

**studi
germanici**



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English **2013**

Karl Marx and Ernst Jünger: a cohabitation

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Do you believe your own theory?

– No, Stephen said promptly.

(James Joyce, *Ulysses*)

The person can be an individual, but also a type

Historically communism fell for many reasons; philosophically for only one – the absence of an adequate theory of the communist subject.¹ Communism had been constructed, but had left behind within itself an inadequate subject – the individual or *Bürger* –, who immediately lacked “vital oxygen” (*Lebensluft*).²

Behind the historical-political chess pieces there is a theoretical deficit, which, in any event, remains unresolved, and which even contentiously upsets the hypothesis:

El subjetivismo en política es siempre excluyente, siempre particularista, incluso allí donde el sujeto se postula como sujeto comunitario, e incluso allí donde el sujeto se autopostula como representante de lo universal.³

“No sujeto”: the warning, elevated to a theory, runs the risk of dissolving within its own listlessness, extinguishing itself through autophagia. Which is not without purpose – in terms of efficiency a fluidified subject responds to the economic norms of consumption.

¹ *Communitistic, communist*: the adjectival form is connected to doctrinal questions, the noun to historical facts. From the development of the line of reasoning it will become clear that the first form is preferable to the second without exceptions.

² Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter. Gestalt und Herrschaft* [1932], in *Sämtliche Werke* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1978 ss.), vol. VIII, section 2, p. 59.

³ Alberto Moreiras, *Línea de sombra. El no sujeto de lo político* (Santiago: Ediciones Palinodia, 2006), p. 12. A detailed and ample discussion of Moreiras’ (and other authors’ dislocated by the same “line of shadow”) are examined in Bruon Bosteels’, *The Actuality of Communism* (New York: Verso, 2011).



Is it better therefore to start up again from a more static base and ask how to inhabit (correctly) the communal home? In other words: how order the communal thing in an egalitarian sense? The person can be an individual, but also a type; communistic inhabitation reclaims the types.⁴ The investigation of the type, formalized in Ernst Jünger's *Arbeiter*, unveils and reveals a supplementary doctrine for communistic inhabitation; here, therefore, we will test the hypothesis of integrating some typological profiles to the Marxist use of the concepts of *Gattungswesen*⁵ and *Kommunismus*.

Intellectual connections

“Ego and Alter Ego, ‘egoism’ and ‘Communism’:⁶ the theoretical shape of the communistic experience slowly emerges from behind this notion of otherness and filters between the pages of a text that anticipates the publication of the 1844 *Manuscripts* in Paris by just a hair. From the celebrated *Conclusion* of the first book of the *Démocratie en Amérique* we learn that “everything tends to become the same among men” and that “all peoples”, in the future to come, “will appear to walk toward unity”:

⁴ The Heideggerian sense of “inhabit”, it is important to clarify from the beginning, is connected to another plane; cf. *Bauen Wohnen Denken* [1952], in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 2000), p. 143: “*Der Grundzug des Wohnen* [...] durchzieht [...] in seiner ganzen Weite [...] sobald wir daran denken, daß im Wohnen das Menschsein beruht und zwar im Sinne des Aufenthalts der Sterblichen auf der Erde”. By now, living on the earth is not the same thing as inhabiting the genre, the genus, or the *Gestalt des Arbeiters*. Terrestrial living is conservative and historical-traditional (the technical age is not the fracture but the “oblivion” of continuity); it, in any case, is rather long – to use an expression of Walter Benjamin’s – to “explode the *continuum* of history”, in *Über den Begriff der Geschichte* [1940], in “Die Neue Rundschau”, 61 (1950), p. 568: “Das Bewußtsein, das Kontinuum der Schichte aufzusprengen, ist den revolutionären Klassen im Augenblick ihrer Aktion eigentümlich”.

⁵ As to the notion of the *Gattungswesen* or “genus-being” (of Feuerbachian coinage) see Gerd Dicke’s rigorous, and still today unsurpassed reconnaissance, *Der Identitätsgedanke bei Feuerbach und Marx* (Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1966), p. 55ss. Cf. also Roberto Finelli, *Un parricidio mancato. Hegel e il giovane Marx* (Turin: Bollati-Boringhieri, 2004).

⁶ Ludwig A. Feuerbach, *Fragmente zur Charakteristik meines philosophischen Curriculum vitae*, in *Sämtliche Werke* (Leipzig: Otto Wigand Verlag, 1846), vol. II, p. 413: “Ego und



Des liens intellectuels unissent entre elles les parties les plus éloignées de la terre, et les hommes ne sauraient rester un seul jour étrangers les uns aux autres, ou ignorants de ce qui se passe dans un coin quelconque de l'univers: aussi remarque-t-on aujourd'hui moins de différence entre les Européens et leurs descendants du Nouveau-Monde, malgré l'Océan qui les divise, qu'entre certaines villes du treizième siècle qui n'étaient séparées que par une rivière.⁷

Everything moves, to use Benedetto Croce's terms, in the direction of "egualizzazione" [*egalitization*].⁸ But the process, as Croce himself states, in reality has another more dramatic result, a result that the category of egalitization, like a cover worn by too much use, glosses over with difficulty: "Communism is at the heart of Tocqueville's preoccupations".⁹

Egalitization suggests the image of a compact and undifferentiated mass, and in this guise corresponds to a largely mediatized representation of communism. The paradox consists in the fact that this representation finished with the establishment of a "common" perception of otherness. The *monstrum* has become ordinary. In other words, within itself the global market has cancelled every trace of otherness. In this context communism becomes *locus communis* and performs a dual function: it prefigures and simultaneously frustrates the nightmare of a limitation of the markets.

Slick pompadours

A typological perspective reveals that the essential fact in communist discourse is the hierarchical organization of structural elements. The hierarchy retraces the singularity at the heart of homogeneity and signals the differences within "arid egalitarianism".

Alter Ego, 'Egoismus' und 'Communismus', dem beide sind so unzertrennlich, als *Kopf* und *Herz*. Ohne Egoismus hast Du *keinen Kopf*, und ohne Communismus *kein Herz*?

⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la démocratie en Amérique* (Paris: Pagnerre Éditeur, 1848), vol. II, p. 412.

⁸ Benedetto Croce, *Storia d'Europa* [1932] (Bari: Laterza, 1965), p. 132.

