

# CONTEMPORARY TECHNOPOLITICAL ESCHATOLOGIES

## ABSTRACT

The crucial theme of “technoscientific progress” has been gaining new political-eschatological outlines in the ideological environments of the left and right. The present essay seeks to understand and periodize such outlines in the dimensions of the capitalist and post-capitalist accelerationist discourses. We present arguments and notions that criticize and demarcate the insufficiencies of both accelerationist views. To do so, we reflect and propose about the human and the machine, in philosophical and socio-political terms. The essay, in another way, seeks to help in the debate about the contemporary importance of materiality design in aesthetic-political plan, in general term, and democratic, in specific.

## KEYWORDS

Accelerationism; Eschatology; Materiality; Democracy; Contemporary Capitalism.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

How to understand and periodize the eschatological discourses about contemporary technoscientific progress? And what do these discourses have to do with certain expressive and elucidative dimensions of the current encounters between political philosophy, sociology and economics? Such are the two extensive questions raised in this text.

The reflections, analyses and considerations that we will carry out in order to approach for the questions above are immersed in three sections, based on a research hypothesis which evaluates two technopolitical eschatologies, the *capitalist accelerationists* and the *postcapitalist accelerationists*. Connecting the two sections, there is another to clarify theoretical propositions about the contemporary, about the notions of human and machine, and the relationship between them both, especially in philosophical and socio-political terms<sup>1</sup>.

## 2. CAPITALIST ACCELERACIONISM

How to understand and periodize capitalist accelerationism? Following the

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<sup>1</sup> The text, essayistic, is the third part of a research project entitled *Contemporary Materialism, Archeology of Apparatus and Democracy*, it should be noted that, in Brazil, in times of extreme right-wing policies of outrage and dismantling of university institutions, it had been developed without research funding. I would like to thank Gustavo Denani, Felipe B. Gomes e Luciana P. de Souza for their critical and analytical readings.

way in which different humanities and media researchers, in distinct approaches, demonstrate it more and more emphatically (Levy S., 2011; Haucap; Heimeshoff, 2013; Aschoff, 2015; Bolaño; Figueiredo, 2017; Robinson, 2016 ; Solon; Siddiqui, 2017; Pulkkinen, 2019), the place where the combination of financial capitalism and technological innovations, notably computational, has an extraordinary impact is, par excellence, the Silicon Valley, in San Francisco Bay, California (USA): a place marked by concentration of political and economic power, but also by prophecies and experiences of libertarian life and politics. In other words, it is the locus of a virtual pendulum that has been architected by decentralization and centralization of processes, data, designs, flows, capitals, generating rearrangements of capital and labor, based on an *algorithmic governmentality*, term coined by Rouvroy and Berns (2013). Such governmentality is requalifying the concept of sovereignty, the mode of subjection and even contemporary geopolitics (Bratton, 2015).

Since the early 2000s, the algorithmic materialities generated in Silicon Valley, especially the “invisible” infrastructures of the companies labeled GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon and Microsoft) – it should be noted, as we know today, almost all involved in the American PRISM global surveillance program revealed by Edward Snowden –, contributed to figure them between the ten richest of the world, overcoming, since 2017, traditional companies such as Exxon, Nestlé, General Electric and Johnson & Johnson (Parra et al., 2018).

Behind such algorithmic materialities, there are obviously people, manufacturers, traders and funders of infrastructures, producing the “Google humanity” of “users” (The Invisible Committee, 2017), imposed daily to everybody, at the interfaces, webs, backgrounds; people like the libertarian billionaire entrepreneur Peter Thiel, who, among numerous activities, is dedicated to feeding artificial intelligence, life extension and seasteading projects, floating islands in the high seas, in international waters, starting microterritories outside jurisdictions of nation states – one of the dreams of American libertarians (Gelles, 2017).

The Internet of thing, robotic, big data, artificial intelligence, algorithmic structure... The Industry 4.0, based on cyberphysical systems and cloud computing, promises that non-human actors have – inside capitalist models of quantification of life spheres and of surplus value – enormous advantages over humans, in terms of management, execution and communication systems. The unconsciousness and depoliticization of technologies is an outrage; at the dawn of global cyber-surveillance

systems, it is the technocratic and libertarian utopias/dystopias, expressed in the tyrannies of the experts and capitalist elites, that we need to investigate in the context of contemporary democracies. After all, is it not evident nowadays the inversion of Clausewitz's formula, advocated by Deleuze and Guattari (1997)? Policy that becomes a continuation of the war; the "eternal peace", the "end of history", that implements technically the silent and unlimited process of total war, of state of exception.

