

PHILOSOPHICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

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Biocommunism and its Role as it Overcomes Biopolitics

Abstract: Biopolitics is often understood as a form of power that is exercised over a population, not over people. Within this paradigm, a population is understood objectively as wealth, manpower, labour capacity, but also demographically as the object of statistical analysis. If biocommunism is to gain any political significance, if it is to become not only the result of the birth of biopower but also an active and actual agent of new political devices, then it must face the problem of “population empowerment.” In this process of empowerment, “power over life” is to be transformed into “the power of life itself.” In this article, the author tries to develop the idea of biocommunism according to which life is nothing but the fold of being onto itself. Up to now, we have thought of politics as what subsists, thanks to the division and articulation of life, as a separation of life from itself that qualifies it on different occasions as human, animal, or vegetal. For biocommunism, life is a form generated by a multitude of living forms.

Keywords: being-in-common, biocommunism, de-organization, idealistic communism, population

Communism Desire

In order to understand the idea of communism, I would like to start by applying the formula of Kantian transcendentalism. For Kant, the entire interest of humane reason, whether speculative or practical, is concentrated in the three following questions: (1) What can I know? (2) What ought I do? (3) What may I hope for? For Kant, these three questions can be resumed in one question: What is man (Heidegger [1929] 1990)? Following this path, in my paper, I will try to answer three symmetrical questions, namely; (1) Who is a communist?—or, more so, in the plural form: Who are communists? (2) What does a communist want? What are his/her hopes?—or better yet: What are communists hoping for? And in stronger terms: what do they desire? (3) what is the anticipated effect of the political and intellectual engagement of a communist? This is the idea in applying the Kantian model of the three transcendental questions, albeit in a non-classical order. I will try to reformulate these three questions and the possible answers to them in the context of biopolitics and biopower.

One of the key problems I would like to think about is the insight of the following form: if communists desire to change the world to become transformed themselves, then, with what conditions would such a global change of the world, and at the same time, its forms of living, the total transformation of the world of life and life itself, be possible? What does this change mean to life at all? What kind of life is a communist striving for? What life does a communist want at all?

I'll start with a strong conviction, according to which, communism, without ontological legitimacy, without revolutionary intentions is not communism at all. In the first chapter of the famous book of György Lukács from 1923 entitled *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics* (Lukács [1923] 1967), we find a chapter dedicated to the question: what does orthodox Marxism consist of? An important answer we see in the book is still valid: to preserve the revolutionary intentions of Marx. With these reasons, we should be able to agree with Jodi Dean, who claims that some on the Left today dismiss the communist horizon as a lost horizon (Dean 2012). Jodi Dean explicitly says: there is a general assumption shared by leftists who embrace a generic type of post-capitalism but avoid a more militant brand of anti-capitalism. The power of the return of communism stands or falls on its capacity to inspire a large-scale, organized collective struggle toward a political goal. For over thirty years, the Left has avoided such an anti-capitalist impulse, instead, accepting liberal notions of goals and free choices that are strictly part of an individual lifestyle and social-democratic claims that history already solved basic problems of distribution with the compromise of regulated markets and welfare states. The Left failed to defend the vision of a better world, an egalitarian world of common production, by and for the collective people. Instead, they submitted to the temptations of individualism, consumerism, competition, privilege, and proceeded as if there were no alternatives to state that rule in the interests of markets.

For these reasons, I contrast the concept of biocommunism with the “idealistic communism” of Alain Badiou. I assume that the central proposition, belonging to what Alain Badiou calls the “communist hypothesis,” is the primacy of the relationship between an idea and subjectivity, and the intrinsically idealistic character of the communist identity (Badiou 2010). The critical question is: what makes a communist a subject different from others? A simple answer would suggest that a communist subject is established by his or her commitment to a certain idea or truth. The ideal object of a communist's desire is not something that is part of the existing state of affairs. On the contrary, communism is the real movement overcoming the existing state of affairs. But what does this truth mean for an idealistically oriented communist? Well, it means that the idea of communism becomes meaningless if its significance is the same as the idea of Property, or the idea of a Pure Market, which are nevertheless ideas in the same ontological sense.

Badiou certainly tends to suggest that communism is the only Idea in the true sense of the term. This idea reveals its true character only to the subject who desires its realization. Let me repeat this—communists desire to change the whole world. Which means, above all, to change the social and historical form of the world, the ensemble of social practices of communication. A new communist man's life will emerge since this life is nothing other than the immanent result of its own conditions or relations. But to change the world is uninteresting if it does not lead to new practices of life in which a human becomes different, reversing the characteristics of life under capitalism.

Well, what is the problem with this idealistic position? The basic problem is related to some performative contradiction. We do not know what the premise is and what is the consequence (effect) in this process of the self-emancipation of life. The emergence of “new humane or post-humane life” is only possible if the world is changed. Still, the world can only be changed if the subjects are extracting themselves, emancipating themselves from

the determinations of the existing world and existing practices, or at least engaged in the process of self-emancipation.

Communism of Bare Life

Let us assume, at this stage of our considerations, the initial hypothesis is that communist subjects commit themselves to the critique of their individualistic self, their desire for power, domination, and inequality, to become the agent of a collective transformation of the world whose immanent result will be a change of their own lives and practices. What does that mean for the attempt at reformulating communism to biocommunism? In what sense would biocommunism likely avoid the pitfall of being caught up in a liberal paralysis so characteristic to hermeneutic communism, which accepts the current capitalist order of things (Vattimo, Zabala 2011), and the pitfall of being caught by a platonic elevation of an idea so characteristic to idealistic communism?

I would begin by saying that biocommunism reverses the liberal blackmail revealing itself in the formula “there is no alternative” which makes of communism a “red threat” associated with the risk of violence and an attack on liberal democracy. Biocommunism says that there is no alternative to the community of living. From the biocommunism point of view, life is never owned; instead, life is shared with others. The privatisation of life and, more so, its subsumption to capital would be the greatest crime against life itself. In this sense, biocommunism would be gaining an ontological foundation and, at the same time, would be faithful to earthly life and would not be seeking platonic justification.

How can we reformulate the main idea (and desire) of communism in the world of biopolitics? I think it can be made as follows. If we refer to Giorgio Agamben’s known distinction between the two meanings of the word “life,” that is *zoē*, which expressed the simple fact of living common to all living beings (animals, men, or gods), and *bios*, which indicated the form or way of living that was suitable to an individual or a group, we would have to say that biocommunism has no other desire except persisting on the position of *zoē* (bare life), without the need to transform into *bios*. It would thus entail, that biocommunism is de facto *zoē*-communism defending bare life, common life, simple life—from transforming into *bios* which in turn, is a life aspiring to be more than life (Agamben 1998).

