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**The Thalassocratic Revolution
The Possibilization of Historical Writing
after the Event of the Death of God
ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS**

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I am sketching this thesis as a double challenge (nevertheless, in large, the thesis may be situated under the genus of philosophy of history, but the "eponymous" thesis – which lends the name – is a profoundly historicist one: a historical narration). In the first place, I want to uphold a thesis realised under the influence of Gordon Childe's school of Marxist archeology, integrating a new concept of social revolution (the *Thalassocratic Revolution*) in our narrations about the becoming of this world, in order to explain from another perspective what renders possible its actual configuration (geopolitical, cultural, social). A large part of the thesis is a work of methodology, whereby I am trying to explain how I am constituted by ideology as a subject of knowledge in the framework of this narration, what are my worries concerning this domain of activity and with regard with my own historiographic endeavor. By accepting the thesis of Althusser, according to which the purpose of ideology is to construct the [historical]subject, I must assume my ideology (for as much as such an endeavor, such an introspection, is possible), must assume this "part of the world to which I belong". Even from the perspective of Derridean deconstruction I must discover the nudity in the object's event, simultaneously with the deconstruction of the subject of this endeavor. As such, any endeavor of archaeology of knowledge should have this duality.

I don't know if I may argue that it was me who has found the thematic of this research, or rather that it was it that has found me, or maybe even that it happened in both ways simultaneously (that we reciprocally found each other; it began as an idea formed during my second year at the university, from the formative framework offered by the different discourse analyses of various texts). Even if the idea was sketched out during my bachelor studies, I did not insist then on the theme, although I have realized even then what I consider to be the importance and novelty of this thematic horizon.

I have always been fascinated by prehistory and the Antique Period of humanity, desiring at first to become an archaeologist, but, gradually, ideational challenges have sutured me to the philosophy of history. This horizon of philosophy, although not methodically approached through formative courses, has attracted for the depth of reach of its discourse and its discussed problematic (due to the fact that it has raised my awareness to issues concerning my field of activity). Indisputably, the passage towards the philosophy of history was and continues to be a great challenge, especially as a completely autodidact study (the philosophical language of ontology and phenomenology, the language of psychoanalysis etc., are other kind of discourses as compared with historical narration, they use other *access passwords*).

The duality of the thesis lends it also a multidisciplinary character, being both an endeavor of historiography, as well as one of philosophy of history (it may be that the accent lies more on the latter). On the one side, it is a thesis from the field of symbolic geographies and of the comparative study of civilizations, realized on the traces of dialectical processualism, the second thesis being more of a phenomenological approach on the becoming of historical knowledge-structures as an imperative necessity for resuming in *Zeitgeist* the discourse on knowledge.

The main thesis (although its primordial importance to the philosophical thesis is questionable), announced also in the title of the work, is the *Thalassocratic Revolution*, the thesis through which I am maintaining that the origin of our actual Occident is to be found in a social revolution that has approximately began in the Mediterranean of the second millennium before the Common Era (B.C.). I do not affirm that the Occidental world has appeared then, only that those Mediterranean events (societies) have possibilitated the actual configuration of Occidental societies and, through the phenomenon of globalization, they possibilitate the actual world of today (rendering it possible as such).

I am appending this thesis on the *Thalassocratic Revolution* to previous theses that consider the becoming of the *historical environment* through human practice: the Neolithic Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. As it will be highlighted during the ideational development of my thesis, there were previous authors who had been close to bring-forth from concealment this revolution that I am defining, only that in their case there were just isolated statements, they did not seek out the system in its historical genealogy, they have looked contextually instead of in depth at this configuration of events. Hegel, Marx, Toynbee, Braudel, Paul Faure, Sabatino Moscati and others have intuited this social revolution (but just like a kind of *Fata Morgana*, just as a fleeting glimpse), without constructing a proper theory, without integrating the events into a system, into a logically coherent duct (they have not created a narration in this sense, they have not presented the becoming of this event; they have only made meteoric observations of it).

I wish to prove that the Mediterranean societies of Antiquity (Crete, Phoenicia, Ellada) delineate *another way of life* of the social-being in the world, other structures of coagulation (political structures, and I accentuate the *political* character of these societies), that the economy of the Mediterranean was were the dawn of the becoming of the Occident took place (the birthplace of our current capitalist society). Exactly in this sense, a sub-chapter of Michel Molat du Jourdin's book *Europe and the Sea* carries the suggestive title of "The Mediterranean, lung and wet nurse for Ancient and Medieval Europe". Both Jean

Favier, respectively Arnold Toynbee, uphold this lineage of our current capitalism in the city-states of the Mediterranean, but they only mention it fleetingly, without emphasizing its genealogy; nevertheless, their observations/arguments are proven to be useful in confirming my thesis, as it will be shown in my work. I believe that Hegel was the first who emphasized the existence of a specific becoming, a maritime horizon that engenders differences from other societies; practically the German philosopher understood this Thalassocratic Revolution, but without dwelling at all upon it, as if he has fleetingly glimpsed it in the manner of a bringing-forth followed immediately by the forgetting of it, nevertheless he often did refer to a foundational import of the sea vs. land confrontation.