Silicon Valley connotes the historical process of constructing a colossal *center of calculation* (Latour, 2000): technoscience; inexorable *maelström*; whirlwind of expansion and reduction of worlds; control over spaces and times through peremptory circumscriptions, inventories, classifications, surveys, cartographies and far-off incursions. It connotes the circuit of compatibilities, standardizations, counts, flowcharts and organization charts, defining a relative universality, defining a relative universality contrary or alien to local singularities.

We are interested, therefore, in understanding the philosophy and political doctrine or ideology which hosts, flourishes and projects the technophilic belief in Silicon Valley center of calculation; the *technological eschatology*, notably in the version called *technological singularity*, by considering meanings, practices, affections and ideals – that is, a vigorous political cultural – that stands out in it.

In the cartography of this essay, first we will follow the outlines of the libertarian's technopolitical eschatology – especially, that of the Kurzwelians, which diffuses the capitalist accelerationism ideal.

Let us return to the question: how might we understand and periodize capitalist accelerationism?

An eschatological discourse is a doctrine that evokes the destiny of life, of humanity, based on speculations and precepts, in a teleological character, fashion of "final judgments", being conceived in history especially by religious doctrines. In the past two centuries, symptomatically, humanity's spiritual senses and dreams have also spread in technological eschatologies "epistles", presented at sci-fi literature, so that the notion of eschatology became also associated with foreknowledge of technological and humanity becoming. Even more, since the end of the 20th century, such eschatologies gained an expressive technopolitical *corpus*, brought in by the media, but, above all, by institutional structures and organizations, as we shall see.

The theory about technological singularity seeks to transpose the physical-mathematical term of singularity to the technological field. In the physical-mathematical

field, the term singularity is a parameter of the performance of a resolution or a phenomenon. It refers to a singular, peculiar, unusual or abnormal state, in which all the lines are placed parallel, generating an infinite event or a tendency to the infinite and incommensurable. In Mathematics, specifically, singularity matches the value or range of values of a function for which there is no derivative. In Physics, it matches a point or region in space-time in which gravitational forces make matter have an infinite density, relying particularly on the theory of black holes. Singularity, therefore, brings on a decisive and critical notion: that of the transition between two worlds or two domains at a point or instant, introduction a gap, an interval, a split value. It is a term that defines the acceleration of processes and the breakdown of traditional theoretical explanations, going beyond the possibilities of cognition, evaluation and prediction from traditional Mathematical and Physics instruments and laws.

Iconic figure, Kurzweil is the main mentor of technological singularists' discourses; an exponent, especially in political, mediatic and institutional discourses. Author of the books *The age of spiritual machines: when computers exceed human intelligence* (1999) and *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (2005), translated into several languages, he has been arguing and helping to spread the view that contemporary techno-scientific progress occurs on an exponential scale, transcending and giving a new position to human life and powers, advocating a certain sense of the notions of (post) human and economics. In *The Singularity is Near*, the author writes:

What, then, is the Singularity? It's a future period during which the pace of technological change will be so rapid, its impact so deep, that human life will be irreversibly transformed. Although neither utopian nor dystopian, this epoch will transform the concepts that we rely on to give meaning to our lives, from our business models to the cycle of human life, including death itself. (Kurzweil, 2005, p. 25).

In cooperation with Google and the state-owned NASA (and other emerging private companies linked to the field of information and communication technologies), Kurzweil and Peter Diamandis constituted, in 2008, at Silicon Valley, the Singularity University, having today branches and partnerships in several countries. Such university seeks to be, at the same time, a think-tank organization, a business incubator and a disruptive technological innovator in market. It has been the main core (real and symbolic) motivating privileged agents of capitalism (entrepreneurs, scientists in technological innovations, technocrats and so on), in what their views, desires, political

models, ideals of individual and social well-being should be like. All of this, of course, based on technopolitical eschatology and technological singularity of life in general, while subordinated to technological development.

