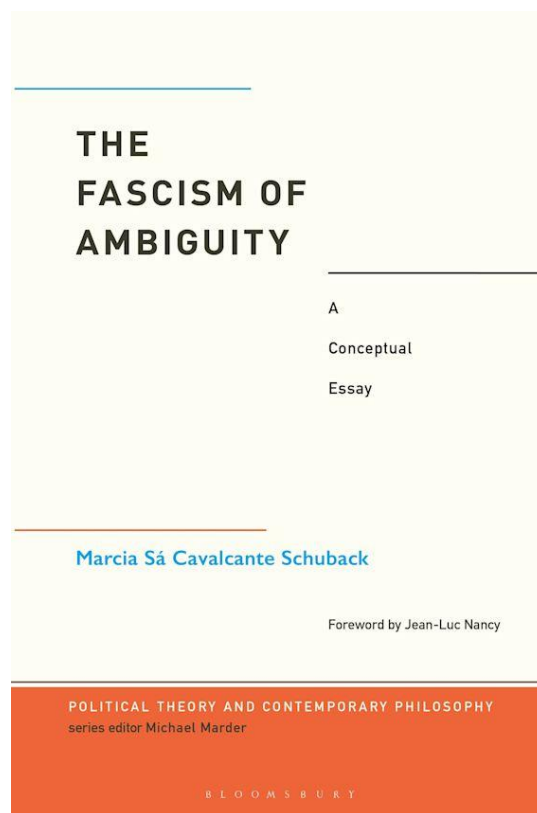


# The Fascism of Ambiguity

A Conceptual Essay

Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback



2022

# Contents

<b>[Front Matter]</b>	<b>3</b>
[Book Series Title Page] . . . . .	3
[Book Title Page] . . . . .	4
[Copyright] . . . . .	4
<b>Foreword</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Preface</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1. Lessons from History: Mussolini's Fascism</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>2. Lessons from Critique: Some Elements for a Critique of Historical Fascism</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>3. Neofascism: Pasolini's Cine-Poetic Vision</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>4. The Fascism of Ambiguity</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>5. The Ambiguity of Sense</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>6. Metapolitics</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Precision Exercise I</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Precision Exercise II</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>By Way of Conclusion</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>78</b>

# [Front Matter]

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**THE FASCISM OF AMBIGUITY**

*A Conceptual Essay*

**MARCIA SA CAVALCANTE SCHUBACK**

Translated by Rodrigo Maltez Novaes Foreword by Jean-Luc Nancy

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# Foreword

“Fascism” has too easily and hastily become the name of a political, even more than political, devil. Because of the Second World War, we hurry to lump together all forms of authoritarianism, of national and racist exclusion and constriction, under this word. This is because the war’s victors represented, in their diversity, a demand of humanity, whereas the defeated represented, also in their diversity, a negation or a surpassing of the human (of the “only” or of the “too” human). The conviction that from then on spread throughout the world was that there had to be—and that there already was in fact—a theoretical and practical recognition of human dignity. In this respect, the European Enlightenment and its American avatars had triumphed over dark forces.

The disparity between the Western model (itself heteroclitic) and the Leninist and/or Trotskyist model was, however, going to divide the front of the victors more and more—spreading through various forms of decolonization, as the expansion of either Enlightenment or revolutionary socialism. Instead of a general appeasement, there was a feverish agitation of social and cultural models, while the race of techno-economic mastery was accelerating.

Throughout this history of a great half of a century, the word “fascism,” far from losing itself with the regimes that had incarnated it, subsisted or returned according to two axes of signification: the first was the amalgam, signaled above, of all forms of authoritarianisms (a significative example in France: the left treated De Gaulle as a fascist when he rose to power in 1958 due to the Algerian impasse); the second was, on the contrary, the sentiment of a necessity to better understand the meaning of this term that was about to reemerge according to the semantics of “control,” of “technological mobilization,” of the integration of civil society in the State and the power of techno-economical organs.

The two motivations converge: without a doubt, we did not understand enough how fascism had been and continues to be— by mediating changes of habits and mythologies—an important dimension not only of the visible politics but above all of the profound culture (or the in-culture) of our society.

How this happens has to do with the manipulation of significations and values. This is the departing point of the present book by Marcia Sa Cavalcante Schuback.

It shows how this comes firstly because this fascism has no longer a need of mobilizing, as its predecessors, a mythological arsenal coming from a supposed past. If before there was a wish to reenact repairs of an ancestral authenticity combined with a noisy avant-gardism, today it is enough to play with the ambiguities coming from a reign of opinion, of the complexity of relations between States and private interests,

of a general appetite for the innovation of technique and of a “youngism” admitted as a cultural norm. With the products of what we could name a “signaletic civilization,” the entire field of consciences and desires is saturated with significations—ambiguous and undetermined.

For fascism has always proceeded from a will to sense: a will in the most imperious denotation of the term—a sense with the fullest, most achieved value of the word. For example, the people (Italian, French, Chinese, etc.) detain an accomplishment of sense by itself, by its nature, in that everything should be put in its service. By a hidden axiom, fascism rejects every open and unachievable sense (philosophical, poetic) and all transcendent (religious) sense. When a thought, an expression, or a faith pretend to break the tension of sense, they are thereby also fascist.

Today, it is an ideo-mytho-logy of the polymorphous, individual, and indefinitely repeatable satisfaction that fascizes the rich by their commerce and their consumption, the poor by their lack and their hate. Cocaine or smartphones—these are good examples of this fascism whose reality could be named addiction. For addiction is the escape from the real and the symbolic: it is an existence where ambiguity consists in in-existing.

Jean-Luc Nancy, May 2021

# Preface<sup>1</sup>

*Fuse or Intereexist*

Fernando Pessoa<sup>2</sup>

*The future is by definition imageless.*

*History provides it with the means to be thought.*

Paul Valery<sup>3</sup>

This essay is an attempt, a rehearsal at understanding. It attempts to comprehend the new form of fascism that is today destroying so many bodies and souls on and of the Earth. Its intention is to present more of a conceptual search than an analysis of the fascist politics spreading all over the world, having the case of Brazil as an indicator of some of its senses. The purpose is to write a conceptual essay and not to propose a finished conceptualization. As an essay it aims, on the one hand, to gather elements for a conceptualization, and on the other, to follow the style of thought in motion and of open reflection. There is a dispute over how to designate the conservative pushback that plagues not only Brazil but also a large part of the world. For many international political scientists, it is more a case of right-wing populism than fascism, or more a case of conservatism and authoritarianism than totalitarianism (Toscano, 2017; Traverso, 2017). For critics and activists in Iran, fascism only exists in Iran and to assign the term fascism to other right and extreme right regimes would be to deny the gravity of the Iranian political situation (Shahrjerdi, 2020). It seems that every country experiencing this turn to the right revendicates its own terminology and conceptual tools. In Brazil, there is an increasing consensus that we are under a neofascist regime. Those who resist recognizing this new form of authoritarianism as fascism cannot admit that fascism can acquire new and unexpected forms and defend that fascism can only have one shape. Those who admit that today’s “new” and “alt rightism” should be called fascism do legitimate the term by means of pointing out the similarities to Mussolini’s and

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<sup>1</sup> A first version of some of the thoughts proposed here was presented in a lecture given in November 2019 in the *Artepensamento* cycle, organized by Aduino Novaes, which had the relevant title “Still in the storm.” The published version of this talk can be found in Aduino Novaes (ed.) *Ainda sob a tempestade* (2020). Some examples of the ambiguity here in question were gathered in Luisa Buarque and Marcia Sa Cavalcante Schuback. *Desbolsonario de bolso* (2019). A Portuguese version of the now elaborated version in English is published by Marcia Sa Cavalcante Schuback. *O fascismo da ambiguidade* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora da UFRJ, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> “Fundir-se ou entreter-se.” Fernando Pessoa, *Textos filosoficos*, vol. I, Estabelecidos e prefaciados por Antonio de Pina Coelho, Lisboa: Atica, 1968 (imp. 1993):36.

<sup>3</sup> “L’avenir par definition n’a point d’image. L’histoire lui donne les moyens d’être pense” Paul Valery. *Oeuvres*, vol. II (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 917.

Franco's historical fascism, or to Hitler's Nazism. Resistance to recognize what is now happening in Brazil or other countries as fascism or neofascism undoubtedly reflects the interests and political perspectives of the analyses, but not only that: it reflects above all the nebulosity that surrounds the presumed unequivocality of the concept of fascism. It seems necessary to me to accept this nebulosity and therefore deal with what we do not know within what we do know about fascism, in other words, with its unknown elements. However, the question concerns, before anything else, the nebulosity of current times. If for millennia the world has been asking the questions: where did we come from and where are we going, today the urgent questions are different. Today it is urgent to ask ourselves: where are we and what are we? But most importantly: what are we (and are not), wherever we are; and where are we (and are not), whatever we are.

In this conceptual essay, I begin by formulating some lessons from history, both from what constitutes fascism and its power of mobilization, as well as some critical and opposing lines to historical fascism, elaborated during the first half of the twentieth century. Then, I try to identify what constitutes the new in the new form of fascism, taking Pasolini's cine-poetic vision as a starting point. Following his leads, I make an attempt to identify the points where the new form of capitalism, which could be called *technoplanetarian* and its neoliberal politics, the dynamo of globalization, reveals itself as a new type of fascism. At these points, I found in the world today a new way of imposing the unequivocal meaning of fascism through a dynamic of making every sense ambiguous, when their exacerbation empties them. Fascism as a whole is unequivocal, but today its unequivocality is exercised and imposed through a politics of ambiguation. That is what I have called the fascism of ambiguity. To develop this line of understanding, I also proposed a discussion on the senses of ambiguity and of the ambiguity of the word "sense" in order to explicit what the ambiguity of sense consists of. As resistance to the fascist politics of depoliticization through the ambiguity of senses, I suggested a politics of sense, understood as precision exercises. Precision is not the same as order or definite determination of univocal senses. This is what the old forms of totalitarian ideology intended. Faced with the ideology of ambiguity, I believe that it is crucial to do precision exercises such as artistic, poetic, and musical precision. In the first exercise, I examine the poetic precision of Orides Fontela and her poetics of the anti-word and anti-sense. In her work, it is possible to discover a poetic sense of resistance and opposition, implicated in her use of "anti" as a prefix. In the second exercise, I outline a reflection on the musical concept of ligature as an exercise in listening to the bindings not only between the present and the past, and the present and the future, but also between the present and the present. This is an attempt to outline elements in order to think about the disconnected connection of the desire for a fusional identification with the stereotypes of such a desire and the determination of finished and closed forms. This exercise is an attempt to clarify another sense of bond and of the common. These exercises are not a conclusion for this essay. They are



what they say: exercises, attempts, searches, sketches, and rehearsals, opening up the unsaid and the unthought.

This essay has many people to thank: Patrick Pessoa and Tania Rivera who, during the preparation seminars for our course on *Dissidences*, during the pandemic, helped me to understand a number of issues addressed here with comments of great value and critical light; Adauto Novaes for reading the manuscript, inspiring suggestions, and years of work on the mutations of the contemporary; Luisa Buarque and Bernardo de Oliveira for the discussions of several passages in the text that helped me to clarify what obscures us today; Tora Lane and Johan Hegardt for inspiring conversations about the urgency of these issues, in the realm of our research project on “Traces of oblivion: Identity, Heritage and Memory in the Wake of a Nationalistic Turn;” Irina Sandomirskaja, Peter Trawny, and Michael Marder for conversations along the years. And finally, I also appreciate that the Postgraduate Programs in Philosophy and Postgraduate Studies in Contemporary Arts Studies at Universidade Federal Fluminense in Rio de Janeiro welcomed me as a visiting professor during 2020.

Stockholm, February 2021

# 1. Lessons from History: Mussolini's Fascism

The prevailing view of historical fascism defines it as an authoritarian, conservative, and above all ultra-nationalist political ideology. In Europe, the fascist phantom is the phantom of an exterminating, racist nationalism and a controlling, censoring statism. In Brazil, each of these terms, nationalism, racism, extermination, statism, control, and censorship are co-implicit, because they are enunciated and practiced having colonization as a starting point: the experiences of extermination as a principle and the expropriation of one's self by the other are structural and not conjectural.

Fascism is, as we know, a term coined by Mussolini to designate the party he founded in January 1915, the Fascist Revolutionary Party. In the famous entry on Fascism written by Mussolini and the philosopher Giovanni Gentile for the 1932 edition of the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Mussolini insists that even in that first period his only doctrine was a "doctrine of action." Denying the doctrine of socialism an effective practice, he declared the *practice* of socialist doctrine as the foundation of fascism. The aim was not a theory of action, but fascism as a "need to act" and fight, hence the name he conferred to the "*Fasci Italiani di combattimento*" [Italian Fasces of Combat] movement. As a doctrine of action, fascism claimed to be contrary to doctrinal expressions, asserting itself as a set of "aphorisms, anticipations and aspirations," a political doctrine that pretended to be completely different from all the previous ones. If this new style of writing a doctrine of action, intended by fascism, lacks carefully elaborated ideas or logically linked paragraphs, it replaces doctrine with words of "faith." *The aim was to appropriate the socialist desire for action.* Its intention was to touch the people without mediation, that is, to cause emotion, a verb that literally means to set the people in motion, however, without the mediation of the mechanisms of representation, understood by Mussolini and other political theorists of the time as the undemocratic stain of democracy. Fascism designated a doctrine of action whose objective was to implement a State of the people represented directly by the *Duce*, a word that means "conductor."

Mussolini's entry in *The Enciclopedia* is revealing. It affirms a new style of doctrine: aphorismatic, anticipatory, aspiring, and non "doctrinal." We thus find defined more of a change in the style of ideological language instead of a new ideology. The ideological language gains a new aesthetic. This is an important first point to be kept in mind when trying to clarify the nebulosity of the concept of fascism today. The second point to be highlighted is the difference that Mussolini makes between theoret-

ical doctrine and doctrine of action and the pathos of mobilization of that doctrine, a mobilization that must be total, recalling the title of the famous essay by Ernst Junger (2002). Fascism always says: no more theories, no more words: it is time not only to act, but also to act from beginning to end. In these formulations, fascism is a mobilizing and distorting appropriation of Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach: "Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it" (Marx, 1998 [1976]). Fascism distorts because it does not want transformation, but the deformation and extermination of the world. Indeed, it substitutes the senses of transformation with the powerful meaning of destruction. But how does this doctrine work? It acts belliciously, repudiating all pacifist doctrine: "War alone keys up all human energies to their maximum tension and sets the seal of nobility on those peoples who have the courage to face it" (Mussolini, 1968), as read in the same entry by Mussolini. Fascist ultranationalism brings people together in an immediate relationship with the *Duce*, their conductor, who was seen—which coincides with what was experienced—as their "direct representative," unmediated and, in this union, generating the electrifying experience of uncontrolled human energy. The *Duce*, the great conductor, is the electrifying conductor of all human energy that only in war—that is, in hatred—reaches its maximum tension. In the words of Mussolini's entry, this antipacifist spirit inhabits not only the people, but each individual who, even though wounded by war, writes on their bandages "*Me ne frego*," "I don't care a damn" or "so what?," to demonstrate not only an "act of philosophic stoicism" or to "sum up a doctrine which is not merely political," but also the "evidence of a fighting spirit which accepts all risks. It signifies a new style of Italian life." In the same passage, Mussolini also speaks of how fascism is "love of life" conceived as struggle, duty, and conquest, as a life lived for oneself and above all as a life lived for others and their substitutes. This love of life is "love of one's neighbor," the entry continues, not the vague and abstract neighbor of a "universal embrace," but the differentiated neighbor watched with vigilant eyes. It is a life understood as the selective and natural proximity of the strongest. According to Mussolini, it is this conception of life that opposes fascism to Marxist and scientific socialism, and to the materialist conception of history. He considers that the latter only aims at the economic well-being of the people. But for the fascism formulated in this entry, economic well-being cannot be equated with happiness, because the issue is "spiritual" well-being. In addition to combating Marxist socialism, fascism combats democratic ideology and its liberalism by considering that it represents the "lie of political equalitarianism, the habit of collective irresponsibility," propagated by the "myth of felicity and indefinite progress." If democracy is understood, on the contrary, as "meaning a regime in which the masses are not driven back to the margin of the State" then fascism can be described as "an organized, centralized, authoritarian democracy,"<sup>1</sup> the entry states. Fascism presents itself, therefore, as a conception of life practiced as a fight

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<sup>1</sup> These quotes were taken from the official translation of the entry, published by the fascist government and available here: [worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Germany/mussolini.htm](http://worldfuturefund.org/wffmaster/Reading/Germany/mussolini.htm)

against Marxist socialism and liberal democracy. It is an anti-pacifist life, that is, an armed life, but at no point in the entry does it “anticipate” what kind of life may emerge after total mobilization, after total war. In acclaiming war as the highest tension of all human energy, fascism—which is hyperbolically valid for Nazism—proclaims an absolutely final purpose, an end without an after, the end as an end.

When re-viewing the fascism that constitutes European optics, in the film *Le livre d'Image* [The Image Book], of 2018, Jean- Luc Godard shows quotations from Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821)<sup>2</sup>, the main theorist of the French counter-revolution, signatory of the conservative ideas from which contemporary authoritarianism germinated and remains today one of the great inspirers of the French New Right (*Nouvelle Droite*) and other corresponding movements, which summarize the fascist desire to fuse with life in death. Some of the quotes recited in the film say: “divine war,” “land soaked in blood,” “the altar where everyone must die,” “everything must be sacrificed until the total eradication of evil,” “the executioners are the cornerstones of society,” a world where “the innocent can pay for evils.” These phrases and quotes place us, as spectators, in the experience of hearing their echoes penetrating us. This is to underline the end, that is, death, the end of all ends, “the apocalypse turned into an army,” as in a quote by Malraux, also recited by Godard, as the ultimate goal of the fascist love for life. Living *to die*, no materialism can be more immaterial than the fascist cult of the spirit. Fascism is by definition necropolitics.

Remembering or re-citing—to accompany Godard—the main lines of Mussolini’s historical fascism helps us to clarify why we speak of fascism today. The term comes from the Latin word *fascis*, which literally means bundle and refers to an object used by the *lictor*, the magistrate in ancient Rome, who symbolized the power and authority of the supreme magistracy. It was a bundle of sticks usually tied to a bronze ax. The fascists appropriated this symbol, of Etruscan origin, but it could already be found, and continues to be disseminated, in the national emblem of France, in the Legislative Assembly of Rio de Janeiro, and in the emblem of the Swedish police. The *fasces* remains today as a present symbol, even if unnoticed, of justice and law. The monument to the heroes of the crossing of the Atlantic, donated by Mussolini to Sao Paulo in 1929, with two “*fascio littorio*” remains standing on the banks of the Guarapiranga Dam in the southern district of Sao Paulo.<sup>3</sup>

It is the experience of a bond around necropolitics, the experience of the “common” mobilized by the fascist doctrine of action and the “love of life in death” that for me legitimize the use of the term “fascism” and not populism, conservatism, or simply authoritarianism, to designate the mobilization of destructive forces—and not “obscure”—operating today among us, with the purpose of conducting [*ducere*] human energy to the point of maximum tension.

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph de Maistre is the older brother of Xavier de Maistre, author of the famous book *Voyage || autour de ma chambre* (1794), an author whose work greatly influenced the modern novel and, in Brazil, the work of Machado de Assis.

<sup>3</sup> <http://guianegro.com.br/oito-monumentos-racistas-em-sao-paulo/>

## 2. Lessons from Critique: Some Elements for a Critique of Historical Fascism

Total mobilization and maximum acceleration of all human energy to the point of its highest tension define fascism as necropolitics, a politics of death that makes the end its purpose. The energy of the end appropriates the desire for the beginning. This is the politics of what in French has been called *jusqu'au boutisme* at the beginning of the twentieth century, a drive- to-the-end-at-any-price, to designate the defenders of the continuation of the First World War to the end, even if it costs incalculable human losses. It means the extremism of the extreme. As Edgar Julius Jung (one of the main leaders of the so-called “conservative revolution,” who mobilized in Germany several critics of the Weimar Republic, of parliamentarism, and of liberal democracy) formulated, “the essential thing is not the program of the Conservative Revolution, but its power” (2007).<sup>1</sup> What is the power of the “Conservative Revolution” which pretends to be “a revolution against the [Socialist] Revolution by a closed and well-organized minority,” as defined in 1900 by one of its first ideologues, the French Charles Maurras (1911), leader of the French far-right movement *Action fran<sup>^</sup>aise*? It is the *power* of total mobilization and maximum acceleration— the power of electrification, the electrifying contact, and not its revolutionary program. So how can one explain that the “proletariat,” the “people,” allow themselves to be mobilized by fascism and not by the Socialist Revolution? This question has mobilized and still mobilizes countless critics and activists against historical and contemporary fascism since the first decades of the twentieth century. This point also remains as one of our questions.

