ON PSYCHOPOLITICAL CONTEMPORARY VIOLENCE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSIONS

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ABSTRACT. This article seeks to explain the conditions of possibility of psychopolitical violence in contemporary times. Such is a type of violence practiced in psychic levels when people demand from themselves high performance and optimal results, leading to the undermining of subjectivity and to its nihilistic burnout. Our purpose is to inquire for the affective dimension generated by the violences imposed on others and on the self. Therefore, this theoretical study will develop two settings of issues: firstly, the show-and-hide game and the ratting actualized in social media. Next, our study will analyze the sad effects originated by a capitalist socioeconomical organization indifferent to the importance of social relationships, affections and to the relationship with nature. Through a predatory attitude towards the self and the others, capitalist subjectivity continues to judge and evaluate, even though such practices became violent and destructive. What are the possibilities to shut down this movement, largely grounded on communication technologies? As a partial result, we stress the challenge of inventing new values able to expand life in spite of the boundaries diffused by mere communicational assessments grounded on narcissism.
Keywords: Violence; subjectivity; resistance.

DA VIOLÊNCIA PSICOPOLÍTICA NA CONTEMPORANEIDADE: UMA ANÁLISE DAS DIMENSÕES AFETIVAS

RESUMO. O presente artigo pretende explicitar as condições de possibilidade da violência psicopolítica na contemporaneidade. Trata-se de um tipo de violência exercido em níveis psíquicos, à medida que as pessoas exigem de si mesmas alta performance e resultados ótimos, cuja consequência é sua desestruturação subjetiva e seu autoesgotamento niilista. Objetiva-se inquirir pela dimensão afetiva gerada nas violências impostas aos outros e autoimpostas. Para tanto, este estudo de tipo teórico percorrerá duas dimensões da problemática escolhida: primeiramente, o jogo do mostrar, esconder e avaliar que se atualiza nas redes sociais. Em seguida, o estudo analisará os efeitos tristes advindos de uma organização socioeconômica capitalista indiferente à importância das relações sociais, dos afetos e da relação com a natureza. Em uma atitude predatória de si e dos outros, a subjetividade capitalística segue julgando e avaliando, ainda que tais práticas ganhem contornos violentos e destrutivos. Quais as possibilidades de barrar tal movimento, em larga medida sustentado pelas tecnologias de comunicação? Como resultado parcial, ressalta-se o desafio de inventar

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novos valores a partir dos quais a vida possa se expandir à revelia das amarras difundidas pelas avaliações meramente comunicacionais de fundamentação narcísica.

Palavras-chave: Violência; subjetividade; resistência.

DE LA VIOLENCIA PSICOPOLÍTICA EN LA CONTEMPORANCIA: UN ANALISIS DE DIMENSIONES AFECTIVAS

RESUMEN. Este artículo pretende clarificar las condiciones de posibilidad de violencia psicopolítica en tiempos contemporáneos. Es un tipo de violencia ejercida en los niveles psíquicos, cuando las personas requieren de sí mismas un alto rendimiento y resultados óptimos, cuya consecuencia es su desorganización subjetiva y su auto agotamiento nihilista. El objetivo es investigar como la dimensión afectiva produce la violencia impuesta a otros y auto impuestas. Para ello, este estudio de tipo teórico recorre a dos dimensiones del problema: en primer lugar, evidencia el juego entre mostrar, ocultar y evaluar en las redes sociales. Entonces, el estudio examinará los efectos de una organización socioeconómica capitalista indiferente a la importancia de las relaciones sociales, de los afectos y la relación con la naturaleza. En una actitud depredadora a sí mismos y a otros, la subjetividad capitalista sigue juzgando y evaluando, aunque tales prácticas obtienen contornos destructivos y violentos. ¿Cuáles son las posibilidades de propagación de un tal movimiento en gran parte sustentado en tecnologías de la comunicación? Como resultado parcial, destacamos el desafío de inventar nuevos valores que puedan ampliar la vida sin la difusión de evaluaciones de únicamente narcisistas.

Palabras clave: Violencia; subjetividad; resistencia.