Kurzweil's (1999; 2005) notion of technological singularity is a technoscientific speculation; a stunning chain of predictions based on data, graphs, interpretations and events, imposing itself, either explicitly or between the lines, as a prospect of a foreshadowing socio-political events; a futurological perspective that is based, therefore, on projections, formulating laws, theories and notions that are established on speculations disseminated and appreciated in some academic areas (More; Vita-More, 2013). Thus, the technological singularity stands out, above all, as a political, economic and cultural discourse, instituting a technocratic view of the world, constituting beliefs that reaffirm a political state. A discourse that constitutes, therefore, whether true or false, *regimes of fictions and truth*<sup>2</sup>: thoughts on immortality, technocratic political volitions and the promotion of new frontiers of capitalist innovations, of media conformations and automations, notably.

The discourses on technological singularity, and their various associated estimations, satisfy an eschatological, utopian varnish to technocratic values, explaining a final destination, a vision of “paradise”. A teleological perspective based on a given conception of technology and an optimistic view of “abundance”, security and happiness in the world (Diamandis; Kotler, 2012), exploring, therefore, the strictly technoscientific conditions and conformations to “accelerate the process” towards “good life”.

Currently, as several authors have explained (Malabou, 2009; Pariser, 2011; Crary, 2013; Morozov, 2015; Wajcman; Dodd, 2017; Benkler et all., 2018; Zuboff, 2019) – despite their different philosophical, scientific and political positions –, the digitization processes promoted at Silicon Valley have simultaneously been shaping new cognitive, neurolinguistics and habit's controls in populations, extensively introducing capitalist volitions in terms of subjects readequate to hyper-corporate

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2 “The real must be fictionalized in order to be thought. This proposition should be distinguished from any discourse - positive or negative - according to which everything is ‘narrative’, with alternations between ‘grand’ narratives and ‘minor’ narratives. [...] It is a matter of stating that the fiction of the aesthetic age defined models for connecting the presentation of facts and forms of intelligibility that blurred the border between the logic of facts and the logic of fiction. [...] Writing history and writing stories come under the same regime of truth” (Rancière, 2004, p. 38).

business strategies.

We are not concerned with a denunciation of Kurzweil's theory here or with an archeology of the concept of technological singularity – which goes back to Venor Vinge, John Von Neumann and other authors. It is more important for us to continue to highlight and analyze, by means of periodization, the main meanings, interests and values of these regimes of fiction and truth, which institute and sustain this new technopolitical and eschatological ideal, behind a notion of singularity that entails technological hypostasis and determinism – imputing a political culture that *depoliticizes* the world indeed.

The secular technocratic-eschatological thinking was not exclusive of the eschatology-business produced by the “Californian Ideology” of the Silicon Valley, in the early 1990s. Another contemporary, liberal-conservative thinking has much greater publicization and preponderance, to wit: the State eschatology of the “end of history”. Soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, within the neoliberalism promotion and the feeling of “victory” of capitalism in the Cold War context, a convenient teleological interpretation emerges with the philosopher Francis Fukuyama as its main mentor. In his famous book *The End of History and the Last Man*, published in 1992, Fukuyama expands his ideas previously presented to the public in a controversial article in 1989 (Fukuyama, 1989). The author, in a revisionist and unusual reading of history, Hegel and Christianity, points out the “fully satisfactory” state of the triumphant American democracy, revealing that the political *télos* and *arché* are finally found there. The time would come, therefore, to celebrate the “Good News” and the “Promised Land”, liberal-conservative, as end-of-history judgments – as a doctrine of a permanent and unlimited liberal state. However, the “new world order”, affirmed by a Christian-liberal eschatology, defines a limit to the capacity of technoscientific progress to promote freedom.

But while modern natural science guides us to the gates of the Promised Land of liberal democracy, it does not deliver us to the Promised Land itself, for there is no economically necessary reason why advanced industrialization should produce political liberty. (Fukuyama, 1992, p. XV).

In the words of Sloterdijk (2010, p. 51), the new version of Fukuyama's “Christian” eschatology, a kind of “updated thimotology”, with the purpose of using the modern state, hoped to illuminate “[...] the confused relationship of Western secular and technological civilization with the three messianic eschatologies derived from religious

thought in the Near East: Jewish, Christian and Islamic". However, from the beginning of the 21st century, above all, Fukuyama's eschatological-state perspective (anthropocentric and humanistic), would be confronted with business-eschatology (technocentric and post-humanist). Reacting, Fukuyama, in the book *Our posthuman future* (2002), would criticize the capitalist accelerationist technopolitical discourses and movements, which were beginning to gain popularity. The conjuncture had changed, so that the notion of transhumanism or post-humanism, linked to the capitalist accelerationist technopolitics, would be one of the "most dangerous ideas in the world" (Fukuyama, 2002; 2009), especially because of the departure from the notions of rights based on a solid judgment about "human nature". According to the author:

It is my view that this turn away from notions of rights based on human nature is profoundly mistaken, both on philosophical grounds and as a matter of everyday moral reasoning. Human nature is what gives us a moral sense, provides us with the social skills to live in society, and serves as a ground for more sophisticated philosophical discussions of rights, justice, and morality. [...] The answer is, we want to protect the full range of our complex, evolved natures against attempts at self-modification. We do not want to disrupt either the unity or the continuity of human nature, and thereby the human rights that are based on it (Fukuyama, 2002, p. 101; 172).

The thinker and strategist of the new American geopolitical order, Fukuyama, would oppose the rise of a cybernetic and biogenetic world order, considered as an "advance in industrialization" and "political freedom". This order would supposedly free the world from libertarian radicalizations, for a doctrine of perennial and unlimited technological innovation, directed to processes of ethical, political and economic exemptions, through agents of venture capital and entrepreneurship, dialoguing more and more openly with nation-states, and preaching automation and diverse experiences for and with life.

## 2.1 – Singularity

Regarding *The End of History and the Last Man*, Derrida wondered about the media expansion of such discourses:

One would do better to ask oneself why this book, with the 'good news' it claims to bring, has become such a media gadget, and why it is all the rage in the ideological supermarkets of a worried West where it is bought up just as, at the first rumors of war, people buy sugar and oil, when there is any left. Why this amplification by the media? And how is it that a discourse of this type is sought out by those who celebrate the triumph of

liberal capitalism and its predestined alliance with liberal democracy only in order to hide, and first of all from themselves, the fact that this triumph has never been so critical, fragile, threatened, even in certain regards catastrophic, and in sum bereaved? (Derrida, 1994, p. 85).

Today, entering the decade of 2020, within a period progressively influenced and constituted by eschatological-business technopolitics, we can likewise ask ourselves: what is behind this media expansion of libertarian technological acceleration, in which the notion technological singularity is revealed? In other words, what does it mean: this new idyllic, material, post-human “Good News” of unrestricted optimism regarding the accelerationists corporations?

As to put ourselves critically and at distance, in relation to the technocratic-eschatological dimension of life, though avoiding the same conservatism that marks Fukuyama’s state eschatology, we should attempt to carry out a critical conceptual analysis of the notions of singularity and post-human condition – anthropotechnical, as we might call it.

In contemporary philosophical thought, the concept of singularity deviates diametrically from an eschatological proposition. Singularity, in Philosophy, implicates a sense of continuous becoming of beings, objects, environments, identifying the possible potencies of these as differentiated, spatialized and temporalized *from* heterogeneous and multiple relationships. Based on a selection of Simondon's philosophy, mainly, Deleuze distinguishes any idea of hypostasis and determinism from singularity.

Singularity is seen as immanence of the being that enters a *field of forces*, that is, when it operates in different worlds, of machinic assemblages: psychic, collective, natural, technical. Deleuze says, in *Logic of Sense*:

Singularities are turning points and points of inflection; bottlenecks, knots, foyers, and centers; points of fusion, condensation, and boiling; points of tears and joy, sickness and health, hope and anxiety, ‘sensitive’ points. The singularity belongs to another dimension than that of denotation, manifestation, or signification. It is essentially pre-individual, non-personal, and a-conceptual. (Deleuze, 1990, p. 52).

In Deleuze, therefore, it makes no sense to understand the concept as something prescribed and decided by itself. There is no singularity as a self-reproducing, self-multiplying. Singularity is synonymous with haecceity, a term of medieval scholastic philosophy that confers the particularity of a thing from events,

mutations, potentialities. From modern physics, Deleuze recalls that singularity is associated with the theory of differential equation, which attributes the distribution of curves and potentials in the neighborhoods, surfaces and spaces, thus marking a distance in what concerns the attribution of paradigms, shapes, patterns, universalities, generalities, identities.

The “true identity”, writes Simondon (2013, p. 66), “is not the identity with itself, but the identity of the concrete permanence of the system through phases”. The author's considerations make the traditional philosophical notion of self or subject lose esteem for a set of new notions that suppress the dichotomy between the intrinsic and the extrinsic, between the subject and the object, the self and the world: individuation, associated milieu, internal resonance, etc., are notions to apprehend the vehicles and energy distributors in the expansion of singularities (Idem, p. 83-84).

