reserve army that belongs to the capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost (Marx 1990: 693). In spite of the all-permeating presence of capital and its circulation through commodities in Sauper’s movies, there is a palpable sense of indifference towards the lives and economic utility of the “wasted humans”, as circulation of goods seems ever parallel to that of humans. To turn to Marx once more, capital seems “(...) determined (...) as little by the sight of the coming degradation (...) of the human race, as by probable fall of the earth into the sun” (Marx 1990: 380-1). How do different populations and subjectivities react to this perceived indifference? What forms does this realization take?

[126] In his work the environment does not directly act on humans, but is refracted through social relations of power, an epistemological consequence Lemke (2015) links to Foucault's focus on the history of human sciences. To continue using Foucault in the Anthropocene, Lemke argues for the development of "the government of things". According to Foucault, there is another way to draw things into the sphere of power and that is sovereignty, that deals primarily with “things” and “territories”, rather than people. Foucault quotes Moehau, a 18th century author, according to whom sovereignty deals also with nature, or rather “the perpetual conjunction, the perpetual intrication of geographical, climactic and physical milieu with the human species insofar as it has a body and a soul” (Foucault 2007: 23).

4.8. On the sovereign-form of subject

Leno: "And why is that important, to be bulletproof?"

Musk: "Cause it's badass and supercool."

Leno: "Supercool… I mean, I like that answer, it's a good answer!"

Musk: "Do you want your truck to be bulletproof or not?"

Leno: "Well yeah, I guess I want my truck to be bulletproof!"

Musk: "When the apocalypse comes, you'll be glad it's bulletproof."[127]

"*The National Geographic* found in a survey that 40 percent of Americans find stockpiling supplies and building a bomb shelter to be a better investment than a retirement plan."[128]

"I own a couple of motorcycles. I have a bunch of guns and ammo. Food. I figure that, with that, I can hole up in my house for some amount of time."

Steve Huffman, CEO of *Reddit*[129]

Take Shelter, a somewhat of an underground and underappreciated movie classic from 2011, follows Curtis LaForche, a middle-aged man living in a small town of LaGrange Ohio as he randomly starts to become haunted by different unexplainable experiences, the sounds of thunder from the clear blue sky in the middle of the day, to different harrowing hallucinations, nightmares and grim premonitions. These vary from dreams "(…) that always start with the storm and (...) this dark, thick rain, like fresh motor oil (…)", to huge tornadoes and seemingly berserk animals attacking him and his daughter Hannah, including

[127] CNBC Prime (2020, May 28). "Elon Musk, Jay Leno and the 2021 Cybertruck (Full Segment) | Jay Leno's Garage". *Youtube*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25ZuKkbHdqM

[128] Lindsey Rae Gjording. "US bomb shelter industry booms as Trump stokes fear of nuclear war". *Deutsche Welle*, September 22, 2017. Available at: https://www.dw.com/en/us-bomb-shelter-industry-booms-as- trump-stokes-fear-of-nuclear-war/a-40636649

[129] Evan Osnos, "Doomsday Prep for the Super-Rich." *The New Yorker*, January 22, 2017. Available at: https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/01/30/doomsday-prep-for-the-super-rich

the family dog Red. But the danger does not only come from nature; his family house is under invasion from unknown assailants, and in one particularly violent dream he and Hannah are attacked and harmed by unknown people, whose faces are either unclear or distorted. Sometimes, the attackers are not anonymous: in a nightmare which Curtis later describes to his wife he is attacked by his closest friend Dewart with a pickaxe, managing to strike him in the leg before he wakes up. But this nightmare is not without effects as it sets Curtis into a seizure, ending up coughing blood all over sheets. After turning to a local doctor and being given prescription drugs, the experiences not only persist but grow stronger; Curtis caves into these unclear yet somehow real premonitions and starts to work through his anxiety by excavating and refurbishing an old underground storm shelter in the backyard of his family house. This preparation endangers his relations with his wife, friends and neighbours, especially as he starts to cut social ties with those people who had hurt him in his nightmares and visions. Screenwriter and director Jeff Nichols stated that the movie is about growing feelings of anxiety, invoking further psychological interpretations.[130] By the end of the movie Curtis seems to be vindicated as a huge rainstorm hits the town and the LaForche family runs for safety to an underground shelter. But rather than being cathartic this event is anxiety inducing; though it is powerful, storm is nowhere as near as dangerous and catastrophic as in his own premonitions, making Curtis' whole preparation way overblown: gas masks, oxygen tanks and bolted trap doors of the shelter all point to the fact that he is expecting something far more dangerous and not of natural origin. The ending of the movie further hinges on this anxiety, as the director intentionally opts to leave the question of the coming storm open to interpretation.

Unlike many of similar movies of the apocalypse "genre", Nichols eschews presenting the apocalypse as being underway or as already done, following remnants of humankind in a desperate struggle to survive. It is interesting even to posit *Take Shelter* against other apocalyptic movies since in appearance it is not of a same genre as if to accentuate this the movie juxtaposes Curtis' grim visions of storm and death against the

130 "Jeff Nichols' 'Take Shelter': a storm of anxiety." *San Francisco Examiner*, October 4, 2011. Available at: https://www.sfexaminer.com/entertainment/jeff-nichols-take-shelter-a-storm-of-anxiety/. Nichols states that the feeling of anxiety he was writing about was rather personal since it stemmed from his new marriage, though it was at the same time connected to larger political and social issues of the time – The Iraq War and the presidency of G.W. Bush. See: „Interview: 'Take Shelter' Director Jeff Nichols on How to Make an Indie Epic." *Indiewire*, Sep 28, 2011. Available at:https://www.indiewire.com/2011/09/interview-take-shelter-director-jeff-nichols-on-how-to-make-an-indie-epic-51933/.

almost idyllic US Midwest scenery with blue skies and working-class community whose members are worried and eager to help their troubled neighbour. Yet what makes it even more radical than most apocalyptic blockbusters are that it eschews subjectivising the horizon of hope in a certain character or group. In all these instances, there always exists an "utopian horizon", regardless how dire is the prospect of humankind. *Take Shelter* refuses this temptation by placing danger everywhere and nowhere at the same time, being both natural and societal, coming from friends and complete strangers, wild animals, and a family dog, both from outside and from within the family. It manages to take hold a perturbing sense of anxiety, anxiety about one's life and security without any sort of "external" evidence - and with all evidence to the contrary, that it is Curtis who suffers from mental problems as we find out that he has a history of mental illness in his family. *Take Shelter* thus attempts to cinematically stage the subject formation, a form-of-life *permanently* mobilized in its mobilisation. This form-of-life is a consequence and a reaction to a situation in which

> "(…) the futurity of unspecified threat is affectively held in the present in a perpetual state of potential emergency, so that a movement of actualization may be triggered that is not only self-propelling but also effectively, indefinitely, ontologically productive, because it works from a virtual cause whose potential no single actualization exhausts (Massumi 2015: 15).

It is not so much that this perpetual subjectivisation takes place in the face of *a* coming event – even imaginary, like a classical trope of a right wing fantasy of a US Federal coup d'état and ensuing civil war, nuclear war, alien invasion, asteroid hitting the earth or lately, different sort of ecological catastrophes - but in a shadow of an unnamed, unknowable, unclear and yet even seemingly more inevitable disaster, coming from an unclear direction, of unknown magnitude, but ever present at the horizon of our future – what Eva Horn calls "catastrophe without event" (Horn 2018). *Take Shelter* captures this subjective dimension as an effect of the apocalyptic fantasies and imaginary slowly intertwining within the fabric of everyday experience to the point of being indistinguishable. This growth in the prevailing feeling of insecurity seems to be all pervading, from individual level (be it in the form of insecurity of medical care, job and career insecurity, housing insecurity, to the food and water insecurity and insecurity from harm) to that of states, with the growth of security apparatuses which aim to combat this new milieu of risk by acting

pre-emptively.[131] *Take Shelter* stages a sort of contemporary version of Hobbesian fear – slowly transforming into paranoia - driven by a fantasy of a life permanently at risk, a life whose every movement is defined by the deferral and mitigation of that risk to the point that it is completely absorbed by this activity. The only difference is that, unlike Hobbesian subjects, a way out of this situation is unclear. The contract between the subjects and the sovereign had already been written but it had not been upheld; either it can't be upheld, since the harm comes from outside of sovereign's reach, therefore altering the conditions of the contract; or the sovereign is absent, unwilling to protect its subjects, and therefore in the breach of its own contractual obligations. But for Curtis the question remains: what sort of security can there be when the juridical option seems no longer available?

I will argue that it stages the fantasy of the home, *domus,* as a provider of shelter and security, even in times of natural disasters and climate calamities. This fantasy of the security home takes a hold of almost all parts of society. In 2018, *The Guardian* published a long paper about Silicon Valley billionaires buying en-masse properties in New Zealand; as it is ranked as one of the most resilient countries to the effects of climate change.[132] One of the most high profile buyers is a PayPal founder Peter Thiel, an outspoken libertarian, whose present architectural plans for a building in a secluded part of NZ include a panic room.[133] But Thiel is far from being the only one or even the one that goes furthest. As both *Forbes* and *CNN* report as a sort of curiosity (under the rubric "CNN style" and, even more perplexing, "Forbes Travel") we attach to the world of mega rich, the demand for designer bunkers is on the rise; in Kansas, a private firm specializes in outfitting abandoned military nuclear ICBM silos into doomsday luxury bunkers called "Survival condos".[134] *New Yorker*

[131] Michel Foucault was one of the first authors to deal with the problem of security, opening up the critical perspective in security studies especially in the context of liberal governance. See: Aradau and Neal 2015. For further exploration of pre-emptive securitization as a state (and corporate and personal) strategy see: Massumi 2015.