⁹ *Ibid.*



One must thank Martin Heidegger, who already in January of 1940 organized a “discussion” on the *Arbeiter* for a “circle of colleagues”,¹⁰ for the precise definition of this concept:

Der Typus vereinigt in sich gewandelt das Einzigartige, das vormals vom Individuum beansprucht wurde, *und* das Gleichartige und Allgemeine, das die Gemeinschaft fordert. Aber das Einzigartige des “Typus” besteht in einer klaren Durchgängigkeit derselben Prägung, die gleichwohl keine öde Gleichmacherei duldet, sondern einer eigentümlichen Rangordnung bedarf.¹¹

Jünger’s *Arbeiter* does not cease to evoke the sense of this “particular hierarchy”, which, above all, has an external application. It thus serves to distinguish or rather to create a distance between *Arbeiter* and *Bürger*, type and individual, unity and uniqueness. The “essential difference between *Bürger* and *Arbeiter*”, Jünger writes, does not consist “in der zeitlichen Folge der Herrschaft”, that is, in one power-system’s change into another, nor, more generically, “im Gegensatze zwischen Alt und Neu”.¹² “Was vielmehr die höchste Aufmerksamkeit erregt, das ist die Tatsache, daß zwischen dem Bürger und dem Arbeiter nicht nur rein unterschied im Alter, sondern vor allem ein Unterschied des Ranges besteht”.¹³

According to Jünger, the worker’s power is not the result of any turning towards the summit, of an epochal passage of which history contains any traces. The worker’s struggle is not played out in “homogenous and empty” time,¹⁴ but “within elemental space”.¹⁵ With

¹⁰ Peter Trawny, *Heidegger und “Der Arbeiter”*. *Zu Jüngers metaphysischer Grundstellung, in Verwandtschaften, Jünger-Studien*, edited by Günther Figal and Georg Knapp (Tübingen: Attempto Verlag, 2003), vol. II, pp. 74-91, here on p. 74.

¹¹ Martin Heidegger, *Der europäische Nihilismus* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1967), pp. 121-122. Emphasis in original.

¹² Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 23.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ The expression is Walter Benjamin’s and is taken from the posthumous work *Über den Begriff der Geschichte*, cit., p. 567: “Die Geschichte ist Gegenstand einer Konstruktion, deren Ort nicht die homogene und leere Zeit sondern die von ‘Jetztzeit’ erfüllte bildet”.

¹⁵ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 58.



that, establishing a hierarchical relationship between type and individual means reasoning in terms of contiguity, cohabitation, co-ownership. The theme of succession, whether in a political sense or a temporal one, is outlawed. The worker does not historically “take” power: he has always had it. What counts, Jünger maintains, is not the fact that “eine neue politische oder soziale Schicht die Macht ergreift”; the decisive element, rather, is another and regards the capacity on the part of “einer neuen Gesellschaft” to attain “den Machtraum sinnvoll erfüllt”. As a parallel it is important to refute the idea

im Arbeiter den Vertreter eines neuen Standes, einer neuen Gesellschaft, einer neuen Wirtschaft zu sehen, darum, weil er entweder nichts ist oder mehr, nämlich der Vertreter einer eigentümlichen [...] teilhaftigen Gestalt.¹⁶

Like the figure of the *Anarch*, which appears in the last phase of Jüngerian reflection and which takes sustenance from an acute reflection on Stirnerian “property”,¹⁷ the *Arbeiter* too “kämpft nicht um die Macht, sondern erkennt sie als sein Eigentum”.¹⁸ *Arbeiter* and *Anarch* are demesial subjects and therefore, to the letter, projections or “radiations” of the *dominium*. Whether it is called “form”, “genus” or “genre” we will see more clearly in a moment, dominion above all requires an adequate subjective status.

However, the hierarchy also applies itself within the typological space. Its effects are more difficult to understand, more mysterious. A page of Richard McGregor’s gives us an interesting testimony. Nine men strut into the Great Hall of the People on the western side of Tiananmen Square, and it is not difficult to recognize them.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

¹⁷ For a Jüngerian interpretation of Stirner’s *Eigner* see Giuseppe Raciti, *Vite Parallele. Potere e persona nelle politiche di Max Stirner e Ernst Jünger*, in “Archivio di storia della cultura”, XVIII (2005), pp. 245-265.

¹⁸ Ernst Jünger, *Eumesvil* [1977], in *Sämtliche Werke*, cit., vol. XVIII, section 3, p. 324. The text has quite a pregnant follow-up: “Er eignet sie sich an oder, besser gesagt: zu. Das kann auf gewaltlose Weise, vor allem durch Stärkung des Selbstbewußtseins, geschehen”.



Head to toe in black, red ties. “They all displayed slick, jet-black pompadours [...], a habit only broken by retirement or imprisonment”.¹⁹ The thing that really catches the western observer’s attention, however, is not the “striking similarities”²⁰ of their appearances and their careers, but the connection that ties the hierarchy to the space:

The key was in the order in which they appeared, as it cemented the hierarchy of the top leadership for the next five years, and laid out a line of succession for the entire decade to come, until 2022.²¹

The spectacle (θεώρημα) of Tiananmen Square on occasion of the closing of a Chinese Communist party congress (2007) places types and not individuals on the scene. Their strength consists in projecting differences of decisive rank onto space, those, that is, that will stop historical time for entire decades. This supremacy of space over time is suitable to communistic inhabitation. The China of the so-called capitalist turn has adapted itself without any traces.

Totalitarianism is the parody of totality

It is not true that the modern metropolitan individual – here we imagine the “geistige Nomade” of whom Spengler spoke in his famous work²² – is no longer capable of listening to his instincts. On the contrary, he has replaced those instincts with the most adequate substitute. That which is instinct in the animal is (economic) interest in the individual.

The human being “produces universally”, the animal “unilaterally”.²³ The ancient *topos* of the animal reinvents the sense of a life

¹⁹ Richard McGregor, *The Party. The Secret World of China’s Communist Rulers* (London: Penguin, 2010), p. 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²² Cf. *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umriss einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte* [1923] (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1990), p. 677.

²³ Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte* [1844], edited by Michael Quante (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2009), p. 91: “[Das Thier] produziert einseitig, während der Mensch universell produziert”.



lived outside of genre and within “nature”. Outside of theory and within the “market”. In the market the individual rediscovers the particular or natural *habitat* the genre threatens to take away. That which within the Marx of the *Manuscripts* is the individual in relation to the genus, in *Das Kapital* becomes the “individual owner” or even the “cooperative” subject:²⁴ both instances refer the type to the *Gestalt*. From this angle that we are adapting here in an experimental guise, genus and market exclude one another just as the subjectivity that connects them: just like type and individual.