Gramsci’s response points toward an update of the sense of fascism. He considers that fascism and liberal democracy are two aspects of the same reality (Gramsci, 1924), the reality of a liberalism that is predatory not only for oppressing the people through the social relations resulting from its modes of production, but which also aims to destroy the possibility of an organizational *bond* between workers. The function of fascism is, according to Gramsci, to operationalize the destruction of the possibility of these organizational bonds, to disentangle the living sense of community, substituting it with ideological constructed links. Fearing the mobilizing force of the organizational

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<sup>1</sup> Edgar Julius Jung was also critical of the form that Nazism had taken, as he did not consider it radically conservative.

bonds of the working classes, liberal democracy, or in a more precise sense, democratic liberalism, is mobilized to stem the revolutionary desire. This mobilization of democratic liberalism against revolutionary desire occurs not only through measures of strength, persecution, killing, and defamation of its leaders, but also through the appropriation of certain revolutionary and socialist ideas. Gramsci was the great theorist of “cultural hegemony,” of apprehending how bourgeois elites secure their power through cultural hegemony and also of grasping how liberal capitalism is capable of assimilating socialist and Marxist ideas in a way that makes them ambiguous and empties them. As we have seen, Mussolini asserts himself as a socialist but, unlike socialists, he is committed to his extreme action; he even declares himself a democrat, but unlike democrats, he proposes a centralized and authoritative democracy, non-representational because he “directly” represents the people. With the concept of cultural hegemony, Gramsci has also indicated that the fight against fascism is also a fight for cultural hegemony. Today the “war against cultural Marxism” driven by neofascist rhetoric shows how Gramsci’s conception is being appropriated, misappropriated, and rendered void, above all through the mutation of the very dissolution of the meaning of culture in technoplanetarian capitalism.

Gramsci’s analyses of fascism, of how fascism and liberal democracy come together, and how cultural hegemonies are built, provide elements to show how the *fasce*, the bundle, the fascist way of uniting individuals around a “bronze ax,” that is, of a necropolitics, is a way of confusing the experience of bond, and destroying the senses of community. Fascism confuses organizational bonds—between workers—with the identification of each individual with the conductor [the *Duce*, the *Fuhrer* ] of the masses, when one finds oneself cut off from one’s real bonds. This means a substitution of the sense of bond, of joining and uniting the working class, with that of individual and identifying fusion with the leader, which thus generates a fusional collectivity based on an identification process. The mobilizing “force” of fascism is linked to the mutation of forms of junction and reunion, to the mutation of the very sense of “bond” that technological advances in the modes of production make and impose on the social body and each unique existence. The heart of liberalism is the fragmentation and atomization of society, mobilized and accelerated by the development of *technique*.<sup>2</sup> It is important not to forget the essential link between the emergence of fascism and the fascist power to mobilize and accelerate “all human energy” to its highest tension and the question of modern *technique*. Without a reflection on the acceleration of technological advances in the late nineteenth century and its demonstrative mobilization in the First World War, all analysis of fascism remains limited.

In a very enlightened essay, written surprisingly in 1897, under the title *Methodical Conquest*, the poet Paul Valéry perceives and analyzes the unprecedented power of

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<sup>2</sup> That which encompasses theoretical and applied sciences. [T.N.]

*technique* in the way Germany mobilizes after the Franco-Prussian war (Valery, 1957).<sup>3</sup> Its mobilization is not simply to build an armed peaceful State, but war-ready trade in order to turn armed mobilization into economic mobilization. The dynamo of this technical- military-economic mobilization is the devouring imperative of organizing inequality, by mobilizing all the resources of the excess, the most powerful weapons, the most effective strategies, and making the excess the most powerful weapon, itself the most inexhaustible resource; commercially, the strategy is to produce a cheaper product faster than the wholesale product. Technological advancement, carried out by the Germans in an astonishing way, and which made it possible to transform the military mobilization of all technical, scientific, and intellectual resources into economic mobilization, turned this mobilization into a method, the method of an experience of continuous reason, entirely dedicated to the prediction of the future, to carefully weighed probabilities, “everything to weaken chance” (Valery, 1957, pp. 1855-6), in order to eliminate creation.

The advent of modern technics opens the door to the desire to achieve overwhelming freedom, the immense freedom of wanting everything, which starts to define the technical sense of happiness. A phrase from Albert Camus’ *Caligula*, sums up the spirit of what is at play: holding with strangling force Caesonia’s throat, his wife, who had asked him if the dark freedom he had achieved was happiness, Caligula exclaims in ecstasy: “I live, I kill, I exercise the delusional power of the destroyer, against which that of the creator looks like monkey play” (Camus, 1958, p. 170). On the agenda is the destruction of the creative force, the emptying of the sense of creation when it is emptied by perpetual technical transformation where nothing escapes the will to innovation, the delusion of growth in accuracy and power, which makes it unwise to persevere with being and so create. Since then, to create became confused with innovating and “styling” as they say today. The military mobilization of war funds, as Valery demonstrates so well, depends on a mobilization of all knowledge and sciences, which cooperate for the production not only of all stages of production but also of production itself. By becoming an economic war, war is waged everywhere, and the economy becomes inextricably linked to war. All parts of the globe, all instances of life, all the resources of the Earth, everything must be meticulously studied, investigated, and defined according to categories and genres, everything must become the object of representation and malleable quantity for calculation, thus building commercial captain-generals (Valery, 1957, p. 1859). Unparalleled accuracy apparatus, information services, and secret police are created, and the multiplication of information and the development of advertising become instruments to achieve total production, which extraordinarily includes the “production” of each individual; the Germans saw since the beginning of the industrial era of production that production must be personalized, that is, it must meet the demand produced within each one. This causes not only a social, but also individual

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<sup>3</sup> I am especially grateful to Adauto Novaes for the suggestion of this surprising text by Valery, which, despite decades of reading Valery’s work, had gone unnoticed!

mutation. This method made total requires the individual's mediocratization and the means to "one-dimensionalize" him, evoking here a later term, proposed by Herbert Marcuse (1991 [1964]), that is, to pacify the individual in order for him to accept this framing of all existence, of individuals without choice, individuals who define themselves as those without choice. The great philosophies die, Valery insists, leaving only anonymous science, without general critique, but fertile in reinventions (Valery, 1957, p. 1865). Discipline and method, organization and division of labor *ad infinitum*, are emulators of the total action that is accomplished with a technology that raises and promotes the irreversible alliance of military mobilization and economic mobilization in its own manner of mobilization. This method allows for both total mobilization and total control. This is the method by which the production of the object is simultaneously the production of its future consumer (Valery, 1957, 1870). With this, the individual of an obedient mass is produced, easily mobilized to conduct all his energy to the highest tension. Valery foresaw, in an amazing way, Hitler's future Germany and gave an important key to understanding the core of fascism from the expansion of technological liberalism, itself a technology for its expansion. This key presents new elements to understand Gramsci's thesis that liberalism and fascism are two aspects of a single reality and also why the oppressed choose an oppressive regime. Not only are the relations between social classes in a techno-capitalist production regime at play but also the mutation of social relations and individuals operated by the technologies of production. In this visionary text, Valery does not let us forget that the question of modern technics is the question of a bellicose method turned economic method and that this bellicose economic method becomes the method par excellence of capitalist expansion. However, all of this depends on the production of all areas of the individual's existence, including the production of the individual himself, the production of his desires, and even the production of his "unconscious."

At stake, are above all the productive and producing use of all energies and most of all the human energy. This was what Wilhelm Reich, one of Freud's students and creator of the so-called body psychotherapy, learned well, who in his studies on the psychology of the masses sought to understand the energetic dynamics of social forces and not just the processes of identification of the individual with the mass and of the mass with the leader, as Freud has shown (Freud, 2004). Reich thought that Marxism, which had conferred a language to the desires for freedom and emancipation of the oppressed classes, did not take into account the energetic dynamic and the "social effect of mysticism" on the dynamics of social forces. For Reich, fascism is the expression of the irrational structure of the average man whose primary impulses have been repressed for millennia: "fascism is the basic emotional attitude of man repressed within our authoritarian civilizing machine and his mechanical-mystical conception of life. It is the mechanical-mystical character of modern man that produces fascist parties and not the other way around" (Reich, 2012). Thus, Reich goes so far as to affirm that "each one carries fascism within oneself" because fascism is not defined by the leader and his magnetic force, but by the psychology of the repressed, irrational human en-



ergies. Following Reich's lessons, it is clear that fascism puts the psychology of the masses on the agenda, which, as Durkheim had clearly observed, is more than the sum of individuals. Fascism must be seen, therefore, as a phenomenon that reveals the psychology of an all-particular object—the mass—and not just a phenomenon to be observed by psychology.

A recognizable feature of fascism is the hatred of the other. In Reich's view, racism and its exterminating hatred are not products of fascism; fascism is a product of racism. This is shown today in an exponential way. It is indeed impossible to understand both historical and contemporary fascism without recognizing that

they arise on the basis of systemic racism and colonial heritage, thus fascism—historical and contemporary—is anchored in the hate of the other's otherness. It is important to understand the “question of the other” in fascism because the “other” that must be constructed and produced as an object to be hated and thus uniting individuals against the hated other is also part of the extremist rhetoric that makes the end its maximal purpose: Fascism replaces “this must change” with “everything must end.” *This means the replacement of the desire for transformation with a desire for extermination.* If transformation implies the desire of the other, fascism wants to replace that desire with the desire of the same once again, always the same, the similar other, which is the desire for the “same” to start *again*. The reactionary mixes here with the progressive: *once again—always repeating*—the same and the similar other against the differential *other*. Fascist hatred for the other depends on the equivocation of the very sense of other: other as the same again, once again the same, appropriating oneself in order to exterminate the other as a transformative revolution. Thus, only the other transforms and to transform oneself is to become other.

In his reflections on “The psychological structure of fascism” (1933/1970), Georges Bataille presents the complexity of “heterology,” of *logos*, that is, the discourse and rationality of the other in opposition to “homology,” the discourse of the same, which permeates fascism and modern society. Bataille starts from the relation between individual and collective conscience, affirming the difficulty of apprehending the connection and passage between one and the other. He also makes use of the metaphor of electricity, of electrical contact, in an attempt to make appear not the individual or the collective conscience in itself, but the electrifying contact between both. In this electric current that unites the individual and the collective, a current that is always in motion, two poles tend to form and stabilize: a homogeneous social existence and a heterogeneous one. In its homogeneous existence, society is productive, useful, and all its elements are apprehended, evaluated and measured based on their function. Homogeneous society is for Bataille an expression of the dominant form of economy and capitalist society with their divisions of class and hierarchy, organized by laws and administered by a techno-bureaucracy. The “homogeneous” order is installed with the objective of establishing the homogenization of the world: its “onedimensionalization,” in Marcuse's expression. The homogenization of the world is achieved through the collaboration—as Valéry had previously apprehended in a visionary way—of all processes and resources: intellectual,

scientific, technical, and “spiritual.” But for there to be a desire and intention to homogenize, it is necessary to admit the existence of heterogeneous elements, which resist homogenization, which belong to the order of the unproductive, magic, and mysticism and that the homogeneous society (productive, useful, and effective) expels as waste for not knowing how to assimilate it. Homogeneous society expels every differential element. Bataille’s analysis is itself ambiguous and, in many ways, confused. Seen from the perspective of European history, as Valery and Reich also do, which is the optics of a homogenizing techno-scientific rationality, every heterogeneous, unproductive, irrational, and mystical element must be eradicated and expelled. But this generates a repressed heterogeneous unconscious that grows and rises as a “fascist” mass.

In the Brazilian case, which is the case of a fundamentally heterogeneous society, the fascist mass expresses itself as a desire for homogenization, for the expulsion of all elements that are not exactly heterogeneous (since this society is heterogeneous, a people of countless selves), and of all the forces of differentiation and change. Colonial history is the history of the violation of the right not only of the other, but of being others, in the richness of their plurality, a richness that defines as our *a priori* being a *sameother*, always other in each same. This is the contrary of being the same other and other again; of being the same order of homogenization. The otherness in each one is what the fascist desire seeks to annihilate by imposing a desire for homogenization. The “Brazilian fascist unconscious,” to keep in mind the case of Brazil, is that of a desire for homogeneity and identification with a *same other* and other again, the *same order again*, in power. With this, the figure of the “other” is swallowed up and absorbed by the same, which further triggers hatred toward the *other other* and the other in each one. From the perspective of Bataille’s discussion, the fight against fascism appeals to the heterogeneous values of heterogeneity, as only these can subvert the system of homogeneity that is installed with the capitalist and liberal economy. Heterogeneous values are not just “other” values in the hegemony of the same, but values that let the force of heterogenization take place and expand in society.

What this brief survey of some elements for a critique of fascism makes clear is how fascism aims to achieve “unconscious” automatism, to appropriate and control the realm of the uncontrollable and involuntary energy in order to extort its power of heterogenization, differentiation, and creation. The fascist goal is to exterminate the other, the source of all transformation.

In an attempt to comprehend the new form of fascism that is afflicting and plaguing many today, however, it is not enough to resort to concepts and visions related to historical fascism. It is important to be aware of the changing forms of production and especially the ontological mutation now being experienced.

In the Brazilian context, more specialized studies show the continuity of a fascist mentality in Brazilian elites and a fascist desire as a *modus operandi* in Brazilian society since the era of Getulio Vargas. Several discussions about fascism today start from the assumption of such a continuity, which necessarily needs to be considered to some extent. What, however, complicates today’s view of fascism “only” or “above all” as a

continuation of historical fascism is the blindness for the ontological mutation that is evident in contemporary history in the so-called phenomenon of globalization. In other words, the difference between historical fascism and what we can initially call contemporary neofascism is not only a difference in the means, articulations, and expressions of historical fascism in a world governed by new techno-economic conditions and their political and social consequences. To understand this difference, it is necessary to understand that the “new” conditions are a *mutation* of the conditions and, therefore, which cannot be apprehended merely as a passing from one form to another of the same phenomenon, following a temporal sequence that allows the comparison between past forms with successive forms, between previous and later forms of the same formation. To admit that we live in times of mutation is to admit the need to think about the emergence of forms that cannot be referred to previous forms as their evolution, development, or even transformation. The mutation of forms is the emergence of forms that cannot be referred back to others. It is the very notion of form that is at stake. The question here is of a new experience of the new and of form.

### 3. Neofascism: Pasolini's Cine-Poetic Vision

In the 1960s Pier Paolo Pasolini wrote a lot about the new form of fascism that he saw emerging in the postwar period. In his *Corsair Writings*, his journalistic chronicles and essays, there are inspiring visions for an attempt to think about the ontological mutation where the new form of fascism could develop (Pasolini, 1999). According to Pasolini, neofascism arises from within the new form of capitalism closely allied to the new forms of technology, in his time, called televisual technology and its resulting consolidation of society and mass culture. With his kinetically critical eye he saw the new means of communication and information operationalize and effect a “cultural genocide,” the extermination of values, souls, language, gestures, and people’s bodies (Pasolini, 1999, p. 407). In his short films like the one about the village of Orte, in the region of Lazio, or the one about the old part of the city of Sanaa, capital of Yemen, Pasolini documents the “form of the city” as a form of the “scandalous revolutionary force of the past.” His kinetic gaze seeks to grasp the traces of this scandalous force at the moment of its destruction, brought about by the neocapitalist devastation that is also a mutation of the predatory mode of the liberal capitalism we know. The “scandalous revolutionary force of the past,” which Pasolini recognizes in the form of these ancient and medieval cities, embedded in the cosmic landscape of the world, differs from the mythological, fictionalized “past” built by fascist and Nazi ideologies. It differs in that they show how the soul becomes soul in the soul, how the body becomes a body in the body, so that the soul appears as an extension of the body-on-body [dynamic] of life and the body as the soul of the soul, one in the other, the other in the one. Just by quickly pointing out Pasolini’s insistence on the revolutionary sense of the past one draws attention to the need to rethink the sense of the past, the difference between, on the one hand, its revolutionary force and its reactionary appropriation and, on the other, the actuality if not revolutionary, at least critical, of this force, with the emerging voice of ancestral worlds such as those of the original peoples and Black culture, today so threatened with persecution and extinction. In any case, Pasolini indicates that the media revolution—the rise of mass and consumer society, the technological innovation that has spread globally since the 1960s, of which, in Brazil, the construction of Brasflia is a striking testimony—achieve an *anthropocide*. A skinning of the human in the human takes place when the power of consumption is consummated and is itself consumed thus becoming absolute, a world entirely closed in on itself, a total immanence. Didi-Huberman considers that Pasolini sees “the overexposed power

of emptiness and indifference transformed into commodity” (Didi-Huberman, 2001, p. 31). And that is what Pasolini claims to have seen through his “senses.” Through the senses, he sees an “anthropological mutation” and “cultural indifferentiation,” operated upon senses, through which fascism is finally able to affect the mutation of human consciousness and sensitivity when every sense is replaced by “a potent abstraction, [by] a pragmatism that cancerizes the whole of society, a major central tumor . . . ” (Pasolini, 1999, p. 1530), “a disease that contaminates the social fabric at all levels, an ideological disease that affects the soul and does not exempt any soul” (Pasolini, 1999). Thus understood, neofascism represents a profound break with the forms of organization and discursive formulas of historical “fascism” because it comes from the transmuted background of human consciousness. The disappearance of “spirit” and “popular culture” and their replacement by media culture are for Pasolini’s ferocious testimonies of “cultural genocide” and “loss of linguistic ability” that characterize the “power of consumption.” According to him, Historical fascism, which he also called “paleofascism,” had never been fascist because it had failed to transmute the depth of the human soul, the mode of being human. That is why it was still possible to find forms of resistance to fascism. Only the power of consumption was able to achieve total fascism, the one that absorbs in its logic all forms of resistance and exposes fascism operating even within anti-fascism (Pasolini, 1999, pp. 336-43). Still to explain and understand is how this absolutization proceeds.

Pasolini finds evidence of this “unpredictably new” form in an event. He saw through his “senses” that “something” had happened and that this “something” was the disappearance of fireflies in the Italian landscape (Pasolini, 1999, p. 1457). In the poem “The Resistance and its Light” (Pasolini, 1999, p. 358) and in a known text in which he speaks of “the disappearance of fireflies” (Pasolini, 1999, p. 1269), Pasolini explains the political- existential vertigo of this event. For him, fireflies are the flashing lights of resistance to the extermination of life within life, which broadly defines fascism. This something that happened in the Italian landscape was the disappearance of fireflies, the flashing lights of resistance. The poetic force of this image of resistance has inspired several discussions, especially in the quest to revive the sense of resistance in a world landscape like ours, which is increasingly resistant to resistances.<sup>1</sup>

To discuss the issue of resistance fireflies, however, it is also necessary to understand how the “power of consumption” is capable of fully realizing neofascism, the total control of human consciousness and sensibility. Pasolini refers to the disappearance of fireflies as “the event of something”: “something has happened.” What happened to make the fireflies disappear? I want to propose that the mutation of every thing into “*any* thing” and nothing, in effect, the mutation of *every* thing into *any* thing is what happened. Pasolini’s discussions reveal not only an anthropological but also an

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<sup>1</sup> Even before the book that Didi-Huberman refers to in his book, Nancy Mangabeira Unger, without even knowing Pasolini’s texts, had already discussed the “perplexity of fireflies,” in the book *O Encantamento do Humano* (SP. Ed. Loyola, 2000).

*ontological mutation*, a mutation of the sense of being. By saying “something,” Pasolini touches the heart of neofascism, which is *the power of the emptiness of sense and meaning*. The emptying of the sense and meaning of people, of gesture, of life, of human, of existence, of body, of soul, of politics, of society, of language, the emptying of being and its senses, in short, the emptying of the sense of sense. The “power of consumption,” by which a “cultural genocide” and an “anthropological mutation” are carried out, is the power of the emptiness and the indifference of sense, a new sense of sense, the mutation of sense itself. Pasolini does not develop the question of the mutation of sense. He insists on the “loss of linguistic ability.” Both in his thoughts on “the heretical experience” (Pasolini, 1976) of language and on the relation between language and cinema, there are creative reflections on the life of oral language and its action characteristic, where life as a whole, within the set of its actions, speaks. It is in this sense that Pasolini recognizes the equivalence between cinema and the primal language of men, the action-language. This is the linguistic ability that the neofascism of mass society and media culture removes and annihilates, appropriating the kinetic force of language through the media. Even without touching on the issue of emptying the senses, Pasolini recognizes that the loss of linguistic ability is linked to the mixture and confusion of senses that thus empty themselves. This is the annihilating force of neofascism, which, according to Pasolini, remained unrealized in historical fascism.