[132] Nick King and Aley Jones. (2021) "An Analysis of the Potential for the Formation of 'Nodes of Persisting Complexity". *Sustainability 13*(15): 8161; https://doi.org/10.3390/su13158161

[133] Matt Nipert, "Citizen Thiel". *New Zealand Herald.* Available at: https://www.nzherald.co.nz/indepth/national/ how-peter-thiel-got-new-zealand-citizenship/; Mark O'Connell „Why Silicon Valley billionaires are prepping for the apocalypse in New Zealand." *Guardian*. February 25th, 2018. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/ news/2018/feb/15/ why-silicon-valley-billionaires-are-prepping-for-the-apocalypse-in-new-zealand.

[134] Jim Dobson. "Billionaire Bunker Owners Are Preparing for The Ultimate Underground Escape". *Forbes*, 2020 March 27. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites/jimdobson/2020/03/27/billionaire-bunker - owners-are- preparing-for-the-ultimate-underground-escape/; Elizabeth Stamp. "Billionaire bunkers: How the 1% are preparing for the apocalypse". *CNN*, August 7, 2019. Available at: https://edition.cnn.com/style/article/doomsday-luxury-bunkers/index.html

journalist visited the condos in Wichita, and talked to the owner and developer

> "The interior can support a total of seventy-five people. It has enough food and fuel for five years off the grid; by raising tilapia in fish tanks, and hydroponic vegetables under grow lamps, with renewable power, it could function indefinitely, Hall said. In a crisis, his *SWAT*-team-style trucks ("the Pit-Bull VX, armoured up to fifty-calibre") will pick up any owner within four hundred miles.[135]

American culture has a long political history of the home. As Cavarero reminds us, home (*domus*) has a curious semantic history shown by the common genealogy it shares with *domination.*[136] In the time of the Roman republic, domus, itself inscribed in a bigger public (within the public space (res publica), or later, within the larger domus, that of emperor itself), was defined primarily by the function of the sovereign power of *pater familias* as it was what gave this enclosed space juridical and symbolic meaning. In a curious reversal of inscription of domus in the public, driven primarily by the logic of liberalism the home (homestead) reversed its function: in American society and especially American culture, and by that virtue being exported around the globe, it is still seen as a space of sovereign reign, but at the same time it is seen as the space of true, practicing freedom - unlike the public space.

But we should not dismiss this fascination with the home only as a curiosity of American polity and culture, nor we should interpret this only on the level of a culture or as a kind of collective phantasm. What is needed to understand is to analyse it as a specific set of strategies that aims to take something out of control, out of circulation, out of contact with its environment – what Foucault called the power of subtraction, which he attributed exclusively to the sovereign power as political technology. The fight against the movement of the migrants, the refusal of their asylum claims, international conflicts over certain terrains, mines, locations or straits, such as that over China sea, all point to reversal of the free movement and globalization and can be ascribed as a part of set of strategies of subtraction; from domus to the defence of the sovereign borders, the same strategies are applied.

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[135] Osnos, "Doomsday Prep for the Super-Rich."
[136] Cavarero and Scola 2015.

For a long time, there was a prevailing tendency of interpreting Foucault's work on governmentality and biopolitics as a historical mode or even epochs substituting the era of sovereignty, something for which there is support in Foucault's own work. Among those working within the Foucauldian field it was Roberto Esposito who warned about rejecting a simple narrative of declining sovereignty and rising productive power

> "Anything but destined to weaken as some had rashly forecast (at least with regard to the world's greatest power), sovereignty seems to have extended and intensified its range of action beyond a repertoire that for centuries had characterized its relation to both citizens and other state structures. With the clear distinction between inside and outside weakened (and therefore also the distinction between war and peace that had characterized sovereign power for so long), sovereignty finds itself directly engaged with questions of life and death that no longer have to do with single areas, but with the world in all of its extensions." (Esposito 2013a: 350-1)

But is the sovereign power that returns the same of yesterday; in what way could Foucault who at times came almost to proclaim, as Esposito argues, its decline be of use today? Foucault equated sovereignty with the "juridical power"; though in *Security, Territory, Population* he provided a genealogy of sovereign power and the state, arguing that the Hobbesian *Leviathan* was already a "late comer", a juridical expression of different and preceding form of power. So, within a strictly Foucauldian position, is it possible to say that we are witnessing the return of a sort of pre-Leviathan sovereignty? Not the one that is defined by juridical apparatus, defined by law and subject of rights, but the one relying on force and power of subtraction, operating less within the juridical apparatus and more as that of the apparatus of war?

Our understanding is that Foucault's "toolkit" (Foucault 1980: 145) is useful only If one uses all the tools and moves away from the predominant use of a single concept of power, that as a productive relation. Foucault's idea of power as a relation that presupposes freedom is unable to capture the predominant tendency of contemporary capitalism towards the transformation of all relations of power into *asynchronous relations of force,* into that relation of power that Foucault will at one point assign to the prehistory of capitalism as the sovereign power of subtraction. It is here that Foucault meets Marx once more: power of

subtraction rethought not as exclusive sovereign form of power, but as capitalist form of power puts it into the orbit of a more well-known Marx's concept of "primitive accumulation". Not only due to the fact that they both play a certain role in their theoretical edifice as a background against the productive power of capitalist accumulation springs out, but in that they signal the tendency identifiable in both Marx and Foucault that pulled them away from materialism in the analysis of power towards a tendency to analyse power as in a historical sequence, one mode being supplanted and in the end being substituted by another.

4.9. Production of *post*-productive subjects or a dead-end of productive power?

From "homo Malheureux" (Hill and Montag), "homo sacer" (Agamben) and "wasted lives" (Bauman), to "the indebted man" (Lazzarato) and "negative individuality" (Robert Castel), we witness different attempts at articulation of what Esposito called "the black box of biopolitics", the attempts to think and articulate the effects of the negativity and *destruction of life* inherent in the politics of life. The above mentioned are just among the most prominent interventions of those who, working within what we called "the biopolitical field", have attempted to grasp this paradox of productive power at *both* of its poles: that of production of individuality (what Foucault called "anatomo-politics") and that of protection of life. What defines these forms of life, be they individual or collective, in both their biological and social existence, is that they are embodiment of the contradiction of productive power, its negation and the condition of possibility at the same time. Nonetheless, they do not present an homogenous group, as there is a clear distinction; though all are affected by violence, both "ultrasubjective" and "ultraobjective" (Balibar 2016), it does not affect them in the same way. For some, the violence they are exposed to takes the form of that which we could define as primarily instrumental and productive, at least from Foucault's point of view: discipline, as Foucault stated, "(...) increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)" (Foucault 1995: 138).[137] Foucault here goes *full Marx*, though the language is

[137] He continues: "In short, it dissociates power from the body; on the one hand, it turns it into an 'aptitude', a 'capacity', which it seeks to increase; on the other hand, it reverses the course of the energy, the power that might result from it, and turns it into a relation of strict subjection. If economic exploitation separates the force

not that of alienation and commodity production: the subjects of discipline are being made politically docile as their power is "dissociated" from their bodies, turned into an "aptitude" and "capacity which it seeks to increase", while on the other hand this capacity is "reversed (…) and turned into "a relation of strict subjection" (Foucault 1995: 138). Capitalist apparatus of production for both Marx and Foucault are a mechanism for extraction of worker's *potenza*, in one case returning as a force of subjectivation via mechanisms of discipline, while for the other transforms itself into a *commodity* and produces himself as a commodity. In both cases the power of bodies made docile and selling their labour power returns as an alien force against them. For example, when we think of the role of debt - in all its forms, from the private debt of students in US to the sovereign debt of Third World countries in Africa or Asia - its effect is that it ties the debtors to the capitalist productive apparatus more firmly and punishes any sort of "counter-conduct" almost automatically (Lazzarato 2015).

What I attempted to think is the very extreme of this process of subjectification which pushes Foucault's concept of discipline to its limit and possibly beyond. At its limits, this process does not aim at "increasing the economic utility of the bodies", as it produces what I tentatively call *post productive subjectivity* in its different forms be it that of *parasitic subjectivity* or that of *subject-as-sovereign.* The parasite is the figure of biopolitical power, historically opposed to that of the "beast of prey" we find in, among others, Hobbes, Nietzsche and Derrida as a symbol of juridical or sovereign power (Derrida 2009; Hobbes 2017). A capitalist creature, it intertwines with the life of the other, forming an extractive relationship which is no longer that of a permanent outside nor that of a complete inside, but the one in which outside-inside distinction no longer matters or is no longer clearly identifiable. Think of relations of extraction underpinned by the all-permeating financialization, as the complex international character of these markets obfuscates what Foucault proclaimed to be "a settled account" of exploitation: for the latest devastating example see banks, different asset management firms and pension funds between 2015-2020 investing at least 10 billion Euros in deforestation of the Amazon leading not only to ecological destruction and destruction of the biosphere but also to the destruction of local

and the product of labour, let us say that disciplinary coercion establishes in the body the constricting link between an increased aptitude and an increased domination." (Foucault 1995: 138).

forms-of-life on an unimaginable scale.[138] As for a sovereign form of subjectivity, the force of neoliberalism had usually been thought of not only as a discursive regime but as a form of political rationality producing a specific form of subjectivity; this subject had been defined as an "entrepreneur of himself", managing oneself as if oneself were a firm with the goal of "appreciating" one's own capital (Feher 2009, Lorenzini 2017). Replacing the firm, contemporary subjectivity takes its form from that of the sovereign state; unlike that of the parasite or perhaps a reaction to the parasitic form of contemporary capitalism, the sovereign subject aims to re-establish boundaries and proclaim its rule in the world of potential threats: these boundaries are either those of the state itself (Brown), their neighbourhood, their home (*domus*), or their body as the last line of defence.