In other words, still within Agamben’s vocabulary, if politics were the place in which life had to transform itself into a good life, bare life recognizes the value in itself without this transformation. Agamben suggests, that “There is politics because man is the living being who, in language, separates and opposes himself to his own bare life and, at the same time, maintains himself in relation to that bare life in an inclusive exclusion” (Agamben 1998: 8). Biocommunism would suggest an opposing formula, whereby there is politics because any living being does not seclude itself in a separate form of life added to bare life. For biocommunists, *bios* was never the object of desire.

Let’s look at this problem differently. The thesis about the domination of biopolitics in modernity will never have to be corrected or, at least, completed, in the sense that what characterizes modern politics is not the inclusion of *zoē* in the *polis*, but the elevation of

zoē to the level of *bios*. For Agamben, if anything characterizes modernity, it is that modern subject presents itself, from the beginning, as a vindication of *zoē*, and that it is constantly trying to transform its own “bare life” into a way of life and to find, so to speak, the *bios* of *zoē* (Agamben 1998: 11). It is not strange, therefore, that the opposing tendency, strictly *zoē*-communist, related to seeking *bios* in *zoē*, is considered a threat. Agamben only reminds us that in contrasting the “beautiful day” (*euēmeria*) of simple life with the “great difficulty” of political *bios*, Aristotle may well have given the most impressive formulation to the aporia that lies at the foundation of Western politics.

It is, however, not as aporetic for biocommunity as it is a challenge: to never turn away from the “beautiful day” of bare life in order to trade it for a form of the great difficulty of political *bios*. Perhaps, every society sets limits; every society decides what the bare life is. It is even possible that this limit has done nothing but extend itself in the history of the West and has now—in the new biopolitical horizon—moved inside every human life and every citizen. However, contrary to many of Agamben’s exemplifications, we need demonstrative examples for “life that does always deserve to live.” In the simplest interpretation: the biocommunist engages in justifying the thesis that the concept of “life devoid of value” (or “life unworthy of being lived”) could never happen.

Beyond the Division of Life

Let us stop here at the one important critical remark that can be made about the unclear meaning of the very term “life.” It can be argued that biocommunity is entangled in an obvious aporia and even a contradiction. Life is understood here as something related to self-organization, creating its own rules of functioning, something consisting of emergent and heterogeneous elements and at the same time, it is a biological object. Similarly, biopolitics is understood as both managing this spontaneity and multitude and managing life itself. A critical reader could say that biocommunity uses this conceptual confusion, suggesting that not only “policy over life” but “politics of life” is possible. In other words, biocommunity seems to be making the risky decision that biopolitics does not mean “politicizing life” but rather “naturalizing politics.” Is this the case? Is there a way to go beyond this alternative of “life in politics” or “politics in life”?

Biocommunity, as I understand it, is no suggestion to return to the “state of nature” or praise natural life. On the contrary, it is an encouragement to transcend the opposition and division into *bios* and *zoē* and to go beyond the understanding of life as a “biological fact” or the subjective feeling (experience) of life. Certainly, the constant attitude in our culture is in which life is never defined as such but is articulated and divided into *bios* and *zoē*, politically qualified life and bare life, public life and private life, vegetative life and a life of relation. That means that each of the partitions is determinable only in its relation to the others (Agamben 2015: 20).

What does this permanent division in our culture mean? The conventional notion of life—not “a life,” but “life” in general—is perceived as a “scientific fact,” which has no relationship with the experience of a singular living person. It is something anonymous and generic, which can designate at times—an organism, a collection of cells, a person,

a bear, an embryo. It is this “scientific fact.” “Life” today has more to do with survival than with the vitality or form of life of the individual or pseudo-use of life in every-day-living. On the other hand, each of us is the subject of the experience of his or her own intimate life, understood not so much as a raw fact, but as a “travel vehicle” enabling the creation of biography and individual experience. Thanks to this vehicle—bare life, we observe our life in its most intimate events such as nutrition, digestion, urination, defecation, sleep, and sexuality. One understanding of life is here against the other understanding, or one’s life becomes a supplement of the second, i.e. its rest.

It is extremely puzzling that from *The Birth of the Clinic* on, Foucault admired Xavier Bichat for having invented a new vitalism by defining life as the set of those functions which resist death (Foucault 1976: 147–148). The theory of a double biological layer within every living being—one vegetative and unconscious, and the other cerebral and relational—was first put forward by Bichat who identified the specific status of the living body precisely in its active opposition to the pressure of death. In what lies Bichat’s innovation, compared to classic biology? Well, according to Bichat all life makes up between the two lives—organic life, to which he ascribes the vegetative functions (digestion, respiration, circulation of the blood) and animal life, which governs the motor, sensory, and intellectual activities involving relations with the outside. While organic life is closed and inward-looking, animal life is in contact with the environment, changing it and being changed by it (Esposito 2012). However, it should be added that Bichat believed in the functional and quantitative prevalence of organic life over animal life.

The question here that gets entangled first is the relationship between the nature of the living subject and the form of political action. While the assumption of modern political philosophy is that of subjects endowed with a rational will who, by collective choice, establish a certain political order, the physiological principle of a “double life”—organic and animal, creates a significant shift in the perspective. In what way? Life itself is “decided” about the mode and form of collective life. The unity of life is no longer broken down by the old dualism between body and soul but by the biological difference between an organic type of “life within” and a relational “life outside.” An open desire for biocommunism is to regain this unity of life or, at least, to go beyond this opposition.

The life as understood in biocommunism is not reducible to either of the opposed terms, neither to the idiocy of private life nor to the uncertain prestige of public life, and it indeed calls into question the very possibility of distinguishing them. Biocommunism does not carry the promise of a new ontological opening; it is instead a return to the old philosophical problem that persecutes human thought from Aristotle to Heidegger, namely: what does it mean “to existence”? Existence—a concept that is in every sense fundamental for the philosophy of the West—perhaps has to do constitutively with life. “To be—we read in Aristotle—for the living means to live” (Aristotle 1984: 415). On the threshold of the modern world, Nietzsche specifies: “Being: we have no other representation of it than the fact of living. How could that which is dead have being” (Nietzsche [1883] 1968: 7). With the term life, we understand that it can never be separated from its form, a life in which it is never possible to isolate and keep distinct something like a “pure life” without organization, without significance, and without properties. Being and living “are said in many ways” and are thus always already articulated and divided.