The disappearance of resistance when fascism and antifascism come together appears in a long poem that Pasolini wrote, inspired by his visit to Rio de Janeiro in 1970. During the military dictatorship, Pasolini spent a few days in Rio and Salvador together with Maria Callas, on the way to the film festival in Mar del Plata.<sup>2</sup> The poem bears the title *Hierarchy* [*Gerarchia*] and was published in 1971 along with some other poems related to the Brazilian trip in a volume called *Transhumanize and Organize* [*Trasumanar e organizzare*] (Pasolini, 2003, pp. 207-11). *Hierarchy* is a long poem, where a sensual and sexual experience of the city of Rio de Janeiro is expressed through the encounter with the *carioca* Joaquim, a hustler in Copacabana, in whose eyes Pasolini sees reflected his encounter with Brazil. More than a narrative poem, it is the narration of a poetics, understood as a gaze that sees itself in the other’s gaze. This is what is meant by cine-poetics proposed here.

Pasolini, the poet, lands and goes through customs toward the “incognito.” He arrives “in a city beyond the ocean.” He arrives in Rio de Janeiro. What exists beyond the ocean? The “desperate city” of a colonization “where poor Europeans came to recreate a world in the image and likeness of theirs, forced by poverty to make a life from exile.” What the cine-poetic eyes soon find is an inverted Hierarchy, because the last ones are the old—the Europeans—and the first ones are the young, the glaring youth in the most beautiful hustlers, “the first to be found in the places we always discover.” The

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<sup>2</sup> For an article in Italian about Pasolini’s trip to Brazil: <http://www.centrostudiperpaolopasolinicasarsa.it/pagine-corsare/la-vita/altre-geografie/ppp-in-brasile-nel-1970-un-viaggio-e-la-poesia-gerarchia/>

city emerges to those cine-poetic eyes that seek to see the gaze in everything they see: streets and boulevards emerge through the eyes of these young people, the first ones, of whom whose stature a few old intellectuals manage to reach. Through the eyes of the hustler, this “boy of the people,” who becomes a guide holding the poet “by the hand with delicacy,” the cine-poet discovers the “invariability of life,” a discovery that requires “intelligence and love,” whose “asceticism requires sex, requires dick,” because life requires that one penetrates life. Thus, he sees “Rio from the inside, appearing eternal.” Joaquim, hustler, boy of the people, the guide to the slum that “was like Capernaum under the sun,” “a shack on top of the other,” “twenty thousand families” and little by little revealing themselves to the other, “one word after another,” “prudently,” “absently” spoken: the communist and subversive cine-poet; the hustler, a soldier in a division specially trained to fight subversives and torture them. Then the encounter of the cine-poet, “great connoisseur,” and “he, [the] guide” happens. In the favela, the

European-Italian-subversive-cine-poet meets the family of the colonized-Brazilian-hustler-guide-subversive-trained-to fight and torture subversives, and is welcomed by the mother, the “invariability of life.” The cine-poet “seeks perdition and finds a thirst for justice.” In the favela, the cine-poet meets people who “either don’t think about anything or want to become the city’s messengers.” And in that encounter, he discovers how “it is by pure chance that a Brazilian is fascist and another subversive, and that the one who gouges out eyes could be mistaken for the one from whom the eyes are gouged out.” The cine-poetic eyes see the surprising fact of how here the oppressed can become oppressor, of how he who blinds can be blinded, of how “Joaquim could never be distinguished from a malefactor.” Pasolini then writes the central verse of the poem: “so at the top of the Hierarchy, I find ambiguity, the inextricable knot.” For here, in Brazil, which the cine-poet takes as “my wretched homeland,” the one whose owners are money and flesh, while being so poetic, there is “within each inhabitant” “an angel who knows nothing,” “either old or young, hastens to take up arms and fight, regardless for either fascism or freedom.” We can undoubtedly criticize, as the celebrated Brazilian film-director Glauber Rocha did, Pasolini’s “old” vision of the so-called Third World; criticize his vision of the city, of man, of prostitution, of Brazil (Rocha, 2006). But the value of this poem for our discussion is in Pasolini having caught, in his cine-poetics of the city and the bodies that guide him, the “inextricable knot” of ambiguity where fascist and subversive are confused, where those who have their eyes gouged out could soon become those who gouge out eyes, where one can fight for both fascism and freedom. Pasolini’s lesson is that of a view of the points of contact between fascism and subversion, of the place where we must investigate not only how the “return of the repressed” was possible and the reasons for a presumed “retrotopia” (Bauman, 2017) of the world, but also for the ineffectiveness of inherited forms of resistance and the urgency to reinvent them.

## 4. The Fascism of Ambiguity

Pasolini's reflections on "televisual neocapitalism" are part of the great debates on "mass media," the "mass media system," the question of technology and information, the cybernetics revolution, and new techniques of control and surveillance, which since the 1960s and 1970s have not ceased to be debated. By surprising the unpredictable "neofascist" form of the power of consumption of a "televisual neocapitalism," Pasolini clearly saw that "planetary capitalism," no longer productive, but financial and monetary, is tele-mediatic capitalism. For him, neofascism no longer needed any form or value from historical fascism: tradition, family, or religion because when pulling man from man, body from body, soul from soul, the neofascism of consumer society and mass culture realized what no ideological content of the previous fascism had achieved: the lethal mutation of human sensibility and consciousness. But how, then, do we comprehend the reactionism and pushback that accompanies what we are calling fascism today? In a world where any-end-justifies-the-means is universalized, where absolute finality has no finality, how do we comprehend the moralizing and conservative discourse that circulates everywhere? Indeed, we must start from what, at first sight, constitutes a surprising contradiction and that must be posed as a guiding question: how is it possible that technoplanetarian, neoliberal, financial capitalism, unthinkable without the new forms of information technology, robotics, algorithms, social media, media spectacle, artificial intelligence, that is, capitalism without borders, essentially "internationalist,"—because today power is entirely in the digital hands of powerful inter-, multi-, and transnational conglomerates—lives together so well alongside authoritarian, nationalist, protectionist, and patriotic governments? Why are there "nationalisms" in the situation of a transnational "worldwide un-world" (Granel, 1982, p. 59), in the expression of the French philosopher Gerard Granel, where nations are nothing more than "franchises of world capital"? (Granel, 1982), as Brazil today demonstrates in such an excruciating way? These questions arise when we assume that, in order to understand the new form of fascism that is afflicting and plaguing our time, it is necessary to understand the new form of worldwide "capitalism" that causes it. It is impossible to conceive one without conceiving the other. Our starting point is that, from the point of view of its internal logic, neoliberal, techno-mediatic, and financial capitalism has fascism as its system and not that fascism is its allied force. In its new form, fascism exposes how, in the age of planetary *technique*, man ceases to be the subject of history, as the new subject becomes *technique*; technoplanetarian capitalism. If the total State of totalitarian systems is to be considered as a subjectState



(Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 2002, p. 24), then today total *technique* is the world's subject, indeed the subject of subjectivity.

We know that the fascist defense of national sovereignty against the international defense of the Amazon and its indigenous nations and peoples shows in a wide-ranging way how the government's protectionist politics is the way "Brazil" places as quickly and widely as possible "its" Amazon-commodity for sale on the "Amazons" of the world market. There is really no contradiction between technoplanetarian capitalism and its neoliberal ways to proceed, which is defined as absolute anti-statism, and fascist statism, because today the State is already a branch of neoliberal capital, the State is itself anti-statist. The need for a strong State presence is explained by the need to carry out the privatization of the State in the quickest and most complete way, without further ado and political negotiations. The anti-globalization discourse of the Brazilian fascist government is by no means anti-liberal; on the contrary, it is a discourse that is partly more neoliberal than the neoliberalism driving globalization.

The goal of this new type of fascism is very clear and precise: it means "total mobilization"—Ernst Junger's term remains relevant—toward a techno-neoliberal media politics whose ferocity increases with the accelerated depletion of the planet's natural, human, and non-human resources. Fascism is never ambiguous and its goals are unequivocal. The "need" for nationalist, protectionist, reactionary, and restrictive policies, for the construction of physical and discursive, mental and sensitive walls, is clarified by this goal, of conducting neoliberalism to its maximum point, before "the world ends," and of making apocalypse its weapon. To do that, it needs to replace the desire for transformation with a desire for extermination, "let's end all this" as soon as possible. The State of current fascism is the State that, in its apparently anachronistic exacerbation, empties the sense of State and operationalizes the implementation of neoliberalism as the only viable politics to "save" the country from "collapse," leading the collapse toward collapse. Under the discursive cloak of the cleansing of cronyism and corrupt civil service, State policy is made to streamline as much as possible both the entrepreneurship of every worker, the annulment of all labor laws, the privatization of all State-owned companies, the outsourcing of the economy, etc., such as State entrepreneurship, that is, the transformation of the State into a company. This means the need to empty the sense of State through the excess of a State politics against the State. The other need is for the

State to undermine public space, for politics to undermine and empty the sense of politics, to undermine social movements and expressions of resistance, combining traditional mechanisms of torture, persecution, extermination—as in the case of Marielle Franco<sup>1</sup> and many others—with the promotion of the privatization and deprivation of the common space. This is done through the excess of social media, the continuous "selfization" of each individual, identified with their image for consumption, which to-

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<sup>1</sup> Marielle Franco, born 1979, was a Black Brazilian politician, sociologist, feminist, and human rights activist murdered with several shots on March 14, 2018, in Rio de Janeiro.]]

day is not only of things but the consumption of images of things and above all of themselves. Narcissus would no longer know how to recognize himself in contemporary virtual narcissism. A verse from the chorus of Sophocles' *Antigone*, often overlooked in various analyses of this play that does not age, expresses in a concise way what happens: *hypsipolis, apolis*, the excess of polis, of politics, the emptying of the polis, of politics. The excess of sense, the emptying of sense: this is the rhythm of an operation of sense, which empties sense by its exacerbation, by its hyperbole. This is, in my view, the main driver of the new form of fascism that afflicts and plagues us today. The unequivocal goal of neofascism finds its method in the ambiguation of every sense and value.

Reality today confirms that fascism lives very well within a democratic regime, not only because fascism is elected democratically or even because fascism and democracy would be two sides of the same coin, as suggested by Gramsci. The new way of co-existence between fascism and democracy is very clear, for example in Brazil, partly because after decades of authoritarianism and military dictatorship, democratic institutions are still on the path of democratization and partly because in its new form, today's fascism presents itself as pretending to be more democratic than democracy. Thus, if democracy has the representational system as its "weak point," since many feel they are still not represented in it, today's fascism proclaims itself more democratic than democracy, because it exercises a power that "speaks" to each individual "directly" via Twitter and WhatsApp, no longer needing representatives, because democracy now wants to be the mediatic presentation of everything that happens and not merely a representation that is never sufficiently representative. Thus, everyone is deluded by the possibility of direct access to inaccessible power. Furthermore, if democracy means the power of voting, each individual feels "empowered" by voting continuously with their daily *likes*, every minute, for everything and everyone. More than ever democracy shows how all political categories are reduced to public opinion. With "likes" and "dislikes" at every second of life, this voting to continuously give the impression of a hyperactive "agency" in a democracy exercised continuously on social media. This equates and confuses the consumer vote with the political sense of voting, the vote as a citizen. Voting on everything all the time empties the sense of the vote when citizenship mixes with consumer activity. Citizenship is exercised as one consumes and the right to citizenship is no longer dissociated from the right to consume. Thus, the hyperbolic vote annuls and empties the political sense of the vote. That is why today's fascism is deliriously in need of votes. Through excessive voting, the power of decision rests on the digits of the algorithmic and automatic system. If historical fascism boasted that it achieved what no representative democracy was capable of, that is, "*being*" the people directly and not simply representing them, through an identification of the people with their leader or "*Duce*," then today social media seem to be able to finally realize this "desire," through the "direct" mediatic contact between clichés of all kinds and "each individual." Instead of the historical mobilization of the masses, "social media" attract atomized individuals, isolated and impoverished consumers, to-

ward connectionless connections, relationless relations, senseless senses, and valueless values.

Democracy is defined as a regime based on freedom of expression. Today's fascism wants to present itself as exercising more freedom of expression than in classic liberal democracies because it has the "courage" to say what it wants in everyone's face. Rather than completely banning freedom of expression and completely infringing the well-known censorship mechanisms of a military dictatorship, the fascist government boasts of using the most vulgar, violent, humiliating, hateful, homophobic, racist, ordinary, and lowest words. It replaces the sense of freedom of expression with a practice of libertarianism of expression, boasting the courage to say what the politically correct censures within itself. Thus, it is the politically correct that exercises censorship, self-censorship, while fascist speech appears as an excess of freedom of expression. In this exacerbation of the sense of "freedom of expression," the sense of freedom of expression is emptied of sense. Excessive sense empties sense. This so-called democracy that is more democratic than democracy—new fascism—lives from the emptying of the sense of people by replacing the idea of people with their privatization and deprivation, when everything happens directly between the environment and each individual. Today, the people is a sample and a statistical population, the sum of isolated atoms and atomized isolations, brought together in networks and groups mediated by the "virtual" and virtualized by the "medium."

For our discussion of the new form of fascism that today surpassed the neofascism formulated by Pasolini, it is worth noting the development of new information technologies and the sense of bond and connection that are operationalized in them. Social media are the most powerful way to achieve and establish bondless bonds, relationless relations, and encounterless networks. It is important to be aware that the hyperconnectivity generated by the networks disconnects precisely when hyper-connecting. The exacerbation of the sense of bonds, ties, networks, connections—"links," "networks,"—empties, by excess, the sense of relation. It is the hyperbole of the sense of relation that empties the sense of relation and the relation of senses. With this, both the *in-between-us*—the open space of the common, more decisive for a living and free politics than any demarcation of a common space—is seen to be privatized and private, because the opposite of in-between is not together but hyperpolarization<sup>2</sup>; also, the space of solitude of each one, the space of creation, is privatized and private because it is confused with the isolation that includes or excludes each one from the market and its images. With the pandemic, these and many other issues discussed here have become more acute.

The new fascism continues to exercise the age-old boundaries of every totalitarianism: *divide et impera*, divide and conquer and also *panem et circenses*, bread and circus. The difference is that it intensifies them by making them ambiguous because today fascism unites in order to divide and thus stimulate even more evidently so that each

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<sup>2</sup> I thank Patrick Pessoa for such a precision.

one should voluntarily serve the tyrant—the neoliberalization of all systems—and that every bread becomes a circus, that is, every reality, especially that of the breadwinner, becomes a spectacle. Thus, democracy is dissolving as if “naturally” (which today means the same as artificially) not by decree or institutional act (although several acts and decrees are also being voted in the congress while media scandals occupy the front pages) but while being preserved as an empty form by the growing disarticulation and the continuous dissolution of the common and of the practices of inclusion. The viralization that disseminates and thus exacerbates senses not only empties them, but also operationalizes the naturalization of all types of discourse, especially hate and exclusion discourses within this senseless hollow. The linguistic mechanisms for naturalizing racism and exclusive segregation studied so carefully by Victor Klemperer in his important work, *Language of the Third Reich: LTI: Lingua Tertii Imperii* (Klemperer, 2000), find today in social media and in the robotic algorithm of messages, a means of uncontrollable naturalization. Through “humor” and viral “jokes” in memes and messages, hatred starts to become as natural as the artifices of its production. The “loss of linguistic ability” observed by Pasolini, as a sign of televisual neofascism, is now going viral and becoming naturalized by the continuous production of new words and expressions, through which the unacceptable becomes the most natural.

What Pasolini had seen as the event of “something” happening and which he witnessed with the disappearance of fireflies from the Italian landscape, becomes more and more explicit as the universal event of *every* thing, sense, and value transforming into *any* thing, into *any* sense and *any* value, emptying both the senses and values of things as well as the sense and value of sense and value. This is what we may call the “anyzation”<sup>3</sup> of each thing. With that, the sense of each and every one, the sense of the singular, dissipates, since *each one* is now confused with *anybody*.

This is what the advancement of information technologies, the development of artificial intelligence, of the numerical society manages to naturalize and thus universalize and totalize. The thesis I would like to outline is that the “unpredictably new” form of fascism, which we are witnessing today, is the form of the ambiguity of all forms. It is a fascism that is articulated in the ambiguity and oscillation of all sense and value in such a way that in this oscillating ambiguity, sense and value lose value and sense. Ambiguity here means emptying, by making every sense equivalent to any sense. It is because of this ambiguous oscillation and oscillating ambiguity where all formulas and expressions can be inverted and perverted, where every sense and value can be turned against itself and against any other that not only the “voluntary servitude” of everyone to the tyranny of a unity that annihilates all living unity—evoking the classic concept and discussions of Etienne de La Boetie published clandestinely 1577 (1976)—

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<sup>3</sup> In some texts I published previously, I suggested the verb “to whatsoever,” “whatsoevering.” But maybe anyzation can render my point more clearly here. See my article “The Lacuna of Hermeneutics” in *Research in Phenomenology*, 51 (2021).

but also the new mechanisms of power, control, and censorship, become possible. It is this dynamic of sense that I am calling here *the fascism of ambiguity*.

The fascism of the ambiguity of every sense and value is found today everywhere. At any moment and in any situation, we see senses oscillating between right and wrong, true and false in a growing ambiguity that makes it appear, in an astonishing way, how even the polarization of senses, values and positions triggers the ambiguity of senses more than their distinction and demarcation. The very oscillation of the sense of “fascism” testifies to the continuous ambiguation of senses: how to speak of fascism if today’s “*Duces*” are nothing but caricatures of past fascists, parodies of dictators? Everywhere there are caricatures of caricatures, idolatries of idolatries, masks of masks, parodies of parodies, all intentionally staged in autopilot mode, which allows us to say that they are both caricatures and non-caricatures, both masks and non-masks, both fascism and democracy, because in the world of image, where everything is what it is not and what is not is what is, non-being presents itself as non-being and not as what is hidden behind being, everything is by definition ambiguous, one of the faces of Janus, the two-faced face. In the world of ambiguous oscillation and the oscillating ambiguity of senses, which is the world of the image of the image, nothing is hidden; everything is shown and shown in everyone’s face, including the hiding of senses and intentions.

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Without this dynamic of the ambiguation of sense, there cannot be what is called “capitalism.” What has been called capitalism within the scope of economic and political-economic theory corresponds philosophically at its core to what Nietzsche thought and developed in terms of “nihilism.” In the light of philosophical nihilism, “capitalism” can be defined as the political economy of the ambiguity of senses. To grasp it, one can follow how Marx, in his analysis, sees money not only as a key element for his political economic concept of capitalism but also as a power to realize the ontological mutation at stake in the capitalist world. This was what the young Marx had already noticed when, inspired by a reading of the play *Timon of Athens* by Shakespeare, he wrote enlightened lines about the essence of money. In them, Marx draws attention to the fact that money is not defined by numbers, but by affecting a continuous ambiguation of senses. Money makes the “ugly look beautiful, the bad good,” the outside turns inside out and the inside out turns outside, thus transforming everything that exists into its own opposite (Marx, 1963). To say that money buys everything and that everything has a price is not simply to say that money corrupts everything and empties all values. It also shows the value dynamics involved in money. Marx shows us that the economic value of things is linked to human work and, therefore, to the human and social reality of its production. Things have a use-value and this value is often invaluable, both because it is something difficult to replace and because it has an affective value. But things have a commodity value, an exchange value. The capitalist economy is an economy based both on transforming use-values into exchange value and making use-value an exchange value. Changing

means replacing. The capitalist world is a world committed to replacing everything with everything: not only replacing all values with exchange value, not only replacing things with commodities, affective relations with interest relations, ethical values with economic values, but making everything replaceable and redundant: people, lives, and both human and non-human existences. And money does that by emptying everything of sense, making everything equivalent to everything. This makes all senses equivalent and ambiguous. By mixing the sense of equality with that of equivalence, money confuses the sense of value by stating that everything has the same value. In fact, what is being said is that all values are reduced to a single sense of value, which is monetary value, the emptying and empty value of every value. This apparent equality, which is nothing but the same amount of money, legitimizes the substitution of everything for everything. Money, as Marx will deepen in his later thought, is not value, but “value-form” (Marx, 1990, p. 232). Thus, appropriating all things, money becomes the most “thing” thing that exists, and finally, the only “thing” that exists. In addition to making every sense ambiguous by emptying it of sense to the point of being able to transform it into its opposite, money transmutes what I have into what I am, so that I become only what I have. With money, being as a whole is reduced exclusively to having. Money, Marx says in this brief text from his youth, is the bond of all bonds, [*das Band aller Bande*], the “chemical force of society” the one that unites by separating. Its activity is to create connectionless connections, relationless relations, transmuting everything that exists into mediation. Money is the means of fragmenting society through the iron-bonds of dependence. This universalized and universalizing practice of creating bondless bonds, of diluting bonds by the excess of *links* gives a decisive sense to “bundle,” *fasce*, the typically fascist social identification bonds. In this sense, one could say, with Gramsci, that liberal capitalism carries fascism in its kernel: *in nuce*.