The figure of post-productive subjectivity serves to "open up" the problematic of the production of subjectivity and not be a sort of answer to different political or philosophical quandaries - as for example, it was used by Negri (2017) for whom production of subjects is not only a point of contact between the Marx and Foucault, but the key to each other's theoretical (and practical) "deficiencies". It therefore opens far more questions than it provides the answers. First, a qualification about the "post" in post-productive, especially since this type of historicization of the present - or perhaps its futurization - has a bad reputation in what we could call general Marxist discourse, as one needs just to think of "late" capitalism or, even more infamously, "*post*modernism". The "post" in *post*-productive subjectivity relates to two different moments and/or possibilities of this historicization of the present: first, unlike the "productive subject" (Macherey), these forms of subjectivity are post productive in a classical Marxist sense since the predominant economic activity they partake and are a crucial subjective part of is not that of "production of surplus value" nor even production in general, but rather *appropriation* - defined not by the "power of multiplication" but that of "subtraction", taking on different forms of economic activity: debt, fraud, finance, i.e. extraction economy. In a certain way, we deal here with capitalist subjectivity *as such*, in "its pure form", since as Lazzarato and Alliez

[138] Pendle Marshall-Hallmark (2021) "Investing $46 Billion in Client Money on Amazon Destruction", Amazon Watch, June 3, 2021. Available at: https://amazonwatch.org/news/2021/0603-investing-46-billion-in-client- money-on-amazon-destruction; Fair Finance International. "ING, Rabobank, ABP and Allianz finance the destruction of the Amazon", August 27, 2020. Available at: https://fairfinanceguide.org/ff-international/news/2020/ing-rabobank-abp-and-allianz-finance-the-destruction-of-the-amazon/

remind us, “the aim” of the circulation of capital - the very term circulation sounds as if it is privileging a kind of homeostasis - is *not productivity as such but the creation and extraction (or appropriation) of profit*, i.e. *accumulation,* something already present in Marx’s work but obfuscated by his focus on industrial production, productivity and conception of progress (Lazzarato and Alliez 2018).[139]

Second, this post in *post*-productive aims to reopen the question of the production of subjectivity by reclaiming the question of political rationality. Balibar was among the first to open the question of the discourse of political rationality by questioning whether when we think neoliberalism are we not dealing with a “(…) negative symptom of the dissolution of traditional structures of domination and resistance to domination (…) not leading to any tenable form of social life” (Balibar 2015: 105). Might the term post-productive refer to a *limit* to political rationality, a form of subjectivity effected by relations of power - be they of discipline or governmentality - but more as its by-product and less as its intentional effect? What would be the criteria according to which these two productions might be distinguished - and is this distinction even tenable, at least from a Foucaldian perspective? Are these a product of political rationality, such as neoliberalism, or are they only a symptom of the inability of certain socio-political structures to organize and sustain its own reproduction? A non-productive subjectivity would range from the ones whose form cannot be put to work in any way – which does not add any value to the activity of production of surplus value - all to more extreme forms we find in the “economics of abandonment” (Povinelli 2011). A paradox of collective and individual forms of life comes at the point at which the effects of power are beyond that of *productive* calculation, when the instrumental horizon of “costs” of power becomes irrelevant, when these forms of life are abandoned, “expelled” (Sassen). A failed capitalist subjectivity: can there even be a “capitalist” subjectivity beyond the world of work, production, and exploitation? Would an unemployed (and unemployable) subjectivity still be a capitalist subjectivity?

[139] Theoretical precedance here is Lazzarato's own work on "indebted subjectivity", but made pushed bto and beyond its logical conslusions. According to him, “indebted subject”, produced outside the market and the factory, is disciplined – or goverened - subject who plays a crucial economic role as a consumer of debt, i.e. financial service. The subjectivity we have in mind her is not only not productive or surplus value, it does not partake in the process of acumulation even as an *object* - be it in the role of consumer, or even as a labour-commodity - unlike Lazzarato's indebted subjects, or incarcerated subject in Wong's “carceral capitalism” (2018).

5

Conclusion

5. 1. From irreverence to the irrelevance of the life of the Other

Much of the way we today understand the interplay between destruction that capitalist mode of production unleashes and its productive capabilities is defined by the historical experience of the industrial capitalism of the 20th century; mass employment and consumption in the core of the world economy formed the middle class, a tendency which was supposed to lead to an infinite economic growth and protect the legitimacy of capitalism itself. Instruments of financialization and different technologies of "extraction" (Sassen) of the 21st century capitalism thus are an attempt to answer to low rates of accumulation, leading to the divorce of accumulation of capital from industrial production as its precondition. What is the future of capitalism's violence now divorced from industrial productiveness, a marriage in which it played an important role and which, from Marx on, was characterized even by capitalism's most belligerent opponents by its progressive role, leading some to even openly welcome it as a shortcut to a communist future? In the end, was it not Marx himself who stated that "violence is the midwife of every old society pregnant with a new one"? How can one think of systemic violence when the bonds it had with mass industrial production seem to be severed? Does it not leave capitalist destruction and violence tethering on the brink of the instrumental role it played in its history; no longer unknowingly serving the "progressive" role it morphs into something what philosophers like Balibar and Cavarerro attempted to grasp by the name of "cruelty" and "horrorism", thereby opening the possibility for thought of systemic, non-instrumental, heterogenous violence

(Balibar 2015; Cavarerro 2008). There seems to be a growing necessity to think and conceptualize this form of violence devoid of its instrumental role, now beyond any dialectics or any teleology, manifesting itself predominantly in the form of a surplus, as an excess. While the dominant post-Marxist school of cognitive capitalism and post-autonomists focused on the ways in which bio-political capitalism exploits and appropriates general intellect for private use - leading to the blurring of the boundary that divides time and place of work with that of living, personal with economical, a process whereby "life itself becomes value" (Fumagalli 2011: 12) - what it failed to see is how this process of expansion of exploitation of cognitive, affective and linguistic capacities of workers is coexistent with another war that capital wages against life, but one whose nature is radically different, and which in some sense harkens back to capitals beginning. This war is not led by capitals penetration of life in its different forms and dimension, but by withdrawal and abandonment of life, its complete irrelevance to the process of accumulation, to incessant production of those that capital "does not call upon" (Marx). This accelerating process is as much if not even more determinant of not only the future of capitalism, but also the forms that class war will take against different types of domination that it will bring about. We can witness the slow emergence of the thought that struggles to understand this transformation of this dialectic between production and destruction, as the names of this new mode of "production" tell us - be it "carceral" or "gore" capitalism, among others.[140]

The coming climate catastrophe is just the ultimate boundary beyond which the play between the "progressive" character of capitalism and the violence it affects comes to an end. Destruction and the drive to accumulate now parting its ways, the violence of capital's accumulation no longer content to play the role of Marx's "midwife". The question which this work posed is how does this relate to our understanding of Marx and Foucault, and their conceptualisations of power and capital? How to grasp the destructive potential of contemporary capitalism without resorting to the idea of capitalism gone awry; a theoretical model, which if not alternative to "the productive ontology" - in which capital and power are defined as non-entities - effects of relation of different forces, non-existent in themselves - infinitely productive, creating values, objects, discourses, subjectivities - than at least "concurrent" to it? The need of the present moment necessitates a turn to that what is

[140] Jackie Wang (2018) *Carceral Capitalism.* Cambridge Mass: Semiotext(e); Sayak Valencia (2018) *Gore Capitalism.* Cambridge Mass: Semiotext(e).

suppressed and left unthought in their work, often in the form of different leftovers which actualized in another way - through a reading which I call "heterodox", but for which we can also reserve the name "minor" or "peripheral" - could pose a set of challenges to the predominant interpretations opening thereby a possibility for not only another reading but more importantly another use of Marx and Foucault.

To use Louis Althusser's term, this "subterranean" (2006) stream of images, concepts, moments of exposition, movements of thoughts, available in Foucault and Marx's work may provide us with the necessary elements to rethink capitalism not from the perspective of its productivity, but from its destructive capacities as these break the surface so should the apparatus to capture them. The most obvious example of the effects of these destructive capacities - subsumed under the name climate change - itself presents a specific challenge to accumulation capital, to which two seeming answers are formed, exemplified in the bifurcation of capitalism's future into two. First, there is that future of further expansion of accumulation in the form of "Green Capitalism" (under different names, from Green New Deal to Green Growth and sustainability), driven by the need to embark on the technological answer for what Andreas Malm and Wim Carton call "(…) the ethereal frontier of capital accumulation" (Malm and Carton 2021: 3). Regardless of the multiple possible nuances of different pathways – from those that lead to more to those that lead to less equal outcomes – whichever is taken will necessitate a "(…) transformation in the productive capacity of society, reminiscent of the Marshall Plan".[141] The second answer is that of extractive capitalism of growthless economy of "the stationary state" (Balakrishnan 2009), defined by strategies that range from accumulation of dispossession to "capture" through rent. Regardless of these answers, as Lazzarato and Alliez maintain, with the ending of World War II we witness a fundamental shift in the ontology of capital, a shift for which Foucault himself opened up the space by introducing atomic weapons into his analysis of biopower, a completely new ability to "kill life itself",[142]

> **"**The nuclear apocalypse that concluded an already-won war became the vector of apocalyptic thought attached to the "ontological" reversal of the "emancipatory"

[141] Kevin Anderson, "Response to the IPCC 1.5°C Special Report", *Policy@Manchester Blogs,* October 8, 2018. Available at: https://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/posts/2018/10/response-to-the-ipcc-1-5c-special-report/

[142] They re-use and reinterpret the work of Gunther Anders. See his: „Reflections on the H-bomb", *Dissent* 3(2), (spring 1956): 146-155.

> functions of productive forces. The "destruction" is now deeply inscribed in Labour, Technology, Science and accompanies "production" as its double. The power of annihilation replaces "creation" ex nihilo and the promethean power of humans. Capitalism thus introduced something remarkably new to the history of humanity: up to the advent of the atomic bomb, only individuals were mortal, while the species was immortal" (Alliez and Lazzarato 2018: 354)

While there are some attempts to still take hold and grasp these productive forces of capitalism - see for example the proposal to "seize the means of carbon removal" (Malm and Carton 2021), or in other words the means of production of the milieu for (future) life itself - the line of thought with which we could draw throughout modernity and which slowly became dominant with the advent of neoliberalism is the one which aims to show what Alliez and Lazzarato claim to be the reversal of the "emancipatory functions of productive forces", a disentanglement of progressive political forces from productive forces of capitalism. A question arises with not only narrow scholastic but also profound political consequences: does all this for certain point us to the break in Foucault's fundamentally productive proposition of (bio)power? In other words, has (capitalist) power irreversibly turned *against* life – either via sovereign's decision or the "invisible hand" of the market – both on individual and collective level as a denotation of subjectivities and its relation to the milieu? If this is so, should our conceptual framework to grasp this relation revolve not so much around protection of life but rather around different forms of its abandonment, leading (potentially) to its destruction?