The problem of communism does not regard the position of the human being within the cosmos, but within the genus. Within the genus consciousness becomes demesial consciousness. That which invalidates this drama of formation is the phenomenon of alienation. The capacity to inhabit the genus or not depends on the effects of alienation: this is why the theme of alienation is the *Manuscripts*’ “key concept”.²⁵ Posing the political question of the habitation of the genus means disposing, that is, removing, the theoretical problem of alienation.²⁶

“Die entfremde Arbeit [...] entfremdet [...] dem Menschen die *Gattung*”.²⁷ From this first (and only) evidence we deduce that alienated work de-generates the human; that is, it deprives him of the genre to which he belongs. To be clear: it does not concern natural, that is, biological or racial, but theoretical or political affinity; it involves a praxis (the habitation of the genus) and a theory (Marxism). On the typological aspect the “legitimization” of the single person is given to the belonging to or not of a *Gestalt*.²⁸ *Gattung* and *Gestalt* concern the “whole” and do not pit one part against the other as

²⁴ Cf. Karl Marx, *Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, in *Werke* (Berlin: Dietz, 1986), vol. 23, lb. I, cap. XXIV § 7, p. 791: “das individuelle Eigentum auf Grundlage der [...] Kooperation und des Gemeinbesitzes der Erde [...]”.

²⁵ István Mészáros, *La teoria dell'alienazione in Marx* [1970] trans. by Mario and Elena Cingoli (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1976), p. 11.

²⁶ On the risks connected to an underserved dilation (spiritualistic, existential) of the theme of alienation Theodor I. Oiserman's book, *Die Entfremdung als historische Kategorie* (Berlin: Dietz, 1965) is still useful.

²⁷ Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, cit., p. 90.

²⁸ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 47: “es ist die Legitimation [...] des Einzelnen, daß er dieser oder jener Gestalt zugehört”.



continuously occurs in nature. This notion of totality is clearly distinct, it seems obvious, from totalitarian “de-generations”: totalitarianism is the parody of totality, that is, the emphasis of the “part”. Fascisms politically reproduce the fragmented and instinctual conflict of the natural world: they, Boris Groys says, “are not total enough” because they oppose one race to another, while Communism “hat [...] allein das Ganze zu seinem Gegenstand”.²⁹

Liberal democracies reproduce the partial conflicts on an economic plane, that is, within *Zivilisation*. The hendiadys regarding *Kultur/Zivilisation* is still fruitful: *Zivilisation* signals (in a Spenglerian manner) the “crisis” of *Kultur* and brings its purely economic aspect to light. There is in fact no economy without crises and more importantly without financial crises. The financial phase of capital creates the conflict of nature on a completely artificial base: “Zivilisation ist der Sieg der Gesellschaft über Natur, der alles in bloße Natur verwandelt”.³⁰ Caught up within the vortex of a “*zügelloser* Bewegung der geistigen und materiellen Elemente”,³¹ the Bürger expresses his freedom, that is, his nature, through the instinct of “Kauf und Verkauf”.³²

Marx, as is well known, turned the Rosseauian assumption on its head: emancipation is not a movement that from totality approaches partiality; the trajectory described by communism does not derive from an institution “parfait et solitaire” in order to draw from the

²⁹ Boris Groys, *Das kommunistische Postskriptum* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 2006), p. 34. Groys almost literally reproduces the Stalinian problem of the “nation”: “The nation is not [...] a community of race nor stock, but a community of historically formed people”, in Joseph V. Stalin, *Il Marxismo e la questione nazionale e coloniale* [1913], trans. by Carol Straneo Caracciolo (Turin: Einaudi), p. 48. Stalin needs the concept of the nation in order to fix the theoretical statue of Communism.

³⁰ Max Horkheimer - Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* [1947] (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2011), p. 195.

³¹ Karl Marx, *Zur Judenfrage* [1844], trans. by Giuseppe Scuto (*La questione ebraica*), ed. with original text and translation (Bolsena: Massari, 2003), p. 88: “Die Freiheit des egoistischen Menschen und die Anerkennung dieser Freiheit ist [...] die Anerkennung der *zügelloser* Bewegung der geistigen und materiellen Elemente, welche seinen Lebensinhalt bilden”.

³² Karl Marx - Friedrich Engels, *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, in *Werke*, cit., vol. 4, p. 476.



“*partie d’un plus grand tout*”.³³ The reason is simple: the genus is not the result of the sum of its parts. The idea of communism does not derive from the sum of the Communist parties. These architectonic affinities with Jünger’s *Gestalt des Arbeiters*³⁴ impose certain elementary considerations: communism has no beginning (*ordo naturalis*) and no end nor goal (*ordo artificialis*). Communism is neither nature nor utopia. “Die Entwicklung kennt Anfang und Ende, Geburt und Tod, denen die Gestalt entzogen ist”³⁵ Jünger clarifies. In analogous terms the Marxist criticism of “rohe und gedankenlose” communism, to which in descending order the criticism of every possible “history” or “evolution” of communism is associated, nullifies the genetic hypothesis.³⁶ As to utopia, it projects definitive settings both in *design* as well as efficiency: *Zustände* in Marx’s language; in other words, “static projections”, uninhabitable, there where the theory of communism does not cease to suggest the political problem of the habitation of the genus.

At the beginning as well as the end, from a natural or utopian perspective, the individual is at work. The individual is with that *punctum*, status, *Zustand*, and it does not matter that at the beginning and the end he is connected to a process; neither the process, or even better, the “movement”, can be considered real – *wirklich*, actual – if within its development it calls for such extremes. As a *punctum* or *Zustand*, the individual is a *Theilwesen*, a “partial being”.³⁷ The partial being is the “man without generality”. For this reason Marx says: “[die entfremdete Arbeit] macht [dem Menschen] das Gattungslieben zum Mittel des individuellen Lebens”.³⁸ And he adds: “[Die entfremdete

³³ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Du contrat social* [1782], edited by Bruno Bernardi (Paris: Flammarion, 2001), p. 80.

³⁴ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 37: “In der Gestalt ruht das Ganze, das mehr als die Summe seiner Teile umfaßt und das einem anatomischen Zeitalter unerreichbar war”.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

³⁶ The criticism of *rohe und gedankenlose Communismus* is developed in the *Manuscripts*, cit., on p. 113ss. We will return to these texts shortly.

³⁷ Karl Marx, *La questione ebraica*, cit., p. 80.

³⁸ Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, cit., p. 90.