This brief discussion about money aims to indicate the revealing power of the ontological mutation that capitalism performs and not specifically on how Marx analyzes money in the totality of his economic theory of value. For Marx the central key to define the capitalist world is the relation between the world of commodities and the world of social relations, a relation that has to be considered in its specific historical frame. But in order to seize this relation as the core of capitalism, it is necessary to understand how money becomes capital, the genesis of the “surplus-value” arising from a growth of exchange value, which Marx identified with labor force. In capitalism, labor force is a commodity whose consumption augments exchange value, whose “use” creates a surplus in exchange value. Following Marx’s *Capital*, the capitalist transforms money into commodities which will be the basis for new products but to which he incorporates another commodity, living labor force, transforming value into capital and thereby extending the production of value beyond measures. That is why the value of a commodity is the “crystallization” of social labor and depends on the incorporated quantity of labor. The need to remind the key concepts in the context of our discussion is to keep in mind the dynamics in which things become personified and

persons become things, how relations become commodities and exchange as such becomes the only utility and use. The capitalist world is the one in which money becomes the main commodity forcing the world to give up both the thinghood of things and social relations. The reification of everything means the rendering of everything into anything whatsoever, hence into the loss of the sense of thing through the exacerbation of thingness; the reification of social relations, of humanity, means de-socializing the social. Surplus value is Marx's concept that reveals the "logic" of capitalism not only of reifying social relations and transforming social labor into commodity but above all as the logic of voiding value through the addition of a "value" that is more than value itself. This logic of "surplus value" operates even more powerfully in technoplanetarian capitalism, when the nature of social labor is transformed to the point that social relations become the techno-mediatic mutated nature of work. The more the surplus generates a surplus of the surplus, the less values have value.

The dynamic of ambiguation of sense and value, which constitutes the very social dynamics of production relations, is not, however, something that superimposes what is economically produced, but what is incarnated in products. Another of Marx's precise and precious concept was that of commodity as a fetish. The famous passage in *Capital* on the fetish of the commodity describes the commodity as that which makes sensitive and palpable what is supra-sensitive and impalpable, that is, its exchange value, which is a reflection of social and productive forms. Being "a sensitive/supra-sensitive thing" [*ein ubersinnlich sinnliches Ding*] (ibid., p. 276), the commodity exposes the invisible and impalpable forms of social relations as visible and palpable, operating as if by magic or spell the transformation of the relation between men into a relation between things, on the one hand, and on the other, the individual's objectification and his relations. Things become personified and persons reified. The commodity is the spell of the transformation of human relations into things, the substitution of use-value for exchange value, or more precisely, the mutation of use into exchange and mediation. If things in their "trivial" sense, the table in one's childhood home, have a use-value, an affective and thus priceless value,<sup>4</sup> then as a commodity, the table becomes any table, which as such can be replaced by any other table. To be a commodity means therefore to stop being *this* thing in order to become *anything*, an X, and as such substitutable for any other thing and thus capable of receiving any value and sense depending on how it presents itself. To be a commodity, a thing must lose its sense of thing in order to receive not only the value of being any thing

but above all any value whatsoever. It is the transformation of "S is P," the universal form of predication, into "S is X" (= *any* thing, sense, or value), the predication formula of "any." The social forms of work and production, exploitation and capitalization are

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<sup>4</sup> On the affective value of use-value, see the beautiful letter from Rainer Maria Rilke of November 13, 1925 to Witold von Hulewicz and the commentary by Giorgio Agamben in, "Marx; or, The Universal Exposition" in: *Stanzas: Word and Phantasm in Western Culture* (Minnesota: University Of Minnesota Press; First edition, November 17, 1992) and also George Simmel. *Die Philosophie des Geldes* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989).

hidden under the spell of “any” thing, “any” sense, and “any” value. The commodity is not simply a thing or the objectification of relations; it is the substitution of things for the *thing-form*, of relations for the *relation-form*. The value of being able to be anything whatsoever, the value of ambiguity, flexibility, and substitution is decisive here. For only then both what has a price and what has no price, both price and appreciation or esteem, can come to have any price. Everything will depend on how the commodity is presented and exhibited, that is, the spectacle of the commodity. Commodity fetish is the *spectacle* of the power of the emptiness of sense. This is what allows and promotes the flexibility and mobility of values as a supreme value.

Neoliberalism, technoplanetarian capitalism, is a dynamic of *constant transformation*. However, a constant transformation is an oxymoron, because it expresses a transformation that does not transform itself; in fact, a transformation that transforms everything is one that transforms everything except the sense of transformation. It is a transformation that can only generate a *status quo*, a dynamic conformism. The Aristotelian description of the first unmoved mover [*ho ou kinoumenon kinei*] serves well to define capitalism, which moves everything except motion itself. Here everything must become insecure, but in such an absolute way that the continuity of this insecurity must be guaranteed at any cost. Nothing can stand still where it is. Everything must always leave where it is, having to turn into anything whatsoever, so that it can be used at any time, by any one, in any way, without any limit, be it natural, technical, ethical, or cultural. The digital and virtual world is the full realization of this continuous transformation of everything, which transplants everything from its site to its website, taking it from its security, however fragile it may be, into solid insecurity. All that is solid melts into air, recalling Marx’s famous formulation. A lesson from untransformative continuous transformation is that the “immanent” need for fascism in this capital dynamics corresponds to the need to preserve not so much known forms but the *forms* of the known, not so much old and stable senses and values but the stable *form* of value and sense so that senses and values can continue to circulate, to become mixed and confused, to feed the incendiary fire of the ambiguation of all senses and meanings, including the senses of meaning and the meaning of sense. The great confusion is to think that the new fascism that afflicts the world of today wants *in fact* a return to conservative values and senses, well, these would require a world structure entirely different from that which the new fascism intends to consolidate, which is the form of a spectacular world, where everything ceases to be or have any sense and value, being and having only the empty form of senseless sense and valueless value.

For such a spectacle, it is essential that the *form of sense* can be maintained so that the contents of sense can flow without anything to obstruct its malleability. Ensuring the malleability of senses, their ambiguous oscillation, is decisive in order to control all resistance and critiques of the overwhelming expansion of neoliberal political economy. At the world’s present moment, where the immoderation of global capitalism in the form of social injustice, hunger, violence, and misery screams and becomes explicit with uncontrollable force, not only in Brazil but worldwide, fascism grows to mobilize



all human energies in order to immobilize resistance and critical energy. Hence the “need” for a new form of fascism for the logic of neo-*liberalism*, the logic of *anything goes*, where everything is worth nothing, nothing is worth everything, and everything is worth anything. This new form of fascism takes the form of ambiguity, where all forms become ambiguous, even fascism— because it is fascism, but it is also not fascism. In a world where everything is spectacle, where everything is and lives from the image, where one can “be” what one wants, where identity is defined by identification with an image, every sense is similar and can be equivalent. But what cannot be confused is that the emptiness of sense has the form of *sense and meaning*, or that is, appears, and seems *like* sense and meaning. Fascism—always conservative and reactively reactionary—wants to maintain the *form of sense* and *form of value* to ensure the dilution of senses and values and, thus, undermine every critique and censor every insurgency; hence its need to return to the “past” and to make it necessary for “an acute sense of the past” to exist alongside the anxiety for continuous change and progress.<sup>5</sup> The return to the past, the reaffirmation of the already given in an essential manner, is, before any reactionary content, a return to the past forms, to the structure of the “formed” and “known,” and more of a return to the forms of the reactionary than to reactionary forms. The fascism of ambiguity must, first of all, ensure the permanence of forms in a world where even form is formless, in a world governed by continuous circulation and substitution, flexibility, mobility, and malleability of every sense, value, and content. In the anguish at the lack of form in the world, it is tempting to pay attention to discourses on returning and going back to forms. The fascist desire is a desire for stability, to be able to “live in peace minding my business,” to secure “my livelihood,” to find a hyper-political way to live apolitically. But these “solid” forms and values are forms of forms, forms of values, and forms of senses and meanings, hollow in themselves in order to consolidate the operational mode of the continuous dilution of the life of forms, senses, meanings, and values. If fascism today presents the contradiction of resuming anachronistic fascist content, of donning a discourse where the mythology of the “people,” of tradition, of order, of morality, and of civility returns, in a world entirely submitted to the neoliberalism of “anything whatsoever,” to inexorably transnational capital, to a digitally limitless world, to the point of submitting reality as a whole to its total virtualization, is to ensure the empty *form of sense* in order to be able to fill it with any sense whatsoever. This “formal” need is justified insofar as control not only of consciences, but above all of the collective unconscious is at stake, and, if that were not enough, also of the form of the unconscious, of what could be called the *formal unconscious*,<sup>6</sup> when one accepts the unconscious as an automatism of the order of the

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<sup>5</sup> See Georges Bataille’s discussions on “Nietzsche and fascism,” in: *Oeuvres Complètes* by G. Bataille, and also Jean Baudrillard’s discussions. *The System of Objects*, 9th edn. (NY: Verso; January 17, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Karl Mannheim had already learned in 1929 that the control of the collective unconscious was at stake. What he did not realize was that it was not only the repressed and sublimated unconscious contents to be controlled but also the very form of the unconscious in the unconsciousness of the form,

uncontrollable and unpredictable. With the new information technologies, all based on the literally understood “televsual,” the availability of the brain to become empty and available for more images and messages upon receiving a hyperbolic and continuous flow of images and messages, expands. One is continually “facing a system capable of filling a place in order to empty it of its natural mental qualities” as the writer Bernard Noel noted in his book *The Available Brain* (Noel, 2015, p. 8).

This means also the maintenance of the form of sense and the form of value that fuse capitalism with worship and, thus, with religion. This was a critical illumination expressed by Walter Benjamin as early as 1921, in a reflective fragment titled “Capitalism as religion” (2013),<sup>7</sup> which today shows its enormous relevance, especially considering the relation between fascism and religion in countries like Brazil, Poland, and others. It is not exactly “religion” that is in question, but the religious cult and the cult of religion, in other words, the inherited religious *form*, emptied of religiosity, hollowed in order to receive any ideological content, which is clear in the neo-Pentecostal movements.<sup>8</sup> In its general concept, cult comprises internal and external acts in which God is honored, worshipped, adored, and idolized. The Bible distinguishes the cult of idols from the cult of the true God and in the Latin West, the Vulgate uses the term *cultus* to express care for beauty.<sup>9</sup> Despite the different Greek and Latin terms for “cult” and the countless discussions and distinctions made by theology and the history of religions about its meaning, “cult” is basically understood as the “act” and “form” of expression of a sense of *reverence* in relation to God and the sacred. Effectively, it is the sense of the *form of reverence* that explains the religious character of capitalism and that can also point out how technoplanetarian capitalism connect so intimately with cultic religions, as in Brazil and which also seems to give sense to Catholicism as in Poland. Here we can also recognize how the exacerbation of the cult of religion empties the sense of religion as an experience of the sacred and of mystery. The decisive thing is to spectacularize the spectacle.

In his analyses of Paris as the capital of the nineteenth century, Walter Benjamin discussed the need to spectacularize the commodity, realizing how the exhibition in showcases and universal fairs are not just a place for selling commodities but to expose the commodity as an exhibition, as an “enchanted object” and “epiphany of the unattainable,” according to the reading by Giorgio Agamben (1977, p. 46), as a culture of “spectacle,” bringing Agamben close to Guy Debord. Benjamin makes it very clear

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which, under Walter Benjamin’s inspiration and his notion of “optical unconscious,” I propose to call “formal unconscious.” See Karl Mannheim. *Ideologie und Utopie*, 9th edn. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, [1929]-2015), pp. 30-49.

<sup>7</sup> See the interpretation by Giorgio Agamben of this brief text by Benjamin in: *Creazione e anarchia. Lopera nell’eta della religione capitalista* (Vicenza: Neri Pozza Editore, 2017), pp. 115-32.

<sup>8</sup> Perhaps the relevance of the Deridean formulation of “religionless religion” has never been so clear, which, in its Blanchotian reverberation, has the ambiguity of being a statement of how religion today is empty of religiosity and even that religion may only become religiosity if separated from religion.

<sup>9</sup> See entry “cult” in the *Handbuch theologischer Grundbegriffe*, ed. Heinrich Fries (Munich: DTV Taschenbuch Verlag, 1970).

in this 1921 text *how* the “analogy” with the “foggy regions of the religious world” proposed by Marx when speaking of the “fetish” of the commodity, is the decisive mover of capitalism. The fetish is the core of capitalism as a cult. Thus, it can be said that capitalism is a “purely cultic religion, perhaps the most extreme that has ever existed” (Benjamin, 2004 [1996]). Being a “purely cultic” religion, it has no need for dogma or theology, while pure cult is a form without fixed content, thus it can receive any content. It is fundamental that the cult remains always worshipped, that it remains a permanent cult, where every acquisition of a commodity is celebrated as a feast and euphoria. However, the concept of debt is kept from religious worship. In German, the word for debt is *Schuld*. It is the same word for moral guilt. Debt and credit, guilt and faith: the ethical- moral vocabulary has long been confused with the financial and economic vocabulary, where the second contaminates the first in a way that makes it impossible for the reciprocal to be true. The cult of capitalism does not save us from sin, as Benjamin observes, but creates debt. Every debt is an affirmation of a causal relationship of attribution to something external and antecedent, to which the present and the future are due. Cultic capitalism is capitalism based on credit and debt. Thus, debt becomes universal, even incorporating God in its invoice. With this, capitalism itself acquires the sense of a transcendent order that cannot be touched or altered by man, being like a divine order without a god or the order of a god without any divinity, an exterior and antecedent order that explains everything and from which one cannot escape. Benjamin does not see in capitalism the secularization of a transcendent order, as Max Weber had proposed, but as a universal cult of immanence—far from a world erected by the death of God, capitalism is the world that imposes God “upon human destiny,” which allowed Brecht to write in one of the poems of his *Kriegsfiabel* that “God is a fascist” [*Gott ist ein Fascist*].<sup>10</sup>

Benjamin indicated the need for the alliance of religion— as a mere cultic practice, in which religion empties itself of all religiosity—with capitalism, an alliance today made tremendously clear in technoplanetarian capitalism, that is, in the development of techno-mediatic, planetary, monetary, or financial capital. The loss of all social bonds and social relations at work, which results from devastating entrepreneurship, outsourcing and the increasing digitalization of work, not only transforms the sense of work but also and above all dissolves and empties the sense of work. The immemorial concept and experience of work are thus emptied and absorbed by new forms of digital, virtual, managerial production, and uberization. Doing and its poetics become senseless. Thus the human bonds, bonds that the churches of capitalism will want to fill in order to control the energy released through this profound emptying, are lost.

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<sup>10</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_HgDUgMmROE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HgDUgMmROE)

## 5. The Ambiguity of Sense

Brazilian poet Joao Cabral de Melo Neto wrote a poem titled *The End of the World* (2003), which says:

At the end of a melancholic world men read newspapers.

Men who are indifferent to eating oranges burning like the sun.

They gave me an apple to remember death. I know cities are telegraphing for kerosene. The veil I watched flying fell in the desert.

No one will write the final poem of this particular twelve-hour world.

Not the last judgment the final dream is what worries me.

At the end of our melancholy world, men read “Facebook,” “Twitter,” “WhatsApp,” “memes” and become teledistanced from the explosive reality of the burning real. The poet speaks of the pretentious illusion of writing a final poem and even of imagining a final judgment. At the end of a world, which is by no means the same as the end of the world, because worlds end without the world ending, the “final dream” is the most dangerous. Discussions abound about the new world that the world is living, a frighteningly “brave new world” to remind us of the title by Aldous Huxley, a new world that never ceases to evoke the world of total control, of Georges Orwell’s big brother in *1984*, Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, *Blade Runner*, *The Matrix*, *Inception*, *The Handmaid’s Tales*, and many others. Even without knowing it, Joao Cabral knew that today each resistance poem posted on the web feeds at the same time the robotics of the algorithms with information about who writes and who reads them. Today, the world of total information controlled by information is already in place. Furthermore, in this world, it is the excess of information that misinforms and disinforms. It is worth discussing the mutation of the world, of a new world-form in which known forms of the world lose their forms, and in which countless forms of life struggle to selfrecognize and be recognized. The great challenge is to think about the mutation of the world, as this requires becoming aware that our concepts and experiences of transformation are not enough to think about mutating the world-form.

It is not surprising to see a turn to the extreme right, to conservatism and fascism when considering the issue of world control. The question is, on the one hand, control of the world of control, its use and exploitation. But, on the other hand, there is also the lack of control in the world of control, because the world that mobilizes and organizes itself to control everything is not able to control its own control. There is a difference between selfcontrol, understood cybernetically as control technology that self-regulates and self-controls automatically, and the immanent limit to the unlimited desire to control everything, since this requires the impossibility of controlling that desire. Thus,

the power of controlling everything also discovers its powerlessness to control that power. The machine, as Baudrillard said, does not know how to do anything other than a machine, it does not know how to differentiate itself—only man self-differentiates to the point of becoming a machine. But we still have to ask ourselves what is the final dream that happens at the end of our melancholy world of the control of everything? Is it the dream of an endless world, an eternal world? In other words, of a world that has managed to end the end and kill death? Is this the final dream? This seems to have been Caligula's final dream, the hallucinating tyrant who, moved by the suffering of the death of his sister-lover Drusilla, dreams of killing death. His final dream was to found "the kingdom of the impossible," that of a life that eradicated from life its finitude, its limit. But to make this dream come true, the only way he found was to kill everything before death, to advance the death of everything. In the dramatized version by Camus, Caligula justifies why he needs to add to the evil already inherent in the world, yet one extra total evil. He says he does it because of the despair of a disease of the body and not of the soul because it is the disease of a body pulled out of the body and not only of a body without a soul, or soulless, as one usually thinks. The final dream is of a body even more soulless than a soulless body: it is that of a body without a body, expropriated from itself. A life without finitude, without a differentiating and thus creative limit, is the life of a delusional power of destruction that, as mentioned earlier, Caligula describes as one close to which the power of creation is nothing more than "monkey play" (Camus, 1961). It is the dream of an unbearable release, of the hallucinating loneliness of one who had to destroy everything around him in order to kill death as a condition of life. Caligula embodies the final dream of techno-mediatic capitalism, which promises to end the end by ending any and all forms of life that safeguard finitude and limit as sources of differentiation and singularization; the power of creation.

This final dream undoubtedly worries our poet, especially because, in order to realize this delusional dream, the techniques of destroying and killing everything around—in order to achieve, in death's advance, to "kill" death—are techniques for exterminating senses. I have insisted on the urgency to reflect upon the ambiguity of senses. Indeed, nothing is perhaps more ambiguous than the word "sense." The word "sense" has several meanings in Latin languages. Sense means that which is sensed, the senses of sensation and the body, the sense of being touched by the other, by life, by the world. One can speak here of sensible sense, meaning both the faculty of perception and the realm of feelings and sensation. As a dynamic of being touched by the lives of the world, by the worlds of life, sense is also linked to the articulation and thinking of the world's senses. Therefore, sense mixes with signification and meaning. One can speak here of intellectual sense, meaning the intelligibility of things. Saying sense, what is also the case in German *Sinn*, both "senses" are intertwined, the sensible and the intelligible, perception and knowledge, feeling and understanding. This also explains the oscillations in the use of the term in English and the tendency to distinguish these two main senses of sense, leaving "sense" for feelings, emotions, perceptions, and

“meaning” for knowledge and understanding. Moreover, in Latin languages, “sense” has even a third sense, namely, of direction, for instance when saying “*sens unique*” meaning one-way-street. Thus, sense means, before any signification, a motion of world-experience within life, the being exposed to the world. The word “sense” is furthermore used in several expressions: common sense, good sense, moral, and aesthetic sense. There is also the sixth sense, an expression for the perception of the imperceptible—a kind of divinatory sense—and for the contact between feeling and thinking, something that could even be described as “sensingthinking” and “thinking-sensing,” to evoke the new verbs used by two celebrated Brazilian authors Guimaraes Rosa and Clarice Lispector. This abundance of senses of sense indicates the richness of the experience of sense but also the extension of consequences when this richness is appropriated by the politics of ambiguation of senses.