With this thesis I do not intend to cover the becoming of our current Occident in its entirety (it would be too large a task, or, more correctly, an impossible one), but just to delineate in large this becoming, to bring it forth to presence. I am assuming the authenticity of my endeavor, by trying to theorize a coherent system, although naturally not a non-ideological one (a scientific endeavor doesn't become more scientific, more impartial, more objective, by hiding its own ideological grounds), but one inscribed in the framework of an assumed ideology (I am following, as I have already mentioned, the duct of the school of Marxist ideology of Gordon Childe, and, as such, my demonstrations follow the argumentation method of the Australian archaeologist who has synthesized and debated the concept of the *Neolithic Revolution*). Even if the thesis of the *Thalassocratic Revolution* is following the logic of the endeavor of Gordon Childe (in his turn, tributary to the evolutionist thesis from the B5 fragment of Democritus – the Presocratic philosopher considered that man was initially a hunter-gatherer animal, lacking language and any knowledge of production activities, but necessity and fear forced him to associate with others and to develop his understanding; with the invention of language and of the use of fire, the history of mankind has begun, with all the discoveries that followed; the becoming of the human *praxis* is owed to intelligence and reason), it is a thesis of a profoundly innovative character, there being no other historiographic discourse to develop this perspective (at least I have never encountered one).

The secondary thesis, foreshadowed in the subtitle of my work (*The Possibilization of Historical Writing after the Event of the Death of God*), starts from the affirmation that there cannot be historical truth after *the death of God*, after the de-structuring of the Aristotelian correspondence-truth realized by understanding that the Word cannot contain the world as such (in its totality), and, moreover, that it cannot guarantee it as Truth

(narration is losing its legitimatory force, although not also its efficacy, as I shall be showing at the end of my thesis).

Nevertheless, upon truth and the contextual theories on Truth I shall insist more, especially through a genealogy of these theories, by showing the historical framework of their becoming; I shall affirm that truth is necessarily historical (any genealogy is history), therefore I shall be led to deny my starting assumption. The originality of my endeavor consists in that it realizes a phenomenology of historical becoming under the imprinting of materialist dialectic and by relocating Lacanianism in the field of historiography (application in another field and with a different approach).

I shall affirm that there is Truth and post-truth (there is effective *Poesis* and *Praxis*) and that every act of understanding requires a [re]taking in possession, because the phenomenon of understanding is dialectically structured (as it was said by Marx and Thomas Kuhn, but also Lacan and Žižek, respectively even by Husserl – and I don't believe I am forcing Husserlian phenomenology by affirming this); moreover, without such taking into possession as the different, truth could not be effective (ultimately, I also wish for the efficacy of my thesis because I do *believe* in its coherence).

In this part of my work I am debating more theories on truth, using the works of Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, William James, Karl Marx, Adam Schaff, Giorgio Agamben, Karl Popper, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Michel Foucault, Martin Heidegger, etc., attempting to construct my own perspective, certainly a perspective influenced by the whole formative endeavor.

Beyond the formal framework of the two theses, but integrated to them, there is also a political and politicized discourse. This is exactly in assent with the principles of Marxist historical dialectic materialism, which, according to Lukács, does not intend to reconstruct the past, but to understand the mode in which the present is structured, the becoming of its possibilizations (the becoming of the *historical environment*) that delineate the *here/now-human* world.

I have structured the thesis in four chapters and several sub-chapters adjacent to each chapter. This structure was not clear from the start, I did not know exactly the form/structure in which I was to consolidate the duct of my phrases. The organization of my discourse took a final stage.

The first chapter, *Beyond Truth*, announced as *prolegomena*, delineates my starting presuppositions, my formative influences. It surely does not do so exhaustively, since I cannot reach such ideal perfection and there remain, more than certainly, unannounced

presuppositions, nevertheless these will be precisely delineated within the next chapters (even when not disclosed with the express intention of disclosing, and they stay somewhat hidden, but, possibly, decipherable; I cannot boast of a self-knowledge that could pierce all the recesses of the ideologies that determine me as a subject of knowledge, and therefore assume them in their totality).

