



MARX, ENGELS, AND MARXISMS

Marx, Alienation and Techno-Capitalism

Lelio Demichelis

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Marx, Engels, and Marxisms

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Introduction

The new is advancing in great strides, unstoppable, magnificent, democratic, libertarian, individualistic, post-capitalist, multitudinous and above all: technological. This is what the narrative—storytelling, propaganda, technical and neoliberal determinism—of the last thirty years has been saying. In truth, the current technological and capitalist processes produce totally opposite effects as far as promises, storytelling and propaganda are concerned. However, it is wrong to believe—because of the social, cultural, anthropological and political *rumble* (including populism) that technology and neoliberalism leave behind—that what we have defined as *techno-capitalism* (2015) is in crisis or on the decline. As a matter of fact, it continues to produce *hegemony* and *domination for itself*, *against society*, *against the individual* and *against the environment*.

However, everything is *well disguised* by the system itself, given that *no one rebels*, *no one seeks alternatives*—and even populism is a *political solution functional* to techno-capitalism—and everyone *adapts* to the dynamics of the system, and to the many and apparently different forms of alienation that techno-capitalism produces. And which are cleverly *disguised* to support and promote its infinite reproducibility. Alienations that will be analysed in these pages thanks to Michel Foucault's considerations, and by re-reading and updating the Frankfurterian *critical theory*, returning once again to the ways in which techno-capitalism has built its

hegemony and its *domination*. This is by no means an example of *technophobia*, but a dutiful and necessary *critical thinking* applied to capitalism and above all to technology.

Because in truth we would have (*do* have) a desperate need to innovate from an ethical, social, environmental and political point of view; to recover the *human capacity* and *possibilities* to *imagine something other* than techno-capitalism. Instead, we are closed in Weber's *iron cage*, which has now become *virtual but very real in its anthropological effects*. Or, otherwise, locked up in *Plato's cave* where the shadows on the wall are the virtual reality (technological and capitalist) that the system creates for humanity. Which made them lose their relationship with natural reality, with the concept of limit, with themselves, with an idea of insurgency or at least resistance to techno-capitalist power. A *cage/cave* that prevents any ability to plan other than the one required to favour a technological determinism and a human-technical syncretism/animism for which only technical innovation has value and produces results—and therefore, all *must* be innovative in terms of technique and technology, and no one must be so in political and social, ethical and environmental and social responsibility terms. Feeling limited *in* the body and *by* the body, but above all *in* the mind, it is thanks to technology that we seek *power* and *domination* (and *omnipotence*) over others and the environment. In other words, we bow—like Sevillian citizens before the Inquisitor in Dostoevsky's story—before Silicon Valley and *its guru-inquisitors*, a symbol-metaphor of the new global power. Which is a power of private companies and of a technology made up of networks and algorithms that allows and imposes total social control—which is offered and hidden in the name of absolute individual freedom—through those data that are now its indispensable, and potentially unlimited, raw material.

We are—*individually and collectively*—confined and limited in a *newness* (and in a *techno-enthusiastic "newism"*, *regardless*) that produces a *collective discourse/imaginary* now *recursive and tautological*: forceful because rhetorical and self-referential, captivating and motivating because individualizing and *deeply activating* the human psyche. It is the new *great narrative*, more powerful than all earlier ones—or the techno-capitalist *device* to lead man *happily* towards totalitarian enslavement to technology and a *post-human* condition. A maximum (ostensible)

individual freedom and creativity, for a maximum (very real) alienation/reification and commodification of the individual: it is *the techno-capitalist expropriation of an individual's life, of their emotions, relationships, sociality, responsibility and planning*. Thus generating a *false individual*, by now an integrated part of the *great* techno-capitalist machine—but Erich Fromm already wrote about a humanity that has long since ceased to use production as a *means* to a better life, making it instead *an end* in itself. An end to which they subordinate their *entire* life, because *in the process of an ever-greater division and mechanization of work, and in the ever-increasing dimensions of social agglomerations, they themselves become part of the machine rather than its master*. Individuals exalted in their egotistic/egolatrous individuality, but in truth controlled and *governmentalized* in every step, thought, behaviour and action. *Individualized*, but *stripped* of any *possibility* or *capacity* for *individuation* (“*Individualism* is a state of equivalence [while] *individuation* requires a philosophy in which *nothing is equal*”—B. Stiegler, 2010).

By *individuation* meaning—according to C. G. Jung—being able to “distinguish the sense of one’s own subjectivity, the sphere of free and autonomous reflection and action, from collective beliefs, from the authority and traditions of social consciousness” (Oddo, *L’Inconscio, tra reale e virtuale*, 2018: 59); or Romano Màdera, “the search for an inner *magisterium* that shifts the guidance of our action, thinking, and feeling from imitation to individuation; an opening to a dimension of desire that pushes itself towards its infinite horizon without losing its anchor in the insuperability of the experience of limits” (*Sconfitta e utopia*, 2018: 15).

