1. INTRODUCTION: Political vs. social

We concluded our last year's presentation on the normativity of what we called biopolitical theory with a brief indication of different directions this theory might pursue. The first direction is a phenomenology of the collective, which in contrast to political phenomenologies inspired by Heiddeger does not start off from death as fundamental ecstatic phenomenon, but rather from love and solidarity as actualized under conditions of post-Fordist production. Community that is thus emerging in the post-Fordist age - and this is our second conclusion - relates less to the category of work [labor] and more to the category of action. And, finally, subject of such an action - we've named it messianic - is primarily concerned with the verification and only secondarily with the legitimation of the existing state of affaires. Meaning that the goal of messianic action is not an ecstatic destruction fueled by the intuition that there exists something "outside" the existing world (order), but that the true messianic action is the one living and acting, as the Jewish-German philosopher Franz Rosenzweig has put it, "in the midst of life" (in der Mitte des Lebens).

Now, let us revise our analysis of the normativity of biopolitical theory - namely, we believe that all ambivalence and ambiguity of biopolitical theory regarding normativity results from one crucial dichotomy of political theory. And this is dichotomy of political and

social. We wish to conclude that insofar as our analysis has been primarily guided towards discerning, in authors such as Negri/Hardt, Agamben or Virno, the genuine political aspect of normativity, we one-sidedly remained absorbed in phenomena of legal production whose paradoxes those authors deal with.

In deed: legal (constitutive) production, paradoxically defined as extra-legal site of production of legality that is in strict terms both a-normative and outside the (nation-)state, still remains exactly described matrix or medium of modern political life. However, this time around our question is a different one: if the legal production is then taken to be the dominant form of political action, what would constitute its equivalent in the social domain?

In brief, we assume that a more comprehensive emancipatory-normative potential of biopolitical thought rests in its insistence on moment of social transformation (and possibly, yes, even revolution), and not as much in the transformation of political conditions. At the same time, we do not think that the political domain is secondary, but we rather take the dichotomy between political and social as a methodological aid in the explication of what we wish to state here.

In the first part of our exposition, we will be speaking of the normatitvity of political militancy and try to discern what constitutes the one-sidedness and limitation of biopolitical theory if all its efforts are concentrated solely on the political domain. After that we will provide preliminary indications for defining what is a social normativity and what is its primary scope of interest.

2. Normativity of political militancy

Call for a new political militancy can nowhere be noticed better than in the narrative on the "global civil war or state of exception" as current state of the globalized world. Of course, if given a closer consideration, this generalization also proves to be inexact and useless for a more effective, normative political theory - but the crucial role of this generalization lies exactly in the mobilizing and radicalizing character inherent to the discourse on "global civil war". To put it short and to quote Carl Schmitt, "Every concept is an attack" - "Jeder Begriff ist ein Übergriff" - demonstrating very vividly that in an assumed state of civil war the very language, vocabulary or conceptual apparatus cannot serve as a mediaton neutralizing the potential of the conflict. Even more so, it is this very language or discourse on civil war - where the most succinct articulation of such a language is the division between "us" and "them", or "friend" and "enemy" - that radicalizes and makes such a conflict absolute. Militancy that is at issue here is, therefore, is first and foremost a language phenomenon, evident as a material effect of a radicalizing discourse on general and total war.

We will give two examples from the recent theory that illustrate what we are thinking of when we are speaking of the language of civil war as a foundation of a new political militancy.

The first example is provided in a small book "Airquake" - "Luftbeben" - by Peter Sloterdijk - a sort of factory *byproduct* announcing the author's concluding volume of his fabulous trilogy of spheres. *Airquake*

is a short, poignant text dealing with the 20th century as its exclusive subject.

So what is then 20th century, as Sloterdijk's philosophical atmospherology articulates it? It is primarily the space of mass extermination whose cultural strategy consisted in explicating latent conditions of collective existence. Explicating - its imperative Sloterdijk takes up from Robert Brandom's "making it explicit" - as a cultural method is distinguished by three essential phenomena that are, according to Sloterdijk, inherent to the 20th century: first, terrorism; second, product-design; and last, ecological ideology.