When speaking of the ambiguity of sense, we want to indicate the emptying exacerbation-dynamics of senses, an exacerbation of every sense of sense and above all that which thus mixes sense and signification, which makes it difficult to see the difference. This dynamic implies several movements at once. It implies, on the one hand, the reduction of senses to significations, here understood as established and inherited contents of meaning, and, on the other hand, their simplification. In this reductive simplification, every sense that is difficult to be assimilated without efforts is proscribed and everything that is difficult to express is denied existence. Reduced to signification, simplified to immediate absorption, meanings can be then exacerbated and saturated. The opening force of senses understood primarily as the simultaneity of grasping while being grasped, of touching while being touched, of the exposure of existence exposed to the world, by the world, in the world, is reduced to the impact of meanings, which dissolve immediately as soon as another meaning impacts. Senses are thereby reduced to signification, and the movement of sensing, experiencing, is reduced to determinate meanings that are voided, the moment they become saturated through exaggeration. Today, it is not only the so-called intelligible senses that are emptied by exacerbation. Something similar happens with the so-called sensible senses. The exacerbation of the image overshadows vision to such an extent that today we are barely able to exercise the vivacious patience of the gaze. For gazing is to make the visible, visible, and not simply being impressed by the visible. When criticizing the hegemony of an ocular principle of thought and thus claiming listening as a principle, it is often forgotten that the hyperbolic exacerbation of the image not only reduces the ability to listen, but also the ability to gaze. We are blind not due to a lack, but due to an excess of images. The digital world has reduced the hand to the touch of a few fingers, to the digital, and with it the life of touch and contact seems to lose its sensible directions. The more the body is virtualized and idealized, the more the violence upon body increases, the dynamics of emptying sense by its exacerbation removes the sense of sense. Not only are the known senses emptied, that is, of their significations, but above all the sense of making sense. Thus, one can perceive the nihilistic dimension of the “neoliberal” and global dynamics of the world.

It is necessary to clarify a little more the sense of ambiguity. Ambiguity is undoubtedly an ambiguous concept. Ambiguous literally means being adrift and being able to go anywhere and everywhere. The prefix *ambi* is a corruption of *amphi* and it means *around*. Aristotle had already observed the ambiguity of ambiguity<sup>1</sup> and sought to discern some of its senses. Ambiguity can be understood as equivocity, where the same word has different meanings, for example, crooked (bent) and crooked (dishonest), such as the word justice, spoken by the executioner or by the victim. For this purpose, Aristotle reserved the term “homonymous.” Ambiguity also refers to a syntactic ambiguity, which generates, according to Aristotle, the fallacies of reasoning and obscures understanding. This is what he called amphiboly, for example: “. . . he affirms to be a stone.” This part of a sentence may imply that *he* claims that something is a stone or that *he* himself is a stone. With that, what is spoken about is obscured and one is neither certain about the subject nor the object of the discourse.

There is no language without ambiguity and undoubtedly the richness of language is essentially linked to its power to make sense, to open up to multiple interpretations and the reinvention of significations. Thus understood, ambiguity indicates the creative wealth of language. Simone de Beauvoir showed the importance of developing a “moral of ambiguity” and Merleau-Ponty considered that philosophical thought is liberating due to its power of ambiguity, understood as that of rising up against the univocity of sense, which is the tyranny of imposed, closed, and dogmatic signification.<sup>2</sup> Zygmunt Bauman developed a critique of modernity as critique of its project of order to rule over the creative power of ambivalence.<sup>3</sup> Julia Kristeva developed several thoughts on the need to retrieve the ab-jective force of ambiguity.<sup>4</sup> The praise of ambiguity that appears in various philosophical, poetic, and ethical reflections in the twentieth-century results from the struggle against the totalitarian ideologies of that century, which are ideologies of the totalization of sense in univocal significations. Brainwashing is the imposition of an unequivocal and unique signification and meaning that states it is only possible to think *this*, understand *this*, and any discussion about sense must be punished, tortured, and exterminated. But today it is important to distinguish not only between ambiguity or equivocity and univocity, but also between several possible senses and a single sense. It is necessary to distinguish above all between being able to have *any* sense whatsoever and the richness of open senses and half-open senses. Thus, it is important to understand that ambiguity does not refer only to a word

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<sup>1</sup> See K. Jaako and J. Hintikka. “Aristotle on the Ambiguity of Ambiguity,” in: *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy*, 2: 1959, pp. 137-51 and Barbara Cassin’s considerations in *LEffect sophistique* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), pp. 348-55.

<sup>2</sup> On the creative sense of ambiguity, see A. de Waelens. *A philosophie de l’ambiguïté. Lexis-tentialisme de Merleau-Ponty* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1951) and Simone de Beauvoir. *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (New York: Open Road Media, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> For Bauman ambivalence and ambiguity are synonymous, see Zygmunt Bauman. *Modernity and Ambivalence* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> Julia Kristeva. *Strangers to Ourselves* (New York: Columbia University Press; 1991).

having several senses, to polysemy and a phrase that can be read in different ways. Ambiguity in the sense of the richness of the life of senses is now being emptied by the excess and exacerbation of ambiguity, which instead of opening up to new senses, immobilizes the plural senses making every sense equivalent to any other. As I have already stressed, fascism is never ambiguous and ambiguity as the openness of senses, the source of creative language, is the most opposite to fascism. But the fascism that we see emerging today affirms its unequivocal meaning, making every sense and meaning ambiguous, first by confusing sense and signification, and this in such a way that the very richness of ambiguity is emptied by hyper-ambiguation. Its goal is to destroy the creative source of language, that is, to destroy man in man. Ambiguity sees itself transformed into a dynamic of the emptying of every sense by making every sense equivalent to any other and any thing. Therein lies the fascism of ambiguity.

There are several strategies to realize this immobilization of the creative force of senses through the hyper-ambiguation of ambiguity. The practice of renaming is one of them, already apprehended and discussed by Russian formalists like Viktor Shklovskii (2018). Slogans like “There was no military coup, there were motion and counter-revolution” and “Freedom and democracy in Brazil are due to the military that prevented Brazil from being communized in 1964” are the aberrations we have heard recently in Brazil. This continuous renaming belies the truth of history and immobilizes vital and real oppositions and contradictions by making them equivalent. To belie and not simply lie is another fascist technique.<sup>5</sup> One gives with the right hand and takes back with the other. The fascist himself, who appears either as a fascist, or as thoughtful, or as incendiary, or as savior, extinguishes the fire that the fascist exacerbation ignites on the bonfire. In the continuous renaming and belying it is fundamental to create the confusion of senses that empties both every sense and, we must insist, the sense of making sense. These strategies show that the exacerbated sense of ambiguity transforms the creative openness of senses into being able to mean anything and to be interpreted in any way.

But here what also appears as the ontological dimension that defines ambiguity is not only that which encompasses the relation between the reality of the sense and the sense of reality but above all the *can-be*. In a not very often read paragraph of Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, one finds a reflection on ambiguity, which, together with curiosity and idle talk, constitutes improper modes of being-in-the-world, modes of its

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<sup>5</sup> Nuno Ramos saw this clearly in his chronicle in *Folha de Sao Paulo*, May 3, 2020.

“I read the following question on the Internet: how does a fascist lie? Well, he does not lie—he belies. He belies what he said and accuses us of saying it for him. He creates an echo chamber in which the energy of what he said, of his verbal ‘act,’ has already been lost, and it is in this very loss that he invests. A fascist lies without grammar, not out of ignorance (erring in grammar is never a problem), but because he needs a linguistic dispersion that borders on the unintelligible and where, although the sense of what he says is clear (for example, ‘a coup’), the opposite will also be meant, in a lateral and apparently meaningless little phrase, so that it can be rescued, if necessary. More than falsehood, the fascist lie is a case of cowardice.”



“decay” (Heidegger, 1996, § 37, pp. 237-40). Leaving aside issues related to Heidegger’s thought, the problems that his concepts of proper and improper, authentic and inauthentic continue to raise in the academic debates of philosophy and the humanities and even underlining that these issues are very important to discuss fascism, the paragraphs where curiosity, small talk, and ambiguity are discussed give us important keys to understand “loss of linguistic ability,” “linguistic dispersion,” and the emptying of speech acts in the fascism of ambiguity. And, above all, these discussions also provide keys to apprehend where ambiguity and ambiguation strategies are at work in today’s discursive economy of proper and improper, of the mechanisms of real and symbolic appropriation and expropriation. Everything here works to render the possible and the impossible inoperative in the real. Ambiguity operates in the context of coexistence, of community, preventing the liberating openness being distinguished from the imprisoning anyzation. For one does not think and talk only about what happens and occurs, but also about what may or may not happen. Today, more and more, it becomes clear that the society of spectators is very much the society of *expectators*, always expecting what is going to happen, for Twitter to ping, for the news that will arrive, for what will happen in the next second and about what should be done. Thus, “one lives faster.” Thus, we live in the here and now, continually disconnecting from the possibility and the urgency to be present to the present, without realizing it. The most decisive thing, however, is that by articulating on the seesaw of the maybe yes, maybe not; it may and may not be; “there will be a military coup,” “there will be no coup”; “he will fall,” “he won’t fall”; he will act, he won’t act; the impulses for action are immobilized, and above all the sense of the possible is emptied. This maybe/maybe-not mixes the oscillating sense of might with the power of the possible. The ambiguity of fascism makes use of ambiguity and its strategies in order to empty the possibility of the possible itself. Its goal is to make the possible and even the impossible, inoperative.

To eliminate the need for senses to make sense is an integral part of that final dream of killing death, which is also the final dream of eliminating any and all resistance to this delusional power of destruction. This is the final, active, and awakened dream of fascism as a whole. There are many ways one could try to eliminate resistance to the power of destruction. The most immediate is physical violence, extermination, the extermination of the other and all of his transforming power. But it seems that even this is not enough, as it cannot exterminate the force of resistance itself. The question that the dictator always asks is how to eliminate the power to resist destruction, which is the power of creation. Therefore, the great fascist dream is not to eliminate freedom of expression, but above all freedom of thought. Caligula’s answer is by destroying everything, eliminating all springs, drying out all sources, and devastating the soil by making it desertic and laterite. But even though he was completely mad, Caligula recognizes and shouts in his last speech in the play by Camus: “I am still alive,” remembering that while there is life there is resistance to the power of destruction because life is creative resistance. The formula that fascism today finds is more virulent: to exterminate the sensible and intelligible life of senses, in order to make impossible any

distinction between just and unjust, good and evil, true and false, Heaven and Earth, sensibility and insensibility. The undermining of senses, both intelligible and sensible happens through the very exaggeration of senses, of an odd hyper sensibilization that renders sensibility itself insensible. Thus, the somehow unnoticed character of the mutation of sensibility contemporary fascism operates with and upon. To this mutation of sensibility, belongs the extermination of horizons, of the dancing lines of difference, of the thresholdvoices that distinguish without separating, that unite without mixing. This means the extermination of the *space-between* differences, of the “in-between” us. An extermination that takes place when it is no longer possible to distinguish between a wall of exclusion and a threshold, between difference and apartheid, between the uniqueness of each one and the characterlessness of anything whatsoever, between the lethal flexibility of a capitalism without borders and the movement of life, between the ambiguation of senses and the openness of the life of senses. When equality is confused with equivalence, understood as everything being measured by monetary value, when the symbols of a long tradition of struggle for freedom are appropriated in order to become symbols of oppression, a confused emptiness of senses is installed. Everything is worth everything. Nothing is worth nothing.

At this point, the search for molds and stereotypes has been installed, of types for identification not with content, but with forms and images of content. It is these molds and stereotypes that fascism offers. In a world of extermination and emptying of life-forms, there is an emptying of the sense of identity through its exacerbation. Waving the flag, armed gestures, the truculence of gym bodies, etc. The techno-mediatic dynamics of global capitalism is not simply that of emptying the sense of things and modes of being by transforming them into commodities, that is, into what can be equivalent, exchanged, and replaced by *any* thing. It is, above all, to carry out this emptying that turns *every* thing into *any* thing, which reduces thing to “thingform,” through its exaggeration, its auxesis. Auxesis eliminates the need for any exegesis. In a world where everything must lose form, contour, content, and, therefore, identity, this compulsive and compulsory loss occurs through the hyperbole of identity. Everything must be detraditionalized by hypertraditionalization, deontologized by hyperontologization, and deidentified by hyperidentification. We have already noted that one of the defining traits of historical fascism is that of fusional identification with the leader and with the images of people, nation, and race built through the construction and naturalization of hatred toward the other. What is decisive here is not the identity, but the “identification apparatus” (Lacoue-Labarthe & Nancy, 2002, p. 31). We have also indicated that today this identification is no longer directly with the “leader” who claims “to be” and not only to represent the people, but passes through the fusional identification with mediatic images of oneself and others, with the spectacularization of oneself and of everything. The construction of the identity of a “pure” and “strong” race, of an “original” and “authentic” people constituted the mobilizing force of historical fascism. In the Brazilian case, where the “original peoples” and the “traditional cultures” are not a construction, they are not a fabricated myth, but the living testi-

mony of cultural forces, marked not only by colonial history and the systemic racism of Brazilian society, but due to the violent social and economic inequality that results from a dizzying class difference, the fascism of technoplanetarian capitalism instead wants to eradicate and exterminate the “proper essence” of these peoples and cultures because “the interest in the Amazon is not in the Indian, nor in the fucking tree, it is in the ore.” The question is not one of either the proper or the improper, but of the property, in effect, of the appropriation for the total expropriation of the country. Fascist politics now uses developmentalist slogans characteristic of the military: “we have to remove the Indians from the Stone Age in which NGOs leave them,” quoting phrases of the Brazilian Ministry of Environment. In the case of Black communities that were never able to own land, which survived through the force of recreating the sense of territory in the experience of the *terreiro*-community and *terreiro*-city<sup>6</sup> (Sodre, 2019), what fascism wants to eliminate is their transforming cultural force, the power of their culture of transformation. What replaces the mythological cult of the proper and original in historical fascism is the hyperbole of identification with the mediatic narcissistic imagery, which operates on the historicity even of human sensibility and thus of political sensibility. This means the fusional identification with the capitalist and mediatic dynamics of identification. Today’s *forms* of resistance to fascism take on the issue of identity as their only power, when political resistance strategies seem weakened in the face of a world system where the total technique of totalizing capitalism becomes the great subject of history. The ambiguity is made clear when we realize that the struggle against fusional identification with the fascist identification apparatus that mobilizes the capitalist technique makes use of an appeal to fusional identification with the persecuted, threatened, and violated identities. There is a great oscillation between the concepts of identity, identification, and identity politics. Fascist identity politics fights against the political force of cultural identities which have been oppressed along centuries of colonial history: the same word “identity” oppresses and emerges as resistance, urging the need to clarify the different senses of “identity,” the distinct processes of identification and the sense of politics the concept of identity involves. How the fascism of ambiguity appropriates all of these concepts in order to make them ambiguous in a way that makes it difficult to distinguish whether defending a race is racism or the way to fight racism is decisive. In the confusion of senses fostered by the fascism of ambiguity, every sense can take on any sense so that libertarian discourses can be used against freedom. In the military dictatorship, a verse of the Brazilian poet Carlos Drummond de Andrade, known by heart by almost every Brazilian, “There is a stone in the middle of the road” was used as a slogan by the Vale do Rio Doce company during that period, but slightly reformulated: “There is a stone in the path of Brazilian development” (Wisnik, 2018, p. 112). In this ambiguation, one often tends to forget that traditional cultures such as Afro-Brazilian and indigenous peoples’ are cultures of a millenary experience for which fixed and consolidated “identity” is not

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<sup>6</sup> *Terreiro* is the house of worship of the Afro-Brazilian religion Candomblé.

only an illusion but also a danger, the danger of installing the finished and closed as a life principle. The ancestral is not an identity fixed in time, but the experience of a continuous plot within the web of life and the living, always being narrated in a new way through inherited narratives. The ancestral is the experience of another sense of identity, unthought and unthinkable for the frantic search for images of identification and appropriation of every means of identification. There is much to be learnt from the experience of ancestry as a human experience of de-identification of the figures and figurations of the unlimited power of the human to be used against the fascist fusional identification. This is perhaps one of the senses of the “revolutionary force of the past,” the power to unlearn to be attached to figures and forms of being in order to be able to exist. Here we touch on an experience that reveals the in-between space of history, the *in-between* us, an *us* that binds all forms of life, human and non-human, to each other.

## 6. Metapolitics

The politics of the fascism of ambiguity happens, as indicated above, in the dynamic indecision between “it is” and “it is not,” by which one bets on continuous and widespread chaos. A question that remains to be asked is about the ideology of fascism today. The fascism of ambiguity is materialized in an ideology that is defined through an alleged “de-ideologization.” It mimics the supposedly de-ideologized ideology of liberalism, which, as Gramsci had clearly noted in the 1920s, substitutes ideology with cultural hegemony.

In her analyses of totalitarianism, Hannah Arendt insisted on how the totalitarian regimes of the first half of the nineteenth century, Nazism, and Bolshevism were imposed due to their ability to articulate ideology and terror. What we see today, which we have called the fascism of ambiguity, is a new constellation of ideology and terror. In Arendt’s argument, ideology is a coherent and comprehensive conception of the world, which aims to give a unique meaning to history as a whole, past and future, always accompanied by a scientific vision. Therefore, a univocal and unequivocal sense capable of explaining the whole past and the whole future, in order to justify every totalitarian action in the present, always accompanied by a “scientific basis,” that is, covered with scientificity and objectivity. The ideology of the fascism of ambiguity operates quite differently. By emptying the sense of making sense from the world, the senseless and nonsensical then come to explain the past as a whole and any future in order to justify every spurious action in the present. The lack of sense of sense says, on the one hand, “there is no sense in seeking sense” and, on the other, “it is better to leave the nonsense of the world to the administrators of the senseless god of today’s world.” In the world of digital technics, robotics, algorithms, and artificial intelligence, science is no longer a realm for legitimizing worldviews in competition with religion, because science is already the world. Thus, by delegitimizing science discursively, by proclaiming the Earth is flat and the truth of creationism, one delegitimizes not only the contents of science but also the very need for legitimizing and grounding knowledge. Today, when Wikipedism replaces Enlightenment Encyclopedism, each one “has” the right to rewrite knowledge and its history. Everything being equal, to both rewrite European history from the perspective of what this history has forgotten, butchered, exterminated, and to rewrite history from authoritarian interests in the manipulation of historical truth, are presented as equally “legitimate.” Thus, the usurpation and adulteration of history are confused with historical justice and reparation. Through the imagination of discourses and the discursiveness of images, every sense tends to become equivalent and equivalence becomes valid as the only realm of legitimacy, not

least because equivalence starts to become confused with democratization. Furthermore, the speed with which information proliferates, disseminates, and “goes viral” disinform the information. By confusing knowledge with information, the living and critical sense of knowledge is emptied, which means hard study, attention, care, and thought exchange. As a continuous confusion of senses, the ideology of the fascism of ambiguity depoliticizes through the exacerbation of politics, de-socializes through hypersocialization on social media, and disinform through the excess of disparate and always ambiguous information.

The ideology of the fascism of ambiguity has no ambiguity. Its intentions are grotesquely exposed and proposed. Everything is wide open. But the means of exposure is through a politics of the ambiguation of senses; a political action that depoliticizes by hyperpoliticizing, that alienates by placing the “political” vocabulary on every screen of daily life. The French ideologists of the *Nouvelle Droite* [New Right] called this political action, “metapolitics.” Metapolitics is a term coined by the German philosophers Christoph Hufeland (1762-1836) and August Schloser (1735-1809) and introduced to the French language by Joseph de Maistre, the French reactionary thinker of the counterrevolution, aiming to find the first causes and principles of the phenomenon of politics. Alain Badiou used the term recently, in his book *Metapolitique* (1998) to propose an emancipatory ontology of the political phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> Shortly afterwards, Alain de Benoist, a French New Rightist, proposed it as the term for action. “The metapolitical action consists of trying to restore sense to the highest level through new syntheses.”<sup>2</sup> This is the term of a political action to restore sense to the elites, to justify non-egalitarianism, not only justifying the organization of inequality that, to some extent, defines any liberal regime but to found new inequalities. The appropriation of a notion linked to the history of conservative and right-wing ideas in France (Joseph de Maistre) by a left-wing thinker like Badiou and its re-appropriation by an extreme right-wing ideologue shows the dynamics of appropriation and expropriation of ideas and beliefs that Gramsci had already understood so well in his analyses of cultural hegemony and the need to carry out a war of motion rather than a war of positions. The extreme right defines “metapolitical action” admitting the use of a certain “right-wing Gramscism” and intends to turn the spell against the sorcerer, that is, to play Gramsci against Gramsci to thus empty the mobilizing force of his concepts. In the expropriating appropriation of the terms implied here, one can see that, as an *action*, taken in the sense meant by the extreme right, metapolitics means to meddle with the politics of ambiguation of senses, aiming to instill in the soul of each person the certainty of the nonsense to seek, make, and create senses. This is a comprehensive

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Andre Taguieff, French sociologist dedicated to the question of racism and anti-racism, who wrote a lot about the French New Right and de Benoist, speaks of “Republican Metapolitics,” without however defining the term. See, Pierre Andre Taguieff. *The Force of Prejudice: On Racism and Its Doubles* (Minneapolis, MA: University of Minnesota Press, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> Alain de Benoist and Charles Champetier. “Manifest: La nouvelle Droite de l’an 2000.” <https://www.revue-elements.com/produit/la-nouvelle-droite-de-lan-2000-version-pdf/>

way of establishing a new cultural hegemony in a world that is already hegemonic in terms of its techno-economic principle of organization. As Gramsci had seen, liberal capitalism is more effective in immobilizing the left because it is able to absorb elements of revolutionary Marxism and Socialism within its ideals and ideas, thus undermining the force of resistance to the expansion of its power. Now, the right is appropriating Gramsci's concept of cultural hegemony. In this way, the difference between right and left becomes blurred, with a view to emptying left-wing discourse as a whole, that is, the discourse of emancipation and liberation from the system. Therefore, it is no wonder that de Benoist's introduction on Wikipedia reads: "a critic of Christianity, neoliberalism, free market, democracy and egalitarianism" and that he is a critic of Bolsonaro. This is the extreme right devouring the imaginary of socialist utopias and the socialism of utopia, that is, of the transforming possible. As an action, the fascist sense of metapolitics aims to eliminate emancipatory thought from the political phenomenon beyond (meta) techno-instrumental politics.