Words such as *new*, *smart*, *sharing*, *like*, *social* and *start-up* are now constitutive of a *neo-language* that we have defined as *Lingua Internet Imperii* necessary to legitimize—*social pedagogy* and *mechanisms of veridiction*, to use Foucault’s words, produce them—the dominion/domination of the technique and of neoliberal capitalism (Demichelis, 2015: 52ff.) and to create and make people accept *everyone’s total dependence on the technique* and its *total delegation* to the technique and to the collective discourse/imaginary that it produces (just as the citizens of Seville *delegated themselves* to the Inquisitor). Delegation to the technique that arises from a *technophilia*, ancient and necessary for humanity to survive (in the past), but that has now become *technopathy*. In the triumph not of the *Anthropocene* (the new era in which humanity would be the *force* that determines the environment), but of the *Tech-nocene*, where it is technology that produces the *environment* where

humanity is made to live ever more integrated and connected, making them believe they are *free subjects* and not *objects engineered* by technique and neoliberalism. And to *delegate* his every thought, behaviour, decision and action to technique (Ippolita, 2013)—(it is *Internet-centrism* according to Evgeny Morozov; it is *cybernetic totalitarianism* according to Paolo Zellini).

Delegation being the maximum form of man's (self) alienation, which in turn determines what could be defined as a form of *achromatopsia*, that is the inability to see colours—in this case of freedom, democracy, imagination, of the human soul, of the multiplicity of life—and not even the *black* of the *delegation* granted to the apparatus/religion and therefore his (self) alienation (*black*, the annihilation of his subjectivity). A *technopathy* that combines technological *bulimia* (but without feelings of guilt or self-contempt, while the anxiety and depression associated with it are *treated* with a further intake of *technological food*) and relational/social *anorexia* (see Galimberti, *Nuovo Dizionario di Psicologia*, 2018: 101, 198). By, precisely, producing the *recursive, self-referential and tautological collective discourse/imaginary* of technology and capitalism—and people have always liked *to tell stories* and above all *to hear stories told*, not only in childhood and adolescence; and that of techno-capitalism is the most fascinating story ever—which allows us to *believe that we are God and that we are creative creatures*, while in fact people are increasingly *created, activated, governed and socialized* precisely by techno-capitalism.

Thanks to a *recursive and tautological discourse/imaginary* that rhetorically describes in an ever-positive way (*rhetoric* and *storytelling* as highly effective forms of *propaganda*) a series of technical and capitalist processes that have become the *form* and above all the *normalized and normative norm of individual and social life*. In truth, an a-social yet *communitarian life*, everyone isolated but connected and integrated via the network/*social-community* with other equally non-social/de-socialized individuals. The Father has not *vanished* (see Recalcati, 2011, 2013) and Telemachus is not disoriented, both are *guided* and *oriented* (and therefore *alienated*) by the *Father-Mother/network-technique*, which summarizes in itself the dyadic, triadic and group socialization. Of course, sometimes the confidence in Progress *seems* weaker and less motivating than in the past, but, in reality, people and society are increasingly *dominated* by an unreflective trust in a technological innovation that *must not stop*, but, if anything, increase more and more. And if society is dead, it is because it *had to die* according to the falsely individualizing

neoliberal ideology and also as a consequence of the just as falsely individualizing network technology; society breaking down into a plurality of self-immunizing and self-isolating *individualities* and *communities* (Demichelis, 2010). The *sense of responsibility and solidarity* and the concept of *limit* have been removed in the name of the *will to power* (beyond Nietzsche, who associated it with art) and by the *individual sense of omnipotence* offered to each one by technology.

The result is a techno-capitalist/neoliberal system which is religious, which is a *grand narrative* and now totalitarian, meaning by totalitarianism—among the various possible interpretations—“that form of domination that is exercised over the dominated without going through the mediation of the State” (Abensour, 2017: 310)—however sustaining and reproducing itself *also* through the action of the neoliberal state. And techno-capitalism now is the *global non-state*—and *global religion*—that rules the world and *governmentalizes* people’s *entire* lives, replacing *legitimate* and *controllable power* (democracy) with its own (*will to*) (technical and market) *power* that *need not be controlled*. Which is the ultimate *form* and the ultimate modern manifestation (*extremely heavy*, though, in terms of *modified anthropology*) of that *only technical and capitalist becoming* which seems to be the destiny and at the same time the *delirium* of the entire West, which has become the *delirium* of the globalized world—with *blockchain* and cryptocurrencies as the new *dream* of American anarcho-capitalists/neoliberals for a stateless society and the transfer of power from institutions, and especially from democracy, to markets and the network. In fact, making the *nightmare* of a domination and *hegemony* without a state come true. And so, let’s go back to Weber, who wrote as early as a century ago about how “The capitalistic economy of the present [...] forces the individual, in so far as he is involved in the system of market relationships, to conform to capitalistic rules of action”. Now, however, not only economic, but technical and economic.