Introduction

According to Byung-Chul Han (2015, 2017a), we live in a transparency society, but also in a burnout society. Both terms, markedly neoliberal, target contemporary societies without contradicting each other: instead, they contribute to the same and uncanny diagnose. The neoliberal society, defined by Han as transparent and exhausted, is not a society in which political democratic regime prevails, prioritizing political participation and, therefore, a pleasant and achievable (or even achieved) life. It prioritizes and incites people to dedicate most of their energies, optimizing their actions, their performances, their appearance and their opinions until they reach the maximum of nihilist exhaustion.

We are stressing here unattainable practices guided by idealizations that, according to Žižek (2012), transform capitalism in some kind of religion followed by a significant number of people. Thus, for him, there are two remarkable perils in our historical time: "[…] the reinless capitalism and the religious fundamentalism […]" that, combined, destroy the possibility of a public and democratic life (Žižek, 2012, p. 138).

In *A sociedade da transparência* (2017a) observes that the demand for transparency does not lead to the possibility of democratic respect for public affairs, but to the complex phenomena of mistrust and exacerbated public exhibition by means of accountability. This is a quest for reinless results that must always become public as detailed as possible. The most obvious of these facets appears when we think of public agents and institutions. Such

setting became very clear in current Brazilian society when the demand for the so-called transparency reached all of the state bodies, to the extent of becoming a duty enforced by law on any public institution – precisely, the Law 12.525 from November of 2011. It is known that some public institutions even anticipated the law, releasing all the occupational data concerning their staff.

However, the transparency is also exercised in other levels of social existence. It is distinguishable by how we live in a culture of exposition of our taste and our bodies, of our opinions and (even) our prejudices, based mainly on social media. We expose ourselves willingly in weblogs, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and many other tools in which we shamelessly write and post our images. In digital media, we become truly impudent. But all of this 'impudence' just take place when we feel protected, albeit a well-paid protection: in order to become protected, it is fundamental to expose something properly acceptable as a high-level performance with optimal results. These are daily or even continuous posts; moreover, they rely on uninterrupted maintenance of the 'online' status. The condition of being always connected and available seems to indicate, at a first glance, the current stage of a society reigned by the principles of communication, technology and information. In this case, although, it is not a simple information, but a high-level performance that imply a mandatory exposition and increasingly stressing and suffocating noteworthiness rather than a free and transparent access to information. Moreover, the sensation of being suffocated does not purely and simply arise, in these cases, from oppressive systems in which the inhibition of existence and individual performance is alien to subjectivity. Rather, it is a complex process of self-coercion in which the individual demands more and more from itself, exhausting and depleting all of his or her own strengths and creative powers.

Considering this emergent scenario, the present theorical study aims to comprehend the violent effects that arise from the ultra-exposition of subjects in social media and in the everyday-life of capitalism (Guattari & Rolnik 1996), stressing its outcomes in the social collectivity. Many diagnostic studies point to these scenarios (Han, 2014a, 2014b, 2015, 2017a, 2017b; Žižek, 2012). The feature of this paper consists in spotting specifically the affective dimensions triggered by the naturalized dissemination of sad passions, as defined by Spinoza (2017). Therefore, this study is divided in two parts. Firstly, we will expose what we call the show-and-hide game in social media, underlining the new forms of violence it activates. Then, we will approach the contemporary scenario of capitalism as the spreader of sad passions, against the 'money can buy happiness' statement common to contemporary times. At the end of our path, we will collect sufficient arguments to hint the following diagnosis of the present time: the psychopolitical violence that traverses our everyday-life highlights destructive human passions, making our historical time increasingly sad and nihilist.

The show-and-hide game in social media: new violences taking place

Let us approach a simple case that may somehow illustrate our argument. Recently (on October 21st of 2017), a teacher in municipal school of Indaial, a small town located in the Itajaí vale, was physically attacked by a student. A news website (Tenente & Fajado, 2017) of national circulation revealed the case and, in the following days, published a series of articles describing the aggression and violence Brazilian teachers are exposed to in their workplace while practicing their profession. An article from 22nd of October published in the website revealed that, according to OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and

Development) reports from 2013, Brazil is at the top of the violence against teachers world rankings.