But let's first play the devil's advocate: is it possible not to leave the safe haven of Foucault's argument and still explain the very same processes? Is not climate change the ultimate confirmation of biopolitical drive to enhance humanities capabilities to secure the conditions of life, that ends up turning into its opposite, just as for Foucault that was the case with nuclear power and atomic bomb, especially since the end-result of this turning might not differ as much, making possible the destruction of life as such? Can the unwillingness to decide and act on climate change itself be seen as a part of biopolitical strategy and the transformation of sovereign's "act of killing" into biopolitical "letting die" – in other words, from acting to *not-not-acting*, a form affecting by abstaining from activity – as climate catastrophes are projected to hit first and hardest those in the Global South, both Sub-

Saharan Africa and South-East Asia? Is this not the ultimate vindication of Foucault's somewhat surprising introduction of state racism as an explanation of death in the midst of the "politics of life", one whose echoes we can find further developed in different ways – for example in Judith Butler's latest work, *The Force of Non-Violence* (2021), and in a somewhat different, Marxist-Leninist interpretation, in G.M. Kelly's concept of "biopolitical imperialism" (2015)? For Foucault racism was a necessity to explain the mechanism by which murder, in all its different forms - including also "(...) every form of indirect murder, the fact of exposing someone to death, increasing the risk of death for some people, or quite simply, political death, expulsion, rejection" (Foucault 2003: 256) - is possible in the age of biopolitics. As we saw in *Society Must Be Defended* Foucault developed the concept of biopolitics as a form of power which grasps men as "multiplicity" and a "biological fact", "(...) taking control of life and the biological processes of man-as-species and of ensuring that they are (...) regularized" (Foucault 2003: 246-7). From the very outset biopolitics approaches death as "something permanent" that "gnaws at life" - its "inner fold", as Esposito puts it - though it nonetheless attempts its "disqualification", as it aims to "maximize and extract forces" (Foucault 2003: 244) from population and individuals. But if biopower's basic function is to "(...) improve life, to prolong its duration, to improve its chances, to avoid accidents" (Foucault 2003: 254), how can it then still exercise its power to kill? For Foucault the answer is racism, but not of any kind; this racism is tied to the state and the practice of sovereignty, as it introduces a "(…) break in the biological continuum of human races" between "what must live and what must die" (Foucault 2003: 255). Foucault is precise: this racism defines the relationship between the survivor and non-survivor, the ones which are to live and those which are to die, between the murderer and the killed not as that of security, nor politics or war. "The system of biopower" introduces "direct" but strictly "biological" relation between one's life and the Other's death: killing or any form of "indirect murder" is "acceptable *only* if it results (...) in the elimination of the biological threat to and the *improvement* of the species or race" (Foucault 2003: 256). While Foucault's different concepts of power were fruitful as multiple starting points for thinking about international (in)action on climate change, they nonetheless pose some serious shortcomings: these obviously hold up for biopolitics also –

even more so.[143] Concluding remarks of his *Society Must Be Defended* formed as a question, whose seeming answer will put a (further) explanatory strain on the concept of biopolitics, are emblematic of this

> "How can one both make a bio-power function and at exercise the rights of war, the rights of murder and the function of death, without becoming racist? That was the problem then, and that, I think, is still the problem (Foucault 2003: 263)

While it would be hard to against the fact that contemporary calculations about the victims of global warming, especially in the Global South which will be hit the most are completely devoid of a racist reasoning, it is equally difficult to maintain the existence of a "biological relationship" as the dominant reason behind climate (in)activity, especially of the Northern countries.[144] Or we can maintain the existence of biopolitical reasoning, but only at the cost of divorcing it of its specific biological logic of destruction whereby the death of the other would guarantee my "health", my "vigour", two logics that according to Foucault merged at the end of the 19th century in a marriage which, according to his account, will hold for a while.[145] Not only has the development of biological and life science or the transformation of racism into "neo-racism" (Balibar) altered this relation.[146] In the context of the loss of "futurability" (Berardi 2019), any sort of eugenic program Foucault presupposes to be an essential part of racist discourse and practice – modelled on the Nazi one, which was to span over hundreds if not thousands of years – folds upon itself into more immediate short-term imperative of *survival* first and foremost. Thus, this biopolitical

[143] See: Smith, Sara and Pavithra Vasudevan (2017) "Race, biopolitics, and the future: Introduction to the special section", *Society & Space* 35(2): 210-221. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263775817699494.
[144] While there is no place to develop this further, Foucault's discourse of "state racism" shows its limitations in his treatment of Nazism, in which he conflates the operation, effects and goals of Nazi racism and antisemitism. See: Foucault 2003: 259-261.
[145] On consequences of Foucault's biological concept of racism see: Warren Montag (2002) "Toward a Conception of Racism without Race: Foucault and Contemporary Biopolitics", *Pli* 13: 111-125.
[146] Montag argues that this opens another reading for Foucault's racism, which is paradoxically more in the line with his initial concept as read through the work of Canguilhem: "For if according to the first account, racism thrives on the human differences formulated by life science and derives a vitalist ethics for the Darwinian struggle for life, Foucault simultaneously posits a racism that forsakes not only any concept of the struggle between races but also any concept of human races in the plural. This latter racism is a racism which thus no longer concerns itself with race at all; its object is the species as a whole. It is no longer the champion of a particular (superior, successfully adapted) race against others; it is the guardian of the whole and the bearer of the universal" (Montag 2002: 123). Once more, Nazi antisemitism and its universally redemptive goals come to mind.

relation morphs into the paradigm of war, a prospect which Foucault dismisses from the very start of his inquiry. Regardless of the lack of biological relation in Foucauldian sense, what we might have in this case is a specific form of "letting die", a type of climate war of inaction in which for you to live "(...) the other must die, but you yourself do not have to be the one who takes that other's life" (Butler 2021: 110). There is another possibility of this relation - or better to say non-relation - defined by a shift from the *irreverence* of the life of the Other to its *irrelevance* as we move from proposition that the Other "must die" to that he "may die" or is "free" to die. Though the prospect and effects might be similar - and effects are what counts - there are different strategies involved. Butler has connected this irrelevance of the life of the other to the fantasies of "the sovereign's self-sufficiency" (Butler 2021: 99), refusing dependency and obligation as facts of existence, while in previous chapters (Chapter 3) we attempted to propose it as a one of the forms post-productive subjectivity takes, a process whereby the decomposition of neo-liberal model of subjectivity is followed by that of *becoming sovereign of a subject*, tied to specific forms of self-governing and strategies defined by, among other things, rent seeking and extraction. Nevertheless, this non-relation opens up the possibility that the Other is irrelevant to one's life, left to fend for itself against different manifestations of destruction brought upon by what Balibar calls ultra-objective violence (Balibar 2016). But this time this ultra-objective violence promises to bring destruction on a scale hard to imagine, with the possibility that in the end it may endanger the conditions for the practice of politics altogether - if not life itself. An indifference of capital accumulation to "degradation of the human race" posited by Marx at the start; irrelevance to the Other's life, with a dash of "security" sprinkled on.

5.2. Episteme for the end of the world

If one harbours any serious doubts about the irrelevance of life to capital and its accumulation one need not look any further than IPCC reports of the last couple of decades. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is the United Nations body for assessing the science related to climate change created by the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988. Its goal is not to conduct its own research but to assess and determine the existing

state of knowledge on climate change as "a key input into the international negotiations to tackle climate change". Divided into three working groups,

> "The IPCC prepares comprehensive Assessment Reports about the state of scientific, technical and socio-economic knowledge on climate change, its impacts and future risks, and options for reducing the rate at which climate change is taking place. It also produces Special Reports on topics agreed to by its member governments, as well as Methodology Reports that provide guidelines for the preparation of greenhouse gas inventories."

While Working Group I deals with "the physical science basis of climate change" while II "climate change impacts", Working Group III addresses "all aspects of mitigation including technical feasibility, cost and the enabling environments that would allow measures to be taken up", focusing on "synergies and trade-offs with adaptation measures" and "(...) co-benefits, risks and links to sustainable development".[147] The collective work of natural scientists is subsumed to that of policy planners and economists which become predominant in Working Group III, as has often been noted.[148] But, even more, it is their theoretical models and discourse that shape the way impact of climate change is measured, and what is the optimal course of policy (Keen 2021). To see how economics defines this one can do no better than turn to the Temple of free-market neoclassical economics and its high priests - The Bank of Sweden ("Sveriges Riksbank") and the Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel. Established in 1969, the prize itself was a part of an almost a half a decade long attempt by the Bank of Sweden to free itself from democratic oversight of the Swedish parliament; the prize was to provide economics with an aura of scientific legitimacy by removing it as far as possible not only from political decision making but politics altogether, the end result being the depoliticization not only of the science but the domain of economy as such. Put in a historical context, this struggle of Bank of Sweden can be situated at the beginning of a neoliberal regime of accumulation; one of its side-effects was an opening up of the space for the path to orthodoxy of neoclassical

[147] See *The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* website: https://www.ipcc.ch/

[148] Coverage of the scientific literature and existing evidence is divided into three Working Groups that assess climate change science, impacts and adaptation, and mitigation; of all three, only in the first one can find predominantly climate scientists. For the critique of the organization of the IPCC reports and the role of policy makers represented by economists see the proposal for reformation of IPCC members: Gabriel Chan, Carlo Carraro, Ottmar Edenhofer, Charles Kolstad and Robert Stavins (2016) "Reforming the IPCC's Assessment of Climate Change Economics", *Climate Change Economic*s, Vol. 7 (1).