For some centuries, the distinct and precise positions between "right" and "left," or, "political laterality," resisted any ambiguity. Today, they are increasingly confused. If for years the right could

be conceived as "a metaphysics—or if one likes, a mythology, an ideology—of something given, of something absolutely and primarily given and to which nothing or very little of essential can be modified" while the "left implies the reverse: that this [the essential] can and must be modified" (Nancy, 2019), then today it is the "right" that proposes the modification of the essential in order to implement images of the essential while the "left," mobilized by the politics of identity, aims to restore the essential in every image. Today it is the extreme right that claims an "international"—"extreme right of all countries, unite!"—and who lost the role of "revolutionary critique." The internationalism of nationalism reaffirms the character of "megalopolitic" of politics today, of how "each" politic seeks global legitimacy.<sup>3</sup> If for years it has been possible to attribute the conviction that "on the one hand, collectivity is formed and normalized from itself and, on the other hand, it is ordered in relation to humanity as a whole" as the "minimum content" of the "left," then the idea that man is the producer of his own social existence today is confused with the reality that man is voluntarily a servant of capitalist production, which is formed and regulated from itself. It is then the production of oneself that becomes the "essential datum" that cannot be modified because this self-production is presented as an order that transcends collectivity and the individuals, a divine order, perhaps even more divine than the Divine. Total-techno-capital is the total-subject.

The fascism of ambiguity produces a "*metapolitical action*," whose dynamo is the excess of politics and politicking that, through increasing digitalization, depoliticizes by hyperpoliticizing, as I have already insisted. The goal is to depoliticize by politiciza-

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<sup>3</sup> For a philosophical discussion about megalopolis and megalopolitics, see Jean-Francois Lyotard. *The Inhuman* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991), pp. 191-204.

tion. In this way, micropolitics is able to remain separate from macropolitics. Thus, the horizons of a possible other are what has to be undermined. Today, the fascism of ambiguity does not only foster hatred against social groups, majoritarian minorities, critics, thinkers, and teachers (the representatives of “cultural Marxism,” an expression that means nothing more than defenders of culture as a source of creation). It encourages, within its varied forms of hatred, the grand-hatred of the other possible, the power to become other as the possible, brought about through a micropolitics of hatred: the hatred that surpasses hatred for one’s neighbor to become today hatred for family members.

Following and developing Arendt’s reflections a little more, totalitarianism is not merely the imposition of an ideology; it is the articulation of ideology and terror; it is the imposition of a state of fear. Today’s fascism does not need to implement terror camps—even if they are still built and implemented with variations, camps for migrants who escape camps—because terror is already incorporated into society itself. Terror is already implanted in the extermination practices; be it of indigenous peoples, Blacks, workers, or children; be it by the militia, crack cocaine, inhuman exploitation, violations of all rights, and today, more and more, of the right to existence. The new form of fascism is militia-military, playing with the ambiguity of a militia that takes the place of the military—from the point of view of the violent force of control and torture—and the military as the savior of militia violence, when both collaborate with each other. Fascism is democratically elected in order to legitimize the implementation of terror against terror, violence against violence. If the military used weapons to prevent armed struggle and massacre the resistance forces, today the fascist government arms the population for it to massacre the force of resistance within itself—this, in alliance with militia violence and the military readiness to add violence to the violence. In the face of social insecurity not only established, but promoted and *acclaimed*<sup>4</sup> by entrepreneurial capitalism, where work and its social ties are dissolved in the shift from productive work to digital work (Casilli, 2010), this “insecurity” appears as almost nothing close to the insecurity generated by the “terrorist” threat and by the terror experienced in urban centers, to which Latin America serves as a powerful example. This is how the “precariat” ceases to be revolutionary in order to join populism and fascism, as its “insecurity” in the neoliberal form of “life” is threatened by a much greater, uncontrollable, transcendent insecurity. Thus, it seems best to ensure social insecurity by choosing strong regimes that, with the violence of control, promise to

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<sup>4</sup> In a significant study on the constitution of the Weimar Republic and on the doctrine of immediate democracy, where he discusses the juridical-political question of the referendum as a legal instrument to oppose representative democracy to immediate democracy, Carl Schmitt states that the “original phenomenon” [ *Urphanomen* ] of democracy, as suggested by Rousseau, is acclamation. Carl Schmitt. “*Volkentscheid und Volksbegehren. Ein Beitrag zur Auslegung der Weimarer Verfassung und zur Lehre von der unmittelbaren Demokratie*” in: *Beiträge zum ausländischen öffentlichen Recht und Völkerrecht*, Heft 1 (Berlin/Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1927).



protect against the uncontrollable violence, pointing toward the freedom of a religious comfort in consumption.

The forms of censorship also change in the fascism of ambiguity. The emptying of senses and, above all, the sense of giving sense to sense generates a tremendous form of censorship which is the sense censoring sense. The writer Bernard Noel suggested the term “*sensure*,” *sensorship* with *s*, in order to express this new mode (Noel, 1990). This is a step beyond selfcensorship, which defines the fear of speaking, either for fear of arrest or loss of a job, or for fear of hurting another or oneself. The *sensorship* with *s*, where the sense censors sense, is enhanced by the censoring methods of limitless and unpunished violence. But what is surprising is how *sensorship* operates through the proliferation of senses disseminated in social media, through the unrestrained rhythm with which they acquire and lose meanings and significations.

In the vertigo of sense being emptied of sense due to excess sense, we witness daily the implosion of resistance fireflies, which Brecht had also witnessed when he saw his critique of businessmen ironically dressed as gangsters in his *The Threepenny Opera* be highly appreciated by businessmen because their “truth” was being presented in order to be appreciated as it is (Arendt, 1973, p. 335). Was Pasolini right that the resistance fireflies have completely disappeared from the world’s landscape? How to resist today’s fascism if the concepts used by antifascist politics are easily appropriated by the fascist politics of ambiguation, such as the concepts “identity,” “race,” or “rewriting” history? Or is it something more than to resist that is in question? Isn’t to exist more at stake than to resist? Maybe one should *re-exist*? What sense does existence have if not to expose oneself to the openness of senses? The tragedy of the neo-fascism of the ambiguity of senses, which establishes an unusual power, the power of the emptiness of sense even and perhaps above all of power itself—for power is both about the closing in within coercion and the openness of the impossible in the possible—means to confuse the openness of senses with the emptiness of sense. With this, it becomes almost impossible to glimpse the need to invent a mode of existence exposed to the openness of senses without this being the same as living in the nonsense of the senseless. Living under the *sensorship* of sense through which contemporary fascism establishes itself and expands, the difficult task of cultivating an art of “subtle distinctions” is imposed, a task that even Kant, a philosopher so precious in his distinctions, considered to exceed the competence of philosophy (Kant, 1998). This task is mainly an art of listening in order to discern the same from the same, to distinguish the ambiguity that confuses every sense by obstructing the possible from the ambiguity that interrupts the iron dogmatism of significations in order to put in motion the creative work of thought and the thought of the creation of senses. One of the great ambiguities is, in effect, that of ambiguity itself, that which lies between the openness of senses and the emptiness of sense.

To be able to hear the vague and indeterminate, not as deformed and emptied, but as form being formed, sense being sensed, and the being of existence being and existing, is at stake. And so to hear this vague of being as an exposing of oneself from

one-*to-the*-other, as one *in-between*-us, experienced as an inbetweening and not as a space measured and controlled by an “us” and a “you” tied up in fasces-fascist bundles of usurped, denied, renamed, and manipulated senses. Thus, the society of the spectacle of numerical connections—connections that connect by destroying connections, relations that only relate by interrupting relations, the society of automatic decisions and invisible responsibility—exhibits the terror of destruction that destroys the “inbetweening” of the in-between, of the undetermined, vague, and open inbetweening of the one inbetween us, “between water and land, between silence and word, between sleep and vigil,” to remember the verses of the Russian poet Lev Rubinstein (2018). Guy Debord had insisted that the only possible critique of the society of the spectacle and the perfection of its censorship, which we are calling *sensorship*, would be such an intense combination of theory and practice that a critical theory could only be conceived as a “rigorous practice” (Debord, 1994, p. 132). He also proposed that “diversion is the fluid language of anti-ideology” (Debord, 2016, p. 134). What in the 1970s could still present itself as a deviant and resistant language today has become an instrument of even more insidious misrepresentation. The mix of oppositions is even more expansive today because we only find, everywhere, the sameness of “cultural undifferentiation” and a tremendous indifference to the extermination of so many lives, visible and invisible, anonymous and anonymized lives.

# Precision Exercise I

## The Precision of Poetry: Orides Fontela

*Navigare necesse est, vivere non necesse.* To live is not a precise need, neither is sailing sufficient. One needs precisely to learn to re-exist. For this, a *politics of sense*, of open senses, is needed, where one could distinguish not the diverse, but what is presented as the same. A *politics of care for the language* is necessary, capable of observing nuances and minutiae, the almost invisible distinctions that abysmally separate the same from the equal, the leveling ambiguity that makes every sense equivalent to any other of the living multivocity. A language of precision fundamentally different from univocity is necessary, a language capable of saying no without allowing itself to be absorbed by what it needs to deny in order to exist, a language that says “anti-” without slipping into mere antonyms, which for standing out, allow the life of differentiation to slip by—the power of becoming other, that needs to be maintained in each one, as the power of “being singular plural”.<sup>1</sup> This is the precision of poetry that is not limited only to the poetry of the language of words.<sup>2</sup>

It is in this sense that I would like to propose some precision exercises. The first is a precision exercise of listening how poetry is itself an indefatigable precision exercise, a “sweet flower of precision, graceful, yet precise” as Joao Cabral de Melo Neto never tired of saying (2003, p. 357).

Poetry is necessary. At this moment when we not only confirm the emptying of words and senses but also witness the techno-mediatic spectacle of this emptying removing the possibility of speech and words making any sense, at this moment, when sense is used against itself, when everywhere sense becomes antisense, poetry becomes precisely necessary, more than necessary. But how does one precise the precision of poetry? By seeking the help of theory in order to propose a theory of poetic precision? However, how does one develop a theory of poetry? We know of numerous theories of poetry: aesthetic, linguistic, political, psychological, stylistic, structuralist, hermeneutic, materialistic, idealistic, contextual, intertextual, and all the adjectives formed from the countless “isms” of the history of ideas. By admitting that philosophy is the theory of theory, would it then make more sense to consider a philosophy of poetic precision?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jean-Luc Nancy. *Being Singular Plural* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Gabriel Itkes-Sznajd for the enlightening discussions on poetic precision, to which I have been able to participate, as his advisor to his doctoral thesis on the topic. I consider important to distinct precision from exactitude leaving the latter to natural sciences and the realm of its probabilities.

<sup>3</sup> See Jean-Luc Nancy. “Fazer, a poesia,” in: *Alea Estudos Neolatinos* 15(2): 414-22, December, 2013.

But however poetic a philosophy or a theory may be, wouldn't one always be looking for a realm outside poetry in order to precise the precision that only belongs to poetry? And even if one attempted to elaborate a poetics of precision, wouldn't one be pushing poetry outside or beyond itself? These questions highlight the difficult relation between theory and poetry and ultimately between philosophy and poetry. Much can be said of this relation and several quotes from philosophers and poets about such a relation can be recalled and discussed. But what a moment as extreme as ours seems to claim is not so much the formulation of either a theory, a philosophy, or a poetics of poetic precision, but how to put in word the imprecise and painful coming to word, and how to think not only about the senses of precision and the precision of senses but also about the coming to sense of a sense. It now seems to me more precisely necessary—in the whirlwind of the vertiginous nonsense and ambiguity of senses and words—to listen and follow with reflexive attention the coming to sense of senses and the coming to word of words. For perhaps it is in this putting in word of the coming to word and thinking of the coming to sense of a sense, in this experience of “source” and “open sore,” that it becomes possible to specify the precision of the poetic word. Thus, instead of looking for the final word, the full sense of a motion of saying and thinking, it would be necessary to pay attention to the experience of how the precision of the poetic word deals with the imprecision of the search for the word, of how the precision of the poetic sense faces the antisense of sense. Therefore, poetry would be a lesson in relating to the anti-sense and the anti-word, a lesson in dealing with the dissolution and emptying of words and senses, a hard lesson in precision in a world rescinding, in every realm, its contract as world. Such an exercise also requires another type of theoretical text, a text with a distinct essayist character, a type of writing that draws and outlines rather than paints and configures—because the unspoken and unthought at stake are themselves in motion, and not merely a veiled realm behind the said and the thought.

In the poetry of Orides Fontela (2015), a poet still quite unknown outside of her homeland Brazil, we find one of the most extreme and intense lessons in precision that our language knows. How to be a poet in times of dissemination and usurpation not only of words and their senses, of senses and their words, but also of existence itself, when one is at all times close to giving up on life and reality? In a poem dated July 23, 1964, we read:

It tires me being. The numberless open sore  
of myself scintillates; wordless, damp  
red source of being, longing and tedious  
to proceed, uninhabited, alive.

To continue. Oh, ignored presence of being in me, secret and contingency,  
mirror, shallow crystal, submerged  
in the eternity of existence, still.

It tires me being. Oh, open sore and old dream  
of golden transmutations and other lives

beyond me, beyond another life!  
But it shapes my being. The essence holds me  
(deep and truthful root) to the immutable  
condition of being a source and open sore. (p. 293)

In the pain of the tiredness of being, in the boredom of the difficulty of having to continue, at the moment when the definite articles turn into a cry—"the open sore," "oh, open sore," one is "wordless." But in this "wordlessness," one hears how, in this cry, one cries "oh, the ignored presence of being in me," the "secret and contingency" of being, the "eternity of existence, still." In this cry of being within the cry of the tiredness of being, one hears how the "dream of golden transmutations and other lives, beyond me, beyond another life" is old. When discovering the antiquity of this dream, one hears how it "shapes my being," how "the essence holds me (deep and truthful root) to the immutable condition of being a source and open sore." The poem speaks of another sense of transformation that is no longer defined as the search for "lives beyond me, beyond another life," but to be shaped by being, by the eternity of existence, of being held by the immutable condition of being a source and open sore. Here it speaks of another sense of resistance to the tiredness of being and the boredom of continuing. Here:

Being is high agony, a difficult trial:  
to self-overcome between metamorphoses  
a living essence in extreme purity  
striping away the spells, mists, myths. [. . .] (ibid., p. 292)

as another poem from the same period says. The resistance is to "striping away the spells, mists, myths" of another life. It means to plunge into the "purity of extreme contingency," that of simply being, "absolute being" that is only absolute because it is nothing but being.

To simply be constitutes the "difficult trial," the "high agony," where another sense of transformation that we are also calling resistance becomes exposed. How can one articulate this other sense? How can one articulate to simply be? In this trial and agony of being, one is left "wordless," a wordlessness that always accompanies pain and its cries, "oh." The precision of the poetic word at the moment of the shattering of words and senses, when nothing remains but being, which strips away every myth of being beyond being, is fundamentally linked to the experience of being "wordless."

There are several ways of being "wordless." Either in pain or in love, words disappear and the cry of the unbearable or the groan of ecstasy remains. One is wordless when everything is difficult to say, either because everything is yet to be said or because there is nothing left to say. In a poem titled "Say," which is found in Orides' first book of poems, *Transposition*, written between 1966 and 1967, we hear:

Everything  
shall be difficult to say: the real word  
is never tender.  
Everything shall be hard:

merciless light  
excessive experience  
too much awareness of being.  
Everything shall be  
capable of hurting. It shall be aggressively real.  
so real that it shatters us.  
There is no mercy in signs  
or in love: being  
is excessively lucid  
and the word is dense and hurts us.  
(Every word is cruelty) (ibid., p. 47)

The poem does not say that everything is difficult to say but that everything “shall be” difficult to say. This future does not speak of any future contemplated by the old dream of “golden transformations,” of reaching a life beyond another life, a being beyond being. It speaks of the strange future inherent in being, a present future, difficult to articulate, impossible to conjugate because the future is already “happened-being” (ibid., p. 87). It speaks of the difficulty of saying when everything is in tune with the experience of overcoming “that old dream” of an afterlife which results in “getting real” [*cair na real*], a common expression, which in Orides’ poetic language speaks of receiving the “merciless light” of “excessive experience” of “too much awareness of being.” In the merciless, excessive, and bright light of that lived awareness of being, “everything” “shall be difficult to say,” “everything shall be hard,” “everything shall be” “capable of hurting” because “everything shall be aggressively real.” The difficulty of articulating the real, overwhelming everything, making everything aggressively real is the difficulty of saying the “real word,” the one that “is dense and hurts us,” the real word that “every word is cruelty.” The most tremendous difficulty is to say the real word. Here emerges a precision of the precise poetic word: that of being a real word and not a word about the real.

How can one distinguish the “real word” from a word about the real? This distinction refers to the overcoming of a historical, cultural, and civilizational and therefore habitual and ingrained distinction between the word and the real. Every word is cruelty because the word is real and not an unreality imposing itself on the real or a second reality parallel to the real. In a poem also from her first book *Transposition*, titled “Ode I,” we hear about the clarity of such a cruelty:

The real? The word  
human thing  
humanity  
penetrated the universe and behold, it delivers me  
solely a rose. (ibid., p. 52)

The real appears as a question and the question “the real?” is already the word as an inscription of the question. As an inscription of the question of the real, each word always re-enacts the cruelty of, in the word, as a word, from the word, the human

thing, humanity penetrating the universe and “behold,” in this penetration, it delivers to each one “solely a rose,” the soleness of a rose, the rose of soleness. The human word is cruel not because it would be a convention, an ideality or immateriality pretending to correspond to the real, a non-rose seeking an adequation to the rose-thing. The cruelty of the word lies in being, in its humanity, that is, in its testimony of human penetration into the universe, the delivery of solely a rose. This penetration is real, so aggressively real, as difficult to say as a rose. It is as much rose as rose cannot be separated from its name. And if human penetration into the universe is violent, it is not because it takes the rose from its infant innocence, without speech, name, or word, but, precisely, because it murders the name of the rose, the name of the flower. This is what another poem from *Transposition* titled “Rose” says:

I murdered the name  
of the flower  
and the same flower complex form  
I simplified in the symbol  
(but without eliding the blood)  
However if solely  
the word FLOWER - the word  
is humanity itself  
how to further express what  
is, living, nonverbal density?  
(The ex-rose, twilight  
horizon)

I murdered the word  
And my hands are full of, living, blood (ibid., p. 49).

The poem tells us about the word FLOWER. The word FLOWER, in capital letters, speaks both of the word flower and of the word as a flower. The murder perpetrated by the human penetration into the universe is the killing of the power of words’ names, the power of the word being a flower. Humanity does not murder things, the flowers, the roses of the real, but the thing, the flower, the rose of words and names. Humanity is a murderer of language. And this logocide begins with the belief that the word itself belongs only to humanity. In this belief, it becomes impossible to “further express what is, living, nonverbal density”; the flower-being of words or the word-being of flowers. Thus, rose becomes ex-rose, and yet, hence the parenthesis, “twilight, horizon,” the loss of its dawn, the dawn that Homer described as “rose-fingers” *poSoS&KTuXoq*. The rose, as present in Orides’ poetry, and explicitly linked to the dawn as in the poem *Dawn* from the 1986 book *Rosette*, says:

Rose, roses. The first color.

Roses that horses

Trample. (ibid., p. 221)

the rose of roses, trampled by the horses, confirms that human violence does not act directly on things but rather on the human to compel it to spur horses upon the

roses. The rose of the words' fingers and the blood of the living hands of its murderer expose the root of the anti-sense and the anti-word that overwhelms us today as the illusion of language being about the real and not *of* the real.