What interest us for the time being is a detail in the article from October 21st. It is well known that online articles allow internet users and readers to publish their opinions on the comment section. In this case, the website warns us that comments do not reflect the company's opinions and, as such, the responsibility for what is written is invested solely on the authors. In order to comment on the website, the reader is required to register using e-mail, Facebook account or WhatsApp. Specifically, in this website's case, the comments are allowed after the registration or directly through Facebook account, which allows the usage of false names – or, as Facebook calls them, 'public nicknames'. Until the 24th of October, that is, three days after the release date, the article registered exactly 1.208 comments. A considerable number, more than the simple majority, were unfavorable to the teacher. A good amount even suggested that she would be responsible for the aggression because of her ideological convictions, which readers implied by stalking the teacher's Facebook profile. It is curious, in this case, how the effort of searching for someone's life or posts is applied to blame them or not for their own suffered aggressions based on the criteria of ideological convictions. The effort is even greater when we observe that new posts and new aggressions were published, not just adding virtual aggressions to the physical ones, but also producing so many other nefarious effects: attacks to someone's image and humanistic integrity, and public disqualification based on information provided by themselves.

It would be easy to report similar cases. Specially because they multiply daily. Standing before these news – and in the name of a misguided conception of freedom of speech –, web readers prodigally comment and issue their oftentimes hateful and prejudiced opinions, instilling violent practices and transforming their comments in an exercise of violence as well, usually protected under a nickname. This is a dangerous equation lacking critical thought: if in neoliberal times, one of the most debated issues is the craving for security, how is it possible that it also permits the exercise and the proliferation of a violent act, even if 'only' in the form of speech? A paradox seems to reside in these practices. After all, the craving for security is pertinent if somehow, justified or not, a real or possible threat and violence scenario is settled: we want sanctuary to the same extent as we face this condition as a form of protection against all things that threats or may threat us. So how, once protected, we allow ourselves freely and voluntarily to violently act through written words and posts? How, allegedly protected by nicknames (what is false, in fact, since all computers are set with an IP identity that allows immediate traceability and, thus, the identification of the user), we injure others, instilling hate and inciting aggression?

Now the internet and social media are set as new 'places' to the exercise of violence, configuring what Han (2017b) calls a new topology of violence. But the most intriguing of this new topology is that it structures itself on its inherent contradiction. Differently from other forms of violence and places where it is exercised, in this case there is a contradiction between the object and the objective of violence.

Certainly, when we pay attention to the posts and its offensive and aggressive tones – to name it properly: violent tones – it is clear what is the object of these practices. In reference to the object of violence as target, that is, as something aimed at and against which all violent forces are expended, we find the subject affected by all the posted violent speech. Hence why people investigated the teacher's social media posts. But who investigated it? Everyone? Or just some, since others believed in the information and shared it indiscriminately? In these cases, it seems that the objective does not coincide with the

object. In the case we previously emphasized as exemplary, it is obvious that the target, the object of violence was the teacher. But the objective of such violence did not aim at her; to some extent, as objective, the referred teacher was irrelevant; she stands at an empty space that may be filled by any other object or target and, therefore, the violence is not personal: it is against a settled target, but it does not seek it solely and specifically.

In this sense, even if the attacks reach one person, its honor and dignity, it is not really a personal attack, since the target could be anyone, as long as it matches with certain traces of identification that constitutes it as the object of aggression. What is the objective in this case? It is to call attention to the self, to call attention to the one who executes violence, no matter if through likes or dislikes, or through directed comments pro or con the original violent or offensive comment – which may even turn into a swirling of new attacks and violence, now practiced by others. In other words, if the object of violence was the teacher, the objective was to call attention to the self as the aggressor, as the agent of violence, even if disguised under a nickname (what is another level of contradiction by itself). Our argument here is that hateful, prejudiced and aggressive speech in posts seeks to fulfil a demand of the aggressor's narcissism – whose expected success is to call the attention of others to their posts, no matter if agreeing or not. The value of web integrated posts is, in fact, as irrelevant as the object of the aggression of these posts. What matters is to record the obtained attention. It functions as a cash register for the success or failure of whoever is posting evaluative or condemning messages, including the aggressive and violent ones. Žižek (2012) defines these actions as the 'universal resentment' that results in the systemically dissemination of a predatory and destructive violence.