A *becoming* to be understood (Severino, 2007: 247, 248) as *becoming something else*, as *diversifying* life and the things of life, in a continuous but also growing *shift between being and non-being*, between *destruction and creation*. Or as *what continues to exist*, according to Nietzsche, *because to impose upon becoming the character of being—that is the supreme will to power*—and power is *panoramic* [...] and being panoramic is a *looking beyond* narrow perspectives (Heidegger, Nietzsche, 1991: 147, 148), and therefore, it is a perspective look, that is a gaze that always

opens up new perspectives (and the thought is above all *constructive*)—while techno-capitalism has shifted the becoming from the *being* of man to the *doing/producing/consuming/innovating* against man and the environment (it is above all *destructive*), preventing any prospective gaze and denying (*closing*) any *other* and superior/better perspective than itself as techno-capitalism; conceptually transforming the virtuous *becoming* into its own incessant and vicious *creative destruction*, forcing man to *adapt* to this *false becoming* thanks to specific forms of *coercion* (which refer to *ideas that a subject cannot help thinking* or to *acts, behaviours and conducts* that man feels forced to carry out (Galimberti, 2018: 235). Turning, this *becoming other* and this *shift between being and not being*, into a very powerful factor of both production, consumption, innovation—it is the “dynamization of the social order”, according to Massimo De Carolis (2017); or Zygmunt Bauman’s *liquid modernity*—and of the consequent alienation and systemic and pulsive nihilism (it is the *pleasure of nihilism* that the system has turned into the best-selling *commodity* of its own cultural industry—Demicheles, 2010: 10).

Of many alienations, in truth: from the self of individuals, from their social and natural environment, from their ability to understand the techno-capitalist organizational mechanism into which they were originally *forced* (First and Second Industrial Revolution) and then in a *soft/biopolitical mode*; and alienation from space and time, from imagination, sovereignty and democracy and knowledge, now transformed into mere *competence* and a *learning by doing* without planning and without meaning, without rationality and without responsibility towards the future. Because alienated—in Marx’s sense, but not only—are the workers of Uber, and those *uberized* in *Platform Capitalism*, the *friends* who live on Facebook and *social networks*, those who have become extras in the *cultural industry* of *pulsive integrated spectacle*, no-longer-citizen citizens because they have been dethroned by technology and neoliberalism, individuals led to live in a state of *incessant and total mobilization* of themselves in the name of technical innovation and market competition, following a *leader* and/or living in a network-swarm.

ALIENATED IN THE NETWORK-FACTORY/SWARM-FACTORY

And alienated above all are the individuals who *believe* themselves to be free (who are *made to believe* that they are free and autonomous) in a network that is instead the new *Factory*, the new *capitalist means*

of *connection/production* and, at the same time, the largest control and publicity agency in history (*infra*). *Factory-network/Factory-swarm* where each individual in the swarm *must know how to do all the work alone* but *synchronized* with the others, and where all forms of work—from production and consumption, sharing/gig economy and piece-rate work, free and salaried work, transfer of data/profiles, *gamification*, to *turkers*/digital piece-rate Amazon workers (*forms* all ascribable to *platform capitalism*)—are increasingly integrated *by* and *into* technology as an apparatus of command and control, but above all of activation and modelling of individual and social behaviours.

Exactly: platforms as a *means of production, connection, mobilization*, going through algorithms and their promise of efficiency/rationality-computability, their fascinating *magical* dimension, and at the same time their *inviting offer of delegation*, thus confirming Novalis when he wrote that “It is on account of indolence that man demands mere mechanism or mere magic. He doesn’t want to be active—to employ his productive imagination” (see Zellini, 2018: 131). And life online is a succession of *injunctions* but in the *soft* form of suggestion/*gentle push/network effect*, *digital conformism/echo chambers*, such as: *click on this link, download this app, express a like*. While advancing towards the triumph of *algocracy/algocrature* (or shifting from Stefano Rodotà’s *technopolitics* to *algotpolitics*), that is, to the power of algorithms that totally alienates the *demos* and the *polis* (and the *agora*) from sovereignty, thought and decision, from the *possibility* and above all from the *ability* to imagine politically. And towards the *end* of the *social* (wrongly identified with *being connected to the network*, that is, to private organizations created for profit and certainly not to produce democracy) and *society* itself (Demichelis, *Società o comunità*, 2010). While the network and *social networks* “by recombining the space into ever more homogeneous community sub-networks exploit the human tendency to *homophilia*, that is to ‘the creation of homogeneous groups of people’ (Ippolita, 2014: 20, 26), and concurrently to *claustrophilia*. Micro-communities, in any case integrated into the macro-community of the network (*small communitarianism* is included in *great communitarianism*), always in a *double movement of dividing/individualizing and then integrating everything/everyone* into the *One* of the apparatus, and into one’s own theology/teleology, between *weak and strong ties* in any case governed by pre-established, alienating and undemocratic *norms* because “democracy is not a code, much less a software” (ibid.: xiv).