In the experience of language as being of the real, the real proves to be anti-real. This is not merely a formal inversion: what was once ideal is now treated as real and vice versa. What is shown here is how the difference between human and universe, between language and thing, between thought and reality, narrated as an ancient myth against myth, is discovered to be the fold of a fan. It is as if history had not noticed that the presumed fissure between the ideal and the real was nothing more than the fold of a fan. In one of the *Fan poems* found in the 1973 book *Helianthus*, we hear that:

[. . .]

IV

Step by step

(fan opening)

gesture on gesture

(fan opening) weaving

the anti-rose and its splendor absolute gesture.

V

Cultivates (cult)

In act extreme

Splendid

presents (apprehends) the arid summit vertical light extreme

VI

Re-discovery: the lovegaze apprehends

THAT

VII

Open fan. O(h)

Real

VIII the insoluble real

only presence. (ibid., pp. 112-13)

Far from fissure or scission, the real emerges here as a fan opening, showing differences such as folds and pleats, "step by step," "gesture on gesture" where what used to be called "cult" appears as cultivate, what before was spoken of as "apprehend" is now revealed as to present itself and what was rose emerges as "anti-rose," "splendor," "absolute," "gesture." No longer the rose against the word rose, but the fold of the real, of the "insoluble real," folding endlessly in presences only. "Anti-rose" speaks of only the insoluble real present, the re-discovery that apprehends THAT in capital letters, *that* rose is and not what a rose is. *That* being is and not what being is, thus speaks the real language. Only the insoluble real present, the anti-rose presents itself as a fold in the omega circle of the real, written with capital O(h), the circle, in the poem Circle, is explained as follows:

The circle



is astute:  
it curls up  
autophagically involves.  
After  
explodes  
IX galaxies! -  
opens up  
living  
Pulsates  
Multiplies  
circledivinity  
perplexed  
(perverse?)  
the unicycle  
devouring  
everything. (ibid., p. 356)

The word anti-rose does not separate the rose from what it is not, but through the “lovegaze,” it rediscovers the rose as only a presence, as a fold in the fan “autophagically” opening from the real, “devouring everything.” “Being is enough for the rose: /everything rests in it,” as the verses of *Rest* say, another poem from *Helianthus* (ibid., p. 151). The “anti” of anti-rose does not deny but affirms, presents, puts the rose before its splendor of absolute gesture, as if in a mirror. A poem from *Transposition*, titled *Poem II*, makes this sense explicit by saying:

To be in the mirror  
deterred flow  
ante-oneself  
lucidity. (ibid., p. 40)

This is the “anti” of “ante” or “before,” [*diante*] showing another sense of denial and resistance, which is the very sense of showing, appearing, presenting, or exposing oneself. Orides’ poetry is full of these “anti”: the poem *Anti-Caesar*, which rediscovers the story in the following verses: “I didn’t come/I didn’t see/there was no war” (ibid., p. 246); the poem *Antigenesis*, which rediscovers a beginning no longer as parting or the parted and separated but as:

Dome par  
ted  
the heavens  
rupture.  
Solved Earth. Life ends. O(h)  
Breath  
Reabsorbed  
and the mighty dark  
water

sips

the

Light. (ibid., p. 277)<sup>4</sup>

The parting and the parted with which we represent the beginning, be it as a departure from non-being toward being, as the separation of a unit, or the expulsion from a paradisiacal rest, is re-discovered here as an even dome, a paired dome, and when the heavens rupture, the Earth emerges solved and life ends because Heaven and Earth are distinguished as a breath that is reabsorbed, and the mighty dark water sips the light in such a manner that sipping is light. And always this capital O(h), the omega circulating the breath of the real; and there is also a whole cycle called *The Anti-bird*, which sings of a bird whose “nest is stone,” a bird that “weighs,” that “resists the skies,” that “endures,” “despite.”

The re-discovery that the rose, the Caesar, the genesis, and the bird of the “anti” sing and tell of, is always spelled with a hyphen, which more than a separation that unites or a trace of union that separates, indicates an active of “gesture on gesture,” “step by step,” an open sore and suffering patience, almost a laboratory work, where

We dis-arm the fact

to - patiently

re-generate the structure

being born of what merely happens.

We re-make life.

as in the poem *Laboratory* (ibid., p. 36), also included in *Transposition*. The real word is a dis-armed word, re-generated because it is the word of “being born of what/ simply happens,” a word of life simply re-made of being. Re-discovering thus how the real is anti-real, the real of simply being, of being born of what simply happens; the real word, the one that is not about the real but of the real, becomes detached from the form, or rather, from the sense of form, to re-discover itself as “simply a balance of rhythms,” to “live the pure/uninhabitable act” (ibid., p. 35).

[ .. ]

Detained fluency of being; form

- simply a balance of rhythms.

[. . .]. (ibid., p. 148)

The cruel, real word, speaks the harsh precision of words continually transposed, one touching the other, one folding the other in the opening of the fan of the real. Throughout Ordes' work, we hear countless words formed from touching each other, touch, not only in the sense of contiguity and juxtaposition but a sense passing, like a bird of what-happens, of the instant-happening of being: thus, a vocabulary is born, a vocabulary of the lightinstant [*instanteluz*], colorinstants [*coresinstantes*], fluxuniverse [*universofluxo*], experienceflowerchant [ *cantoflorvivencia* ], neofluent [ *novifluente* ], fragmentsvoices [ *vozesfragmentos* ], redsky [ *vermelhoceu* ], timepresence [ *pre-*

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<sup>4</sup> See also the poem *Genesis*, ibidem, 147.

*sen ^ atempo*], lovegaze [*olharamor*], shestar [*elaestrela*], sheflower [*elaflor*], flowerinstant [*florinstante*], oscillateshines [ *oscilafulge* ], infancytime [ *tempoinfancia* ], bodynave [*corponave*], selfinterimpregnate [*interfecundar-se*], tremblelight [*tremeluzir*], circledi- vinity [*divindadecircle*], unicycle [*unicircle*], experienceeyes [*olhosvivencias*]. The real word is cruel because it precises the imponderable imprecision of the lightinstant, the one where everything oscillates “between north and orient” (ibid., p. 126), “between north and nothingness” (ibid.) but it does so in this “tremblelight,” “neofluent” oscillation, like traces in the air, scribbles in the sky, graffiti on the water, the happening of being.

The precision of the poetic word comes from listening attentively to the rhythmic balance of the instant, the “detained fluency of being.” This is the precision of a gaze surprised by the instant, trapped by this surprise, discovering in the instant a “tranquil stone,” as we hear in an *Ode (II)* from *Alba* (1983):

The surprise-instant: birds  
 crossing the silence  
 the  
 surprised  
 instant: shells  
 enameled, still  
 the instant  
 this tranquil stone. (ibid., p. 212)

The life of experience is re-created in this lesson in precision, in which poetry articulates the inaccurate of the oscillation “between north and orient,” the “tranquil stones,” and the “enameled shells” of the instant. One learns to re-exist. Thus, instead of looking for remnants of sense in order to resist the deviation from the emptying of words and senses due to the excess of senseless words and insanity full of words, poetic precision speaks the language of re-existence, a language that pronounces itself on the borderline, when existence is “wordless,” with senses on the tip of the tongue, and “under the tongue” sheltering “the knowledge that the mouth tastes/ the mortal flavor of the word.” “Everything shall be difficult to say” not because everything has been said or because there is nothing more to say but because everything is yet to be said, at the tip of the tongue, under the tongue when existence is almost desisting from existing. Poetic precision calls for very hard and cruel, difficult, and rough training, which means “knowing the silence by heart,” listening to the oscillating movement of the coming to word of words, the tremblelight of senses coming to sense, sustaining oneself in the oscillation between “north and nothingness” where “the mighty fragile happening” (ibid., p. 70) of a word contained in silence, felt in thought, “the word overcome and forever inexhaustible” (ibid., p. 93) may happen. This is the laboratory in which life is re-made and one learns to re-exist when one accepts that

Life is the one that has us: we have  
 Nothing more. (ibid., p. 369)

In the experience that there is no being beyond being, there is no life beyond life, that we have nothing but life having us, that being is enough and that everything shall be difficult to say, everything shall be hard, everything shall be/capable of hurting, one learns to re-exist in the light of the instant, the one that never tires of teaching that

The open  
lives  
open sore and/or  
star  
is  
eternal.  
The open  
shines  
destroys walls  
intense and free  
Love. (ibid., p. 397)

# Precision Exercise II

## Listening to the Ligatures of the Present

Throughout this essay, attention was drawn to how information technologies, which produce the digital world's virtual reality, are hyperconnectivity technologies, which, due to their own structure and dynamics, disconnect individuals from their singularity. This essay also insisted on how the dynamo of financial techno-mediatic capitalism, of technoplanetarism and its neoliberalism lies in establishing relationless relations, bondless bonds, and connectionless connections. We live in a world of continuous connections and links. Everything is connected and connections can be easily established. But one of the conditions of this continuous and limitless connection is that nobody becomes the binding that each one as existent already is. Being a binding is not the same as having or making connections. Constitutive bindings are continually uprooted, massacred, and destroyed by a production regime that tends to produce more and more productions. Uprooting indigenous peoples from their lands, a people from their history, the unique life of their experience and memory, are common "practices" of a process of continuous expropriation and appropriation, which accompanies modern history and today is spreading at every level of individual and collective, social, and cultural existence, in what we are used to describing as globalization. These are not only fragmentation and dissemination practices, but also socialization, which de-socialize and a-socialize. This is in addition to one of the principal techniques of totalitarian regimes that emerged in the first half of the twentieth century. One of the characteristics of totalitarian terror was to implement a collective practice that isolated individuals by desingularizing them, forcing them to identify themselves fusionally with the dictator and with the dynamics of collectivization. But no totalitarian regime has been as effective as the world of digital connections. Practices of breaking the bonds with existence are at play, which disconnect the bonds not only with the past and the future, but above all with the present. Alienation today does not mean not being able to see the present or how the past and the future interconnect with the present. It means to experience such an exacerbated present here and now so that the present becomes disconnected from the present, thus reducing the revolutionary force of the past to stereotypical images and forcing the openness of the future to empty itself into phantasmagoria. This means the loss of the present as it loses itself in the here and now. The most disorienting sense today is the one that confuses the present with the here and now and the presence with the factuality of things at hand.

The question of how to act and how to resist grows in the face of the derangement strategically implemented by the fascism of ambiguity. But considering the dynamics

of a more than contradictory world, woven into the inextricable knot of ambiguity, the world where those who have their eyes gouged out are also those who gouge eyes out, the world of voluntary servitude to the tyranny of the one and the diversified same everywhere, where could one find the point where disperse elements bind and become a dissidence from a world-condition that keeps repeating itself to such an extent that the forms of resistance to that condition eventually reproduce such a condition? How does one break this endless repetition and reproduction of oneself? And furthermore, how does one define the common binding, that of the commons, which does not fall into fusional identifications? How does one de-identify oneself from the desire to fusionally identify oneself?

To think about these issues, we need a *politics of listening and of voice*, which allows the re-existing force of singularity to resonate in the emptiness and hollow of senses, the one that opens

the space between us. But where to find and how to define this common “*bind*” if not in the *space between* the countless selves that form the selves of the common? How does one conceive of this living and pulsating space between of the in-between us? To this end, I would like to propose a second precision exercise for the conceptual outline attempted here, by importing a technical concept from music: *ligature*. To import a musical concept is to import the fundamental experience of listening and of the materiality of a sound. This starts from a need or necessity, the need to exercise listening to the binding of and to the present and the present as a togetherness with the past and the future, which does not pass through images and figures, contents and significations. In music, relations are related to relations. Music is embodied binding in each of its elements and aspects. And music is the experience of the figureless, which is perhaps the only possible figure of the presence of the present becoming the present.

What is, to bind? To bind has many senses. We are bound with things and people. We bind in the sense of being attentive and touched. To bind, conjoin, or connect is perceiving, realizing, becoming aware, and paying attention. We connect lights and cables. The body is made of joining ligaments, bundles of fibers that twin the human body not only to the animal world but also to the plant world. We know of amicable and love binding relations as well as of connecting ties. To bind is also the primary sense of the Greek word *logos*, which also means language and reason. Logos is the binding relation between relations, a word that was also used in one of the first treatises on music in ancient Greece to designate what we now call the musical interval, the relationship between sounds. Not every relation binds and a binding relation is something that may or may not happen. Marcel Proust went so far as to say that a novel is like mayonnaise: sometimes it thickens, binds, and sometimes not. In this sense, a binding relation also refers to the way in which dissidence was understood, at the time when that term became well-known and disseminated within the context of protest movements in Eastern European countries against the iron domination of the Soviet regime. In Czechoslovakia, for example, which experienced a significant dissident movement, very distinct, more and less politicized people, with different political desires and cul-

tural habits, came together against Soviet repression when the rock group, The Plastic People of the Universe [PPU], the most representative group of the Czech underground, was arrested and censored. It was this event that generated the binding relation, which made the Czech people's dissent against the occupation intensify. In 2013, in Brazil, the increase in bus fares provided a binding relation among some part of the people with the fascist right and the defense of wild neoliberalism. A similar increase in Chile made the left bind together, for a widespread critique of neoliberalism. This notion of binding relation, of connecting, which historically is associated with the concept of dissidence, follows a different dynamic than a decision. Perhaps it would be worth trying a new verb here, the verb "to diside," which follows the dynamic of resonance and propagation of a sound and light wave. To "diside" is not the same as to dissent. It means to get into a dislocated position through a binding that suddenly takes form in the middle of a process. It is therefore no wonder that music has played such an important role in becoming the "link" of apparently dispersed people in so many contemporary revolutions that may be better conceived as dissidences, from the Prague Spring to the Arab Spring. The Arab Spring, which counts as a revolutionary wave that emerged on social media does not speak only in "favor" of social media as a means of liberation; even if its meaning can be discussed, if it has or not been orchestrated, etc. it speaks mainly of a type of sound propagation and resonance because it was a song that generated the "link."

However, we should not forget that binding relations presuppose separation. This does not mean that it is only possible to bind what is separate, because it is possible and also necessary to relate to relations, to bind to bonds, to connect to what is connected, to bind togetherness. It is in this context that I propose to import the musical concept-term *ligature* in order to listen to the realm of resonating and propagating not only sounds but especially the voices of sound and the sounds of voices. With this concept, an attempt is made at displacing the mere register of reasonings, discourses, and speeches, as well as the dynamics of meanings and significations. An urban graffiti, posted on the Internet, of a verse by the Brazilian activist and musician Marcelo Yuka, reads: "peace without a voice is not peace, it's fear."

The voice sings and speaks against fear. The voice knows not only places but also the strangeness of the place of place because today the place is also placeless. A powerful and beautiful contemporary oeuvre—beauty is not harmony, it is the force of an irruption—in the Brazilian theatrical scene is by Grace Passo, particularly *Vaga Carne*.<sup>1</sup> It is the staging of the voice entering a woman's body, the voice looking at the world, the voice entering the words, the voice that is the inside-out in the outside-in—of entering into things, of different forms of life, of the emptiness of the air, of the hollow of openings and craters in the living world, and of the world as vague flesh. In this work, the voice is a voice, just that, a mode of existence that invades matter.

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<sup>1</sup> For a beautiful critique of *Vague Flesh*, see Patrick Pessoa. [questadecritica.com.br/2016/10/vaga-carne/#more-6068](http://questadecritica.com.br/2016/10/vaga-carne/#more-6068)

I am a voice, that's all. And even though I know that you do not believe in this type of existence, which is not human, I have come here, to utter sounds from your limited languages; languages that don't decide. They don't decide whether to say what they write, or whether to write what they say. I am communicating with the words of a human animal, because you are so selfish, so selfish that you only understand your own languages. I could communicate in Morse Code, inaudible sounds, magnetic waves, or whatever. You think my existence doesn't exist, but you need to know that voices do exist. And they invade matter. And they are voracious for matter. (Passo, 2018, p. 17)

What mode of existence is that of the voice? The voice that is a vibrant sound that makes one vibrate; which is neither an inside nor an outside, but an inside-out in the outside-in and vice versa, flesh more than body or body more than body. The voice endows voice to the mode of existence of sound. It is a very strange mode of existence because, by its very "nature," it is refractory to the image and its figurations of visibility. The voice of sound and the sound of the voice resist visibility, even though sounds may be converted into images, even when sounds may be seen through their colors, as Alexander Scriabin did when building his color keyboard, to sound in his work *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire*.<sup>2</sup> In addition, sound has a voice because it is in itself several sounds at the same time, neither mixing nor juxtaposing, but diverse in itself, which was the delirious discovery of the Orphic Pythagoreans, already ancestrally known by ancestral African and Eastern tribes and peoples. A musical sound, which we hear as a unit, as this note and not another, is already a series of what is called in English "harmonics," a designation that confuses more than elucidates, as it encompasses understanding within the realm of the harmonious. "Harmonic" translates the phenomenon of supra-tones, which includes sub-tones, since a sound is already the resonance of several sounds. Certain traditional singers in Africa and Vietnam, for example, manage to sing three to four notes at the same time, sounding the harmonics or supra-tones of a sound at certain points of the vocal chords. The voice is the singularity of the sounds of plurality in action, being active and passive, interior and exterior at the same time, the times of several times, the rhythm of the rhythmic syncope of life.

The sound, the voice—this existence that is from the inside- out in the outside-in, one in the other, is, in its own materiality, both resistant to the visible figurative of the forms formed, as well as to the unitary one, individualized, atomized. Being in itself multiple and diverse, being the one that is more than one in the one, which is, the sound, each sound, each sound of the voice, is already a binding relation. In the sonorous experience, there is no "unity," since each "unity" is already a finite multiplicity, resonance, and propagation of the self within itself. The binding relation of musical elements, in the various dimensions of music, is by definition a relation of relations.

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<sup>2</sup> This is a link to a page with various sounds-colors visualization instruments. <http://homepage.tinet.ie/~musima/visualmusic/visualmusic.htm>



The musical concept of ligature presents us with a few signs in the recording of sound, in the mode of existence that is sound and voice. Ligature is a sign from musical writing, a graphic sign, a musical graffiti. It is a written mark that introduces a new kind of inscription that is nonetheless fluid and dependent on context. It is a line that binds and connects notes. It emerges with the very emergence of musical notation during the development of plainchant, “but was also the way in which troubadours notated their songs: as if this music of love and longing required a new vocabulary of conjoining connection.”<sup>3</sup> Neumes, the signs of early notations in medieval music, did not spell out exact notes and rhythms but were almost like notations of breathing (*pneuma*, in Greek), notations of the sounds, rhythms, and resonances coming to the voice. The vertical lines that bind the neumes are the first ligature notations, binding the movements. In medieval scores, we see a notation of sound movement rather than a succession of independent notes. Thus, a syllable was sung with different sounds, forming what is called melisma and melismatic lines. Here there is no bar, there is no measure of the notes; the measures arise from the flow and movement of the voice entering the words. There is no tonality either; this music is modal.

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<sup>3</sup> Thanks Peter Hanly for this remark.

I.

**K** Y-ri- e \* e- lé- i-son.

In modern classical music, when musical notation starts from measure bars, from quantified notes, from more fixed rhythmic and melodic structures, or from specific harmonic rules, of the tonal system, ligatures are shown as arched lines.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> I am grateful to Carlos Alberto Figueiredo, professor of graduate studies in music at UNIRIO, for the enlightening and stimulating conversation about ligature, during the writing of this chapter.

4

# LA PASTORALE.

*Andantino.* (♩ = 66)

3<sup>e</sup>  
ÉTUDE.

The musical score is written for piano in 6/8 time. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with a slur over the first two measures and a *p* dynamic marking. The left hand (bass clef) has a steady accompaniment of chords, also marked *p*. The score is divided into two systems by a double bar line. The first system contains two measures, and the second system contains two measures. The tempo is marked *Andantino* with a quarter note equal to 66 beats per minute.

In music theory, modern ligature and legato can assume three different functions but are always joined together. One can speak of *duration ligature*, which without extending the notes, without changing the value of their duration, indicates the joining together between the notes in a succession, as the binding between the currently sounding note mixing with the beginning of the next note. In this case, the currently sounding and the beginning-to- sound are played together. From the point of view of duration, the ligature does not make one note last more or less than the other, but it does indicate the sound of listening to the passage from one note to another when both are played, so to speak. In vocal music, the duration ligature indicates that a syllable is to be sung over more than one note, detaching the movement of music from being chained to the syllabic structure of the words, and thereby rendering possible a kind of musical release. The ligature can also indicate how the notes are articulated. One can speak here of *articulation ligature*. In this case, it indicates how when passing from one note to another, the notes are distinguished at the very moment of their inter-sounding. It is the binding of notes that allows each note to sound. Finally, ligature also represents expression. One can speak of *expression ligature*, which does not mean the marking of some accent, either strong or weak, or intonation, but expressiveness in the conduction of the phrase, which ignores the rules, but comes from listening to the music itself. Duration, articulation, and expression ligatures are so intrinsically bound that it is difficult to make clear distinctions between them. They are dimensions of the way sounds, which are resonant binds and binding resonances, bind and resonate in music.