Singularity is, therefore, a meeting of forces, differences, realities, worlds; a *constellation* – something expressly different from hylomorphism and substantialism that are at the roots of the technological eschatological arguments. Simondon, in *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques*, made it clear that the process of improving the technicality of the machines “[...] does not correspond to an increase in automation, but on the contrary, is due to the fact that its operation preserves a certain margin of indeterminacy” (Simondon, 1969, p. 11, emphasis added). Machine automation is, in fact, a lowering in the degree of technical perfection. The elevation of its perfection, the higher technicality, occurs through the processes of openness to individuation, as an “open machine”, assuming “[...] the man as a permanent organizer, as a living interpreter of machines [...]”; after all, “the conductor of the orchestra can only direct the musicians by the fact that he plays with them, as intensely as all of them” (Idem, p. 11-12).

What does reducing the notion of singularity to machine automation imply? Or, in more general terms: why such exaltation of the notion of technical progress in itself? Evidently, it is necessary to reflect on the political dimension created within the eschatological spectrum, which the myths of progress and technical superiority of the moderns exasperate still today (Dupas, 2006), after three centuries of shoring.

If technology becomes industry and takes defensive refuge in a new feudalism of technicians, researchers, and administrators, it will evolve like language and religion towards closure, centering on itself instead of continuing to form, with man, an ensemble in process of becoming (Simondon, 2010, p. 232).

The regime of fiction and truth inside the technological singularity, conceivable and convenient for heralds, supporters and economic agents of libertarian technocratic barbarism, vivifies and shapes the feudality managed in a feedback loop: connection without singularization; and social machinations absorbed in automatisms, hypertrophies and alienations.

In an excerpt from the classic *The Society against the State*, a work in which Pierre Clastres (2003) studies the modes of life and thoughts of the Amerindians, we navigate in a sober and precise way in the issue we are facing here.

If one understands by technics the set of procedures men acquire not to ensure the absolute mastery of nature (that obtains only for our world and its insane Cartesian project, whose ecological consequences are just beginning to be measured), but to ensure a mastery of the natural environment *suited and relative to their needs*, then there is no longer any reason whatever to impute a technical inferiority to primitive societies: they demonstrate an ability to satisfy their needs which is at least equal to that of which industrial and technological society is so proud. What this means is that every human group manages, perforce, to exercise the necessary minimum of domination over the environment it inhabits. [...] Hence there is no hierarchy in the technical domain; there is no superior or inferior technology. The only measure of how well a society is equipped in technology is its ability to meet its needs in a given environment. (Clastres, 1989, p. 191, emphasis by the author).

The technological character of primitive societies, says Clastres (Idem, p. 199), was “more like positivity” between humans and the cosmos. In the line of Amartya Sen (1993), it would be said, Amerindians valued their *capacities*, leveraging themselves to realize their conceptions of well-being and freedom. Here, development or progress is a synonym for expanding capacities, associated with well-being and ecological care. There, in the instrumentalization of the progress of modern societies, the imperative of economic prosperity, the libertarian utopia and the ecstasy of immortality are altogether dissociated from well-being and ecological care.

## **2.2 – Anthropotechnical condition**

The problematic issue of technological singularity and automatism forces us to consider the other side of the same coin, which is also problematic; to wit: the idea of a “pure” human essence.

Proclamations such as “Freeing oneself from the machine”, “having pure will,

interiority and desire”; “meeting the core of the human”: those would report us genealogically to a romantic spirit of a Rousseau (Derrida, 1997; Stiegler, 1994; Deleuze, 2006); but today they seem to us philosophically and politically unsustainable and problematic.

Human history, analyses in an anthropotechnical way, indicates a horizon of continuous machinations between the self, the social and the technical. Here we are in agreement with a set of contemporary philosophical reflections of a materialistic, anthropological and paleontological order (Sloterdijk, 2010; Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Stiegler, 1994; Serres, 2019; Leroi-Gourhan, 1964; Latour, 1994), by which we apprehend that the human ancestor appears exclusively from technical modifications and, thus, from his continuous transformation with them. If only today we realize the complementarity of technical exteriority for human physics, biology and memory, this is due to scientific discoveries and the loss of strength of anthropocentric thinking to that of mediation, which symmetrically includes humans and non-humans. So that, instead of looking for the “essence of Being”, the investigation and appreciation of compositions and modes of existence take place in terms of mediation, intensity or transindividual reality, emphasizing *attention* or *care* with life and cosmos.