Arteit] entfremdet [...] das Gattungsleben und das individuelle Leben”.³⁹ This last notation is important because it denounces the habitational, which is in no way an abstract (“logical”) function of the genus. The subject inhabits the genus and the reality of the genus is its habitability. An edifice can remain empty, a genus cannot: constructing it is the same as filling it. There is no genus, no totality, independent of its inhabitability; and it does not support, as a consequence, the theory of a “liberal” subject; that is, one constitutionally free from habitational or egalitarian constraints. In Jünger’s words: “[Die Gestalt] ist im bedeutendsten Sinne ein Sein, und das drückt sich in bezug auf den Einzelnen so aus, daß er entweder Arbeiter ist oder es nicht ist”.⁴⁰

That could also be stated as follows: the person is either a type or an individual (nothing). The subject either inhabits the communal house or falls back, in the words of Badiou, into “les limites [...] impose par l’individualité (ou l’animalité, c’est la meme chose)”.⁴¹ Everything evaluates the genus, as is said, not in abstract terms, logical, but real (others would say, maybe carelessly, ontological).⁴² If the genus is

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 84.

⁴¹ Alain Badiou, *L’hypothèse communiste* (Paris: Lignes, 2009), p. 185.

⁴² Cf. Bruno Bosteels, *The Actuality of Communism*, cit., especially the chapter “The Ontological Turn”, pp. 42-74, where the author reasons on the hidden dangers connected to the contriving of a communistic ontology. The way Slavoj Žižek promptly liquidates the question is interesting: “Communism should not serve as a predicate (designating a politics of ideology as ‘communist’): the moment we use communism as a predicate, we engage in the inscription of communism into the positive order of being”, in *Living in the End Times* (New York: Verso, 2011), p. 183. The positive order of being is the right contrary to an “imagined” and for that reason total space. The dry fixity of the *Zustand* does not withstand the incandescent wave of (communist) theory. Communism is not, in effect, a theory among others, but rather form itself, the perimeter of every possible theory. In Žižek’s words: “One should bear in mind that Communism begins with [...] thinking, with the egalitarian universality of thought” (*Living in the End Times*, cit., p. 450). The word communism is the modern cast of the Greek term *κοινωνία*. Anti-communism is therefore the same as anti-theoretical, the same as anti-philosophical. And this, as Boris Groys suggests, “explains the instinctive inclination of communism to be found in all the people gifted with a critical consciousness” (*Das kommunistische Postskriptum*, cit., p. 9).



real, if *Gattung* is *Gestalt*, the singular person arranges communistic habitation as his own property; he is, according to the surprising (as it is subtly Stirneresque) formula of *Das Kapital*, the “individual owner”.

Worms and ants

The communist inhabits the genus without any relationship to the genus: the genus, therefore, is not the being of which the communist (or the type) would be the “custodian”, the “shepherd” or privileged speaker. It is a prerogative of the individual to seek “dialogue” with totality. In this attitude there is a dualistic premise that does not gloss over its violent nature. The individual relates to totality in order to remain deprived, excluded, and the terms of this exclusion or “privation” become the object of juridical regulation, they form the material of “private law”.

Walter Benjamin has clarified in some glowing pages the connection that welds violence to juridical relations. It is evident, for example, in the Hegelian concept of *Privatrecht*, in which the “abstract individual”, the result of the grafting of the “person” onto “property”,⁴³ appears, rather crudely, to be the product of the “Verwesung des politischen Lebens” (putrefaction of political life).⁴⁴ Just as “der Staatsorganismus” scales off “in die Atome der Privatpersonen”, in this way, Hegel continues, “jeder Punkt ein eigenes Leben für sich gewinnt, welches aber nur das elende Leben der Würmer ist”.⁴⁵

From worms to ants. In the *Gemeinschaft* an *ameisenartig* lifestyle is at work in relation to which, Jünger writes, the “pretense of originality” encamped in the singular person is only “eine unbefugte Äusserung der privaten Sphäre”.⁴⁶ Worms and ants exemplify, in the two contexts, antithetical processes: dissolution and organization, in-

⁴³ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte* [1822/23], in *Werke in Zwanzig Bänden*, edited by Eva Moldenhauer and Karl Markus Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1999), vol. XII, p. 384. “Das Privatrecht [...] ist dies, daß die Person als solche gilt, in der Realität, welche sie sich gibt – im Eigentum”.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., pp. 48-49.



dividualism and communism. The use of such metaphors is strongly established in western tradition, but in the *Arbeiter* the issue is radicalized. Primarily the relationship between history and myth, between movement and *Gestalt*, must be observed, which upsets the scheme of positivist philology: history is not behind but in front of myth, as the screen in relation to the projector. Which, however, does not imply a relativization of historical becoming. It does not concern, that is, the renunciation of the struggles that characterize the history of workers' movements, but indicates, in light of the myth of the *Arbeiter*, its "metaphorical" nature. "Eine gestaltmäßige Betrachtung des Arbeiters", we read at a certain point,

könnte anknüpfen an die beiden Erscheinungen, aus denen bereits das bürgerliche Denken den Begriff des Arbeiters gewann [...]. Diese beiden Erscheinungen wechseln ihre Bedeutung, wenn ein neues Bild des Menschen in ihnen zum Einsatz kommt.⁴⁷

The "concept" of the worker express itself in history, but this, in its turn, is "expressed" by the *Gestalt*: "Die Geschichte bringt keine Gestalten hervor, sondern sie ändert sich mit der Gestalt".⁴⁸ The *Gestalt* is not fixed, not more than as much as history is really in movement. *Neverchanging everchanging*. As regards the fixity of the myth, history's movement is not "apparent", it is metaphorical. Clarifying this point is important. The historical movement refers to nothing outside of itself, for example, to a superior regulatory instance (transcendent or transcendental); it stimulates instead an essential aspect of the same *Gestalt*, which is the kinetic aspect. History is the "dynamic comment"⁴⁹ of the myth, it is the image in movement, the kinematics of the *Gestalt*. The *Gestalt* moves or is "moved" through its historical metaphors. History "dramatizes" the *Gestalt*.

History's drama is precisely this lack of connection between the community and the singular person, the perennial disconnect be-

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* "Entwicklungsgeschichte ist [...] nicht Geschichte der Gestalt, sondern höchstens ihr dynamischer Kommentar".



tween the two sides of the world. But community and the singular person “are metaphors, *Gleichnisse der Gestalt des Arbeiters*”.⁵⁰ The disconnect belongs to the movement of history, the deployment of its metaphors: it is history that does not cease to discuss the myth of the habitation of genus. In this sense history is indistinguishable from the processes of alienation described by Marx. History, if we can say so, is the history of alienation. Only the myth is inalienable. Myth and history form hierarchically differentiated planes or levels. We know, however, that within a hierarchical order time is not free; this means that both myth and history are capable of cohabitation. For this reason the older Jünger states: “Der Mythos [...] begleitet die Geschichte traumhaft”.⁵¹

The foundations of the past

“Zeitloses wiederholt sich überraschend in der Zeit”.⁵² No less surprising is that communism, by virtue of history, returns to human consciousness. *Communism is eternally challenged by historical processes because it is the eternal element within historical processes.* This paradox contains other considerations as regards the relationship between communism and history. The following words from *The German Ideology* are well known