Alienations. Which determine and compose a *great alienation*—harking back to Karl Polanyi’s *The Great Transformation*. And nihilism, that is the non-being, the *bringing things and great values to nothing* (Nietzsche), leaving only the *great value/will* of nihilism to prevail—structural and functional to the system, as well as the *essence* and *tendency* of techno-capitalism itself. Because techno-capitalism has, in and of itself, a very strong *telos*; it is nihilistically teleological and deterministic, and at the same time theological (Demicheles, 2015). Mistaken for its *will to power* (quite different from that imagined by Nietzsche), with its own incessant growth *for becoming* and (*will to*) *power*. Which increases the more it produces destruction, decomposition, de-socialization, alienation, estrangement, reification and that specific alienation called *identification* of each with the apparatus (the techno-capitalism), which produces organization, which governmentalizes, which is *pastoral power*, offering *meanings of life, emotions* and now *pathos*. *Pathos*, meaning both man’s *passion* and *illness* of the psyche, both *compulsion* and *suffering*. In the *becoming* of *pathos*, and with the *pathos* of technical *becoming*. So powerful—so biopolitical—to circumvent/remove, or make accepted as inevitable, in collective psychology, even the risks of *technological unemployment*: which always repeats itself in every phase of the *long industrial revolution* since it is structural to the system (and therefore, according to the prediction of J. M. Keynes, 2010, it will not be solved when the *economic problem is solved*). A structurally and intrinsically destructive or unbalanced/unbalancing system precisely due to the imbalance it lives on (Romano and Stefano, *Squilibrio*, 2018).

And in the end, it is an increase—now autopoietic—of the *imbalance*, of the *dynamis* of techno-capitalism, of the *creative destruction* in which Bauman’s *liquid modernity* is but the consequent, and incessantly teleological effect of this *dynamis/destruction/disruption*. *Dynamis* which is different albeit derived from the one described by Plato for whom (Galimberti, 1999: 61) doing something (*téchne*—but in any case *being masters of one’s own mind*) presupposes the possibility of being able to do it (*dynamis*), a possibility that arises only if one possesses the science (*episteme*) of the thing one wants to do; while now *dynamis* defines and determines not the *being able to do* but *having to do everything that is possible* (Anders), given that the system—without man—can do (autopoiesis, in fact) everything that is possible thanks to algorithms and *machine learning*, regardless of the (*human*) knowledge of what must be done, and above all of the reason and responsibility for what one does and

has done. And this is because there is no politics (now overwhelmed by technique and by technocracy and by algocracy/alcocrature) which, again according to Plato, would be the *basilikē technē*, or *kingly art*, that must (*should*) control and govern all other techniques by assigning them their purposes according to the ends of the *polis*, because “what decides the validity of a technique is its use” (ibid.: 268) and only politics is “capable of making what is right triumph by the coordination and governance of all activities that take place in the city”. On the other hand, technical reason has long since welded itself with the *will to power*—and the knowledge that springs from technology is “knowledge that can” (ibid.: 263)—progressively turning the power/*dynamis* subordination to knowledge/*epistēmē* into its opposite; because Bacon’s famous phrase *scientia est potentia* actually defines the fact that *technique* and the *will to power* have become *one*. Now, however, this *will to power* always references technology and its *rationality* which for some time now has no longer been the reason of individuals (according to Galimberti, ibid.: 37, in Bacon’s time “[m]an could still claim his subjectivity and his dominion over technical equipment”, which is no longer the case), *technical reason* is increasingly self-referential and self-poietic (like *capitalist reason*) but it is finally—this is the thesis supported here—*clothed in pathos* in order for its *will to power* to be stronger than reason, knowledge, politics and/or the *principle of responsibility*, according to Hans Jonas, or Ernst Bloch’s *principle of hope*.