Finally, in a world that not only knows not only artificial intelligence but also artificial life, Robert Nozick comes up with an “experience machine” that would give us any experience we desired. This machine has to force us to imagine a man who would be floating in a tank, with electrodes attached to his brain. Nozick asks us a simple question: Should we plug into this machine for life, preprogramming our life’s experiences? Nozick already knows that an “experience machine” could not live our lives for us. The author of *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, writes openly: “Perhaps what we desire is to live (an active verb) ourselves, in contact with reality. (And this, machines cannot do for us.)” (Nozick [1974] 2013: 60). Biocommunitarianism only emphasizes this fundamental fact: life is revealing one’s existence to others. Biocommunitarianism talks about a bare life that is intercourse: sharing life in the community of many lives that exhibit (reveal) each other. Biocommunitarianism merely articulates the interweaving of being and living. In essence, it states that the rethinking of this connection is certainly the main task of thought and politics today (Agamben 2015).

Communism of Population

Let us inspect the very same problem from Foucault’s perspective. Let us consider the same issue of biocommunitarianism, not from the perspective of bare life but the position of the centre for the concept of the biopower category of population. Foucault believes that one of the basic phenomena of the nineteenth century was what might be called “power’s hold over life” (Foucault 2003: 239–265). What Foucault means by this is that the acquisition of power over man, insofar as man is a living being, is that “the biological” came under State control. There was a certain tendency that leads to what might be termed “state control of the biological.” Unlike discipline, which is addressed to bodies, the new non-disciplinary power is not applied to “man-as-body” but the “living man,” the “man-as-having-being,” and the “man-as-species.” To be more specific, Foucault would say that discipline tries to rule “a multiplicity of men.”

After the first capturing of power over the body in “an individualizing mode,” we have the second capturing of power that is not individualizing but massifying, which is not directed at “man-as-body” but at “man-as-species.” Simultaneously to the anatomic-politics of the human body established in the eighteenth century, we have, at the end of that century, the emergence of something that is no longer an anatomic-politics of the human body, but what Foucault would call a “biopolitics” of the human race. With all the risk of using this term “race,” Foucault, in his analytical approach adds that at the end of the eighteenth century, it was not epidemics that were the issue, but something else—what might broadly be called endemics, or in other words, the form, nature, extension, duration, and intensity of the illnesses prevalent in a population or race (Foucault 2003: 254–257).

The aforementioned history of the birth of biopolitics means that one of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eighteenth century was the emergence of the “population” as an economic and political problem. But what does the term “population” mean? Well, population means many things at the same time. There is population as wealth, population as manpower or labour capacity, or population balanced between its growth and the resources it commanded. In the most straight forward interpretation, new power regimes

perceived that they were not dealing with subjects, or even with a “people,” but with a “population,” “man-as-species,” with its specific phenomena and its peculiar variables: birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illnesses, patterns of diet and habitation (Foucault 1978: 25–54). Finally, Foucault in lectures from the series *Security, Territory, Population*, bonds the birth of modernity with thinking in terms of population, writing quite openly: “Population is undoubtedly an idea and a reality that is absolutely modern in relation to the functioning of political power, but also in relation to knowledge and political theory, prior to the eighteenth century” (Foucault 2007: 11).

What does this relationship between population and modernity mean? Well, it means that the population as a new collective subject is foreign to the juridical and political thought of earlier centuries. Foucault insightfully adds that the population covers the old notion of people, but in such a way that in comparison with that notion the phenomena are spread out, some levels being retained while others are not, or are considered differently. Hunger and poverty are no longer a moral or personal phenomenon, but a purely economic phenomenon related to the business cycles of grain and grain prices. Is there a group of people in society who don’t want to accept this new liberal order, liberal governmentality? Yes, these people exist and will become a new source of revolt in the future. The people are comprised of those who conduct themselves in relation to the management of the population, at the level of the population, as if they were not part of the population as a collective subject-object, as if they put themselves outside of it. Consequently, the people are those who, refusing to be the population, disrupt the system.

What conclusion should we derive from situating population at the centre of politics? It is perhaps a sad, or at least melancholic conclusion, namely, that population in this interpretation is never the subject but always the object of regulations. It is never a power of life, but it is power over life. Biocommunity, even if the new strategy of power implicates it, it is more so as the effect, or even a “by-product” of the new forms of management rather than its prerequisite. Foucault connects, in an open way, the birth of liberalism with the birth of biopolitics. He explicitly writes that it is only when we understand what is at stake in the regime of liberalism—as opposed to *La raison d’État*, only when we learn what liberalism was, we will be able to grasp what biopolitics is (Foucault 2008: 1–25).

What does this surprising process of reducing political categories to “raw facts” and seeing them as a new field of political regulation mean? Is biopolitics a naturalized policy, i.e. politics in nature, or, on the contrary, is it politicized nature, nature in politics, nature raised to the level of “institutional facts”? For now, let’s just note that to say that population is a natural phenomenon that cannot be changed by decree does not mean, however, that it is of an inaccessible and impenetrable nature, quite the contrary—in that the naturalness identified in the fact of population is constantly accessible to agents and techniques of transformation.

The question that arises here is: why study biopolitics as the main instrument of liberalism in relation to population? The simplest of Foucault’s answers would be that the essential issue in the establishment of the liberal “art of government” is the introduction of economics into political practice. To govern a state will, therefore, mean to apply economics; to set up an economy at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form of supervision and control as attentive as that of an ancient head of a family over his household and goods. The

word “economy,” which in the sixteenth century signified a form of government, comes in the eighteenth century to designate a level of reality, a field of intervention, through a series of complex processes that Foucault regards as fundamental to history (Foucault [1979] 2000: 298–325).

The final fragments of Foucault’s lectures *Security, Territory, Population* announce the arrival of the day of the revolution, the day when the strict “rights of the people” will collide with the calculated “law of the population.” Foucault leaves us no illusions about the necessary coming of a day of revolution:

There must be a moment when, breaking all the bonds of obedience, the population will really have the right, not in juridical terms, but in terms of essential and fundamental rights, to break any bonds of obedience it has with the state and, rising up against it, to say: My law, the law of my own requirements, the law of my very nature as population, the law of my basic needs, must replace the rules of obedience. Consequently, there is an eschatology that will take the form of the absolute right to revolt, to insurrection, and to breaking all the bonds of obedience: the right to revolution itself. (2007: 356)

It is a revolution of life itself, which no longer wants to be the raw material for further political regulation!