Der Kommunismus ist für uns nicht ein Zustand, der hergestellt werden soll, ein Ideal, wonach die Wirklichkeit sich zu richten haben wird. Wir nennen Kommunismus die wirkliche Bewegung, welche den jetzigen Zustand aufhebt. Die Bedingungen dieser Bewegung ergeben sich aus der jetzt bestehenden Voraussetzung.⁵³

Not a “state of things”; not a regulatory ideal, transcendental: as a fiber or tensor of *Wirklichkeit*, which is reality *in motu*, communism

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵¹ Ernst Jünger, *Die Schere* [1990] (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2001), p. 162: “Der Mythos [...] begleitet die Geschichte traumhaft, fällt ‘wie der Tau’ bei Nacht auf das Gras”.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁵³ Karl Marx - Friedrich Engels, *Werke*, cit., vol. 4, p. 35.



cannot extinguish itself within a place, even emancipatory, and even with the best political intentions it cannot adapt to a pre-established direction, or party line. From this point of view the Marxist criticism of *rohe und gedankenlose Communismus* frees not always adequately valued theoretical developments. Marx affirms that communism is “incomplete” when, to justify its foundations, it has need of historical *exempla*. From the point of view of “complete” (mythical) communism, recourse to “historical proof”⁵⁴ is rather a symptom of weakness. Commerce with the past, it is true, serves to create a “complète floraison historique”;⁵⁵ but it is also true that such communism, “wenn einmal gewesen ist, eben sein vergangenes Sein die Präntention des Wesen widerlegt”.⁵⁶

What does this statement mean? Plunging into the past is the characteristic movement of all foundational work. However, the nature of being, Marx tells us, is not foundational. Being has its own temporal line which does not meet the past and which “jumps” or “breaks” history. The refutation of the past as a recipe of the “proof” in support of *Wirklichkeit* – the action which necessitates proof is called reaction –, as a consequence has the freedom from foundation. In place of foundation a foundational freedom emerges. “Zu den Kennzeichen der Freiheit,” Jünger writes, “gehört die Gewißheit, Anteil zu haben am innersten Keime der Zeit”.⁵⁷

Keim der Zeit is a concept that recalls the *Jetztzeit*, the actual or “full” time (as it is without tributaries: the past and the future) Benjamin speaks of in his *Begriff der Geschichte*. This time of being is not present or punctual in the manner of the *Zustand*; it is not preterit nor archival and therefore tied to historical *Beweise*; it would also be rather obvious to ascribe the sense of the communist revolution to the future.

⁵⁴ Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, cit., p. 116.

⁵⁵ This beautiful expression comes from the French edition of the *Manuscripts*, edited by Franck Fischbach, the last, until today, in a language different from the original: *Manuscrits économique-philosophiques de 1844* (Paris: Vrin, 2007), p. 146. The corresponding German reads: *historische Vollblütigkeit* (ed. cit., p. 116).

⁵⁶ Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, cit., p. 116.

⁵⁷ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., pp. 63-64. He continues “eine Gewißheit [...] in der sich die Freiheit des Täters als der besondere Ausdruck des Notwendigen erkennt”.



Lenin reasons on the sense of the “future ‘extinction’” (будущего “отмирания”) of capital and that it is not possible to determine, in time, this fateful moment.⁵⁸ Marx, he warns, never lost himself in “vain conjectures on that which you cannot know”. It is more helpful to work on the hypothesis of a gradual, temporally indeterminate process: from capitalism to socialism, from socialism to communism, etc. Bloom’s joke here is quite satisfactory: “A revolution must come on the due installments plan”.⁵⁹ From here the recourse to the evolutionary model, of which Marxism would be the “most complete form” (в ее наиболее полно форме).⁶⁰ But the assumption of this model is problematic today since it does not concern a neutral instrument to use, as necessary, in the most congenial of manners. The scientific theories are “pre-oriented”.⁶¹ As a consequence, Marxist discourse should not be concerned with the future extinction of capital, but the extinction of the future as such. What is the future if not the premise or the promise of capitalistic accumulation? In place of a classless society one would need to begin to discuss, in political and not metaphysical terms, a timeless society.

Our experience of time is invaded and almost colonized by death. We call future the possibility of our death and past the reality of others’ deaths. The future is the possibility of death and the past the reality of death. In this sense, future and past are death’s by-products. The attention we give to the dimensions of time, in daily as much as philosophical discourse, suffers from this fundamental necrophilia.

Now the extraordinary idea in which communism is dressed is that of connecting the future to life – it is a very simple concept, but one which seems impossible to conceive of without removing the future

⁵⁸ Vladimir I. Lenin, *The State and Revolution*, Russian text on: <http://www.magister.msk.ru/library/lenin/lenin007.htm>: “Ясно, что не может быть и речи об определении момента будущего ‘отмирания’”.

⁵⁹ James Joyce, *Ulysses* [1922] (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2010), p. 551.

⁶⁰ Vladimir I. Lenin, *Государство и революция*, cit.

⁶¹ Marx, it is true, was planning to dedicate *Das Kapital* to Charles Darwin, but the manner in which he liquidates the idea in a letter to Engels is symptomatic: “Darwin depicts the animal kingdom like bourgeois society”, in Karl Marx - Friedrich Engels, *Briefwechsel*, in *Werke*, cit., vol. 30, p. 249, letter of June 18, 1862.



dimension from the line of time. Lacking the “natural” relationship to death, the future ceases to be a dimension of time and becomes a dimension of politics. This can explain why the revolution, located in historical time, has the effect of “exploding the *continuum* of history”.

Aoristic tasks and metallic physiognomies

From the beginning this work has been concerned with understanding why “[der Mensch] in seinem individuellsten Dasein zugleich Gemeinwesen ist”.⁶² Whether the human being is a communistic being or not – individualizing is possible only in the common thing. Of course, to follow this idea to its logical end it is necessary, as Badiou suggests, to “changer de subjectivité, vivre autrement, penser autrement”.⁶³

The *μετάνοια* (changing one’s mind) is already in action when Marx lets rise the hypothesis of a communistic right of inequality. It concerns arriving at the concept that rights are “equal” but that “dies gleiche Recht ist ungleiches Recht für ungleiche Arbeit”.⁶⁴ Every individual is in fact gifted with different strengths and talents. Communistic rights do not recognize “class distinctions”; in this sense it is “equal,” but implicitly recognizes “die ungleiche individuelle Begabung”.⁶⁵ Equal measure, a prerogative of rights, attaches to “die ungleichen Individuen” who, in addition, “wären nicht verschiedene Individuen, wenn sie nicht ungleiche wären”.⁶⁶ Here it is important to establish the connection between unity and inequality. There is an individual right, but there is not even a juridical instance to subordinate singularity to: the personalization of rights is the economic and civilized side of the political depersonalization of juridical subjects. The sense of a unique right, in which unequal subjects live together, typologically distant, is clarified only within a hierarchical model.