Making us forget (again Plato—and even this forgetting is an effect of the alienation produced by neoliberalism and technology) that in an *opulent city* devoted to *pleasures*—and now to the pleasure/*pathos* produced by technology—we need a concept of *justice* that places itself as a limit to what tends instead to the unlimited with no reason or responsibility.

Technique is therefore “what the will needs in order to be able to express itself”—as Galimberti summarized—and “to differentiate itself from the dream, or the desire without realization”; but the technique (and not just capitalism) *is* now the dream and *pathos*, it is the *emotion* and *more than the emotion* that is produced to generate a relationship of fascination for itself and in itself as a techno-capitalist innovation. Because it is no longer true (Galimberti, *Il tramonto dell’Occidente*, 2005: 471) that “only in a static universe, as the universe objectified by science is, can scientific reason express its tyranny”; but it can and must do so—by also, and above all, changing into technical *pathos*—in an increasingly dynamic

universe where techno-capitalism *plays* with the world, and makes people *play their own game of omnipotence* by obeying the only rule/norm of its unreasonable reason, that of incessant *creative destruction*, or of becoming/*dynamis*.

Technique is always the structure underlying modern rationality (just think of algorithms and their growing *dominion* over human life), but now it has mainly turned into *rationalization of the production of pathos*, into *scientific organization of pathos and destruction/innovation drives*. And into *industrialization* and *individualization/personalization of the will to power*—understood (see Nietzsche) as the ceaseless activation of desire (here, of *pathos*) which in turn wants and seeks its continuous *growth*, being an infinite *drive* for renewal, and necessary (but beyond Nietzsche—who instead was looking for a man *capable of being what he is*—and who wrote: “That which is higher than all reconciliation must the will which is the will to power will”) to push even further, in the inexorable repetition of the eternal return of the destructive act, the *will to power* of techno-capitalism and its (ir)rationality.

Therefore, action—understood by Hannah Arendt as the ability to initiate, start and undertake a new course, with often unintended consequences—must at the same time multiply and become a normalized, and at the same time familiarized, *compulsive destructive behaviour* by socially stabilizing *creative destruction*, and making *imbalance* and *disruption* be accepted. And if for Aldous Huxley the dystopia of *Brave New World* rewrote the principles of 1789 in *Community, Identity and Stability*, now the first two are further strengthened to recreate *the order of disorder*, while the *creative destruction* steadies—and the citizens of the techno-capitalist *new world* do not need to renounce emotions but live them to the fullest of their drive/productivity (*pathos*).

Thus betraying the protests of 1968, but also Nietzsche and his idea of artistic practice as the *counter-movement* to modern *nihilism*. With the techno-capitalist *pathos* that looks like Nietzsche’s intoxication, yet used not to produce art as *fullness* but to increase *dynamis* (*movement*) and one’s own nihilism: “Intoxication has to have heightened the sensitivity of the whole machine, or else there can be no art. All the very different kinds of intoxication have the power to do this: above all the intoxication of sexual arousal [...]. Likewise the intoxication which accompanies every great desire [...], the intoxication of celebration, of competition, of the bravura piece, of victory, of any extreme movement; the intoxication of cruelty; the intoxication in destruction” (*Twilight of the Idols*, 1998: 47).

THE DISCIPLINING BIOPOLITICS

The system now becomes pre-power no longer thanks to the *logos* of a calculating and instrumental rationality but activating, for the strengthening of precisely this *logos*, the *dynamic and dynamizing pathos* (a new and more intense modality of the old *total mobilization* according to Ernst Jünger) that *techno-capitalism from a state of nature* (see De Carolis, 2017: 20ff.) produces and reproduces with the “great video game, between real and virtual of the war of all against all” (Demichelis, 2010: 10). A “scientific rationality that produces technology as a system” but which is now no longer “a quiet pre-power that does not need violent actions because its power would come before its actual exercise” (again Galimberti, 1999: 378); which does not merely reside “in its power to rationalize *something*, or some *sphere* which then becomes dominant to the point of spreading to other spheres of life, such as the economic sphere in Marxism”, that is, creating the *ethos* of humanity and their ontological *a priori* (Galimberti, 2005: 435); but it is a dynamic/dynamizing and destructive pre-power which—even if it reaffirms the dominant technological *a priori*—must produce dynamization, mobilization and pulsive imbalance, must continually re-legitimize itself with the power and with the violence of the *pathos* of innovation for innovation’s sake and with the power and violence of market competition and neoliberalism.