The narcissistic demand for attention of the aggressor points to much of its inherently violent psyche. It is no longer just a sort of violence dedicated to the other as its negative and assaulted object. It is also a direct attack on the demand of high-performance craved and chased by the subject. If we highlight the objectual indifference of the agent of violent posts, it is because we want to sustain that such agent corresponds to what Han (2017b) calls the achievement-subject of post-modernism, which is not confronted with the negativity of the Other, especially in the virtual world:

> The virtual world is poor in otherness and its resistance. In virtual spaces, the ego can basically operate without the 'reality principle', which would provide a principle of the other and of resistance. In these imaginary virtual spaces, the narcissistic ego mainly encounters itself. Virtualization and digitization are increasingly contributing to the disappearance of the real, which is notable above all for the resistance it provides (Han, 2017b, p. 71, author's emphasis).

If there is no coincidence between the object and the objective of the aggression in virtual social media, if we are facing aggressions that, paradoxically, refer to an non objectual object, then what prevails is the purpose of aggression as a form of self-promotion and quest for the optimal results of violent and aggressive performances shared in social media. If, supposedly, such results are not achieved, the psychic result is the performance of frustration; and even if desirably achieved, they turn into an absolute and unstoppable competition against the own self that may even become lethal, since it denotes a high trace of self-imposed aggression, constraining the subject even more to his super exposition, until the implosion of his Ego and his subjectivity, reduced now to the evergoing quest for higher achievements. Such subjectivity consumes itself until the complete burnout, or until another target for the attacks is found. In the former case, what matters is the survival of the performatic aggressor as such by acts of violence that approach the object as irrelevant, although it may seem the opposite. In the topologies of the past, and even in the modern,

the other is completely irrelevant, since, generally, he also presents himself as violent. I may be equally and reciprocally attacked by the other, to the same extent as I may attack him. The innovation now introduced – not necessarily replacing older topology, but adding it up – is the fact that by the absence of the object, by the absence of the other, only my own Ego is projected and idealized by my violent performance. Han acknowledges in this process the occurrence of a game of idealization:

> Basing the self on the ego ideal [...] is interpreted as an act of freedom. But in the face of the unattainable ego ideal, the self sees itself as deficient, a loser to be assailed with self-reproach. Auto-aggression develops out of the gap between the real ego and the ego ideal. The ego struggles with itself, is at war with itself. The society of positivity, which believes it has freed itself from all external compulsions, entraps itself in destructive self-compulsions. Psychic ailments such as burnout or depression, the exemplary ailments of the twenty-first century, all exhibit auto-aggressive tendencies. One does violence to oneself and exploits oneself. External violence is replaced by self-generated violence, which is more devastating because its victims imagine themselves to be free (Han, 2017b, p. 81).

But we cannot assert from this that the self-destructive effect only occurs when the performance does not achieve its goals of public self-affirmation. The self-constitution of this narcissist self-centered subjectivity seems to suffice, to the extent of refracting any minimal trace of the phantom of otherness – although emptied of objective or affective content (the other to whom violence is directed is not objectively and subjectively hated, but ignored and neglected, in the form of an 'another-other', as well as in the form of 'another-me').

The self-destruction of the self is also caused by the exhaustion before the so craved and desired recognition of the community of virtual spectators that provide 'likes' and 'dislikes'. It occurs as an overdose, required more and more, until nothing else is sufficient, until the level of collapse. As Han says:

> The subject of achievement society is characterized by narcissistic self-referentiality. Because it receives no gratification from the other, it is forced to achieve more and more. Though the negativity of the other is still present in competitive relationships, the subject lacks this negativity because, after all, it competes with itself and tries to outdo itself. It must run a devastating race, endlessly 'circling itself' until it collapses (Han, 2017b, p. 101, author's emphasis).