⁶² Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, cit., p. 115.

⁶³ Alain Badiou, *L’hypothèse communiste*, cit., p. 87.

⁶⁴ Karl Marx, *Kritik des Gothaer Programms* [1875], in *Werke*, cit., vol. 19, p. 21.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*



This position connects to the nucleus of serious problems brought to light in the work of Evgenij Pašukanis.

The Jüngerian idea of hierarchy, based on a typological model, allows one to observe and not confuse the singular person within the communal home. Another thing entirely the society populated by individuals. The individual is never equal to himself, it is true, but is always identical to the others. This is the principal of socialization, to which the type is ordered by rank, and fragments into unstable unities.

Unity of the type, uniqueness of the individual. The distinction is substantial, that is, external and “formal” (*gestaltmäßig*), instead of internal and psychological; visible, or rather, “monumental”,⁶⁷ rather than suspicious and repressive; it is included in the “work” which concerns subjects in simultaneity, in Benjamin’s words “im Augenblick ihrer Aktion”.

As an adherent to a workspace, the singular person is busy with the exercise of a punctual, aoristic task – neither perfect nor imperfect, even less so futuristic, let’s say then “mythical” –, a task which severely cuts his appearance: “metal-like in men, cosmetic in women”.⁶⁸ That, however, has nothing to do with identity. Identity is unique as it does not resemble anything, and it does not resemble anything because it does not differ from anything. This is Leibniz’s paradigm of indiscernibility, which the logic of individuality remains attached to.⁶⁹ On the typological plane, however, two equal entities spatially differentiate, namely hierarchically, as in the episode recounted by Richard McGregor at the beginning. The typology discerns two entities without resorting to individuation or to mere enumeration (*solo numero*); without resorting to internal or external form of temporality. This is the paradox of singularity and the never appeased antisocial tension that courses through it.

⁶⁷ The beginning of psychology, György Lukács declares, coincides with “the end of monumentality”, in *Sören Kierkegaard und Regina Olsen*, in *Die Seele und die Formen. Essays* (Berlin: Fleischel & Co., 1911), p. 85.

⁶⁸ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 126.

⁶⁹ Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *Nouveaux Essais sur l’entendement humain* [1705] (Paris: Flammarion, 1921), lb. 2 §27.



Personal identity is mortal as is time that will get rid of it. In its place a dynamic identity grows that responds to concepts of “Gefolge” or “Gefolgschaft” and that is opposed to the traditional historical-social sedimentations (“Partei”, “Versammlung”, etc.).⁷⁰ Even “a group of unemployed” is an operative unity (*Gefolge*). This comes from the fact that work has an “intelligible, unempirical” character; escaping from it is thus impossible. “The state of unemployment” is rather equated to that of “reservists” in the organization of an army.⁷¹

Marx depicts in effect the same scenario and uses the same words when he equates the unemployed to an “industrial reserve army”.⁷² The “workers’ overpopulation”, nothing other than the phenomenon of unemployment, “even becomes the stimulus of capitalistic accumulation”.⁷³ Capital grows thanks to unemployment. At the origin of the paradox the question of alienation remains. The opposition employed/unemployed no longer has any sense because from the very beginning alienation removes the worker from the process of production. If capital can fire workers, it is because alienation has already fired them *ab origine*. In this sense, production imposes unemployment and not only because of surplus personnel. The “crisis”, one could say, is the substitutive or “ideological” denomination of alienation and glosses over a process that extends beyond the physical limits of the factory. Both the *Arbeiter* and *Nichtarbeiter* (to take up once again that strange Marxian distinction),⁷⁴ that is, factory worker and office worker, material and immaterial worker, are engaged in the process of production that makes them unemployed.

⁷⁰ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 106 and p. 108.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 275-276.

⁷² Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, cit., vol. 23, lb. I, cap. XXIII, § 3, p. 661: *industrielle Reservearmee*.

⁷³ *Ibid.*: “Wenn [...] eine Surplusarbeiterpopulation notwendiges Produkt der Akkumulation oder der Entwicklung des Reichtums auf kapitalistischer Grundlage ist, wird dies Übervölkerung umgekehrt zum Hebel der kapitalistischen Akkumulation, ja zu einer Existenzbedingung der kapitalistischen Produktionsweise”.

⁷⁴ Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, cit., p. 98



The revolutionary side of misery

The western road to alienation (*intelligere in alio*) is sketched by Spinoza in his famous letter to Henry Oldenburg, secretary of the Royal Society of London: “Per modificationem sive per accidens intelligo id, quod in alio est et per id, in quo est, concipitur”.⁷⁵ The comprehension *in alio* occurs *per accidens*. This statement projects its effects well beyond the limits of logic; for the rest, Spinoza assigns the entire edifice of his Ethics to an axiomatic structure (*more geometrico*). This means that ethics has a logical nature, but also, more profoundly, that logic has an ethical nature. The question is nevertheless more general. In philosophical history politics never ceases to emerge from behind the fictitious line of logic. In this way the hierarchical declination of the *Gestalt* or the dialectical distribution of the *Gattungswesen* respond from a distance to the articulation of *substantia*. Substance and accident are in a certain way the logical fossils of theory and praxis: substance returns to dissolve in pragma every time it encounters the antagonistic principle, in other words, the “revolutionary side of misery”.⁷⁶ This type of perception presupposes a total or “stereoscopic”⁷⁷ vision of reality. “The total point of view,” a refined theorist observes, is “the real material factor and the real process as such”.⁷⁸

“Freizeit und Arbeitszeit sind zwei Modifikationen, in denen man von ein und demselben technischen Betriebe in Anspruch genommen wird”.⁷⁹ Technique is therefore substance – idleness and work, as two sides of the same coin, are its “Modifikationen”. The scheme is re-proposed in relation to Asian mechanization, in particular to Japanese technocracy: it concerns “one of the modifications [*Modi-*

⁷⁵ Baruch Spinoza, *Epistola IV* (Londini die 27. Septeb. 1661).

⁷⁶ Karl Marx, *La misère de la philosophie. Réponse à la ‘Philosophie de la misère’ de M. Proudhon* [1847] (Paris: V. Giard & E. Brière, 1896), p. 174.