Essentialist thinking, which ultimately supports the human and technical relationship in a dichotomous or paradoxical way, needs to be overcome. As noted by Garcia dos Santos (2005, p. 165), the main problem for those who defend the “essence of Being” would be “[...] valuing the human in what he has as an animal, as if there were a kind of terrain to safeguard... [So that] the retreat for the animal implies the attempt to hold on to a kind of 'essence of the human' that no longer makes sense”.

However, there was always being a fluid, anthropotechnical human nature; and such a philosophical position is different from the idea of an advanced stage, contemporary or future, in which we would reach a “post”-human horizon, as advocated by eschatological conceptions. Nevertheless, when we intend to overcome the post-humanist eschatological universe, we must criticize not only the scope of libertarian technocratic volitions and actions, but also the postmodern philosophical perspectives of apocalyptic nature, which diagnosed an “imperious” technical machine determining the era of “total cyber transparency” and the end of political possibilities of generating diverse capacities for the well-being and freedom in democracies.

In the critical conceptual analysis of postmodern philosophical perspectives, a subject-matter that remains poorly understood, it is worth to highlight the thought of

Jean-François Lyotard – presumably the most respectable author in the announcement of a *constraint*, by repeatedly asserting a dichotomy and human-technical *incommensurability*, and the consequent political desolation for all subjects in democracies.

Living and proclaiming the “postmodern moment” of the Enlightenment, Lyotard positioned himself within paradoxical *hesitations*, foreseeing a dreadful antagonism between the “inhuman fate”, the anthropotechnical, and the human freedom: the exercise of human freedom for the constant increase of machining would, oppositely, imply a loss of human freedom by automation, absence of thinking and an “eclipse” (of freedom).

For all Lyotard’s sceptical attitude towards the humanist tradition in Western culture (in common with most postmodernist thinkers he can be very critical of what the Enlightenment has meant or has been used to justify), he is espousing what looks substantially like a humanist position in *The Inhuman* [1987]. Anti-humanist though he is generally described to be (sometimes posthumanist), few humanists would disagree with the line he takes in the book. He is certainly on the other side of the divide from enthusiastic champions of a machine-led culture such as Donna Haraway, for whom a conflation of the human and the inhuman, in the form of the cyborg, is a highly desirable development: ‘the machine is us’, as she provocatively proclaims. From a Lyotardian perspective, to go down the road of cyborgisation, to cultivate such an affinity, is to surrender to the inhuman, and he is calling on little narratives to do their utmost to prevent this from ever happening. (Sim, 2011, p. 106).

Lyotard (1984; 1993), as well as other admirable French philosophers of his generation, particularly Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio, would, in fact, emphasize a *critical affirmation* of technological eschatology – having found themselves, ultimately, in a cul-de-sac. Within a certain Nietzschean tradition, Lyotard pointed the inability of thinking as reduced to the order of actual judgment and calculability of life. In terms of the “victory of capitalist technoscience”, the “great success” is precisely the recognition of success only as a criterion of judgment, renouncing thinking of life in terms of ethics and justice: success “is self-proclaiming, like a ratification of something heedless of any law” (Lyotard, 1993, p. 18-9). His diagnosis of isolation and hypostasis of technoscience in relation to other sociotechnical networks, compelled him to judge that, in a blind and hegemonic way, technoscience *decides* on the “true” and the “just”, leaving no space for the judgments of values and the *circumstances* of the world.

In *We Have Never Been Modern*, Latour (1993, p. 46) ratifies: “Postmodernism

is a symptom, not a fresh solution. [...] It senses that something has gone awry in the modern critique, but it is not able to do anything but to prolong that critique, though without believing in its foundations". Then it would be up to us to ask: how to overcome the symptom and hesitation of postmodern philosophies? Positively, first we must say that there is still a possible path to politics and history; there is still a place for an authentic (undetermined) life. So the question is not exactly "against the posthuman". *Hesitation* should not be a philosophical negativity in relation to the advanced anthropotechnical inhuman and a critical affirmation of the technological eschatology of capitalist accelerationists. Instead, such philosophical negativity or hesitation should be considered as a political critique against the volitions that want to eliminate the event of desiring and the social machines (Deleuze; Guattari, 1983).