Let me try to summarise this part. Biopolitics, in Foucauldian terms, is understood as a form of power that is exercised over a population, “man-as-having-being,” “man-as-species,” not over people. Within this paradigm, population is understood objectively as wealth, labour capacity, but also demographically as the object of statistical analysis, with specific phenomena and its peculiar variables. At this point, my thesis is as follows: if biocommunity is to gain any political significance, if it is to become not only the result of the birth of biopower, but also an active and actual agent of new political devices, then it must face the problem of “population empowerment.” In this process of empowerment, “power over life” is to be transformed into “the power of life itself.” If we understand biopower by strategies of regulating life, and biopolitics as tactics of resistance to these operations, biocommunity would be a policy of life directed against bio-power.

What else does this mean? I claim that the stake of bio-community is not humanity and reactivation of neo-humanism, but life and reactivation of open communist vitalism. For a communist, life is power and knowledge is a force that tries to regulate that power. Knowledge always assumes life and has its own interest in preserving life, which every being wants to store in its existence. Communism, or, the “expected biocommunity,” is the communism that would have to become a significant reaction to the doctrine of life serving as machinery for its constant control and transformation into non-life, i.e., a form of death. I oppose biocommunity with thanatopolitics or necropolitics (Mbembe 2003: 11–40). Perhaps this communism would take a form that would no longer be the communism of the intellect (common collective reason, common sense), nor the communism of the will or idea, nor the communism of abstract equality, nor even the communism of the common commodity, the communism of common property, but rather, the communism of shared common life.

Geontopower and Biocommunity

Biopolitics has always been suspended between two extremes—a positive of life production policy and a negative of life destruction policy. Biopolitics, from the very beginning,

was stretched between the tendency to transform life into wealth (synthesis of biology and economy), and the tendency to destroy life that was recognized as “life unworthy of being lived,” “life devoid of value” (thanatopolitics). This biopolitics and thanatopolitic opposition will now be our subject of analysis. At the moment, I would say that there is no more urgent motivation for biocommunism than opposing on the one hand, the commodification of life, and on the other, the political temptation of eliminating “life that does not deserve to live.”

Rosi Braidotti concludes that “bio-power and necro-politics are two sides of the same coin” (Braidotti 2007: 122). Elizabeth A. Povinelli says something even more ambiguous; that current social formations seem to indicate a return to sovereign power (Povinelli 2016). But these manifestations of a new hard sovereign power are deeply insinuated in operations of biopower. According to Povinelli, this fact blurs a great divide that separates the current regime of biopolitics from the ancient order of sovereignty. What does this mean? That sovereignty does not dialectically unfold into disciplinary power and disciplinary power into biopolitics. Rather, all three formations of power are always co-present, although how they are arranged and expressed relative to each other vary across social time and space.

That is why she proposes to replace the concept of biopower by the term—geontological power or geontopower. The simplest way of sketching out the difference between geontopower and biopower is that the former does not operate through the governance of life and the tactics of death but is rather a set of discourse, affects, and tactics used in late liberalism to maintain or shape the coming relationship of the distinction between Life and Nonlife. Povinelli emphasizes that she decided to retain the term “gerontology” and its cognates, such as geontopower, because she wanted to “intensify the contrasting components of nonlife (*geos*) and being (ontology) currently in play in the late liberal governance of difference and markets” (Povinelli 2016: 18). For Povinelli, the main equation that rules no longer within biopolitics but geontopower is the formula: Life (Life{birth, growth, reproduction} v. Death) *versus* Nonlife.

The question is, why in this formula of Nonlife fills the right side of the equation, which contrasts with the left side, in which, we also find death? Perhaps in the geontological perspective—in opposition to some of the author’s intentions—we are dealing with a “positive concept” of death according to which death makes life possible through the conflict between individuals and through the succession of generations, it will always prevail over life. Perhaps life is nothing but the fold of being onto itself, its declension into becoming. This is what life is—it is always *a life*: not that which resists death, arising out of this struggle, but rather that which separates death from itself, unfolding it in a continuous process of change.

Summing up the topic of the relationship between biopolitics and thanatopolitics, in the new regime of power over life and death, death was no longer something that suddenly swooped down on life. Death was now something permanent, something that slips into life, perpetually gnaws at it, diminishes it and weakens it. Sovereignty power took life and let live. In biopower, we have the emergence of a technology that Foucault would call the power of regularization, and it consists of making life and allowing it to die. Perhaps we should draw a surprising conclusion from this transformation of the place of death from sovereign power to bio-power that death is outside the biopower relationship. “Death is

beyond the reach of biopower, and power has a grip on it only in general, overall, or statistical terms” (Foucault 2003: 248). Biopower has no control over death, but it can control mortality.

Hence the main question directed to biopolitics: given that this power’s objective is essentially to make life, how can it be allowed to die? How can the power of death be exercised in a political system centered upon biopower? Foucault’s answer is straightforward: thanks to the concept of racism. What is racism? It is primarily a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under the power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die. Racism also has a second function. Its role is to allow the establishment of a positive relation of the following kind: “In order to live, you must destroy your enemies” or “If you want to live, the other must die” (Foucault 2003: 320). With biopower, race or racism is the precondition that makes killing acceptable. From this particular position of death and racism, also follows the expansively privileged position of Nazi politics. Nazi society is a society which has generalized biopower in an absolute sense, but which also has generalized the sovereign right to kill. The two mechanisms—the classic, archaic mechanism that gave the State the power of life and death over its citizens, and the new mechanism organized around discipline and regulation, or in other words, the new mechanism of biopower—coincide exactly (Foucault 2003).