⁷⁷ Ernst Jünger, *Das abenteuerliche Herz. Erste Fassung* [1929], in *Sämtliche Werke*, cit., vol. 9, sec. II, p. 83: “Stereoskopisch wahrnehmen heißt [...], ein und demselben Gegenstande gleichzeitig zwei Sinnesqualitäten abgewinnen, und zwar – das ist das Wesentliche – durch ein einziges Sinnesorgan”. Theory and praxis are offered up simultaneously, that is, sensibly, to the “generic” mind.

⁷⁸ Mario Tronti, *Operai e capitale* [1966] (Turin: Einaudi, 1977), p. 94.

⁷⁹ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 264.



fikationen], in which the form of the worker is realized”.⁸⁰ Marx instituted the same relationship between alienation and slavery: “Die ganze menschliche Knechtschaft” we read in the *Manuscripts*, are *Modificationen* (κατὰ συμβεβηχός) of the “Verhältniß des Arbeiters zur Production”, or, in other words, “consequences” of alienation.⁸¹ Employment, unemployment and recreation are accidental conditions of a substantial alienation: the one of the worker in relation to the entire process of production.

The occidental process is an accidental process: *intelligere in alio*. The consequence of alienation, its accidental objectification, is socialization. Work becomes social when the productive function prevails within it. Productivity and socialization are based on the same principle: production is the production of *partes* (merchandise), socialization is an aggregation of *partes* (individuals). But from the point of view of the type of work it is not at all a social activity; work is form. The form of work emerges in connection to how much the worker liberates himself from social fragmentation and reconstructs a unity. Let us place reasoning on a tactical plane. “When capital is discovered to be a social force”, it is inevitable to oppose *in toto* “this sociability of capital”.⁸² This does not mean “diluting” opposition “within the general social relationship”; rather, it means solidifying, and unifying the “anti-social revolutionary force”.⁸³ Turning once more to the theoretical plane, it is important to oppose form to the principle that deforms it: the genus to the universal, totality to totalitarianism.

Solitude and totality

The individual “nur *en masse* zu beobachten ist”.⁸⁴ Being alone does not exist, being alone is socially ambiguous. And yet solitude as-

⁸⁰ Ernst Jünger, *Siebzig verweht I*, in *Sämtliche Werke*, cit., vol. IV, section 1, p. 131.

⁸¹ Karl Marx, *Ökonomisch-philosophische Manuskripte*, cit., p. 96. The line continues: “Die ganze menschliche Knechtschaft in dem Verhältniß des Arbeiters zur Production involviret ist und alle Knechtsschaftsverhältnisse nur Modificationen und Consequenzen dieses Verhältnisses sind”.

⁸² Mario Tronti, *Operai e capitale*, cit., p. 82.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 119.



asures the type the possession of totality, it guarantees him the property of the communal home; which has little to do with, we mentioned it earlier, the “relationship” to totality. Otherwise it does not make sense to speak about a shared totality, not without running the risk of having to adopt the expressive means of mysticism. Communism is not this kind of totality; it is, rather, a totality of the genus in which every singularity is not *pars* but *totum*. This excludes the principle of political conflictuality and economic competition. The type “forms” a unity (it makes the genus all one, is its form), but it is also a singularly or a hierarchically differentiated entity because its status cannot be assimilated into the schema *pars pro toto*.

Typization and self-sustenance, individualism and socialization: these are the terms of the question. From the individual one expects recognition and conformism, uniqueness and availability.⁸⁵ The individual is always “part” of something: associations, teams, councils, etc. One is either the head or second fiddle. The individual feels free as the particular with respect to the general, feels irresponsible like the general with respect to the particular. As a consequence, the individual’s freedom is also partial and requires integration. This is what the “mass” provides. Even in the individual’s most autarkical behavior, from dictatorial tragedies to daily embezzlement, the individual leans toward the mass as if to its own *terminus ad quem*, as to its own reason for being. The mass is the undiversified to which individual differences tend. In effect, the *qualitates* the individual enjoys, primarily identity and consistency, are those that abstractly characterize the mass.

Financing reality

The communistic accent (singularly) placed upon singularity rather than on sociability takes light from the concept of “individual property”, *individuelles Eigentum*, a concept in which the *Kapital’s*

⁸⁵ The exponential increase of the mobile telephone perfectly responds to these characteristics: an always more inert and stereotypical subjectivity corresponds to the exasperating personalization of technological gadgets.



language (Chapter 24, book 1) updates the structure – still affected by “idealistic residue”⁸⁶ – of the youthful *Gattungswesen*. A glance at the contents will serve to clarify the terms of the question

Das kapitalistische Privateigentum ist die erste Negation des individuellen [...] Privateigentums. Aber die kapitalistische Produktion erzeugt [...] ihre eigne Negation. Es ist Negation der Negation. Diese stellt nicht das Privateigentum wieder her, wohl aber das individuelle Eigentum auf Grundlage der Errungenschaft der kapitalistischen Ära: der Kooperation [...].⁸⁷

The “conquest of the capitalistic era” is called Kooperation or, better, socialization. Its terrain is the factory. As the hub of socialization the factory is not only the physical location in which one does mechanical work; its range of action is much vaster, hence the Jüngerian expression *Werkstättenlandschaft*,⁸⁸ it is both more atmospheric and more appropriated.⁸⁹ The factory is the technological reason in which the “idiotisme du métier” declines and the “besoin d’universalité, la tendance vers un développement intégral de l’individu”⁹⁰ grows. The whole individual is no longer an individual, he is a type. The factory integrates its subjects, but disintegrates the individual. This is nevertheless only an aspect of partner work; Marx calls it “la côté révolutionnaire de l’atelier automatique”.⁹¹ Socialization is revolutionary with respect to individual anarchism, but it is regressive with respect to typological singularity.

The other aspect concerns the connection between socialization and temporality. The fact that Marx treats the theme of capital’s productivity (exchange value, division of labor, socialization) in ex-

⁸⁶ As Gerd Dicke explains, the concept of “genus” “bildet die unmittelbare Überleitung von Hegels absolutem Geist zur klassenlosen Gesellschaft von Marx, so sehr dieser gegen Feuerbach und speziell gegen dessen Vorstellung von der Gattung wegen des idealistischen Restbestandes polemisiert”, in *Der Identitätsgedanke bei Feuerbach und Marx*, cit., p. 70.

⁸⁷ Karl Marx, *Das Kapital*, cit., lb. 1, cap. XXIV, §7, p. 791.

⁸⁸ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 222.

⁸⁹ “Kein Wunder – muß nicht die Idee der Präzision präziser sein als die Präzision?”, in Ernst Jünger, *Das abenteuerliche Herz: Erste Fassung*, cit., p. 87.