Therefore, abdicating the thesis of human-machine incommensurability, we must propose another between the mechanical and the non-mechanical "[...] there is a complex relation at work that is not a simple opposition. We can call it freedom, but only beginning at the moment when there is something incalculable" (Derrida; Roudinesco, 2004, p. 49). Such a mechanical and non-mechanical association is, above all, a largely anthropotechnical condition. The technical machinations of the world, that is, the devices of calculation and repetition, take place in what engenders the possibility of our own freedom and, thus, of politics - being it the expression of singularities from the *incalculable* or the *undecidable*<sup>3</sup>, in Derrida's terms, or of the haecceity and *indeterminacy*<sup>4</sup>, in Deleuze's terms.

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3 Derrida, in the context of discussion on law and jurisprudence, writes: "The undecidable is not merely the oscillation or the tension between two decisions, it is the experience of that which, though heterogeneous, foreign to the order of the calculable and the rule, is still obliged – it is of obligation that we must speak – to give itself up to the impossible decision, while taking account of law and rules. A decision that didn't go through the ordeal of the undecidable would not be a free decision, it would only be the programmable application or unfolding of a calculable process. It might be legal; it would not be just." (Derrida, 1990, p. 963).

4 Following the Philippe Mengue's formidable commentary on the Deleuzian interpretation of the machining and indeterminacy of life in *Bartleby*, of Herman Melville: "What is common to Bartleby – Deleuzian hero par excellence - is the *idiot*, with the idea that we can only do a policy of indeterminacy as a non-causal condition, capable of giving chances for the event [événement] (violent, disorganizing) and the unexpected (undecidable, not programmable). It is from nothing or from the indeterminate that control slows, slows down, remains powerless and on this occasion an open space is created towards a possible event. Not that the indeterminate has a value in itself and constitutes an ultimate end. But it is from it that we must mainly count, not to produce the event, but to make its appearance possible (which depends on other factors). The event's policy necessarily becomes a policy of indeterminacy." (Mengue, 2013, p. 30).

Now, what the diagnosis (positive or negative) of “total cybernetic transparency” announces and decides, promptly, is the question that should remain unanswered: “what is man?”; or rather, it decides for the immediate elimination of this question and, consequently, it decides for a totally unlimited world to be a general equivalent of mercantilism; a world as a huge “nothing” (*nihilism*): without history, without politics, without God – as Jean-Luc Nancy (1999) said.

Finally, Garcia dos Santos formulated fine issues to research, which move us from the “paralyzing” philosophical hesitations in relation to the so-called “crisis of the human”:

To what extent are humans also machined, to what extent do they belong to the same pre-individual terrain, what relations exist between human and non-human, in the sense of the animal, in the sense of the machine? What kind of transformations could still be updated in the human? [...] *More interesting than opposition is precisely the difference.* Because the important thing is the difference between the human and the machine and at what level we can think about it. What interests me [...] is to think about technology as an individuation process. Where do we stand and differentiate ourselves from the machine? In what he [Simondon] calls *pre-individual reality*. Despite the differences, there are points of contact or great levels of correspondence between our way of individuating and the process of individuation of machines. (Ferreira et al., 2005, p. 165, emphasis added).

### 3. PROPOSITIONS ABOUT THE CONTEMPORARY

As announced, before going on to a presentation and analysis of postcapitalist accelerationist discourses, it will be essential to encourage theoretical-epistemic propositions that we believe are central to an understanding of the contemporary.

How to understand – epistemologically – the human-machine relationship? As we have seen, the technocratic-eschatological status of progress and its utopia of “abundance”, starting from the deification of technical machines, reveals something to us: in the “hybridism of the realms”, “critical discourse should not base itself on a universalist humanism, lest they miss what contemporary assemblages constitute” (Pelbart, 2015, p. 91). The notion of machine therein built is disconnected from the perspective of a transindividuality.

### 3.1 – *Machinations*

As we can see from the reading of the two tomes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Deleuze; Guattari, 1983; 1987), “machines” (from the Latin *machina* and from the Ionian Greek μηχανή - *mekhane* -, a derivation of μῆχος - *mekhos* -, denoting means, expedient or remedy) is a term referring to a notion of “associative flows”, which we can express by such nouns as openness, multiplicities, alterities, assemblages. *Machination*, as “areas of proximity and indiscernibility”, system of flows and “cuts” satisfies plans of consistency between organic and inorganic beings.