Any longer without human planning, but giving each one the *pathos* (which becomes the *ethos*) and the *sense* (illusory, false, but *powerful*) of participating in a great innovation not only technical but in a project that is *also* political and social thanks to technology and to the network, bringing together the *unlimitedness of the will to power* with *communion with the Whole/technique*, revisiting the *oceanic feeling* Romain Rolland wrote about to Freud who in turn referred it to the infantile feeling of omnipotence and that the technical apparatus now offers as a *womb* to anyone who identifies and adapts to it (Galimberti, 1999: 596). Individuals having to become, as Letizia Oddo writes recalling Anders (2018: 130), “machine for machines”, an element “to be always and in any case connected and hybridized and increasingly included in computer programs/predefined algorithms”. Because—and it is only apparently a paradox or apparently a contradiction—the biopolitics/thanatopolitics of creative destruction/imbalance/disruption *functionally* coexists with the need to forecast, to governmentalize, to direct life by means of apps and algorithms—so that, “from an instrument available to the world-of-life,

scientific and technical anticipation becomes the horizon within which the world-of-life takes place” (Galimberti, *ibid.*: 385), which is another way of *producing* forms of alienation not only from *decision* but also from *human prediction* and *imagination*, because technique and capitalism produce “the preventive control of the choices of others” (De Carolis, 2017: 27). Living with forms of *individualized control*—from the scientific organization of Taylor’s work to present-day Big Data and the *super-panopticon* of the *internet of men and things* (*infra*) and *value*, with *computational thinking* that combines *personalization* and *uniformity*, forcing life to be reduced to *quantity* and individuals to become numbers and not just thing/*res*.

Effect of a *biopolitics* of the *pathos* and the *will to power of the system*—a *disciplining biopolitics*, if the concept did not seem, but is not, a contradiction in terms (and, on the other hand, Foucault himself had distinguished between *enclosed disciplines*, as in factories and prisons and *open disciplines*, such as advertising and media)—produced for technological and economic growth.

Above all for the creation of delegation to the technique. And, therefore, of a new *voluntary servitude* by individuals to themselves (precisely the most total and nihilistic form of alienation, leading everyone to *identify/self-alienate* with what alienates). Confirming Étienne de La Boétie’s thesis according to which voluntary servitude is not the result of an external cause, but man becomes a subject and submits himself (*delegating*)—*spontaneously and actively*—self-deceiving (to the point of self-destroying, precisely, as a *subject*) on the nature and causes of this voluntary servitude—and “what started as subjection by force, soon became ‘voluntary servitude’, collaboration in reproducing a society which made servitude increasingly rewarding and palatable”, as Herbert Marcuse wrote in *Eros and Civilization* (1966); or the escape from freedom (Fromm, 1941); or of this new *obedience to authority* (Milgram, 1974); always having to repeat the principle according to which in all fields of social life human beings must be divided into *managers and workers* and “the essence of the managerial function lies in the initiative [...] in the ability to decide on what must be done and *to impose* such a decision, with respect to which the essence of being directed lies in *receptive* and *executive* behaviours” (Schumpeter, 1993: 18). But it is obvious that this *internal cause* or *will to escape from freedom towards authority and hetero-management*—that is, *to delegate* to technique as a subliminal form of hetero-management—is a process quite different from *delegating*

in a representative democracy assuming that, unlike the latter, the power of technology *is not public* (neither are the algorithms, the *forms* and technical *norms* with which the apparatus works and makes individuals and societies function), and *it is not made public and is not exposed to the judgement and control* of citizens.

So, this *internal cause* can be, and increasingly is, *activated/produced* from the *outside* (heteronomy, hetero-management). Because this is one of the ways to interpret the concept of *disciplining biopolitics*, by using *pathos* as an *activator/producer of voluntary servitude* in the *swarm-network*, but making individuals believe to be a *sovereign self*, *owners of themselves* and *equal only to themselves*, *autonomous* and *supramoral* (but “‘autonomous’ and ‘ethical’ are mutually exclusive”—wrote Nietzsche in *On the Genealogy of Morality*: 36). And it is precisely *self-entrepreneurship* and *socialized technical self-innovativeness* that produce alienation in those who believe themselves to be entrepreneurs, innovators and owners of the means of production and of the product of their work—in fact increasingly alienated from themselves as they are nonowners not even of themselves because they have become not only a commodity but self-receptive and self-executive in doing *what must be done*. On the other hand, “All so-called practical men have skill in service, whether it be serving others or themselves; this is what makes them practical” (Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits* 1913, ii: 225—italics ours); therefore, and consequently: the greater the number of *practical/technical individuals* (*doing, innovating, producing, learning by doing*) that can be activated by the system, the greater the number of *servile* and *self-servile* individuals that can be made useful and docile for, and in, the apparatus.