If translating the latent into the manifest is defined as terrorism, i.e. not only as an illicit, specific and particular practice that breaks the rules of ("civilized") warfare, but also as a cultural method that in doing so violently and materially brings into consciousness the until-then-non-explicit conditions of habitation, terrorism then becomes another name for the process of capital and military modernization that is no longer aimed at the systemic subject, but at its *environment* through which this subject can be eliminated even more efficiently, without recourse to the symbolic institution of subjectivity.

Sloterdijk's line of argument is more than interesting, and examples in the text are illuminating. Ecological terrorism - which, according to Sloterdijk, constituted the inaugural moment the 20th century in the first place - came as a result of the gas attacks on the French front in the World War I, making the air as element of life irrevocably lose its innocence. Auschwitz, Hiroshima, Dresden are further milestones in the progression of this terrorist explication of

environment. Air and atmosphere have become equally *Lebensraum* and *Todesraum* of global life: a space where chemical (gases), physical (radioactivity), biological, and psychic extermination vectors meet.

At the very end of his study, Sloterdijk poses a question whether the 21st century might present a possibility for an existence that would leave behind the explicative exteriminism, i.e. individual and mass terrorism of the 20th century. His own answer is a negative one, and as a way out of the radicalizing logics of explicating Sloterdijk's suggests a sort of intellectual not-giving-in and quietism.

At this juncture, we believe it is advisable to introduce the concept of "idiosyncrasy" as was developed by another German philosopher - Silvia Bovenschen who followed the conceptualizations of Freud and Adorno. Idiosyncrasy, as understood by Bovenschen, would be a more radical and intensive form of what Sloterdijk calls the explication practice.

We quote: "Idiosyncrasy stands at the threshold of each of the following two: In its rationalized ("socialized") forms it stands for a dogmatism fixed all the way into the bodily, and in its open, seismographic forms for - but this is only one option! - almost bodily aversion to any kind of dogmatic fixation."

But the phenomenon of idiosyncrasy, which Bovenschen interprets in synch with what we here call biopolitical theory, reveals its militant form only once it comes down to a single (i.e. singular) question: that of war!

What is at getting at is Freud's famous answer to Einstein's question whether there is a chance for humankind to get rid of warfare (Freud's text "Warum Krieg?" - "Why war?"). We will reproduce the entire Bovenschen's quote of Freud, as it seems to us that, at this juncture, it offers us an utterly practical insight.

Freud writes: "... I believe that the main reason why we are repulsed by the war is that we can't do otherwise. We are pacifists because we have to be out of organic reasons. It is easy for us then to justify our attitude with arguments. ... it has its organic reasons if our ethical and aesthetical ideal exigencies have changed (...) War is then in the most radical manner contrary to psychic attitudes that are forced onto us by the cultural process, this is why we are repulsed by it, we simply can't stand it any more, it is not a purely intellectual and affective rejection, with us pacifist it is a constitutional intolerance, an idiosyncrasy magnified, as it were, to its extreme."

Extreme idiosyncrasy as a constitutional intolerance towards war that is said to be global and civil: Is this sufficient to exit the vicious circle of cultural militarist terrorism that Sloterdijk talks about and that is motivated primarily by the linguistic need to make the presupposed conditions of collective existence explicit?

Another example for vocabulary of new militancy that we will mention is the one presented by Agamben in his book on Auschwitz, or more exactly in the segment where Agamben speaks that there might be such a speech act that would be able to cope with the crime phenomena of the 20th century and resulting experience of intellectual impotence in confronting them. Taking a crucial step beyond

Foucault's notion of "archive" understood as that which differentiates what has been enunciated from what hasn't been enunciated, Agamben in his Auschwitz study introduces the concept of "testimony" as that which differentiates the very possibility of language from its own impossibility.