To some extent, this idea corresponds to what Žižek (2003) expressly recognizes as a reference to bad taste, although it does not undermines its intriguing and very precise meaning: "[…] I can risk the claim that the predominant liberal mode of subjectivity today is *Homo sucker*: while he tries to exploit and manipulate others, he ends up being the ultimate sucker himself" (Žižek, 2003, p. 90). Thus, when the subject acts individually or in some kind of mass collectivity (it seems this is the *modus operandi* of the internet users who share in viral scale unread posts without checking its veracity), he becomes his own enemy. Not an unreal enemy. But a perniciously effective enemy, since invisible and unrecognizable to himself as such (Žižek, 2003).

Then, we need to comprehend in what extent the socioeconomical organization of present capitalism contributes to the design and dissemination of these violent subjective components whose feasibility are inherent to processes of idealization, narcissism, and expectation for social recognition at any costs.

Capitalism and the dissemination of sad passions

Another point of view to analyze psychopolitics is less obvious, although socially diffused: it is found in a common statement that runs through different Brazilian social strata: 'Money can't buy happiness: it delivers'. The frequency of its pronouncement denotes some kind of collective belief in the natural bonding between happiness and capital. On the face of it, we may query: who benefits from this all too widespread and naturalized idealization of capital in our historical time? What are the dimensions of existence contributing to consolidate this belief?

What we claim in this section is the idea that capital – beyond the commodities and knowledges it enabled for human beings since its historical consolidation – also brought a series of not so realized sad affections, or at least not so recognized by its destructive, brute and undermining facet (Sassen, 2016). Here, we follow Spinoza (2017), who presents a detailed analysis on the human affections and passions in his *Ética,* vehemently denouncing the dissemination of sad passions as the promoter of the undermining of existence. In his special approach on sadness, Spinoza considers that

> Sadness decreases and restrain the acting powers of men, that is, the efforts by which men struggles to endure in his being. Therefore, sadness is contrary to this effort; and all of the efforts of sad men seeks to put it away. The bigger the sadness, the more quota of acting powers men must be able to find in order to counter it (Spinoza, 2017, p. 123).

We may notice that sad passions set men into a double effort: 1) an attempt to free themselves from all that is sad, spending time and energy on that purpose; and at the same time 2) an undermining of life, whose powers may be invested in joys and encounters favorable to existence, but now are devoted to the struggle against sadness.

How Spinoza's considerations may interact with our understanding of the disseminated saddening values of capitalism? In a class on Spinoza's work taught in Vincennes between 1978 and 1981, Deleuze claimed: "[…] when I am poisoned, my power of being affected is completely accomplished, but it is accomplished only because my power of acting tends towards zero; that is, it is inhibited" (2009, p. 40). Is not precisely this inhibition of the power of living that is tied to the values of capitalism, among which we may highlight competitivity, security and the petty accumulation? Our argument follows this direction. But it assigns us to the task of demonstrating how it happens. Because competitivity, security and petty accumulation are not easily associated with sadness. On the contrary, because its immediate effects grant access to certain satisfactions diluted in everyday-life, it is hard to associate them with sadness. Thus, we must demonstrate how these satisfactions are settled.

Deleuze (2009, p. 161) explains it as "[…] strangely satisfactory happiness […]" that acts on the grounded stage of sadness. The grounded sadness inherent to each one of these practices diffused by the market can be found in the obstacles, restrictions, metrics and even in the shared offenses (the same ones we have exposed in the first part of this paper) they set as obligations. Therefore, the promises of happiness loaded with "[…] the joys of hatred, bigger as they are, will never suppress the tinny and dirty sadness from where you departed; those are joys of compensation" (Deleuze, 2009, p. 161)

Let us see how this occurs, firstly, in competitivity. Beyond a satisfaction rooted on the power to transform nature, knowledge and social relations, which would be achievable in the context of work, competitivity demands an infinite comparison with another worker,

with the market and, sometimes, with ourselves. Therefore, the definition of goals to reach and surpass hold off from the active exercise of power in creative work, binding professionals from different sectors in a reinless common quest for surpassing ourselves and others. To promote this, some organizations even create internal programs of competitivity, publicizing whoever surpass or does not reach the goals. What remains for the ones who fail is the requirement for a greater effort or, in some radical cases, humiliation, harassment or being fired (Forrester, 1997).