This *dynamis*, this *total mobilization*, this *meaningless becoming* each time presents itself in an apparently new *form*, in fact always identical to the previous one in its basic structure of functioning. In a sort of *eternal return to self* as techno-capitalism, of continuous chase between *being* and *becoming*; a *becoming* that now is the *stabilized form* of the *ever unstable will to power*, as an uninterrupted self-empowerment of oneself (Galimberti, 2005: 521). Even if each time it has *increased* and *accelerated*, it always acts according to the *iron law* of a *double movement*, which (recalling Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*) is precisely what techno-capitalism unceasingly produces for itself and for its own *power*: *subdivision* and *individualization* (of society, of work,

of life, of the subject, of reality, of knowledge, therefore, of the alienation itself), on the one hand; and, on the other hand, *totalization*, or the integration and connection of the divided and alienated parts into a *systemic/holistic/theological-technical* Whole greater than the simple sum of its parts; a *communitarizing Whole/One* that contains and integrates them, bringing them back to unity of *meaning* and *purpose*, giving them the techno-capitalist *form* and *norm*. It is, therefore, not the Enlightenment individual, it is not the I—if freed from any bond—that is the agent of dissolution, but it is the techno-capitalist system, in and of itself, that thrives on the production of *false individualism* and of *individualization*, of idolized false individuals, de-socializing and liquefying all bonds that are not functional to its own growth while producing new ones which are functional to its own existence (Demichelis, 2010: 27ff.). And the rise of *individualism without individuation*—which would mean *the decline of the social bond*—is not a natural trait of democracy (as, recalling Alexis de Tocqueville, Alain Ehrenberg, 2010: xxv believed, for example), but is specific to and produced by techno-capitalism. Which *favours the rise of* (false) *individualism* and the *decline of the social bond* and *individuation* to achieve the maximum integration—and, therefore, of alienation by *individuation/incorporation*—of each one within the apparatus. By activating for itself (and not for the human being, whose freedom must instead be increasingly *disciplined* and *governmentalized*), the needed *creativity/innovativeness*. Because (Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 2003: 87, 45, albeit in another sense), “I am that which must always overcome itself. He who must be a creator is always destroying”.

And this is the purpose of the *disciplining* (and *alienating*) *biopolitics* of *letting oneself be guided*, of the *happily alienating delegation*, individually but mostly by the network, by search engines, by algorithms (algorocracy), by *social networks*, by an *app*, by the populist leader, by the autocrat/dictator, by the empathic/motivator manager or by *happiness* inside the company, by the *community*; by the *wellbeing team* of Instagram, by the *collective phenomena* according to Magatti (2009: 233). Because the more the individualization of work and the uncertainty of life and its riskiness, as well as the fragmentation of the *political ruler* (of the *demos*) grow, the more the system needs to connect everyone with itself as an apparatus/algorithm, for itself as a new *stateless sovereign* whose power *cannot and must not be controlled/limited because already seen as rational and mathematical*. And if this may seem paradoxical, in

reality it is the precise and specific *essence* of every organizational, industrial or post-industrial, real or virtual system, that is, to divide and then integrate, standardize and at the same time motivate and above all make everyone *identify* with the organization in which they enter and to which they must totally *delegate*, under the illusion of being co-decision-makers. Where the rhetoric of leadership, of the charisma in *organizing others* and in *making others do, voluntarily and happily, what they have to do*, activates an unceasing device of *creative tension* that, in the name of the corporate *mission* and nowadays of the neoliberal and technical society (modelled, like the state and the individual, on the *enterprise-form*), determines the passive/active acceptance of an constant *changeability* of everyone (this is what is taught, not only in *Business schools*). Thus activating the *pathos* that now is a crucial factor for the *spontaneous and free organization of the networked society*—in reality “planned and planning in the techno-capitalist sense” (Demichelis, *La religione tecno-capitalista*, 2015: 162; William Davies, “Lo stato neoliberale”, in *aut aut*, n. 376: 27), because neoliberalism is an *ideology* not of *freedom* but of *planning* of the society and life, more and worse than the ideologies of the twentieth century, but from a technical and capitalist point of view. With the enterprise seen as the embodiment of the *pulsive/dynamizing rationality of the technical world with respect to the life of human beings*; as a *subject of integration, reconciliation and self-incorporation* of conflicts (in fact, the *factory community*, the *brand community*, *social networks*); and in the form of the *organism* and of the *organic totality* to be reached or in the form of the *automated machine* that must contain and integrate each part in and for itself. Modernity living precisely in an infinite *double movement*, in a *process of differentiation and unification by way of imitation* (see Simmel and modernity as a *search for conformism* together with a *desire for diversity*), now ever more governed by a biopolitics where *differentiation* is obviously functional to *unification* (the Whole/One in which each part must *theologically* and *teleologically* adapt). Thus realizing a unity of an upper level, formerly the *political state*, now the *stateless system* of techno-capitalism.