What are the implications of this when we speak of the global civil war?

In contrast to Foucault's concept of "archive" that is just another, a more abstract name for the discoursive disciplining of social domain, and that constitutes its points of resistance to the system in a quasi-heroic manner (for example, in "Live every day as if it were your last" maxim adopted by the late Foucault in his "Hermeneutics of the Subject"), Agamben's subject bearing witness is left with no genuinely practical form of resistance. What is demanded here is rather trusting that there exists such a form of collective communication and speech acts that doesn't fit into the already corrupted social model of linguistic signification. Price this non-heroic subject, as Agamben describes it, is continuous "falling outside language", - or to paraphrase Freud: a sort of constitutional anonymity. And this all too soon turns into a clichéd, predictable and empty discourse of a victim seeking to achieve the status of a subject, be this no more than the status of a speaking subject, even though the victim discourse is exactly what Agamben is at all cost trying to avoid.

Effort to avoid reductive, agonistic historical analysis that reduces everything to conquerors and conquered, and this is where Agamben remains faithful to Benjamin and Adorno, in his case leads to

an understanding of political action that is founded on the discourse that constitutively refuses all naming, thus remaining in a radical anonymity and aspiring to protect the secret and singularity of the event he has come up against. As much as this form of no-more-linguistic political militancy is accurate, it seems to us that it leaves the moment of the social unaccounted, hence remaining in a sort of true political passivity.

A similar thing can also be said of the concept of narratibilty as developed by the Italian feminist philosopher Adriana Cavarero. She claims that the fundamental imperative of a political community is a demand to narrate and hear someone's life story, i.e. for someone's identity to be constituted as bare narratibility of life - or, to be more exact - as bare fact of existence regardless of the concrete plot or text of that life story. Cavarero is out for a stable political identity that, in her understanding, precludes any kind of subjectivity.

Or to rephrase it, and thus our exposition so far: The price paid for political singularity, in Cavarero as in other authors mentioned, is almost always a social arbitrariness and anonymity, and the general result is the intellectual indifference towards social differentiations. Conversely, our further development will try to demonstrate where the biopolitical theory might advocate a social transformation.

3. Social normativity of negative labor

Radical exacerbation in the deployment of biopolitical legal production witnessed in the massive exploitation of superfluous life in extermination factories of the World War II, led many to reexamine conditions and practices behind circumstances that paved the way for this incursion in the political history of the Occident. Unlike last year, when we have extensively dealt with the analysis of legal production paradigm that biopolitical theory, particularily as laid out in Giorgio Agamben's work, sees quintessentially exemplified in concentration camps, we won't be dealing with the inflections of sovereign power's command over bare life. We rather want to discern the ambiguous position the notion of production in general, and social production in particular, assumes in relation to the biopolitical legal production, in a constellation where the inscription "Arbeit macht frei" (taken from Hitler's Labor Day Address from May 1st, 1933) still looms large.

To extrapolate the formula for this ambiguous status of production, let us take recourse to Werner Hamacher's *Working through Work*, where, guided by the proposition of Adorno's speech "Was bedeutet: Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit?," he attempts to work out and work through work, production and labor in light of its misuse by Nazi regime. He notes: "It [labor] is always also that project that remains open to the other which is not labor, which is alien to labor, *anergon*." So, without wanting to go any further into matters of Nazism, labor, production, work, *Aufarbeitung* and *Durcharbeitung* that Hamacher deals with extensively, here is the formulation of ambivalence of production, set against the background of exploitation of biopolitical nativity: production is always required to do more than

merely reproduce itself, because in reproducing itself it always produces more than its mere reproduction.

This surplus production - an innovational moment in production, implies that labor-force not only produces objects of labor, but it is required to labor on its own mode of production - and is thus always also a social production.

