

## On the Use and Abuse of Intelligence for Life

[Tomislav Medak/ Petar Milat, Multimedia institute, Zagreb]

In the short fragments that follow we wish to outline some specific, particular, ways *how* intelligence emerges. To reflect on *what* intelligence is requires more space than a short text could offer and yet we do not take this question to be our primary intention at all. How intelligences emerges means to ask about intelligence as *potestas*, while its definition takes intelligence as *facultas*. We are undertaking, therefore, here a couple of short interventions or dislocations of the former question regarding intelligence - from the more narrow domain of epistemology into the domain of politics (and, indirectly, art). Granted that intelligence is related to power and that there is no intelligence that would not be its own staging.

*For what is time? Who can easily and briefly explain it? Who can even comprehend it in thought or put the answer into words? Yet is it not true that in conversation we refer to nothing more familiarly or knowingly than time? And surely we understand it when we speak of it; we understand it also when we hear another speak of it. What, then, is time? If no one asks me, I know what it is. If I wish to explain it to him who asks me, I do not know. (Augustine, Confessions, XI, 14)*

1. We should maybe turn the argument around: it's not time that proceeds on the background of knowledge, but knowledge, which emerges taking time as its base.

First case presumes a difference of an implicit and an explicit kind of knowledge, which guarantees the consistency of time. It seems as though time is dividing knowledge and makes it itself so inconsistent (implicit: full, explicit: empty) that there is no viable transition from one regime of knowledge into another which would be lossless. For Augustine time is such an object that simultaneously divides

knowledge into separate domains and creates something which is related to knowledge but itself isn't knowledge (which is a loss/remainder of knowledge that remains out of the process of transition from implicit to explicit knowledge, and vice versa). That loss/remainder of knowledge (or in Augustine's terms, explanation) is indeed an articulation of knowledge, i.e. that which is no more or not yet a knowledge but nevertheless somehow related to it. To put it otherwise, articulation is a deficient knowledge - simultaneously something less than knowledge, but also something, which is remainder of the moment when knowledge passes from its consistent/full to its inconsistent/empty form. Question which arises is whether such a (structural) deficiency has its root in time as a temporal dimension or in time as a rhetorical unit, the *most familiar* and *known*, as Augustine says. In latter case time represents a paradigm-case for similar general notions, or maybe even the language *in toto*. Such an option would mean, to sum it up, that language itself is the instance which disables its own articulation - so that articulation always stands in-between a fully accomplished signification and a meaninglessness of knowledge, as a remainder. If articulation of knowledge proceeds like that, which means that articulation is at the same time deficient and necessary, there is question if such a process could be subsumed into some stable and general regime of knowledge. For Augustine this question, though important and worth of reflection, is just of marginal interest because in the quoted paragraph the notion of eternity, eventually, overdetermines the knowledge of time with God being the instance which guarantees the consistency of knowledge. Argumentative sequence we are introducing here does not assume either of both; on the contrary, the question regarding a general frame where knowledge could be stabilized becomes radicalized to the extreme. Articulation (as a remainder of knowledge) is here understood negatively, as some kind of *vicious circle* and incessant circulation between two alternative regimes of knowledge. Articulation

(of knowledge) in such an understanding is deficient, differential, diffused - and so to the eternity.

*Detour.* What does reversing of the initial formula mean, so that knowledge becomes that which happens with time as its base? What happens when knowledge is that which divides or opens up different dimensions of time? When knowledge that we perceive (and that is always an *articulated* knowledge) is no more a loss/remainder of knowledge bound in a vicious circle, but a moment which enables new sequences, new spaces is time? Could it be instead of an articulation staged as eternally dammed knowledge, an articulation that - exactly by its heterogeneity - enriches and resolves knowledge? Is such an articulation identical to the consciousness and the power of a historical materialist of whom Benjamin speaks in his thesis on history? Power to break up the continuity of enslavement in history? Power of emancipation?

*Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way. (Tolstoy, Anna Karenina)*

2. An analysis of the enlightened modernity always hinges on the question related to social power. For the authors of *Dialectics of Enlightenment* the modern era - despite the obvious progress in technology or economics - has turned against itself, rendering its own foundation dubious. The core-insight of such an immanent-critical understanding consists of recognition that (both political and social) power has been perverted, i.e. that power has abandoned itself. But this abandonment is not to be understood as though power has abandoned some rationality inherent to it (where consequently power would be completely irrational) but it is a process of compressing power. To put it otherwise - while formerly power was concerned with governance, at some point it has begun to care just about staying in power. In this

case again the alternatives are not exclusive, but the initial quantitative difference had become a qualitative one. Governance simultaneously gets radicalized, depotentialized and rationalized in regard to the question how to stay in power. So power (both political and social) in the aftermath becomes a distinct realm of human praxis - while at the same time paradoxically delimited and depotentialized. On the one hand never more autonomous, and on the other never more in the need of a side-support.

Foucault has reached very similar conclusions when he speaks of governmentality. Modern, enlightened community according to him is no more a community where substances are invested, but a relational one, simultaneously accomplished and brought to an end, and therefore absolute. It equals to say that the modern community as an absolute one is always much more and much less than a community. In a very specific way this community is consequently unavoidable, unsurpassable and impossible. An unavoidable, but necessary catastrophe. A catastrophe of political relations, not of substances or bodies. In his lectures from late 70ies Foucault has minutely described what living in such a community at the end of all communities mean. With those insights he achieved a breakthrough in contemporary political philosophy - today even more perceptible than at the time when Foucault delivered his talks. And this was achieved less by its unheard novelty than with its very distinct kind of summing up (compressing) the multitude of theoretical motifs from the inventory of modernist political thought. "Biopolitics" as a label of Foucault's later thinking in Foucault's own mind had to some extent remained ambivalent, provoking in that way very different interpretations, without reaching an ultimate consensus what "biopolitics" really is.

In brief, life that has become its own law, its own measure and purpose is the subject of politics of such a "community" and a logics of governmentality becomes the logics of governing (in most cases not political) and decision making on the

borders of commonality. Politics is here nothing else than police, in the strictest sense of that term.

The forgetting, disappearance or death of (political or social) governance is thus not only, or it is in the least, a destructive end to all things, because a certain mode of deciding has been replaced by another, more efficient and “democratic” mode of deciding, that of policing.

Life that has through and through become law means also life that is its own absolute legitimation. To the life that seeks its own utopia the deficit of legitimation is no problem, but rather the surplus thereof.

But the point here that interests us mostly is Foucauldian distinction between a territory and a population that lies in the foundation of the distinction between (classical) sovereignty and (modern) governmentality. For Foucault this distinction is just criss-crossed with further differentiations, so univocal statement about how exactly the logics of sovereignty and governmentality relate to each other is rendered impossible. Is governmentality, therefore, a continuation and an extension of sovereignty, or are they mutually exclusive?

To sum it up: while sovereignty governs the territory, governmentality governs the population - which does not coincide with the, first glance, distinction between the physical and the psychic realm. Sovereignty reigns over the bodies and souls and over differentiations between bodies and souls, while governmental governance is more precarious and unstable because it reigns beyond the realm of bodies and souls and beyond their differentiations. And if a phrase *nominalist materialism*, which is so often used to depict Foucault's thinking, has any validity it is necessary to argue that governmentality as a regime governs that which Marx calls *general intellect*.