In the field of theory, every conceptual transposition from one area to another—here transposing music into a conceptual essay of a philosophical nature and with a focus on a political issue—must be done *cum grano salis*, with care, because in this transposition one can easily lose both the technical sense of its origin and the phenomenon to be understood. The distinction between these three senses of sound ligature can, however, help us to sketch out an understanding of the ways the present binds to the present. The duration ligature can guide a listening to how the present is bound to the past; the articulation ligature to how the present is bound to the present; and the expression ligature to how the present is bound to the future. It is, however, important not to forget that the present is already a binding with the past and the future, the one in itself differentiated, a sole-resonance of passing, carrying the already-past and the yet-to-pass, in a visceral binding. Hence, one ligature cannot bind separately from the other.

The present is always passing, binding past and future in the memory. Much is said today about the return of the repressed past, the forgetfulness of the past as a way of repressing and controlling the revolutionary force of the past or as a desire to return—the nostalgia for the past—nostalgia for the dictatorship but also nostalgia for the forms of resistance to dictatorship, for the lack of future, of horizons of change. But in all these discussions, there is a tendency to forget that the past is not something that is no longer present, and thus can be forgotten or remembered; the past is not just a content, an image, a signification that becomes absent and distant, declining into

oblivion, in order to be able to resurface, either voluntarily or involuntarily. The past is also the indelible memory of a movement that does not pass, the movement of passing that does not cease to pass. Therefore, the past not only passes, but it also grows. The past grows and ferments. Thus, it never returns as it was, but always displaced from itself, in a differentiated repetition of itself. In the panic of finding ourselves condemned to an endless repetition that confines and isolates us in an immanence without outside, without opening to an other, by listening to how sound repetitions of past sounds gradually dislocate, makes evident much about the ligatures between the present and the past. An example is the piece *Come out*, by American composer Steve Reich,<sup>5</sup> composed in 1966, which uses the voice of one of the six young blacks from Harlem arrested for the murder of Margit Sugar, a Hungarian refugee, who opens the piece with the fragment “come out to show them” from the phrase: “I had to, like, open the bruise up, and let some of the bruise blood come out to show them” to the police. Reich recorded the fragment in two channels that first sounded in unison but gradually the two “voices” start to sound apart, and through a continuous loop, the same voice repeated without interruption forms numerous repeated voices until it is no longer possible to discern what is being said thus allowing the power of the rhythm and the sound of the sounding words to sound.

One of the most difficult ligatures to hear, however, is the ligature between the present and the present, the very articulation of the present, as the contemporary world severs the binds with the past and the future by severing the binds of the present with the present, when the present sinks into the here and now of consuming consumption. Listening brings the present into its own presence, the presence of the voice sounding *while* it sounds, the listening of being and existing, not as this or that, not like this or otherwise, but simply of being in being. This is the very experience of sound touching us, of the voice that is the inside-out in the outside-in and vice versa, touching us.

Listening listening and seeing seeing make appearing appear in the event of that instant. To bind to the is-being means to bind to what has no form or figure, it means to bind to being passing and not to being having already passed and not yet having passed. The difficulty is in becoming aware of how this articulation ligature is a breathing ligature that, when taking a breath, makes the transforming force of being, of existing, without predications, appear. This being, without reason or why, a pure donation of life, is what no gesture of appropriation is capable of appropriating; it is what exceeds all anyzation, capitalization, instrumentalization, and representation. Clarice Lispector, the great thinker of the is-being, of the gerundive of being, did not tire of being astonished at the fact that existence exists.

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<sup>5</sup> I am grateful to Rodolfo Caesar who showed me this piece and explained the loop technique used by Reich. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0WVh1D0N50>[com/watch?v=g0WVh1D0N50], see also Caesar, Rodolfo. *O enigma de lupe* (Zazie editions, 2016).

From the ligature between the present and the present, one can glimpse the dimension of the ligature between the present and the future, which unlike the past, has no figures, images, remains, vestiges, or fossils. The yet-to-come, as Paul Valery insisted, is by definition imageless. It is neither figurative nor abstract, and I do not mean abstract in the logical sense, but in the pictorial sense of the term. The ligature with the non-image of the future is an expression ligature that does not project figurative images and past forms already formed, together with desires for the hollow of the present, upon the blank canvas of the future. The ligature between the present and the future, which we are calling expression ligature in this precision exercise, is more a ligature with the possibility of the possible than with possibilities thought from predetermined potentialities. Therefore, yes and no are at play. Another piece that works with the creative ambiguity of yes and no is the play *JaNe Duette* (2004) by Rodolfo Caesar who, by looping Joseph Beuys saying *Ja, ne, yes, no*, sounded the echo of yes in no and of no in yes.

In this precision exercise, a conceptual line was sought to think about the need to listen to the binds of today with the is- being of existence, a listening to the sounding sound, the sound of sounding, an openness of image and form, an openness that is radically distinguished, but always narrowly, from the formless and imageless anyzation of each form of life and existence. As John Cage once remarked, these are “lines that must be read in one breath [but that] are printed separately [. . .]. These operations or ligatures are not determined by chance, but are decided by improvisations” (Cage, 1987, p. 79). These are the ligatures that allow the movements and passages to sound interbeing more precisely, an in-between experienced as an active verb, as inbetweening. In listening to the inbetweening, it is possible to perceive how the present is bound to the is-being of existence. An in-between which allows an in-between-us to appear and resonate, capable of sharing the openness of senses and opening space for the resonance of the voice, life’s mode of existence in the bodies of the world. Only multivocation may challenge ambiguity.

# By Way of Conclusion

A conceptual essay cannot present a conclusion. Its gesture is an opening for more reflections and discussions, toward the unsaid and unthought. The effort of this essay was to sketch out questions, lines of thought, listening paths, and ways of saying that allow us to glimpse the precision of interexisting and not of fusing and merging, which warns of the danger of allowing ourselves to entwine around the bronze ax that today wants to separate world-emptied life from the open world of life. I see the new form of fascism as the way techno-mediatic capitalism works, in which senses and values are emptied due to their hyperbolic auxesis. Fascism is necropolitics, the politics that replaces and occupies the desire for transformation with the politics of extermination, replacing the everything must change with an everything must end as soon as possible. Its most potent weapon is to turn every sense and value equivalent, each thing into *any* thing, nullifying differences and exterminating by naturalizing hatred of the other as a force for transformation and presence of the possible in the devastated real. Against this necropolitics, there remains a politics of senses, of poetic precision, of listening, and of the voice, a tireless exercise of endowing words to the coming to words, of giving sense to the coming to sense, of thinking the coming to thought, and thereby experiencing the binds of the present to the is-being of existence, and discovering in the is-being, the uncontrollable force of re-existence.



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# Index

[Page numbers don't apply to this version.]  
absolutization 26  
action 2, 11, 15, 27, 70, 78, 79, 80,  
81, 119  
action-language 27  
doctrine of 3, 7  
metapolitical 83  
Afro-Brazilian 76  
afterlife 96  
agency 38  
algorithms 34, 42, 60, 78  
algorithmic system 39  
alienation 112  
ambiguation 37, 44, 45, 48, 51, 70,  
72, 76  
hyperambiguation 68  
politics of 64, 79, 81, 86  
ambiguity 30, 31, 43, 44, 45, 50,  
52, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69,  
70, 75, 81, 84, 86, 87, 89,  
91, 113, 126  
fascism of 43, 53, 68, 69, 75, 77,  
78, 79, 83, 85, 86, 113  
syntactic ambiguity 66  
amphiboly 66  
analogy 56  
anonymous 15, 88  
anonymized 88  
anthropocide 25  
anyzation 42, 70, 125, 126  
apocalypse 6, 36  
Apolis 37  
appropriation 3, 11, 24, 70, 74, 76, 80, 112, 125  
re-appropriation 80

armed life 5  
artificial intelligence 34, 43, 78  
atomization 12  
atomized individuals 39  
atomized isolation 40  
authentic 69, 74  
inauthentic 69  
authoritarianism 5, 7, 38  
auxesis 73, 127  
Belie, belying 68, 69  
binding 111, 112, 113, 114, 115,  
116, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123  
bond 7, 10, 11, 12, 40, 46, 47, 112, 116  
bondless bonds 40, 47, 111  
human bond 58  
social bond 57  
boundaries 41  
brainwashing 67  
bundle 6, 12, 47, 87, 114  
can-be 69  
capitalism 34, 44, 45, 47, 48, 50, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 72, 75  
entrepreneurial capitalism 84  
financial capitalism 34, 35  
form of 24  
global capitalism 52, 73  
liberal capitalism 11, 24, 47, 81  
neocapitalism 24, 33  
planetary capitalism 33  
techno-mediatic capitalism 33,  
62, 111, 127  
technoplanetarian capitalism  
11, 35, 48, 50, 55, 57, 74  
televisual neocapitalism 33  
worldwide “capitalism”  
censorship 1, 39, 40, 43, 85, 87  
self-censorship 40,  
cine-poetics 28, 29, 30  
coexistence 38, 70  
colonization 1, 29  
colonial heritage 18  
colonial history 20, 74, 75  
commodity 25, 35, 45, 47, 48, 49,

50, 55, 56  
community 11, 12, 70  
conservatism 7, 71  
contingency 92, 93, 94  
control 1, 15, 21, 26, 33, 43, 52, 54, 58, 60, 61, 84  
total control 15, 26, 60  
critique 15, 21, 52, 53, 67, 82, 85, 87, 115  
cronyism 36  
cruelty 95, 96, 97  
crystallization 48  
cult 55, 56, 57, 74, 100, 101  
fascist cult 6  
culture 11, 74, 96  
cultural existence 112  
cultural forces 74  
cultural genocide 23, 25, 27  
cultural hegemony 11, 12, 77,  
80, 81  
cultural identities 75  
cultural Marxism 11, 83  
cultural undifferentiation 25,  
88  
culture of spectacle 56  
mass culture 23, 33  
media culture 25, 28  
popular culture 25  
traditional cultures 74, 76  
cybernetics 33  
de-identify 113  
de-ideologization 77  
democracy 2, 5, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41,  
44, 68, 81  
authoritarian democracy 5, 11  
liberal democracy 5, 10, 11, 12  
representative democracy 39  
deontologized 73  
digitalization 57, 83  
dissidence 113, 115, 116  
divide et impera 41  
dynamo 13, 83, 111  
electrification 10  
emancipation 17, 81



energy 9, 15, 21, 52, 58  
human energy 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 16  
epiphany 56  
equality 46, 72  
equivalence 27, 46, 72, 79  
excess 13, 36, 37, 40, 41, 47, 60, 65,  
67, 79, 83, 85, 107  
expansion 16, 52, 81  
capitalist expansion 16  
expansion of power 81  
expropriation 1, 70, 74, 80, 112  
extreme right x, 61, 80, 81, 82  
fascist phantom 1  
fetish 49, 50, 56  
figureless 114  
finitude 61, 62  
flexibility 50, 53, 72  
formless 53, 126  
franchises of world capital 34  
fragmentation 12, 112  
freedom of expression 39, 40, 71  
fusion 12  
fusional collectivity 12  
fusional identification xii, 73,  
75, 76, 113  
gerundive of being 125  
globalization xi, 22, 112  
anti-globalization 35  
hatred 4, 17, 18, 21, 42, 73, 83, 127  
heterogeneous 19, 20, 21  
heterogenization 21  
heterology 18  
historical fascism x, xi, 1, 6, 10,  
17, 21, 22, 25, 28, 33, 39,  
73, 74  
homogeneous 19, 20  
homogenization 19, 20  
homonymous 66  
homophobic 54  
hyperbole 37, 41, 73, 74  
hyperbole of identity 73  
hyperconnectivity 40, 11

hyperontologization 73  
hyperpoliticizing 79, 83 hypertraditionalization 73  
hypsipolis 37  
identification xii, 12, 16, 20, 39,  
47, 52, 72, 73, 74, 76, 113  
identification apparatus 75  
identity 52, 72, 73, 75, 76, 86  
identity politics 75, 82  
ideology xii, 1, 3, 4, 77, 78, 79, 82, 83  
anti-ideology 87  
immobilization 68  
inbetweening 87, 126 indifference 25, 27, 59, 88  
inequality 13, 74, 80  
insecurity 51, 84  
insurgency 53  
interbeing 125, 126  
interexisting 127 internationalist 34  
is-being 125, 126, 128  
junction 12  
labor force 47  
legitimacy 79, 82  
lie 5, 68, 87, 111  
life-forms 73  
ligature 114, 116, 119, 120, 121,  
122, 123, 124, 125  
articulation ligature 121, 122, 125  
duration ligature 121, 122  
expression ligature 122, 125, 126  
sound ligature 122  
linguistic ability 25, 27, 28, 42, 69  
links 11, 40, 47, 111  
logocide 99  
macropolitics 83  
malleability 52, 53  
managerial production 58  
Marxist socialism 5  
mass culture 23, 33  
mass media 33  
meaning 3, 5, 11, 27, 51, 52, 53,  
55, 63, 64, 65, 67, 68, 77,  
85, 117  
mediatic narcissistic imagery 74

mediation 2, 47, 49  
mediocratization 15  
melancholy 60, 61  
memory 112, 123  
metapolitics 79, 80, 81  
micropolitics 83  
military 68, 74, 84  
military dictatorship 28, 38,  
39, 75  
militia-military 84  
misrepresentation 88  
mobility 50, 53  
mobilization 3, 7, 11, 14, 15  
armed mobilization 13  
demonstrative mobilization 13  
economic mobilization 13, 15  
historical mobilization 39  
military mobilization 14, 15  
military-economic  
mobilization 13  
total mobilization 5, 9, 10, 15, 36, money 30, 45, 46, 47, 48  
morality 54  
mutation 11, 12, 16, 22, 24, 25, 27,  
49, 60  
anthropological mutation 25, 27  
individual mutation 15  
lethal mutation 33  
mutation of sensibility 72  
ontological mutation 21, 22,  
23, 27, 45, 47  
myth 5, 74, 94, 100  
mythology 53, 82  
nationalism 1, 34, 82  
ultranationalism 3  
naturalization 42, 73  
neofascism x, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27,  
28, 33, 37, 40, 42  
neoliberalism 35, 36, 50, 54, 81,  
111, 115  
neo-Pentecostal 55  
networks 40  
non-egalitarianism 80

non-human 46  
 numerical connections 87  
 numerical society 43  
 onedimensionalization 19  
 paleofascism 25  
 pandemic xii, 41  
*panem et circenses* 41  
 people 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 20, 23, 24,  
 27, 29, 30, 35, 39, 40,  
 46, 54, 73, 74, 114, 115, 116, 118  
 indigenous peoples 76, 83, 112  
 phantasmagoria 113  
 politics ix, xi, 9, 27, 35, 36, 37, 41, 64, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 89, 113, 127, 128  
 fascist politics 74, 75, 86  
 megalopolitic 82, 133  
 necropolitics 6, 7, 9, 12, 127, 128  
 politics of listening 113, 128  
 state politics 36  
 techno-neoliberal-media-  
 politics 36  
 populism ix, 7, 84  
 power xi, 6, 10, 11, 13, 14, 20, 21,  
 25, 34, 38, 43, 45, 47, 61, 62, 66, 71, 74, 75, 76, 81, 83, 86, 89, 90  
 fascist power 12  
 power of ambiguity 67  
 power of consumption 25, 26,  
 27, 33  
 power of creation 62  
 power of decision 39  
 power of destruction 71  
 power of emptiness 86  
 power of rhythm 124  
 precariat 84  
 precision xii, 89, 90, 91, 92, 94, 96, 106, 107, 108, 114, 125, 126, 127, 128  
 private 41  
 public opinion 38  
 racism 1, 17, 18, 42, 74, 75  
 real 96, 97, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103,  
 104, 105, 106, 128  
 anti-real 105  
 reality 10, 16, 37, 41, 45, 54, 60, 69, 82, 92, 100  
 virtual reality 111

re-existence 108, 128  
 relation 10, 16, 19, 27, 41, 47, 49,  
 50, 54, 69, 87, 91, 114, 115, 119  
 affective relation 46  
 binding relation 115, 116, 119  
 human relation 49  
 interest relation 46  
 production relation 48  
 relation-form 50  
 relationless relations 39, 40,  
 46, 111  
 social relation 16, 47, 48, 49, 57  
 religion 33, 54, 55, 56, 57, 78  
 renaming 68, 69  
 resistance, 26, 28, 31, 37, 52, 60,  
 71, 75, 81, 84, 85, 94,  
 103, 113, 123  
 retrotopia 31  
 return of the repressed 31, 123  
 revolution 18, 116  
 conservative revolution 9 counter-revolution 5, 68, 80  
 cybernetic revolution 33  
 revolutionary critique 82  
 revolutionary desire 11  
 revolutionary force 24, 76, 113, 123  
 revolutionary sense 24  
 rhythm 37, 85, 106, 119, 120, 124  
 robotics 34, 60, 78  
 same 18, 20, 21, 86, 89, 113  
 sameness 88  
*sameother* 20  
 selfization 37  
 sense 63  
 anti-sense  
 emptiness of sense 27, 50, 52, 72, 86, 87, 113  
 intelligible senses 65, 71  
 nonsensical 78  
 senseless 39, 42, 52, 58, 78, 86,  
 107  
 sensibility 27, 33, 71, 72, 75  
 sensibilization 72  
 sensible senses 65, 71

sensing-thinking 64  
*sensorship* 85, 86, 87  
*sensure* 85  
signification 63-67, 85, 86, 114,  
117, 123  
singularity 111, 113, 119  
social  
social body 12  
social classes 16  
social existence 19, 82  
social fabric 25  
social forces 16, 17  
social groups 83  
social inequality 74  
social injustice 52  
social labor 48, 79  
social media 34, 38, 39, 40, 42,  
85, 116  
social movements 37  
social reality 45  
social relations 10, 16, 48, 49,  
57  
socialism 2, 4, 5, 81  
socialization 112  
de-socialized 79  
hypersocialization 79  
solitude 41  
space 41, 76, 87, 114, 126  
common space 37, 41  
open space 41  
public space 37  
space-between 72  
spectacle 34, 41, 50, 52, 55, 56,  
87, 90  
spectacular world 51  
spectacularization 55, 73  
state 2, 5, 13, 35, 36, 37  
statism 1, 35  
anti-statism 35  
stereotypes xii, 72  
subjectivity 35  
substitution 12, 46, 49, 50, 53

subversion 31  
supra-sensitive 49  
technique 12, 13, 33, 35, 62, 68, 75, 112  
televisual technology 23  
Terreiro-city 74  
Terreiro-community 74  
terror 77, 83, 84, 87, 112  
territory 74  
tension 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12, 15  
theology 55, 56  
thing-form 50  
thinking-sensing 64  
threshold-voices 72  
ties 40, 114  
social ties 84  
tiredness 93, 94  
totalitarianism 41, 77, 83  
tradition 33, 54, 72  
transformation 3, 18, 21, 22, 36,  
49, 50, 60, 74, 93, 94, 127  
constant transformation 50  
continuous transformation 51  
technical transformation 14  
transmutation 93  
transnational 34, 54  
uberization 58  
unconscious 16, 54  
collective unconscious 54  
fascist unconscious 20  
formal unconscious 54  
heterogeneous unconscious 20  
unconscious automatism 21  
unequivocal 36, 37, 67, 68, 78  
universalizing 47  
univocal 78  
univocal signification 67  
unspoken 92  
unthought 76, 92, 127  
value 21, 23, 33, 37, 42, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 53, 121, 127  
affective value 45, 49  
economic value 45, 46  
ethical value 46

exchange value 45, 46, 47, 49  
monetary value 46, 72  
surplus-value 47, 48  
theory of 47  
use-value 45, 49  
value-form 46  
valueless value 39, 52  
veneration 55  
violence 52, 65, 71, 84, 85, 99  
virtualization 54  
virtual narcissism 37  
voluntary servitude 43, 113  
war 3, 4, 11, 14, 80, 103  
divine war 5  
economic war 14  
total war 5  
word 2, 3, 29, 39, 42, 66, 67, 87,  
90, 91, 92, 96, 97, 98, 99,  
105, 108, 117, 120, 121,  
124, 128  
anti-word 92, 99  
poetic word 107  
real word 106  
senseless word 107  
wordlessness 93, 94  
world-form 60  
worship 55, 56



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