⁹⁰ Karl Marx, *La misère de la philosophie*, cit., p. 200.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*



clusively temporal terms must cause one to think. “Das Kapital treibt seiner Natur nach über jede räumliche Schranke hinaus”.⁹² Its vocation is worldwide, global. But that which we call world or globe is by no means space: “being in the world”, Heidegger explains, “means being in time”.⁹³ Boris Groys’ intuition that “within capitalistic society money plays the same role as time within the philosophy of Heidegger”⁹⁴ is illuminating. For Heidegger “being is as it is because it has not time to be otherwise”;⁹⁵ for the same reason, “the poietic potential of capital”, its capacity to shape stable forms, “is the result of *Unterfinanzierung*”.⁹⁶ It is financing that gets the ball of change rolling. More financing, more fluidity, more time, less forms. The “richness” of the material, in both the literal and metaphorical sense, depends on the necessary financing to optimize the particle accelerator.⁹⁷ There is a definitive ontological conflict between financing and form: the one excludes the other. Certainly, the credit system has experimented with various forms of financing but the form, in itself, requires sub-financing. Technology is also in line with this logic. The “creation of the physical conditions of exchange”, for example the use of “means of transportation” and in general every form of communication, whether material or imma-

⁹² Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie* [1857-1858] (Berlin: Dietz, 1974), p. 423.

⁹³ As is known, Heidegger supported the theory which holds that space situates itself within the world, and not the world within space, cf. *Sein und Zeit* [1927] (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1967), § 23, pp. 104-110: *Die Räumlichkeit des In-der-Welt-seins*. This, for example, is how the German word *Entfernung*, which means distance and connotes the principle character of spatiality, is understood by Heidegger as *Ent-fernung*, in which the prefix *ent-* negates the substantive *Ferne* and the adjective *fern* (distance, distant). The nature of the world is, therefore, to neutralize every form of distance and, with that, the same sense of spatiality.

⁹⁴ Boris Groys, *Das kommunistische Postskriptum*, cit., p. 75. However, see also Groys contribution to *Der göttliche Kapitalismus. Ein Gespräch über Geld, Konsum, Kunst und Zerstörung*, edited by Mark Jongen (Munich: Fink, 2007), p. 21: “Das Heideggersche Buch hieß ‘Sein und Zeit’, aber wir wissen, dass Zeit eigentlich Geld ist, und das Buch genauso gut ‘Sein und Geld’ heißen könnte”.

⁹⁵ Boris Groys, *Das kommunistische Postskriptum*, cit., p.75.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*



terial, responds to the same principle: “die Vernichtung des Raums durch die Zeit”.⁹⁸ The human being, Martin Heidegger declares, “is characterized by an essential tendency towards proximity”:⁹⁹ “every type of increase in velocity”, which is to say every technological progress, “pushes towards the overcoming of distance”,¹⁰⁰ or towards the temporal or financial neutralization of spatiality.

There is no way to establish communism in time, in the world, in history. Time, world, and history are processes subject to financing. Communism begins where financing ceases, where time stops. This explains the singularity of the Chinese model: it offers up the paradox of a form inscribed into the temporal flow of financing. The Chinese have reconsidered production through exchange in a communistic key. The experiment seems unreal because time, primarily the time of work, time which dilates in the Asiatic, interminable workday,¹⁰¹ no longer plays a determinate role. Chinese communism has so to say re-spatialized capital and has thus given it back to its constitutive ferociousness. One complains about the “cynicism” of the Chinese without considering, as Marx mentioned in relation to Ricardo’s cruelty, that cynicism “est dans les choses et non dans les mots qui experiment les choses”.¹⁰² In a completely analogous way, those who today charge the Chinese with excessive cynicism do not support, in reality, “de voir exposer les rapports économiques dans toute leur crudité, de voir trahis les mystères de la bourgeoisie”.¹⁰³

Socialization does not escape the logic of financing. If human relationships never cease becoming and becoming undone, it is because the individuals are no longer forms, that is, types, but things and, more precisely, merchandise. “Im Tauschwert ist die gesellschaftliche Beziehung der Personen in ein gesellschaftliches Verhalten der Sachen

⁹⁸ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie*, cit., p. 423.

⁹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, cit., p. 105: “Im Dasein liegt eine wesenhafte Tendenz auf Nähe”.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter*, cit., p. 95: “Der Arbeitsraum ist unbegrenzt, ebenso wie der Arbeitstag vierundzwanzig Stunden umfaßt”. Jüngerian “utopia” is Chinese reality.

¹⁰² Karl Marx, *La misère de la philosophie*, cit., p. 65.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 66.



verwandelt”.¹⁰⁴ As a response “personal independence” gives over to “material dependence”.¹⁰⁵ In this turn of events “exchange value” operates as a “universal factor”, *ein Allgemeines*; but the universal has nothing to do with the genus, not any more than communism is compatible with exchange value. The universal is if anything the parody of the genus: it is to the “society of the mass” as the genus to communism. Under the action of the universal “every singularity is negated and dissolved”.¹⁰⁶ The individual, as Hegel says, dissolves within the universal. But the type does not dissolve within the genus, on the contrary: the type absolves the genus. Like the *Gattungswesen* – genus-being, being in the genus, generic essence – the type is *gestaltmäßig*, a total entity.

“The total human being no longer exists”, Ulrich laments in response to Walter’s erudite query (“Man muß es schätzen, wenn ein Mann heute noch das Bestreben hat, etwas Ganzes zu sein”).¹⁰⁷ “Es steht nicht mehr ein ganzer Mensch einer ganzen Welt gegenüber, sondern ein menschliches Etwas bewegt sich in einer allgemeinen Näherflüssigkeit”.¹⁰⁸ Ulrich alludes here to the phenomenon we have considered: that humankind which remains in this vague amniotic bubble is socialized humanity.

Because the nature of capital is *subjektlos*,¹⁰⁹ communism is given the task of negating socialization and re-establishing subjectivity under the guise of “individual property” (“negation of negation”).

After decades of forced economic socialization a restoration of the human being’s by now corroded and corrupted image is necessary. In this role communism finds its fulfillment. An accomplished, whole, full communism – *полный коммунизм*, Lenin says (where the adjective *полны* is akin to *plenus*, *πληρης*) –, is a good alternative to a realized communism.

¹⁰⁴ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der politischen Ökonomie*, cit., p. 75.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*: “Die Tätigkeit [...] ist der Tauschwert, d.h. ein Allgemeines, worin alle [...] Eigenheit negiert und ausgelöscht ist”.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Musil, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* [1930-1943], edited by Adolf Frisé (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1978), p. 217.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Max Horkheimer - Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung*, cit., p. 121: “Der subjektlose Kapitalismus”.