economics.[149] In 2018 Sveriges Riksbank Prize was equally divided among two economists, Paul Romer, an alumnus of University of Chicago, and William D. Nordhaus of Yale University for "(...) integrating climate change into long-run macroeconomic analysis". From the press release one can read that Nordhaus' findings deal with interactions between society and nature

> "In the mid-1990s, he became the first person to create an integrated assessment model, i.e. a quantitative model that describes the global interplay between the economy and the climate. His model integrates theories and empirical results from physics, chemistry and economics. Nordhaus' model is now widely spread and is used to simulate how the economy and the climate co-evolve. It is used to examine the consequences of climate policy interventions, for example carbon taxes."[150]

In his acceptance Lecture, Nordhaus explains his model and its approach

> "However attractive a temperature target may be as an aspirational goal; the target approach is questionable because it ignores the costs of attaining the goals. If, for example, attaining the 1.5°C goal would require deep reductions in living standards in poor nations, then the policy would be the equivalent of burning down the village to save it. If attaining the low-temperature path turns out to be easy, then of course we should aim for it (...) Cost-benefit approaches pose deep problems just discussed because they require putting all changes, plus and minus, into a common metric. Moreover, many impacts are ones that may be difficult to measure, or ones that we may be reluctant to monetize. However, in the view of most economists, balancing costs and benefits is the most satisfactory way to develop climate policy." (William D Nordhaus, 2018*:* 451)[151]

[149] Philip Mirowski (2018). "The Neoliberal Ersatz Nobel Prize," in: D. Plehwe, Q. Slobodian, and P. Mirowski (eds.) *Nine Lives of Neoliberalism*. London: Verso.
[150] "Press release: The Prize in Economic Sciences 2018", October 8, 2018. Available at: https://www.nobelprize.org/ prizes/economic-sciences/2018/press-release/
[151] William D. Nordhaus (2018) "Climate change: The Ultimate Challenge for Economics", Nobel Prize Lecture, December 8, 2018. Available at: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2018/nordhaus/lecture/

The "optimal" way towards a relatively safe climate future was to apply the model of "costs and balances" of climate adaptation to analysis, and to balance the two in order to produce the most optimal results; if the costs are too, or if the goals are unattainable, the end result would prove to be the reverse of those policy effects and would slow the transition, the equivalent, as Nordhaus put it, "of burning down the village to save it".[152] Nonetheless, perhaps it is not the village or the "living standard" of the poor nations that is on his mind; after receiving the Nobel prize, he told his graduate students in no uncertain terms: "As Yale students and faculty you learn how to deal with distractions. Don't let anyone distract you from the work at hand, which is *economic growth*" (Cummings 2018, my emphasis).[153] Dealing with the analysis of "the costs and balances" of climate adaptation and the "optimal" strategies to balance the two, Nordhaus posits the optimal rise in temperature by the end of the century to just above 3.5 degrees C; by his projection, more severe cuts, if even possible across the globe, would increase the short term cost of climate mitigation and therefore have an inverse effects as countries would one by one reject them.[154] But what does this cost-balances optimum of 3.5 degrees C projection mean in concrete terms, in its material effects? The Guardian sums up the latest projections of the consequences of this "optimal" rise of 4 degrees C, which would lead to the planet "(...) unrecognisable from anything humans have ever experienced", with "(...) vast dead zones in the oceans", a "massive die-off of ocean life", growing "desertification" leading to "a more hostile, dangerous world for humanity" and up "to 2 billion refugees till 2100".[155] Nordhaus' work founds the basis of 2017 IPCC's report chapter "Mitigation pathways", particularly during discussion of market-based policies such as carbon pricing, in which he is among the most cited economists (Dale 2018). The model of cost-benefit analysis Nordhaus and neoclassical economy had developed is

[152] In his Nobel Prize acceptance lecture Nordhaus "(...) attempted to assure the world that climate change, though important, was no big deal: the future course for the economy that would minimize the sum of damages from climate change, and the costs of mitigating climate change, would see global average temperatures stabilize at 4°C above pre-industrial levels in 2150" (Keen 2020).

[153] Mike Cummings (2018) "Cheers and roses from undergrads for Yale's latest Nobel laureate", Yale News, October 8, 2018. Available at: https://news.yale.edu/2018/10/08/cheers-and-roses-undergrads-yales-latest-nobel-laureate. For overview and critique of two laureates see: Gareth Dale (2018) "The Nobel Prize in climate chaos", *Ecologist*, October 12, 2018. Available at: https://theecologist.org/2018/oct/12/nobel-prize-climate-chaos-romer-nordhaus-and-ipcc

[154] William D. Nordhaus (2017) "Revisiting the social cost of carbon" *PNAS* February 14, 2017 114(7): 1518-1523. Available at: https://www.pnas.org/content/114/7/1518

[155] Gaia Vince. "The heat is on over the climate crisis. Only radical measures will work". *The Guardian*, May 18, 2019. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/18/climate-crisis-heat-is-on-global-heating-four-degrees-2100-change-way-we-live

premised on a series of general ontological presuppositions whose historical emergence Foucault connected with the discourse of “securitisation" and “government” (Foucault 2007). In *Security, Territory, Population* lectures Foucault argues that mechanisms of juridical power and sovereignty are not so much substituted but amended by what he calls “technologies of security”, an 18th century form of power exercised on another type of object which it itself brought to life - “population”. What is a population? According to Foucault it is not merely “(...) a group of numerous humans, but living beings, traversed, commanded, ruled by the process and biological laws. A population has a birth rate, a rate of mortality, a population has an age curve, a generation pyramid, a life- expectancy, a state-of-health, a population can perish out, or on the contrary grow” (Foucault in: Elden 2017: 59-60). The novelty of these mechanisms is that unlike previous ones (discipline and sovereignty), “(...) they rely on a number of material givens” (Foucault 2007: 19), with an end goal not to achieve “perfection” but something like Nordhaus’ “most satisfactory way”: it is a matter of maximizing the positive elements, for which one provides the best possible “circulation”, and of minimizing what is risky and inconvenient (...) while knowing they will never be completely suppressed” (Foucault 2007: 19). According to Foucault, security differs from sovereignty and discipline in a number of other ways; first, though it deals with abstractions (be it milieu or population), these abstractions are such *only* in knowledge - and are therefore distinct from the sovereign power which deals almost exclusively with juridical abstractions, and is itself an abstraction - while they are fundamentally material, as they refer to the landscapes (“marshes”, “forests”, “rivers”), different “natural events” and “(...) multiplicity of individuals (...) who fundamentally (...) exist biologically bound to the materiality within which they live” (Foucault 2007: 21). The field of application of security is *milieu*, a space within which “different events or a series of events” will have to be predicted, thought about and, in the end, and “regulated” (Foucault 2007: 20). Security approaches milieu as a set of both “natural” and “artificial” givens which form “a combined, overall effect bearing on all who live in it” and is thus both a “medium of action” and the place within which this action “circulates” (Foucault 2007: 21). Abdicating juridical apparatus, through milieu security tries “(...) to reach (...) a conjunction of a series of events produced by these individuals, populations and groups, and quasi natural events which occur

around them" (Foucault 2007: 21).[156] Lastly, security is opened towards a future which is never fully knowable, and from which different events might occur, of which Foucault underscores political economy's fascination with "scarcity" ("la disette"). Technologies of security have their own major form of knowledge - political economy - which from its very beginnings - as we saw in *The Order of Things* - dealt with scarcity, with lack, with hunger; a science of futurity that brings to light *different forms* of the (un)known yet possible *catastrophes.* While security "(...) aims to establish a certain homeostasis by adhering to an overall equilibrium", the question is whether there is possibility for such an equilibrium to be established any more. But there is another question that can be posed: is Foucault's concept of biopolitics not based upon the idea of milieu as something generally hospitable to life, supportive of life, regardless of the risks to which it can expose it?

Foucault differentiates between sovereign power and biopower according to way they deal with how they govern and employ death as means of governing - while sovereign could kill by right ("faire mourir", make die; while "tuer" means to kill) or expose the lives of his subject in war to death, his relation to life was passive - he allowed them to live, ("laisser vivre"), out of sheer lack of capacity for anything else; this incapacity of action on collective life is something which makes Foucault seems dismissive of sovereignty as a structure of power. On the contrary, "the model of biopower that emerged in the 18th century substituted for these rights "a power to make live" ("faire vivre") and to abandon to death ("rejeter dans la mort")" (Hill and Montag, 2015: 261-2). Out of this "Foucauldian black box of biopolitics" (Esposito) emerged two distinct answers to the way in which power relates towards death. One solution was to transform biopower into an extension of the sovereign's power to kill - a proposal contemplated by Foucault himself and developed further by Giorgio Agamben by extending this relation both in history and to the future, proclaiming that sovereignty was always biopolitical and biopolitics can be nothing if not tied to sovereignty and its "right of the sword" (Agamben 1998). This interpenetration of

[156] Foucault quotes an 18th century author Moheau, "who was no doubt the first great theorist of what we could call biopolitics, biopower" (2007: 22). What is far more striking is that Moheau designates this power over life - which he will name as he will still use the language of sovereignty, though, as Foucault notices, which from now on does not correlate to territory any more as a "geographical designation of political sovereignty" - as power over "nature, or rather (...) the perpetual conjunction, the perpetual intricating of a geographical, climactic and physical milieu with the human species insofar it has a body and a soul" (Foucault 2007: 23). Moheau writes: "It is up to the government to change the air temperature and to improve the climate: a direction given to stagnant water, forests planted or burned down, mountains destroyed by time or by the continual cultivation of their surface, create a new soil and new climate" (Moheau, in: Foucault 2007: 22).