Speaking of human beings but also of automata, Stanley Milgram wrote: “Cybernetics is the science of regulation or control, and the relevant question is, what changes must occur in the design of an evolving organism as it moves from a capacity for autonomous functioning to a capacity for functioning within an organization? [...] Cybernetic theory,

by providing us with a model, can alert us to the changes that logically must occur when independent entities are brought into hierarchical functioning. [...] When individuals enter a condition of hierarchical control, the mechanism which ordinarily regulates individual impulses is suppressed and ceded to the higher-level component. *Freud* [...] spelled out this mechanism clearly: “the individual gives up his ego ideal and substitutes for it the group ideal embodied in the leader”. The basic reason why this occurs is rooted not in individual needs but in organizational needs. Hierarchical structures can function only if they possess the equality of coherence, and coherence can be attained only by the suppression of control at the local level” (1974: 125–131).

We are, therefore, presented with a state of heteronomy—which occurs precisely when individuals regulate their behaviour according to the directives or signals that come from *a person of a higher status* (according to Milgram), or, as nowadays, from *a system of a higher status* (such as the network, a *social network*, an app, an algorithm—which in any case are all hierarchical systems, hierarchically controlled and controlling). Therefore, individuals no longer consider themselves responsible for the actions performed, just as happens in a crowd/mass (G. Le Bon, 2004, *infra*)—now in the form of an even more individualized mass, produced by the network—but define themselves as functional nodes of the system and its organizational *forms* and *norms* (heteronomy, or alienation of the *nomos*). There remains “an element of free choice”, Milgram wrote, which “determines whether the person defines himself [heteronomous] or not, but given the presence of certain critical releasers, the propensity to do so is exceedingly strong, and the shift is not freely reversible” (ivi: 134)—heteronomy being, therefore, a form of (self) alienation from oneself, exploited by the hierarchically superior system (business, brand community, *social network* and, above everything: techno-capitalism). Thus alienating man even more from himself, from the *polis*, from *life*, from responsibility; but the system itself offering the organizing and commanding response to the call for *protection* (*social, community, sharing*), given that it needs (it is precisely one of the many normative and biopolitically disciplining forms of the double movement) to incessantly replicate its disorder/imbalance so as to present itself, just as incessantly, as *order*, as *balance/holism* and as a *guide* (from ordoliberalism to order/techno-capitalism). And, as Max Horkheimer recalled, “protection is the archetype of domination”. But also of the techno-capitalist autopoiesis, since techno-capitalism is *the subject that organizes*

after having dis-organized each thing/relationship/value and at the same time *the object of the order it produced*, an *order* that is always different (*dynamization, imbalance*), and as a matter of fact always the same in its *double movements*. While Blaise Pascal already indicated in the *habit* (now *the need to be connected* and the *identification* with the system) and in the *distraction* (produced by the past and present *cultural industry*) the expedients of individuals to avoid facing reality.

And it is a techno-capitalist system with infinite reproducibility—therefore and again: no secular crisis of capitalism, no decline of neoliberalism—because the great ability of techno-capitalism is *to take* human beings/individuals, *to subdivide* them (making them become, for Marx, “a fragment of man”; while for John Ruskin “It is not, truly speaking, the labour that is divided; but the men: divided into mere segments of men – broken into small fragments and crumbs of life”) and *to build/engineering* them in order to insert them in the apparatus and in the process of technical growth and capitalist accumulation, thus *transforming* their lives.

System that has/is the *power* and the *will to power* meant as an incessant *accumulation of power* and as a *setting in motion* of the whole of society; which is more than the one theorized by Nietzsche about man on nature (“not an act of pride, but an ineliminable condition of existence and survival of man”), but rather excess and uncontrolled arbitrariness of man over man and nature—and ever more of *the apparatus on man and nature*—senseless but with the sole purpose of its own growth (“the Technique” to be understood therefore as a “project to infinitely increase the power, beyond any absolute limit”—Severino, 2017: 107). Key factors of a system that socializes itself by becoming biopolitical and, therefore, a *form of life* (Dardot and Christian, 2013; Jaeggi, 2016b; Demichelis, 2017), normal and normed, by creating *common sense*, the *spirit of time*, the *mechanisms of veridiction* and *self-legitimation* as a power capable of *being/making/inducing* innovation, transformation, change (against the *Old* which must be scrapped, always and in any case, *regardless*). A power which has its own *knowledge* and the *powers* it creates based on such *knowledge*. That builds its own power—unlike democratic *power* and *government* that must be balanced by other control and verification powers, first of all that of *demos*—by removing any possible counter-power and any possible balancing and control in order for its (*will to*) *power* to be maximum and unlimited and not limited by law, ethics and responsibility. Refuting Michel Foucault’s thesis that “where there