General intellect is the fundamental productive life force beyond all imaginable relations among bodies and souls, territories and populations. Intellect grasped that way therefore exceeds (simultaneously accomplishing all the potential and

surpassing) the corporeal-territorial realm of sovereignty and the psychical-population realm of governmentality. Or, as we have already stated - it is governance which has become police, i.e. governance outside the realm of governing. It is therefore interesting to observe how Foucault, with his gesture of a *new kind of positivism*, has tried to describe the structural dynamics of such a community determined by intellect as its primary social driving force. If *nationalism* is the notion which describes the structure of inclusion/exclusion in national sovereignty, in governmentality this differentiation is fulfilled by *racism* - argues Foucault. But, we are talking here, about a very strange kind of racism, namely a racism without a race/races that could be included or excluded from the "community" according to some psycho-physical characteristics, namely about - *intellectual racism*.

Intellectual racism as a driving force behind governmentality is all encompassing and tolerates no outside. That is a *nunc stans* of a community that no longer knows appeal and that leaves no lines to escape.

But, as we have argued earlier: on one hand we are faced with never as autonomous governance, and on the other with the governance never more in need of side support, i.e. governance which is backed up by life. We are dealing here with a dual nature of modern racism without which that racism could not proceed: a simultaneous attempt in getting consent and a theft of knowledge. Here we are more concerned with the latter aspect because it directly touches upon the topic of (ab)use of information & intelligence.

*From the beginning, one resource of capitalistic enterprise has been the so-called "misappropriation of workers' know how." That is to say: when workers found a way to execute their labour with less effort, taking an extra break, etc., the corporate hierarchy took advantage of this minimal victory, knowing it was happening, in order to modify the organization of labour. In my opinion, a significant change takes place when the task of the worker or of the clerk to some extent consists in actually finding, in discovering expedients,*

*"tricks," solutions that ameliorate the organization of labour. In the latter case, workers' knowledge is not used on the sly but it is requested explicitly; that is to say, it becomes one of the stipulated working assignments. (Paolo Virno, A Grammar of the Multitude)*

The process which Virno describes and which gain notoriety throughout the 20th century under the heading Taylorism was and still is an attempt to make the concealed workers knowledge and cooperation - which are considered to be obstacles to a more efficient techno-economic progress if implicit - explicit and to make it emerge as a *scientific management* (=governance) of the production process. In difference to the times when F.W. Taylor published his books necessity to make workers' intelligence explicit has become, today, a ruling norm (*non-disclosure agreements*, for example).

The presumed irrationality (*tricks*) of workers' solutions, their secrecy (concealment towards the employer) and the implicitness which is forced to become a rational, explicit form of management - that conglomerate of assumptions which served to extort knowledge today has been already radicalized at the entry-level. This has been, for sure, a result of the immaterillization of labour of late 20th century, but the turning point of whom we here speak is even more interesting if we know that the employees (=wage workers) are obliged to make an initial decision about a simultaneous indiscretion (towards the own employer) and concealment (towards the environment). The employee is urged to make the decision upon which the relationship of managing/governing evolves in the realm of articulation as such. Despite the differences, it seems that here we are dealing with same kind of articulation that we have encountered in Augustine - articulation caught in a vicious circle between the implicit and explicit.

Governance which in the last instance cares just about staying in power - governance which governs only the governance itself, no matter if environment is effected or not - depends on the decision which is brought about in the realm of

articulation as such, where articulation is deprived of any specific content and reduced to its *who* and *how*. If once workers' tricks and their behaviour was that which frightened but also intrigued the employers, today the matter-of-fact is reversed. That which propels our curiosity is the magic that inscribes our own decisions, articulations, and decisions on articulation in an infinite sequence of bad or lesser bad acts, again and again.

And though from today's perspective this could seem naive one should remember the hope which was inherent to a distinct historic task: *The socialized labour can regain its identity only if workers reappropriate the cognitive functions that capitalist management has alienated from them. This can only be achieved if workers as a revolutionary class strive within the processes of national production to realize the implications of their status as socialized workers. But, the effective workers' absorption of managerial governance and the consequent change of their respective status is in reality the same as forming the socialist human. (Alfred Sohn-Rethel, Imperialism - the era of dual economics, Praxis 1/2 - 1969)*