two modes of power Foucault kept apparat redefines the way in which biopolitics relates to life, as for Agamben it is characterized less by the capacity of power to “foster life” and more "by its abandonment to the violence unrestrained by law" (Hill and Montag 2015: 262) - i.e. through the production of the figure of homo sacer (Agamben). The other solution was proposed by Hill and Montag (2015). Interpreting Foucault’s invention of the form of power which he called government and its apparatus of power - political economy - as a form of “retreat of the state”, the 18th century sees the development of what Hill and Montag call “necroeconomics” – a market apparatus which develops as the prerogative of the need of biopolitics to make die (“faire mourir”), or expose to the risk of death certain populations by exposing them to “want, dearth and deprivation”, determining their “conduct far more efficiently and predictably than mere legality" (Hill and Montag 2016: 263). In a clear opposition to juridical power, political economy is the “ultimate” strategy of rational government, since it minimizes its costs by governing through “abandonment”. This retreat of the state and juridical apparatus is not disorderly but strictly organized (“strategic”), as what is left behind it is the market, a leftover of the state’s retrieval; the market and the nature here being the same thing, since during this process the market becomes naturalised, and reversely, nature marketized. One can witness this process today most obviously in the commodification of CO2 and other greenhouse gas emission (GHG) and the introduction of the “emission trading” (ETS) as the predominant international answer to the problem of the global reduction of CO2 emissions. Although organized around COP (Conference of Parties) of United Nations since 1995, these meetings reveal is an attempt at reducing emissions by refraining from direct action of sovereign states as much as possible - introducing “carbon tax” or “cap and trade” alternative, but without any kind of global or international body responsible for supervising whether the targets are met. While no longer “hidden” in Adam Smith's sense of the term, there is a clear division between the operation of the right and the left hand: “When you do merciful deeds, don’t let your left hand know what your right hand does” (Matthew 6:3). So, rather than seeing this introduction of the carbon tax as an alternative to a free market solution, what we witness on the contrary is the *introduction* of *the market itself*. *Financial Times* informs its readers on the stakes of Glasgow COP26 talks on carbon pricing quite unambivalently: “(...) the market is presently fragmented, unregulated and pricing is opaque — problems that experts hope the new UN framework will help solve”. The newly defined framework should therefore lead to "(...) a

surge of funds into the schemes that generate credits — such as tree planting projects and mechanical carbon capture systems — which are bought by those looking to compensate for their emissions."[157] This process, which up till this point had failed to produce any sort of decline in the use of fossil fuels and other GHG emissions,[158] is therefore a material effect of a certain epistemology - that of neoclassical economy. Economics thus brings into existence the very future for which it aims to provide, as Nordhaus would have put it, a "satisfactory" guide to; climate catastrophe becomes not only the effect of capital accumulation on an ever expanding scale but is itself, at least at this point in time, the manifestation of specific ontology of the market which is driven by a Leibniz theology whereby (286) "the very notion of the unrestricted market has the structure of a theodicy that by compensating every evil by a greater good immunizes itself against intervention or critique, and in which imperceptibly what was once evil has become good and what was good has become evil" (Hill and Montag 2015: 287). The discourse of "cap and trade" markets as well as contemporary economic science in general thus seem to continue in the path of a long tradition of classical political economy, from French physiocrats of the 18th century, following in with Adam Smith and Robert Malthus, all to Austrians Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich Hayek, which dealt with the essential relation between the sovereign, the markets and the right to life and all that this necessitates. Hill and Montag's genealogical inquiry draws this line all to the Leibniz and the question of providence now bequeathed to the unfettered market and its operation - both which, as Montag and Hill point out, bring salvation. Though, they add, something else also holds true for both: "(m)any are called but few are chosen" (Montag and Hill 2015: 237). And yet, as Smith underscores, regardless of the number of those which are left behind this is no reason to reject the nature and operation of theodicy itself; if one was unable to rescue himself from his state of "poverty, sickness" or other "calamity", "(...) we ought to rest satisfied that the order and perfection of the

[157] Camilla Hodgson, "COP26 global carbon market rules pave way for emissions credits boom", *Financial Times*, November 14, 2021. Available at: https://www.ft.com/content/f13bce2b-8a2b-4289-9281-9c6acf34f472

[158] On the contrary, emission of greenhouse gas (especially CO2) has steadily risen from the first meeting in Berlin in 1995: "COP host countries altogether have emitted 27.6% more million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the air in 2019 compared to 1995 when the first meeting was held". See: Isabella Boneham, "COP26 in Glasgow: how emissions from COP host nations have changed since the first meeting in 1995". *National World*, 1st November 2021. Available at: https://www.nationalworld.com/news/environment/cop26-in-glasgow-how-emissions-from-cop-host-nations-have-changed-since-the-first-meeting-in-1995-3436764;
Andrew, Robbie M., and Peters, Glen P. (2021) "The Global Carbon Project's fossil CO2 emissions dataset [Data set]". *Zenodo*. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.5569235.

universe requires that we should in the meantime continue in this situation (...) The prosperity of the whole should, even to us, appear preferable to so insignificant a part as ourselves" (Smith in: Hill and Montag, 2015: 237). Regardless of the condition of "dearth" and possible mass starvation, throughout history political economists for different reasons held that there should be no right of subsistence; going against the right of ownership, it would upset the "providence" of the market and hamper its ability to "provide the sustenance and would therefore postpone and aggravate the subsistence crisis such measures tended to alleviate" (Hill and Montag 2016: 268). What the previous COP meetings and other international agreements that aimed to curb emissions through market mechanisms demonstrate, is that this providential operation of "letting die" continues to be a crucial aspect of the discourse of economics of climate change, an expression and extension of economy seen as "(...) an immanent order of the world (...) and the activity of maintaining that order" (Hill and Montag 2015: 251) - one of whose internal elements and preconditions is death and destruction. According to Hill and Montag, this necroeconomics produces a figure of anonymity and frailty, not unlike that of Agamben's *homo sacer*: that of *homo Malheureux*, the malnourished man

> "(…) the one who cannot afford the available food, whose indeed for sustenance is not only not a right, it is not even a demand that will attract supply. He is outside the artificial order of law, as well as the natural order of the market. If in resistance to these orders is life, the Malheureux has ceased to resist: He is the one, the many, who may, with impunity and without consequences, be exposed to starvation and allowed to die, slowly or quickly, in the name of the rationality and equilibrium of the market" (Hill and Montag 2015: 306-7)

Since the last two centuries from the establishment of the classical political economy we had witnessed, with some setbacks, continuous commodification, and the extension of market relations from merely food production to means of subsistence *in general* - and act which, according to Marx, presents an entrance of capitalism to the historical scene - we witness is the further unfolding and universalization of the figure of homo Malheureux. What COP26, as others before it effected, is the contraction of the sphere of law; with it, populations are left to be punished by nature itself. This was the model of punishment as abandonment first developed by Malthus, a that "frees the individual (and population) once

held within it, expelling him outside its limit without either obligations or rights" (Hill and Montag, 2015: 310).

In *Society Must Be Defended*, Foucault claims that ascribing sovereignty the power over life and death means to claim that neither death nor life are "natural or immediate phenomena which are primal or radical and which fall *outside* the field of power" (Foucault 2003: 240, our emphasis). And yet there is a "startling dissymmetry", since this power is „exercised in an unbalanced way (...) tipped in favour of death" (Foucault 2003: 240-1). For Foucault, biopower ultimately reversed this scale; Foucault's introduced the concept of biopolitics as a form of power dealing exclusively as protective apparatus from death brought by others, by direct or, even more, indirect means (his own examples include famines, dearth, epidemics). But how is this relation transformed today: is not the complex transformation of the milieu we attempted to sketch, both of its "natural" and "artificial" conditions as Foucault would have put it, once again tipping the scales in the "favour" of death? Does Foucault not radically distinguish between the ways in which the operation of biopolitics "exposes to death" than it "lets die"? Are we not witnessing a tendency towards a radically unequal global distribution of this life supportive milieu, with the ongoing process of this "exposure to death" whereby power must actively interfere to support life? Should power be seen as something that supports life or that merely postpones death? What does it mean for power to "disallow" life, as Foucault puts it? Does not Foucault's anthropocentrism as well as his focus on the power effects of human sciences (Lemke 2015) not lead him to a specific understanding of milieu that has a particular effect of his understanding of politics as being supportive of life? If this tipping in favour of death is becoming a universal condition, then it is not death that emerges in the midst of biopolitics, but the other way around - *life itself is what must be wrested from the conditions of its dying*. While obviously not yet a reality in itself - at least not yet, though some more grim and hopefully less and less possible futures even point in this direction - it seems that this has already become a form of strategy for action of certain governmental bodies. The current transformations of the planet in the end will reverse this relation; it is not that death will be introduced by refraining from acting, but life itself will have to be actively protected against its milieu which will be more and more hostile to its continuation.

The continuously transforming context of climate change completely transforms the relation between life, its support and protection, in the end putting forward one more

epistemological challenge to the concept of biopolitics. If biopolitics refers only to the administration of population and its life processes, since population as a phenomenon is not an independent variable (something which is obvious from the very existence of the concept and practice of biopolitics) at what point does biopolitics grasp it? Does biopolitics refer to the administration of population, but governing life in regard to the changing conditions of its "natural" movement, its birth rate, death rate, etc.? As Esposito notices in regards the dimension of life as biological capacity (*zoe*), *"*(…) can only be defined problematically: what, assuming it is even conceivable, is an absolutely natural life?", a distinction which is even more problematic today "(…) when the human body appears to be increasingly challenged and also literally traversed by technology [*tecnica*]" (Esposito 2013a: 352). We could also add to this, that beyond this "traversal" of the body by technology, these bodies are being submerged in a milieu which is itself a result of technological and cultural intervention; thus, the inability to unequivocally distinguish between *zoe* and *bios* extends beyond life to the realms of nature and society as such, as contemporary discussion on the Marxist left around "the metabolic rift" and "capitalism-in-nature" witness.[159] Can then biopolitics, especially in the context of global catastrophe, take on another meaning, i.e. that of administration of the *biosphere*; biosphere as it relates to population and its natural movement: Biopower, as in power over bios i.e. life, or as power over *biosphere*, as in all that which supports life (bios) and its processes (since for Foucault biopower of demography, medicine etc., already included different instruments which related to life of individuals not directly but indirectly – by organizing the space of living, hospitals, cities in different ways, by setting up distribution of food in a certain way etc.)? Or, if it were to retain its inaugural goal, is this not a necessity; if it abdicated this role, does it not extinguish its own difference? But if we agree that biopower should open conceptually, are we not abolishing its object and exposing it to an almost infinite number of meanings, since life as such (of population) is an object under an almost infinite number of different fields, vectors, forces, from the most miniscule (like viruses) to global (like climate)? Where does the object of biopower stop; how long is its reach to be an effective and meaningful concept? Is it necessary that it turn into what will Brian Massumi will call "Ontopower", a power that aims to act pre-emptively, shaping the milieu of the practice of power over population?