The surpassment of ourselves and others, however, does not imply the experiment of a body able to surprise, taste and explore the intensities of the encounters, which would let unanswered Spinoza's (2017, p. 101) question: "[…] what can a body do?". The surpassment, on the contrary, is a program predetermined by organizational goals that aims exclusively at the systematical exploration of the human being. The means to achieve those goals also culminate in sad passions, since the ethical and political dimensions of the performed actions may be widely questioned, leading to betrayal, conflict, vengeance and manipulation of others. Here are the 'miserable happiness' pointed out by Deleuze (2009). And he continues his analysis describing what he calls the man of hatred and resentment, that is, "[…] the one whose joys are poisoned by sadness from the beginning" (Deleuze, 2009, p. 161). In this sense, he alerts us: "[…] when you possess the sentiment of hatred, always look its grounded sadness, that is, the hinder and undermined powers of acting" (Deleuze, 2009, p. 161). What would this hatred be in the scenario of competitive market? Harvey describes it:

> […] those who accumulate more quickly tend to drive out of business those who accumulate at a slower rate. This implies a perpetual incentive for individual capitalists to increase the rate of accumulation through increasing exploitation in the labour process relative to the social average rate of exploitation. The implications of this for the labourer are legion (Harvey, 2013, p. 77).

There are no doubts concerning the interventions of socioeconomical organization of capitalism over humanity, fomenting technology and mobility, for example. However, the harmful subjective effects, although striking and violent, are still unrealized and unanalyzed by a critical approach on the affects. They show us sad passions hard to accept and to overcome.

The quest for security diffused in everyday-life social relations is one of the unfoldings of the competitive passion all too present in laboring contexts, but also outside. The expectation for ensured stability in work, but also in love relationships, business, friendships, among many others aspects of existence, indicates a human being neglecting life and its powers of variation, rupture and chance. The also idealized attempt of avoiding risks obligates this kind of human to conceive the future as a planned chart, enabling the emergence of sad, disqualified and nihilist lives (Carvalho, 2014). After all, through the lens of the paranoid security, failure is not an option. In this ideal of control marked by the constant search for stability and security, fatigue and disqualification are set in a fluid world. Precisely because we do not know what a body can do, the experience of encounters does not fit the chart, turning the security passion into fear and hatred towards the unplanned, the open and the unusual.

Deleuze (2009) reminds us that power is distant from planning, it exists 'in act' and is directly linked to the present forces in every instant of existence and to what we are able to do with them in each moment. The presumption of dominating those forces and predefining power is, at minimum, omnipotent and, again, it enables the instalment of other kinds of sad passions, as the resentment towards the fluidity of existence, but also as the ambition of

controlling the forces of life acting through the randomness of the encounters. The attempt to control what is not controllable, that is, the variation of affects in everyday-life encounters, causes the "[…] subtraction of a portion of my powers, which does not belong to me anymore" (Deleuze, 2009, p. 163).

As such, what we observe is the setting of the exhaustion of energy by protocols, agendas, evaluations, security systems and monitoring technologies over self and others. They uninterruptedly connect the subject to the risks and dangers of existence – including the risks of being negatively quoted in social media – and, in addition, they demand time-consuming work in order to achieve the financial support required for sustenance. In the name of fear, the disqualification of the self and the other recurrently occurs and spreads over other domains of life: various specialists are summoned and authorized to speak on behalf of the subject – usually in the name of biopolitical security – defining what must or must not be done in every moment.

In the name of security, consumption reaches every corner of Earth, despite the lack of any analysis about their effects over nature. Thus, we reached the last element of psychopolitical violence we listed in order to analyze the sad passions induced by capitalism: the reinless accumulation of goods and services. In respect to the goods, the human omnipotence to explore nature despite the minimum consideration of any of its effects over nature is very clear. This exploration brutally advances in the form of deforestation of wildernesses, pollution of sea and rivers, extinction of animals and systematic pollution of the atmosphere. We are close to destroy the basic conditions of existence: food, water and air. Without them, though, human life is simply denied.