Perhaps we should bind the concepts of thanatopolitics more with the name Hannah Arendt, in whom we find the concept of “camp” but without any biopolitical perspective, and less with the name of Foucault, with whom we have the concept of lethal biopolitics, but without interest in the architecture of the camp. It is fascinating that Arendt, in Chapter Six entitled *Race-Thinking Before Racism*, in her monumental book—*The Origins of Totalitarianism*, develops ideas similar to those of Foucault. In this chapter, Arendt writes openly about the birth of a new political order in which violence has become the *ultima ratio* in political action, the conscious aim of the body politic, the “ultimate goal of any definite policy.” The most important discovery of biopolitics is that there is nothing sacred in the abstract nakedness of being human. A human being is only the “raw material” used to reproduce capital. Arendt argued harshly and firmly that if “the idea of humanity, of which the most conclusive symbol is the common origin of the human species,” is no longer valid, then nothing is more plausible than a theory according to which “all races together are predestined by nature to war against each other until they have disappeared from the face of the earth” (Arendt 1976: 198). Arendt’s resoluteness reached even further when she claimed “[...] race is, politically speaking, not the beginning of humanity but its end, not the origin of peoples but their decay, not the natural birth of man but his unnatural death” (Arendt 1976: 199). A biocommunist could certainly subscribe to this declaration.

To summarize this part of the analysis, the task of biocommunism is to fight against any division of life, and above all, the racist cut of life that divides this it into a certain hierarchy of existence, and treats the annihilation of one race as a premise for consolidating the strength of other races. In biocommunism life is not the political declension of being: there is no corresponding between biopolitical technology, which articulates and politicizes life and the hierarchical ontology of being. In biocommunism, the deactivation of biopolitical technology necessarily implies deactivation of the ontological apparatus (and vice versa).

Beyond Bio-capital

Let me begin just again by stating the obvious. Biopower was without question an indispensable element in the development of capitalism which would not have been possible without the controlled insertion of bodies into the machinery of production and the adjustment of the phenomena of population to economic processes. In biopolitical regimes of capitalism, we are approaching a logical synthesis of biology and economy. Politics will more and more have to be capable of achieving this synthesis, which may only be in its first stages today, but which still allows one to recognize the interdependence of the forces of biology and economics as an inevitable fact.

At the same time, allow me to make a contradictory comment. All known analyses of capitalism from Karl Marx to accelerationist manifestos drifted between recognition of capitalism as a power releasing excitation and production and the recognition of the machinery for extermination. Even in Marx's *Communist Manifesto*, the bourgeoisie alone has the power of agency (Marx & Engels [1848] 2008). We still remember the words:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionising the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society. [...] All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind. (Marx & Engels [1848] 2008: 10)

The bourgeoisie is the agent of a civilization of the universe whose cities, factories, railroads, ships, and telegraphs are breaking down all barriers of caste and nation and wiping from the earth all traces of primitive savagery and peasant backwardness. It is also the agent of its own destruction, too imbued with its own tragic power to evade the destiny that compels it to keep revolutionizing the instruments of production and unchain the forces that are to drag it down into the abyss. In effect, Marx's *Manifesto* is—to quote a known formula—“an act of faith in the suicide of the bourgeoisie” (Rancière 2004: 124).

What does this mean for the cause of communism? If the *Communist Manifesto* displays an optimism out of proportion to the communist experience of its authors, it is precisely because the possibility of communism is founded in the text, not on the power of a proletariat still absent from the scene, but the power of the bourgeoisie. It shifts the whole force of development and contradiction to bourgeois action and passion. As Jacques Rancière argues convincingly, “it should be said that the power that invents the communist spectre is the same power that invented the railroads” (Rancière 2004: 123). The bourgeoisie is afraid because it recognizes the proletariat more or less confusedly as its own double, the other side of the pact they sealed with the god—or devil—of the productive forces. Its fear is still another manifestation of its power. If bourgeois passion sustains the existence of communism, this is because bourgeois action sustains the existence of the proletariat.

The bourgeoisie is revolutionary not just because it created large-scale industry but also because it is already the movement dissolving all classes—all fixed, ossified determinations. It is already the class that is a non-class, the tragic identity of production and destruction. Simply the double or reverse side of the bourgeois revolution, the proletariat merely sanctions this identity of life and death. Its action is not dialectical but solely materialist. The gravedigger sanctions the completion of the bourgeois revolution.

What this advantage of bourgeois over proletariat means for biocommunism? According to Marx, communism is “only” the real movement that abolishes the present state of things. And these proletarians who “have nothing to lose but their chains” will simply be transforming their condition into a general social one when they eliminate property. Proletariat, which is equipped only in the power of its own body, is yet another name for what we have called bare life, “population,” “living man,” “man-as-having-being,” “man-as-species.” The question, therefore, is whether this proletariat can only wait for reevaluation of all values and all forces and economic factors in such a way that all of them finally allow biocommunism to reveal itself? Yet another question is whether today’s affective capitalism, cognitive capitalism, or communicative capitalism allow for such a revelation? These are, of course, the question that Michael *Hardt* and Antonio *Negri* are asking us in a magnificent tetralogy about the exodus, and of the multitude from the empire (*Negri, Hardt 2000, 2004, 2009, 2017*).

Negri and Hardt openly write that the transformation of constituent power into a plural, continuous process has been deepened through its immersion in biopolitics: the content of constituent power tends to become life itself. Today’s protesters and activists, not only demand increased income and enhanced welfare services, but they also shine a light on the fact that all life is subject to threat and exploitation (*Negri & Hardt 2017*). Let us assume that it is so, i.e., that instead of constitutive power, we introduce the concept of multiplicity. But still, the question remains, what makes this concept so attractive? Why does the first methodological principle of political realism, remaining imperative: begin with the multitude? The most straightforward answer to this question is: multitude, understood as a political project, is the hinge between the plural social ontology and the possibility of a real democracy. The uniqueness of this concept of multitude results from the fact that it is an intermediary between ontology and politics.

The strength of Negri’s and Hardt’s strategy lies in the final perspective it opens insofar as it shows how constituting power ceases to be a strictly political concept and necessarily presents itself as a category of ontology. The problem of constituting power then becomes the problem of the constitution of potentiality, and the unresolved dialectic between constituting power and constituted power opens the way for a new articulation of the relation between potentiality and actuality. The problem is therefore moved from political philosophy to first philosophy or, if one likes, politics is returned to its ontological position. Constituent power is expressed not only as an act but also as potential (*Negri, Hardt 2017*). We have to ask the question about the relationship between power and life, bio power and biopolitics. How to understand relationships between Power as domination (*potestas, pouvoir, Macht*) and power as resistance (*potentia, puissance, Vermögen*), power as a vampire and parasitic force and power as a force which breaks the hegemony and domination?