Biopolitical analysis of social production, as it has been laid out in works of Italian operaists (most prominently in Negri and Virno, but also in Bifo, Lazzarato, Marazzi, et al.), thus examines the real subsumption of social production that is immanent to the nativity of labor-force to the forms of exploitation. This analysis consequently leads them to conclude the following: once the modern conflictual form of class exploitation has been superseded by a postmodern system of adaptable and inclusive integration and administration spreading across the entire social field, the forms of social control managed to put its stranglehold on transformative forces of social production. Through the increasing engagement of individual and collective creativity in processes of production and consumption, which themselves have become mutable by virtue of reining-in that creativity, it has come to an acute receding of the potential for contestation. The excluded, namely, now find themselves excluded within, insofar as the system increasingly succeeds in segmenting and mobilizing their intellectual, affective and communicative powers, i.e. those same powers that once drove them to organize themselves and engage in a class struggle against the exploitation from without.

In brief, the biopolitical diagnostics of the status of production, in a globalizing world governed by services and information technologies, detects a radical convergence between transformational forces of social production and mutability of social administration resting on those same forces, and, consequently, a radical ambivalence in the character of social production as it continues to carry the hope for emancipation and liberation, while, at the same time, helps the system of social control to (re)produce.

The scandal behind this increasing convergence may not seem striking at first. But, as Jacques Rancière in his book *Disagreement* argues - and we have to admit that although this can be backtracked to the old argument of a universal class, its retracing of the move of subjectivation of the particular (group, claim, interest, class) to the universal is exactly what makes it plausible -, while the system of social control is concerned with allotting places and shares to each of its parts and parties (in a foucauldian vein, Rancière calls this system of distribution and legitimization police), politics occurs there where a part excluded assumes the position and subjectivizes itself vis-à-vis the totality. So, if we extrapolate, the scandal that biopolitical theory detects is a radical receding of politics in face of policing.

Surprisingly, it is in this radicalization that biopolitical theory overturns its critique of the exploitation of biopolitical social production into an exposition of transformative aspects of that production. Namely, it is in receding of the social production that poverty of the excluded and dispossessed in their exposedness appears both in its negative aspect of depravation, but also in its positive aspect: as a productive force free of reins, free to leave, an

unbounded valence free to cooperate. Or, to rephrase it, abandoned by the dominant form of social production, it is open to the transformation of social production.

Poverty thus commands three aspects - it is a) resistant to concrete systemic (assemblage of) exclusions, it is b) political vis-à-vis this system in the sense Rancière's understanding of a universal part, a singularity vis-à-vis the totality, and c) creative of new collective forms.

It is here that we confront the notion of negative labor. Both concrete in its refusal of exclusions and universal in its new social production, biopolitical analysis of poverty provides us in that notion with a model of action where negative acts of refusal, denial, exodus, strike, and similar such acts, contain both material elements for a critique of existing processes of social control and material normative elements of emergent transformative action. What provides a general matrix for this model is the ambivalent status of production.

4. Multitude - a collective socialization?

What is multitutde? - Although we might not have the full exposition of this matter yet, it is not as vague as it might seem. Firstly, it is a model to conceive a productive cooperation, but also exploitation, in terms different to those of the worker class of the modern industrial era. Secondly, it is a model to conceive a constitutive production of subjectivities not based on statist models of people and sovereignty. Thirdly, it is a model that rather than being

composed of the individuals, is composed of the singularities, other multitudes and networks of singularities and multitudes.

So, why conceive a concept that cuts across the existing political, economical and social concepts and models? Firstly, because it should account for the global production of collective subjectivities - subjectivities that are multiple yet not unifiable, and actual yet without adequate institutions to uphold them. Secondly, because this production is in its every singular instantiation universal yet concrete. Thirdly, because it is deterritorialized yet participating in the same intensity.

So, can multitude be a description of a collective socialization model for a new global public? The character of its production - intellectual, affective and communicative living labor of bodies constituting it and transvaluation - is in itself primarily a cognitive process of learning and a material process of social transformation.