[159] For a short overview of debate and see: Andreas Malm, "In defence of metabolic rift theory," *Verso*, March 16 2018. Available at: https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3691-in-defence-of-metabolic rift-theory.

5.3. An attempt towards certain conclusions

Having in mind these aporias we shouldn't be surprised that Foucauldian language of biopower seems at once so close and so distant with regards to our present situation defined by climate change and the coming "climate breakdown", proliferations of multiple different types of wars and conflicts, the expropriation of natural resources; migrations initiated by wars and other armed conflicts of low and high intensity, and the sovereigntist response these movements of people elicit globally, especially in the Global North, both Europe and US. The trajectory of this capacity of capital accumulation, and the conditions of living it rearranges on an unimaginable scale, its changes and its ever-forceful imposition on different populations – which can be summarised by the famous Foucauldian opposition between "fostering" and "disallowing" life – was the object of this study.

Like many before I attempted to show that in the light of current transformations of the relation between "the economy" and the domain of life, Marx's work was destined to cross paths with one of the most 'unwilling' Marxist ever to be mobilized within his ranks. Regardless of the differences, reasons for this were both obvious and numerous. Foucault and Marx were both essentially philosophers of the new form of power that emerged with the capitalist mode of production, yet they focused on their own set of questions. At once connected and still different; according to Etienne Balibar (1992) this focus on different aspects of power resulted in two different concepts of materialism. For Foucault the question is primarily connected to the process of subjectification and the ways in which individuals are subjectivised into workers that are efficient and productive (Balibar 1992). This novelty of "capitalist power" was predominantly tied to its application, operation and embeddedness in technology and science. As such, it developed a whole new rationality of power, one hinging upon the technical and technological rather than the law, jurisprudence, or sovereignty, though with a complex relationship towards the old hierarchies and forms of domination. Both Marx and Foucault viewed this process not as an end result of a reified technological and scientific evolution, but as being deeply embedded in the power relations of its time. While Marx held an interest in the production process not for its sake, but in order to analyse commodity production as a form of objectified social power, Foucault was interested in a contingent encounter between discipline and production, which resulted in an infrastructure of power upon which exploitation and surplus production rested. Furthermore,

according to Balibar, Foucault's logic of power is linked to the plasticity of life, with seemingly endless ways in which two connect, whilst Marxist logic of contradiction interiorises power relations in a dialectical relation. But it is a question of materiality, though not so much of socio-economic relations but of practices of "power as they affect bodies" which for Foucault are *always* multiple. Foucault thus argues for the analysis of capitalism not in its singular but in its *plural* logics. In *The Birth of Biopolitics* Foucault seems to provide us with enough arguments not only against the use of his theory in analysing what only a decade before he titled an "empirical-transcendental" doublet; he also seems to refuse the concept of capital as emanating from a singular economic logic

> "(…) if we accept that in a Marxist type of analysis in the broadest sense of the term, it is the economic logic of capital and its accumulation that is determinant in the history of capitalism, then you can see that in fact there can only be one capitalism since there is only one logic of capital. There can only be one capitalism which is defined precisely by the single necessary logic of its economy and regarding which all we can say is that this institution has favoured it and this other institution has impeded it. We have either a flourishing capitalism or a shackled capitalism, but in any case, we have Capitalism (*le* capitalisme) (…) In other words, when you link all the historical figures of capitalism to the logic of capital and its accumulation, the end of capitalism is revealed in the historical impasses it is currently manifesting. If, on the other hand, what economists call "capital" (*le capital*) is actually only a process which falls within the domain of pure economic theory and which only has and can only have historical reality within an economic-institutional capitalism, then you can see that the historical capitalism we know is not deducible as the only possible and necessary figure of the logic of capital. In actual fact, historically, we have a capitalism with its singularity, but which, in virtue of this very singularity, may give rise to institutional and consequently economic transformations (…) which open up a field of possibilities for it" (Foucault 2008: 164-165).

This idea that we can identify a "singular logic" of capital – though Foucault does not refer what precisely he has in mind, as there are crucial differences between the law of accumulation or surplus value, and the specific formation between the infrastructure of power the accumulation of capital – operating in vastly different socio-political contexts,

sometimes without countervailing forces and sometimes facing movements and institutions which attempt to curtail it, is a commonplace of contemporary discourse. This relation between the sphere of economy, as determinant, and the social as a place where this force meets its countervailing tendencies – Foucault here addressing Althusser's concept of "the determination in the last instance" – is reflected in our contemporary discourse and the ways in which, by naming capitalism, at the same time we describe it. Most of these conceptual innovations always seem to reside primarily in exchanging the adjective, for example "free-market" for "Keynesian", "neoliberal" for "state" capitalism etc. As Balibar underscores, due to his insistence on nominalism – manifested in the previous quote in the juxtaposition of the "logic of capital", a kind of economic-metaphysical doublet, with its historical manifestation in different socio-political institutions and relations of power due to significantly different historical contexts – which Foucault *does* abandon from time to time, we must question Foucault's use for the analyses of the *general* mechanism of capital accumulation. Second, as we already saw not only in this last cited paragraph, at numerous times Foucault attempted to distance himself from the analysis undertaken by Marx and especially those undertaken in Marx's name (resulting in "(…) Marxism in the broadest sense of the term" (Foucault 2008: 164). In "Truth and Power", Foucault goes even further by agreeing with his interviewee's, claiming Marxism was a certain "obstacle", especially due to the subordination of the problematic of power to that of economy, and questions of ideology to that of "constituent subject" (Foucault 1996: 116).

But what Balibar downplays is the extent to which Foucault *systematically fails* to live up to the aims of his own critical reading of Marx, especially in regard to teleology, multiplicity of forms of power and the dialectics between forces of production and destruction. For once, numerous are instances where Foucault leaves his nominalism in favour of a general critical theory which "(...) aims to grasp society in its 'living reality'", an "admirable [project] in itself" (Foucault 1996: 282). For example, he abruptly moves from the analysis of mechanisms of discipline to proclamation of "disciplinary society" (Foucault, 1995), just as fast as he moves from "apparatuses of security" to "society of security", or from analysis of the norm to "normalizing society" (Foucault 2007). Second, his proclamation that "(...) we now know with reasonable certainty who exploits others, who receives the profits, which people are involved and (...) how these funds are reinvested" (Foucault 1996: 79), while obviously a hyperbole which has not aged too well, belies a

certainty which seems unaware of the "material" preconditions of discursive visibility of such a knowledge. The critique of political economy was predicated upon a number of social and political relations of the post-war world and was the manifestation of the public role and strength of Marxist discourse; one these were gone, it seems that, regardless of the wealth of knowledge on contemporary capitalism, exploitation - if we can still reserve this singular name for the processes of multiple relations of extractions that make up contemporary capitalism - retracted to *obscurity*. But even more damning for Foucault is that he seems "guilty" of the charge Alliez and Lazzarato (2016) levelled against Marx himself - of equating industrial capitalism with capitalism as such, capitalism as a mode of production with capitalism as accumulation, relegating different forms of accumulation either to its prehistory our simply out of sight. As we attempted to show, this equation has *profound ontological and political consequences*. Foucault's unwillingness to follow through with the critiques levelled against Marx, whether due to different theoretical *cul-de-sac* or shifting of problematic he was interested in, proved to be an obstacle in developing a properly *Foucauldian* critique of capitalist mode of production, regardless of different Foucault's concepts - such as biopolitics, discipline and governmentality - as an attempt at grasping "capitalist power". But there is one fundamental challenge Foucault poses, which may prove crucial: if we subtract from capitalism its "logic" (*le logique capitalisme)* and its "eternal laws" what are we left with? Can there still be an object called "capitalism"? Is this the only way to interpret Foucault's proclamation, or should this proclamation aim to provide a basis for a sort of *nominalist conceptualisation* of capitalism and its different power relations that make up its "infrastructure", along different axis besides that of production: that of sovereignty, debt, financial speculation, war? Is this paradoxical concept even possible, or would this project push us into a perpetual conceptualisation without end? Foucault's nominalism, as Balibar constantly remind us, leads him "(…) away from dialectics that anticipates the end of contradiction" towards an "(…) improbable outcomes of various strategies or repression and (…) forms of subjugation", "(...) the historicity of an event" (Balibar, 1992). What has come out of predominant readings of Foucault through Marx is the suppression of the multiplicity of these "improbable outcomes of various strategies of oppression" in favour of power's inevitable productivity. I argued that this suppression is conditioned on a rather narrow interpretation of both Foucault's and Marx's work, which while highlighting certain aspects of their work goes against their very *fundamentals*. On

the contrary, my argument is that these different forms and strategies - those with which Foucault experimented during the 1970's, such as sovereignty and war, a *non-multiplier* forms of power - are returning and imprinting their mark on our conceptual apparatuses with an exceptional force that only the experience of present can bring. It is only by acknowledging these specific forms of power in themselves that can bring towards their understanding, subsequent refusal and the possible formation of different modes of counter-power.