For Negri and Hardt, the key is to recognize that Power on its own is weak and insufficient, that it can live only from the relationship, sucking the vital energies from those it seeks to rule. Power faces a living and indestructible adversary. However, Power is not solely a wicked reality. The struggle against Power, which takes place within the relationship that defines it, is not only an effort to unhinge the current characteristics of Power (command and domination), not only an effort to break the structural (economic and state) physiognomy of Power, and thus to set in motion strong processes of the subjectivation and

liberation of labour. It is also a long march that destructures the relationship between Power and power, to the point of overturning the balance and posing the concept and the reality of power at the center of the relationship, thus giving it priority and hegemony (Negri, Hardt 2017). The question remains: whether our authors did not overestimate, on the one hand, the productivity and ontological priority of the multitude, and on the other, do they not denigrate and overestimate the conservative reactive nature of each power, when they write that “the institutions of power are always asymmetrical: creativity and invention reside on the side of resistance, whereas power is fundamentally conservative, trying to contain and appropriate the innovations of the forces against it” (Negri, Hardt 2017: 234)?

The question we now need to ask is, whether the empowerment of population is possible at all? What conditions cease the population to be a passive mass of life, biocapital, and becomes an active agent and subject of politics, claiming biocommunism as its natural environment for growth. The question to be asked is also: is the central category of Negri and Hardt—a multitude, really a category we can trust to build future biocommunism? This is the reason why, in their last book, the authors do not ask what multitude is, or what democracy is, or what an empire is, but they ask about the conditions of multitude action. They do not ask whether multitude differ qualitatively from other categories that surround them such as—mass, mob, population, and plebs. They ask about the agency of multitude. In *Assembly*, we don't have the question of what multitude is, but rather what can multitude do? In this book, we can observe a significant transformation from multitude to assembly, which means putting forth the question about internal organization, durability, and the structure of multitude. The question of organization is also and above all, the question of leadership and entrepreneurship, which serves as the hinge between the forms of the multitude's cooperation in social production and its assembly in political terms. Assembly is meant to grasp the power of coming together and acting politically on behalf of biocommunism.

The Redundant Population

Communism is still the major question and the principal experience, and it will be so as long as we do not stop recognizing ourselves with the belief in the possibility of another society and another life. What is this faith? What does this other life resemble? What does this other society resemble? Well, it is a society in which bare life does not have to play the role of a biocapital. It is also the faith in population that needs no bioeconomic apparatus to be controlled. Certainly, the history of capitalism is the history of the world's population being transformed into the proletariat. But with the recent integration of post-communist countries and the rise of China and India, the global proletariat has seen a “great doubling,” with 1.5 billion more people now reliant upon waged work for survival. What does it mean? Well, that means that with the emergence of the proletariat, there also comes a new form of unemployment. Unemployment, as we understand it today, was an invention of capitalism. There are perhaps reasons to say that for the first time in history a new “surplus population” emerges that is unable to find waged work. But what is this “surplus population”? Is it the future, tomorrow-face of a biocommunist multitude?

The sequence Marx envisaged in connection with the surplus population was like this: (1) competition forces mechanisation and automation; (2) automation depresses the average rate of profit because businesses extract surplus value from humans not machines; (3) restoration of the rate of profit requires an increasingly larger reserve army of the unemployed or redundant (surplus) population. Thus, Marx was able to write that mechanisation threw labourers out on the pavement. Marxist unemployment is essentially technologically-caused unemployment. The reserve army of the unemployed is temporarily absorbed in bursts of high prosperity, but its longer-term effect is to produce ever-rising levels of pauperisation. Thus, for Marx, the sequence was exactly opposite to the classical story: mechanisation might create febrile prosperity in the short-run, but it would be at the expense of long-run degradation. Marx denied that any compensatory processes were at work, either in the short or long run.

The story Marx told has no happy ending for the workers. Under the spur of competition, individual companies are compelled to invest as much of their profits as possible in labour-saving—that is, cost-cutting—equipment. But increased mechanisation doesn't benefit capitalists as a class. There is a temporary advantage for the first mover: rushing down on declining average cost curves and annihilating the weaker firms on the way. But competition rapidly eliminates any temporary super-profits by diffusing the new technology. So the problem of keeping up the profit rate is not solved, only postponed (Skidelsky 2018).

The problem of how to define the “surplus population” is one which is often assumed away in the literature. If the surplus is defined in terms of waged versus non-waged, then, are working prison populations not part of the surplus? What about the vast amounts of informal labour that works for a wage and produces for a market? Other problems arise if one defines the surplus in terms of productive and unproductive labour. In particular, one is led to the conclusion Negri and Hardt draw that since socially productive labour exists everywhere under conditions of post-Fordism, the term “surplus population” no longer has meaning (Negri & Hardt 2004: 131). Nick Srnicek and Alex Williams reject that conclusion and attempt to demonstrate here that the concept still has important analytical and explanatory utility. They believe that the “surplus population” can be defined as those who are outside of waged labour under capitalist conditions of production. The latter qualification means that most informal labour, not under capitalist conditions of production, is included in the category (Srnicek & Williams 2015: 91). It is regrettable to say that larger surpluses of labour are beneficial to capitalist interests because capital requires a particular type of surplus population: cheap, docile and pliable. These are the reasons behind the gradual drive to incorporate the world's population into a global labour force.

In a new situation of “surplus population,” the extended working-class comprises all those having routine jobs, including lower-white-collar and service workers as well as the blue-collar working class. Beverly J. Silver argues that a single homogeneous world working class with similar conditions of work and life is in the process of formation. In other words, current transnational processes are resulting in the accelerated division of the world into a global bourgeoisie or transnational capitalist class and a global proletariat. This transnational capitalist class is increasingly both a “class-in-itself” and “for itself” pursuing a class project of capitalist globalization. The “transnational working class,” while “not yet

a class-for-itself,” is increasingly “a class-in-itself,” thus providing the objective basis for labor internationalism (Silver 2003). I am not sure to what extent this “global proletariat” is growing into a real political force. To what extent is it the effect and “material” supplying capitalism machinery, and to what extent is it an active force that can change it?

Biocommunism of Being-in-common

For Foucault, the royal road to understanding biopolitics was liberalism, or more precisely the new “governmental reason.” The fundamental question of this reason is: what is the utility value of all actions of the government in a society where exchange determines the true value of things? For Foucault, the formula of liberalism is not “be free” but rather: we (as a governmental reason) are going to produce what you need to be free (Foucault 2008). Roberto Esposito creatively complements this point of view, taking as the starting point the “dispositif of the person.” Esposito asks the simple question: whether a life is declared to be personal? Was the category of the person not supposed to establish a definitive point of union between law and life, subjectivity and body, form and existence?