In this part I am partially explaining *the event of the Death of God* (as the presupposition of the inexistence of historical truth, the loss of every guarantee regarding the correspondence between real and reality, between event and retelling), what signifies this event in the perspective of Agamben (in the last chapter I also describe the Heideggerian perspective on this event), and I describe the different theories on truth that are concurrent in the narrations pertaining to knowledge, respectively historical knowledge (correspondence-truth, coherency-truth, pragmatic truth, the Foucauldian lightning-truth and partially the *Aletheia* of bringing-forth).

Here I am also beginning to structure the philosophical thesis of my work, which will appear only at its end in all its vitality, by debating the themes of the historical real, historical reality and historical imaginary, under the influence of the post-Freudian psychoanalytic school, by referring to the theories of Lacan and Žižek (but without entering its thematic profoundness; I am attempting, even if without total success, or it may be that I am not trying categorically enough, with a capital letter, not to write the afterword to my own foreword).

I am also analyzing and criticizing discourses on history and truth from the works of various historians (especially from French historiography), seeking to discover enunciations of power in what presents itself as being non-positivism, but often structures itself still *as being* the truth, in the sense of a willed correspondence with the past event (the enunciation of truth as Aristotelian correspondence is sign of a positivist will – a will for Truth, where Truth is power), leading to an alleged reconstitution and recuperation of it, considered as being able to reach more veracity through adopting a multidisciplinary approach, instead of appealing strictly to the document, the appeal that was praised by Ranke: *letting the past to speak for itself* was the ideology of the first historiographic positivism; the second positivism uses a multidisciplinary approach allegedly able to reconstruct the past from joining the perspectives of the social sciences, trying to reach a reconstruction of past real life as such (fears, beliefs, ideals, society) instead of statues in a museum dwelled by ghosts.

Furthermore, I am describing the effective character of the act of historical revealing, an efficacy indifferent to the reality or unreality of the respective historical retelling – an aspect that will later serve as proof that any bringing-forth to presence is a form of *Praxis*.

The second chapter, *Dialectics and historical materialism*, appears as a necessity in the construction of my main thesis, since the thesis of the *Thalassocratic Revolution* is argued in the duct of the historical materialist historiography, similarly to the famous thesis of Gordon Childe, the *Neolithic Revolution*. The fact that I am situated on the ideological ground of Marxism will become apparent, it being required by the endeavor and argumentation of my thesis, although I am resonating with the dialectical principles of knowledge also outside this imperative demand made by the interior structure of the thesis, since the philosophical thesis of my work, enunciated in the final chapter, also bears the mark of Marxian dialectics.

In this part I am explaining dialectical/historical materialism, going beyond the crass simplifications to which it has been subjected, not only by the denigrators of Marx, but mostly by those that have proclaimed themselves as supporters of the interests of the proletariat (a part of the neo-Marxists). Dialectical movement implies relation and not a Manichaeism of opposites, it regards historical environment and man as being in continuous transformation, and this continuous transformation of the relation leaves no place for a knowledge that would posit itself as eternally valid. For dialectics nothing is eternal, immutable. In large, I am criticizing here the aberrant socialist realism that followed in the wake of the October Revolution, with its obviously positivist and non-dialectical discourse *desired* as scientific in its essence.

Moreover, I am explaining the transfer of dialectics, from the order of right, at Hegel, into the order of the political economy, at Marx (from Heavens to Earth), and the Marxist critique of the Hegelian philosophy of right, with its imposition of the particular as being the general in the pyramidal structure of power relations (power-knowledge), an aspect that defines the corporate thought of (not only) the bourgeoisie in both its hypostases: as bureaucracy and as civil society. I am also bringing forth the critique of equality made by Marx, accentuating the bourgeois, homogenizer character implied by the ideological principle of equality (contrary to some neo-Marxists who would uphold equality).

As it can be seen, this part of my thesis is eminently critical; I am not merely presenting dialectics (historical materialism) or different discourses of Marx and

respectively other authors (Marxists or not), but I am foremost criticizing the different contra- or pro-Marxist positions, and I am arguing the reasons why my thesis moulds onto this historicist ideology: the means of production *as parts of the historical environment* are structuring specifically the different societies. Man cannot be torn apart from his *praxis*, history being nothing else than this simultaneous becoming of human beings together with their historical environment through their actions (through the effects of historical events *as parts of the historical environment*).