In the light of contemporary transformations that capitalist mode of production is undertaking, Marx' and Foucault's discourse can retain its critical impetus *only* by deviating from the classical interpretations of their work coagulated in the discourse of "Foucauldian-Marxism" (Balibar 1992), whose basic tenants were put in place by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's *Empire* (2001) and the school of so-called cognitive capitalism. Where this work diverged from now a pretty significant philosophical tradition that emerged from different ways in which Marx and Foucault were made to work together – either by trying to "rethink Marx through Foucault" (Macherey, 2015), vice versa, or simply by combining the two as in a kind of a philosophical 'puzzle' (everything from Bidet's "theory of structuration" (2014) to Hardt and Negri's supplanting of Marx's analysis of capitalism with a theory of subjectivity, Negri 2017) – is that it attempted to rethink the *grounds* on which these philosophical traditions meet. Pushing critical interventions by the likes of Silvia Federici (2003), George Caffentzis (2013), Mike Hill and Warren Montag (2015), Eric Alliez and Maurizio Lazzarato (2016) to their limit, I argued that the meeting between Marx and Foucault must take place in the long shadow that is cast by the industrial capitalism of the 20th century. While this may not seem as too controversial statement - as writings on financial capitalism and different types of subjection and subjectification it introduces had been a part of Marxist theory for some time (among other, see the work of Marrazzi and Lazzarato) - the following proposition might. Not only this necessitates leaving behind the usual vista we've come to expect from Marx and Foucault, one made up of the army of the industrial workers, be they social or not, employed or unemployed, the background of barracks and factories, discipline, production of surplus power and exploitation etc., but more importantly, the whole *ontology* of power erected upon the idea of the ultimately progressive character of capital's dynamic nature, a view held somewhat unsurprisingly by Marx and, as I attempted to argue, more surprisingly by Foucault also. In other words, the

encounter that we stage is not centred around the “productiveness of power” or the “revolutionary character of capital accumulation” and necessitates a critical re-reading of the work done in this tradition (most prominently by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, 2001, Richard Marsden, 1999, Mark Poster, 1985, Pierre Macherey, 2015, Jacques Bidet, 2014). Rejecting an implicit but all-too strong “romantic” impulse for a synchronous and supplementary reading as both a theoretical possibility and a political necessity, the current re-ordering of the world in the making undertaken by capital necessitates a *heterodox* reading of Marx *with*, *through* and *against* Foucault.

Concluding chapter hinted at the end of an era of neoliberalism, a choice of title which I neither directly referred to nor explain. From the “usual” Foucauldian perspective, neoliberalism - often denoted or described as a "project" (Brown 2014) - was defined by the knowledge of its huge apparatus, by its rationality, by the effects it produced, either of subjectivity it purported to produce or in its rearrangement of societal contract. Balibar questions this interpretation by proposing that this historical “sequence” could, in the long run, be seen as an interregnum, a disintegration of the previous system of accumulation and not a “project” in itself – and far from successful one at that. While this conclusion obviously ignores fundamental changes neoliberal project or historical sequence introduced, we should perhaps attempt to radicalize his insight. More and more obvious effects of climate change transformed the definition of the “long” run: the end of neoliberalism thus signifies a beginning of a new era of capitalism, one in which it staggers into by leaving beyond both its productive capacities and in which it abdicates its role as the motor of historical change. This transformation signifies a completely new relation of global forces and requires a completely new political theory and strategy. The alternative is to simply follow wherever capital goes, which itself seems at the moment to be reversing and turning upon its own powers of production. While there exists a historiography of capitalist destruction, it seems that the works of theory lag behind both historical works as well as the present developments. The question which should be posed is not only why is there no theory of capitalist destruction, but also why is its mere conceiving so hard, its tools and concepts so obscure? Is it simply because destruction is seen as a consequence or by-product of accumulation, or because of capital's indifference to both the good and the bad, the productive and destructive? This work is a modest attempt to propose another way of approaching capitalism, in line with what Lazzarato and Alliez proposed, capitalism as a

mode of destruction, unmatched in history. Introducing the prospect of nuclear apocalypse and the threat of mutual self-destruction in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, Foucault opens the doors to thinking "the unlimitedness of capital into war and then into all other aspects of production" (Alliez and Lazzarato 2018: 354), whereby it becomes ontological. What should be added to this insight is that the doors Foucault opens are the very ones through which he never passes himself, as he does nothing to follow on his own proposition and "irresolvable contradiction" of power over life; not even that, but there is a strong tendency to underplay the destructive force of power in his work altogether.

This work was concerned primarily not with the dynamic of life as population, a "species-being" (Marx), but life on the threshold of destruction; perhaps not in its contemporary political articulation but as a spectre and a possibility which haunts contemporary imagination. From this follows a question: to what degree is the concept of biopower useful in order to grasp multiple different contemporary relationships between power and life? Not only biopower, but what can Foucault and his concepts add to our analysis of current forms of accumulation, especially in the context of post-industrial, financial capitalism defined by the ecological crisis and climate change. The Cold War MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) doctrine is perhaps one of the last pseudo-Marxist "appropriations" of systemic power relations: one's life is a relational quality almost completely dependent on the other's desire to violate the status quo, to bring violence, even God's vengeance upon the other. Today we have a different situation. "Arcane" problems plaguing politics still mobilize us, they scare, stress, halt us in our steps, and although we find culprits in governments and multinational corporations, the destruction of life on Earth exceeds any naive dialectics of power. What threatens Life today is not (only) a violent enemy, a relation, but a slow pace of destruction, faceless but identifiable. Those doors Foucault opened are still open and it is more necessary than ever to step through them, but the question remains: are they entrance doors, leading *into* a building, or are they on the contrary something like an exit door, perhaps the ones we take only in an emergency, in case a building is on fire? While probably stopping short from escaping, unable to form a theoretical discourse in itself - which, perhaps due to its very nature, will always remain only a potential, an obstacle, visible in oppositions and limits of the productivist ontology that constantly erupt, just as sign that lightly glows in red "EXIT" - this work points to one of ways out. But to exit is not enough.

It attempts chipping away and stealing a couple of blocks and tumbling the statues in the temple of the productive power. If this vandalism has any merit, it is, as always, upon the reader to decide.

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7. Abstract / sažetak

Kultura u doba bio-moći

Ključne riječi: biomoć, destrukcija, kapital, nekropolitika, populacija, subjektivnost.

Rad problematizira doprinos francuskog filozofa Michela Foucaulta teorijama moći. Foucaultov rad je doprinio nastanku novog polja kritičke teorije, tzv. „biopolitičkih studija“, unutar kojeg autori na različite te ponekad antagonističke načine koriste i redefiniraju Foucaultove koncepte poput biomoći, discipline, subjektivizacije, vladalaštva itd., kako bi objasnili različite kulturne fenomene u sferama ekonomije i politike. Rad kritički intervenira i u navedeno polje „biopolitičkih studija“ i u sam Foucaultov pojmovni aparat, imajući u obzir suvremeni kontekst obilježen klimatskim promjenama, financijalizacijom ekonomije, deindustrijalizacijom, te različitim globalnim fenomenima nasilja (vezanim za ekonomiju ekstrakcije, rast populizma, ratove oko resursa itd). Pitanje koje rad postavlja je može li Foucaultov pojmovni aparat, nastao oko ideje „produktivnosti moći“, objasniti ove fenomene te načine na koji kultura kao ljudska aktivnost zahvaća destruktivnost i nasilje suvremenog kapitalizma. Rad drži da to nije moguće bez temeljnog promišljanja tog konceptualnog aparata kroz „dijalog“ s radom Karla Marxa, autora s kojim je Foucault posljednih desetljeća često dovođen u vezu. Glavni doprinos ovog rada se temelji na drugačijem čitanju dvojice autora za koje predlažem naziv „heterodoksno“, a koje za svoj cilj ima istaknuti točke međusobnog „preklapanja“ koje su u sekundarnoj literaturi zanemarene ili potisnute: različite oblike nasilja te destrukcije. Polazeći od terena „historijskog materijalizma“ kojeg, unatoč svim razlikama, dijele Marx i Foucault, rad će se fokusirati na suvremene kulturne i reprezentativne prakse koje reflektiraju ali i sudjeluju u različitim načinima na koji koji kapitalizam zahvaća život, formira subjekte, no istovremeno određene dijelove populacije prepušta smrti (nekropolitika).

Culture in the age of biopower

Keywords: biopower, capital, destruction, necropolitics, population, subjectivity

The work aims to problematize Michel Foucault's contribution to theories of power. Foucault's work contributed substantially to a new field of critical theory, the so-called "biopolitical studies", a field within which authors in different and sometimes antagonistic ways use and redefine Foucault's different concepts, such as biopower, discipline, subjectivization, governmentality etc., with the aim to understand different cultural phenomena which define the sphere of politics and economy. The aim of the work is to critically intervene both in this field of "biopolitical studies" and in Foucault's own conceptual apparatus, within the contemporary context defined by climate change, financialization of economy, deindustrialization, and different global phenomena of violence (tied to the economy of extraction, rise of populism, resource wars etc.). Most important question text raises is whether Foucault's conceptual apparatus, developed around the idea of "the productivity of power", can explain these phenomena and the ways in which culture, as a form of social activity, grasp destruction and violence of contemporary capitalism. I will maintain that this is impossible without a fundamental rethinking of this conceptual apparatus by putting it into dialogue with the work of Karl Marx, an author with whom Foucault's work was often connected to, especially in the last decades. The main contribution of this work is a different reading of these authors for which I reserve the name "heterodox", with the aim to bring out different meeting points which had been repressed or ignored in the secondary literature: different forms and scale of violence and destruction. Starting from "historical materialism", a terrain which regardless of all differences Marx and Foucault share, this paper will focus on contemporary cultural and representative practices which reflect and shape different ways in which capitalism takes a hold of life, forms subjects but also exposes certain populations to death (*necropolitics*).

8. Životopis

Gordan Maslov je nastavnik sociologije, povijesti te politike i gospodarstva. Zaposlen je u II jezičnoj gimnaziji u Splitu. Upisan na poslijediplomski studij „Humanističke znanosti“, smjer interdisciplinarna humanistika, pri Sveučilištu u Zadru te se posljednjih deset godina fokusirao na studije biopolitke i političku teoriju. Njegov interes još čine povijest ekonomije, politike identiteta i socijalna ontologija. Izlagao je na nizu nacionalnih i međunarodnih konferencija te je autor je desetak znanstvenih i stručnih članaka i radova, samostalno i u koautorstvu s kolegom Atilom Lukićem.