According to Esposito, there is one line of reasoning, in which biopolitics of liberalism and totalitarian biopolitics are oppositional only in appearance (Esposito 2010). For the liberal view, the body is owned by the person who dwells inside it. This aspect alone underscores the radical distance and fundamental difference of liberalism from Nazi biocracy: while the latter works on the human species as a whole, the former pertains only to the individual. While Nazism assigned ownership of the body to state sovereignty, the liberal conception assigned ownership to the person implanted inside the body. But this basic heterogeneity also provides a measure of the trait of symmetry, defined, for both, by a productivist view of life—a life made to serve, in one case, the superior destiny of the chosen race and, in the other, the maximum expansion of individual freedom (Esposito 2010). Biopolitical corporealization of the person and spiritualistic personalization of the body is inscribed inside the same theoretical circle.

Esposito writes something surprising at first glance, contrary to what one might expect, namely, that with the rising tide of Nazism, the notion of humanity, rather than narrowing its borders, expanded to encompass its opposite. In Nazi anthropozoology, humanity is the line, continually being revised, along which life is separated from itself into two opposite polarities that require each other for their functioning. Never as in the case had *bios* (form of life) and *zoe* (formless life) diverged to situate themselves at such a distance from each other. Moreover, the main weapons of biopolitics are not elimination and extermination, but rather domestication (*Zähmung*), breeding (*Züchtung*), cultivation (*Anbau*)—all technologies whose only final outcome involves the eradication (*Ausmerzung*) of the defective products. German anthropologists were to use artificial means to recreate nature or re-naturalizing nature. At the core of biopolitics, there is the clear-cut substitution of the idea of a person with the idea of the human body in which the person is biologically rooted. The living creature called a “human being,” in this case, reduced to its bare determination of race or species, is what remains after the destruction of the “personal form.” For Nazis, true *humanitas* is still not a given (Esposito 2012: 55–58).

The politics of the impersonal lies outside the horizon of the person, but not in a place that is unrelated to it: the impersonal is situated, rather, at the confines of the personal. This type of politics, rather than destroying the “dispositif of the person”—as the thanatopolitics claimed to do—tries to prepare conceptual work on the “third person.” The “third person” is not a “person”; it is the verbal form whose function is to express the *non-person*. Let’s agree with that. Certainly, in comparison with the concept of population, multitude and bare life, the great strength of the third-person lies in the fact that it is the only person that has a plural. The first- and second-person plurals—*we* and *you*—are not really plural at all. They are only an expansion of *I* and *you*. Strictly speaking third person, as a non-person, is neither singular nor plural. By not being a person, it is both singular and plural. But we still do not know what kind of becoming the “third person” or “non-person policy” tells us? Is it a policy of becoming Nobody or a policy of becoming Everyone? This is an important distinction from a political and ontological point of view because, in the biocommunist doctrine of the bare life, a life is not *Nobody’s life* but rather *life accessible to Everyone*.

Is there, therefore, a line of thinking about body and life which would not fall into the trap of such a complex relationship between Nazism and liberalism? Roberto Esposito claims that it isn’t accidental that the beginning of liberal assumptions is entangled with a supposition that community is a “wider subjectivity.” On the other hand, according to totalitarian politics, the subject is only a “reduced community.” The truth is that these conceptions are united by the assumption that community is a “property” belonging to subjects that joins them together: an attribute, a definition, a predicate that qualifies them as belonging to the same totality, or as a “substance” that is produced by their union.

Esposito argues that the community remains doubly tied to the semantics of *proprium*. As dictionaries show, the first meaning of the noun *communitas*, is what becomes meaningful from the opposition to what is proper. In all neo-Latin languages, “common” (*commun*, *comun*, *kommuri*) is what is not proper. It is what belongs to more than one, to many or everyone, and therefore is that which is “collective” in contrast to “individual” (Esposito 2008). Yet, there is a compelling etymology of the old latin *moenus*, meaning “service, duty, burden,” from Proto-Italic *moini-*, *moinos-* which means “duty, obligation, task,” from the Proto Indo-European root *mei*—“to change, go, move,” with derivatives referring to the exchange of goods and functions or obligations within a society as regulated by custom or law. What predominates in the *munus* is, in other words, reciprocity or “mutuality” (*munus-mutuus*) of giving that assigns the one to the other in an obligation.

Roberto Esposito claims that from this etymology, *communitas* emerges as an entity united not by “property” but specifically by an obligation; not by an “addition” but by a “subtraction”: by a lack, a limit that is configured as an onus, or even as a defective modality for one who is “affected,” influenced or touched by an external factor, unlike for one who is instead “exempt” or “exempted.” As a result, the common is not characterized by what is proper but by what is improper, or even more drastically, by the other; by a voiding of property into its negative; by removing what is properly one’s own that invests and decenters the proprietary subject, forcing him to take leave of himself, to alter himself. Therefore the community cannot be thought of as a body, or as a corporation in which individuals are founded in a larger individual.

Neither is community to be interpreted as a mutual, intersubjective “recognition” in which individuals are reflected in each other to confirm their initial identity; as a collective bond that comes at a certain point to connect individuals that before were separate. The community isn’t a mode of being, much less a “making” of the individual subject (Esposito 2008). If we assume that the meaning of the term “immune” (*immunis*) is tied to a situation of “being freed or exempted from the charges, the service, the taxes, the obligations (*munus*, root of the common of the community)”, then we must conclude that biocommunism is a community without immunity, without auto-immunity, without an immunization process, without exception, without the dealing of certain people as very important persons. Biocommunism is the only form of life that goes beyond the paradigm of immunization, the paradigm of immunity.

The only way to resolve the question of “society” without losing any of the terms—community and communism—we have to bring together the content of these two terms in a unitary thought, seeing, in the realization of biocommunism, not an impossible obstacle to community but instead the occasion for a new way of thinking about it. This doesn’t mean that community and biocommunism emerge as the same or even as only symmetrical, or that they are to be situated on the same level or along the same trajectory. Rather, it means that they cross each other at a point that neither can do without another because such a point emerges as constitutive of both biocommunism and community. As a result, Esposito claims that this point, which goes unnoticed, can be denoted as “no-thing” [*niente*]. No-thing is what community and communism have in common (Esposito 2008).