Scientists from several different research fields are continually alerting about the limits and losses caused by this exploration, although unsuccessfully (Marques, 2015). It is as the "[…] little joys of compensation […]", emphasized by Deleuze (2009, p. 167), could disseminate some kind of blindness in face of the disaster announced by different voices (Beck, 2013; Stengers, 2015; Sassen, 2016). By the unfolding of sad passions, as ambition, greed and omnipotence, we are even more distant from the effects our actions produce over nature and, by extent, over humans, insisting on denying the necessity of "[…] discovering the right amount […] selecting […] finding, by means of experience, what are the relationships composing my relationships, and then drawing conclusions from this" (Deleuze, 2009, p. 175). Blind, we insist on "[…] the joys of marketing" (Deleuze, 1992, p. 226) and we adhere to the consumption passion that only increases the depleting of the planet.

If throughout all 20th century and the beginning of the 21st we were able to produce a way of life marked by the sad passions of capitalism, and if at the same time we created different apparatuses in order to disseminate such passions as advantages and to translate them as purchasable happiness (even though this purchase revolves around the three violences we described), we are, at minimum, facing an Spinozian impasse: how to revert this psychopolitical violent condition, seeking in happiness and empowering of social encounters new forms of expression and binding?

Final considerations

The sadness generated by the psychopolitical violence induced by capitalism, obviously, is not restricted to the three dimensions we enlisted here. What concerned us in

this setting of issues was the demonstration that the equation happiness-rating-consumption is politically closer to the liquidation of our existence and our planet then to the consolidation of a powerful life. The difficulty to foresee the brutal unfoldings of this equation is by itself a subjective component that, as alerted by Guattari and Rolnik (1996), was constructed and shaped by the context of capitalism, which seeks to produce individual and judgmental ways of life.

The term 'capitalistic' used by the authors suggests both a singularity and an alarm: we are not just talking about an economical organization. This is a wider approach involving components of subjectivation grounded on sadness that, by means of investment of desires, are able to produce atrocities lacking any ethical and political involvements with life.

Demanding from ourselves and others a high-performance, intending to reach optimal results in the totality of our existence, submitting all of our lived experiences to the judgment and evaluation of the gears of social media, and projecting ourselves on the basis of the likes and dislikes of polemical opinions: all of this leads to the undermining of our subjectivity and to the nihilist burnout of ourselves. In this scenario, we observe that the incitation of contemporary capitalism to high-results and accomplishments ends up producing new forms of violence and new places to its exercise beyond those already known from the past. The result of such contemporary capitalism is sadness. On the one hand, it is an effect of the psychopolitical violence; on the other hand, however, it is the sole practice of everyday violence, since this is the undermining of the powers of existence, reduced to performances seeking the continuous visualization, applause or booing. In this case, sadness is the sole undermining of powers because it is a movement of self-inflicted violence impelled by the subject on himself.

This kind of violence does not occur in the dark, discretely. On the contrary, it is exercised on the basis of a complex, subtle and craved reciprocal system of communication, transparency, overexposure and super exposure of the self as an (elusive) form of insuring safety and protection against the possible threats of the other, but also demanding the recognition of the other as a form of self-affirmation. Thus, such violence can only be defined as obscene or pornographic (Han, 2017a, 2017b). After all, its distinctive trait is the performative overexposure of the self that, as we saw earlier, leads to anxiety, either by the risk of the indifference of the other as spectator or by the excessive demands of self-exposure. But this is a new kind of anxiety marked by the tedious and depressive weariness that may lead to the fatal collapse.

In this sense, maybe Žižek (2012) is right when he claims that the end of times will be defined by the barbarism against the self, the other human beings and against nature. He believes that this is already an ongoing process. Our challenge now is to create new values able to expand life despite the diffused bounding of the mere communicational evaluations grounded on narcissism.

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