The next chapter, the third, contains the eponymous thesis, announced by the title of the work as a whole: the *Thalassocratic Revolution*. In this part I am proving that the origins of our current political, social and economic configuration have their genealogy in the way that the Mediterranean societies have structured themselves over two millennia ago. The mode of production and the emergence of a new mode of social (and political) organization of these ancient Mediterranean states (Minoan/Mycenaean Crete, Phoenicia, the Hellenic city-states) have delineated a new kind of way of life for the historical-social-being. These ancient societies have gradually departed from the agricultural mode of production that followed the Neolithic Revolution, and have structured themselves as societies of craftsmen and commerce (possessing an entirely different dynamic). Major civilizations (in the sense of cultural-political hegemony!), in the terminology of Toynbee, have appeared there, which did not base their existence, and implicitly their mode of structuring/organizing, on agrarian means of production (these societies cannot be subsumed under the civilizing model of the Neolithic Revolution, they were not agrarian societies; there has started a becoming towards something different, other means of production were possibilitating the path towards a new horizon of acts of civilization that has appeared within Thalassocratic society).

The political character of our current world, the world we presently live in, was born in these societies: the (pre-Occidental) political *polis* was opposed to the *oikos*-state of the Oriental despots both in the narrations regarding the discourse upon freedom (which was born then), as well as in the historical structures of political/social organization.

I argue that the city was not born with the unique temple, but that its genesis lies in the moment it opposes political walls to the outside world (it becomes distinct as consciousness; in Marxist terms, its city-dwelling people gain the class consciousness of being citizens). The *thalassocratic* city is what lends the political character of the *Agora*, where the citizen is a subject of the *ius*, of freedoms (rights). Exactly the political character is what differentiates it from the territories surrounding it. The thalassocratic state is no

longer the *oikos* of the sovereign, having a public character (even if dominated by a plutocratic aristocracy: the Roman *Respublica* was aptly named as such). This *thalassocratic* city-state will later universalize itself in the modern political-state through what I call “the *ius* transfer of the city walls (the fortified walls of the city-state) to the border of the political-state”.

In the last chapter, *Historical writing and the Death of God*, I am trying to discover if there can still exist such a thing as historical truth after the loss of correspondence between the object (the object of history, the event) and narration (historical writing). The problem that I discover is that I have put the problem in an erroneous manner (similarly to a large part of post-modern philosophers). The truth of the narration (the truth of socio-symbolic reality) may have lost its credibility after this event of the Death of the Word, this being the reason for which there can co-exist a series of alternative discourses that are effective (hyperhistory), but nevertheless these narrations continue to objectivate, they continue to produce sense, rendering them an effective part of the becoming of the historical *being-here* (*Dasein*). Of course, this enables the existence of a heterogeneous diversity of non-paradigmatic alternative discourses (social sciences cannot reach a political consensus, they are situated in hyperhistory), the natural language of the historian being political language.

But the force of truth is to be found in the *praxis* that lends society its dynamics, its vitality, its continuous becoming (as *poiesis*), the possibilization of its [re]newal. I am breaking, on the wake of Marx and Heidegger, with truth considered as correspondence between that-what-is-as-it-is and that-what-is-said-about-what-is, regarded as part of symbolic reality – as it is since Aristotle –, and I seek its vitality in the force of objectivation of the historical event (as what-renders-possible), in the un-transcendental character of *praxis* (the essence of truth is to be found in the dynamics of creation, in the human practice of *making* the world *become*).

This Heideggerian *Aletheia* does not pertain to a correctness of representation belonging to the symbolic order, it is not Aristotelian correspondence, and neither does it belong to the possibility of scientific re-experimentation, since in this last case it would be a forgetting of truth (certitude does not seek for the new, it lacks the vitality of the search, of the taking out from hiding, it no longer wants to create, its destiny presenting itself as an undifferentiated totality) – it is a bringing-forth (as *poiesis*), it possibilitates the totality of historical events as a world and their presence for the *being-here*.

Historical movement, both as eventuality (in itself) and as *bringing-forth to presence in the Zeitgeist*, is a continuous process of reciprocal sedimentation of the real, of reality and of the imaginary, the *historical environment* determining the *human being-here*, who, in their turn, determine their *historical environment*. The action is reciprocal. Therefore, historical movement necessitates a continuous *bringing-forth to presence* of the appropriations that regard any historical event. All events are historical.

I consider that this historicist relocation of Lacanian theory in a dialectical phenomenology of becoming constitutes a useful different approach on the mode in which we may regard history as a continuous process, as evolution or even as progress (but without assigning a value connotation to the term progress).

At the end, I cannot rightly state that I have covered all the possible directions of such an enquiry, since certainly its horizon remains open. The thesis of the *Thalassocratic Revolution* opens the way for further in-depth research (possibly thematic in the frame of this long term) that may scrutinize more keenly the maritime societies and the marks that these societies have imprinted upon our present. Nevertheless, it is certain that the thesis of *the reciprocal sedimentation of the real, the reality and the imaginary* opens up a multitude of horizons for approaching historical becoming, this theory is by itself an opening, its dialectical nature cannot create endings, it cannot place, at the end of the phrase, a final point.

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