In other words, if we assume that what characterizes modern biopolitics is the paradigm of immunity—the demand for exemption or protection, which originally was only awarded to the medical and juridical spheres and was overtime extended to all other sectors of life. If we also assume that immunitarian apparatuses that characterize politics which enclosure the body and biopolitics found its expression in the idea of a body that is closed in on itself, then, in open opposition to biopolitics understood in this way, we will set up biocommunism, in which hope is associated with flesh—the body that doesn’t coincide completely with itself. Flesh is constitutively plural, multiple, and deformed. It is that one can begin to imagine affirmative biopolitics of biocommunism.

Perhaps all these considerations about the community lead to the conclusion that the term biocommunism means exactly what Jean-Luc Nancy calls “the active restlessness of the same word communism” (Nancy 1991: 31), suggesting that the word “communism” stands as an emblem of the desire to discover a place of community at once beyond social divisions and beyond subordination to techno-political dominion, and thereby beyond such wasting away of liberty, of speech, or simple happiness as comes about whenever these become subjugated to the exclusive order of privatization. Moreover, perhaps the term biocommunism produces what Maurice Blanchot attributed to the meaning of communism, which excludes every society already constituted and excludes itself from it (Blanchot 1988). In this sense, “biocommunity” names a relation that can be thought as a subsistent ground or common measure for a “being-in-common,” “being singular plural,” “being a living man,” “being a man-as-having-being,” “being a man-as-species,” being bare life, *zoē*.

There is only one law of our civilization: general equivalence. The value of any value is its equivalence. Marx rightly called money a “general equivalent.” Certainly, the regime of

general equivalence virtually absorbs today, beyond the financial sphere but thanks to it and with regard to it, all the spheres of the existence of humans, and along with them all things that exist. For Marx, however, the equivalence of money could be demystified in favor of the living reality of a production whose social truth is the creation of “true humanity.” For him, that was the historical task of capitalism, to lead itself to its own transcendence. But to demand equality is first of all to assert it today, and by the same gesture to reject the law of general equivalence. It is to assert common equality of being and common incommensurability of life. It is to assert what Jean-Luc Nancy called one day—a “communism of nonequivalence” (Nancy [2012] 2015: 41) and what I call biocommunism.

Communism as De-organization

Finally, I would like to articulate one uncertainty, motivated by some basic clarity. There are strong indications to say that communism is again becoming the discourse and vocabulary for the expression of universal, egalitarian, and revolutionary ideals. The three volumes of *The Idea of Communism* edited by Costas Douzinas, Alex Taek-Gwang Lee and Slavoj Žižek bring together the interventions of communism idea from the conferences in London in 2009, Berlin in 2010 and Seoul in 2012 (Douzinas & Žižek 2010; Žižek 2013; Taek-Gwang Lee & Žižek 2016). Communism is retrofitting as the attraction of political energy because it is and has been the alternative to capitalism. The question, however, is what kind of an alternative to capitalism is biocommunism? What kind of a conclusion would we wish to draw from the story connecting future fortunes of biocommunism and bare life, population, biocapital, and *communitas*? Is biocommunism a dissolution of politics, an attempt to abolish politics, a sort of “politics beyond politics,” or on the contrary—is it the most extreme intensification of the political?

Perhaps the key problem is the issue of organization. Where Balibar, Negri and Badiou reject the Party and the State, Žižek and Jodi Dean retain a certain fidelity to Lenin. “The key ‘Leninist’ lesson today,” writes Žižek, is that “politics without the organizational form of the Party is politics without politics” (Žižek 2002: 297). According to Žižek, Dean and Bosteels, conceptualizing the party of communists is and must be an ongoing project. They argue, that “party” does not name an instrument for carrying out the iron laws of history but the flexible organization of fidelity to events amid unforeseeable circumstances.

I am not so optimistic about it. Rather, party policy seems to me to be closely linked to the current liberal policy model, where parties compete with each other for people’s votes. It is simply a political model focused on universal electoral suffrage, i.e., the illusion of free human decision. It seems to me that the aspirations of biocommunism go much further. These aspirations determine the strength of communism, but also its weakness. What kind of weaknesses am I thinking about?

I would say that we can learn what “biocommunists” really want to do and what is their Real object of desire when they are confronted not only with their pure intention but with existing social conditions and already given political alternatives, which is always the case in practice. Biopolitics, in this sense, would be the politics of discomfort as it would always act at the risk of departing from its intentions. I am not saying anything original here. I only

just again raise praxis over theory and the very division into theory and practice. If Marx, many years ago was not concerned to specify how the relationship between structure and superstructure is to be construed and has no fear of being occasionally considered “vulgar,” it is because an interpretation of this relationship in a causal sense is not even conceivable in Marxist terms. All causal interpretations are consistent with Western metaphysics and presuppose the sundering of reality into two different ontological levels.

The Marxist concept of praxis can exclude an ontological splitting as a concrete and unitary source reality. If man finds his humanity in *praxis*, this is not because, in addition to carrying out productive work, he also transposes and develops these activities within a superstructure; if man is human—if he is a *Gattungswesen*, bare life, a being whose essence is generic—his humanity and his species-being must be integrally present within how he produces his material life—that is, within *praxis*. In a sense, Marx abolishes the metaphysical distinction between animal and ratio, between nature and culture, matter and form, in order to state that within *praxis* “animality is humanity,” “nature is culture,” “matter is form.” “If this is true, the relationship between structure and superstructure can neither be one of causal determination nor one of dialectical mediation, but one of direct correspondence” (Agamben 1993: 117–119).

The tentative conclusion I draw from this “short story” is a radicalization of the idea that the communists “do not form a specific party.” The communists, as such, are certainly participating in organizations, and in the organization of movements, campaigns, or struggles, because there is no effective politics without organizations, depending on the concrete objectives. But they are not building any organization of their own, not even an invisible one—they are, rather—as Etienne Balibar suggests—“de-organizing the existing organizations, the very organizations in which they participate” (Balibar 2013: 34). Certainly, in this strategy of “de-organizing the existing organizations,” we recognize the logic and work of the Marxist mole, who paraphrased Shakespeare’s Hamlet, writing: “Well burrowed, old mole!” meaning that—“The revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still travelling through purgatory. It does its work methodically” (Marx [1852] 1995: 61). The new imperative of biocommunism is not Marx’s postulate “Proletarians of all countries unite” but, instead, its opposition: “All proletarians divide and never give up sharing bare life.”

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