Thus, we start from a recovery and updating of the epistemological perspective inaugurated by Deleuze and Guattari. However, we are not restricted to it, since the authors are, in fact, resignifying the works of Marx and Freud (and of Marxisms and Freudisms); and, influenced particularly by Gilbert Simondon, Deleuze and Guattari think of a sociotechnical theory from the associations of technical, desiring and social machines, being interested in expressing the idea of the human and the world in a very peculiar concept of machine, in which it covers the various aspects from reality: “There are only machines everywhere, and without any metaphor: machines, with their couplings, their connections. [...] Every machine is, in the first place, in relation to a continuous material flow (*hylē*) that it cuts” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1983, p. 11; 55). The result, so to speak, is a heterogeneous critique of the naturalist, mechanistic or reductionist positions about what is the human and its socialization.

The machine is, in such a way, a “system of cuts” that does not mean separation of realities (completeness, sub-materialization or isolation), but, on the contrary, operations extracting “associative flows”, that is, machinations in the orders of desire, technical and social. In the sociotechnical theory of these authors, it is this system that continually engenders and makes it possible to understand the social productions (actions, connections), the technical distributions (records, graphs, datafactions) and the consumptions and desires (voluptuousness, anguish, pain) of the becomings in general.

Deleuze and Guattari, in the critical dialogue with the theory of psychoanalysis, in the proposals of schizoanalysis and the notion of machination, suggest a new policy of desires, singularities and subjectivities. The structuralist, individualistic and holistic theoretical-epistemological propositions are not appropriate, so that various classical terms and predicates – adaptation, structure, subordination, substitution, extension, exteriorization, impact or incorporation – do not exactly fit,

serve or are not convenient. Such an approach will not be understood as merely the result of linguistic operations (signifiers), nor as being centered on individual or collective agents (intersubjectivity). Composition, agency, individuation, associated milieu, diagrams, connection, servitude and capture could and should be better studied within a new problematic.

If the machine is not, as the tool-inspired model has it, a prosthesis or an organ, then the humans-machines relation can be reduced neither to an *incorporation* nor to an *exteriorization*. Humans-machines relations are always on the order of a coupling, an assemblage, an encounter, a connection, a capture. (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 91, emphasis by the author).

After all, it is hard to notice precisely when the discourse of technological singularity appears, since the *algorithmic* era is now par excellence about decentralized and unpurposive machines (Galloway, 2013; Serres, 2019). The previous era, *mechanical* or *homo faber*, built tools and machines for their well-defined uses and purposes. The algorithmic machines present a novelty: they are universal, theoretical and practical at the same time, and they can be used for all things “[...] and even for a thousand more, precisely because they have no use. Dedifferentiated, universal, they transfer the builder’s utility project to the user, who employs them at leisure and as he or she sees fit” (Serres, 2019, p. 63).

### **3.2 – Contemporary capitalism**

With the rise of algorithmic machines, and with the maximization of machinations, contemporary capitalism has increasingly become an amalgamation of diverse operations in space-time: operations of movements (of raw materials, techniques, humans), comparisons (of profits, cultures, information, labor forces) and captures (of territories, times, human groups), which gain complexity and unprecedented socio-political potentials, from centralized and decentralized associative media flows (Galloway; Thacker, 2007). Thus, when thinking in terms of the hybridism of the realms, Deleuze and Guattari left several conceptual contributions. Paolo Virno pioneered the intellectual and political consequences of thinking collectives from the new conceptual universe, as soon as the agenda became the characterization of:

[...] immediate connection between production and ethicality, “structure” and “superstructure,” the revolutionizing of the work process and sentiments, technologies and the emotional tonalities, material developments and culture. (Virno, 2004, p. 84).

If we are unable to understand the points of identity between work practices and ways of life, we will not understand any of the changes that occur in current production and we will not understand much about the forms of contemporary culture. In the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Deleuze; Guattari, 1987), notably, the social, political and economic fields are immersed in new forms of capture and production of subjectivities, and of capital-labor exploitation based on capitalist machinations. Capitalism appears as a “worldwide enterprise of subjectification”; however, it appears exclusively under a state guaranteeing the “axiomatic of capital” in the populations. Capital and State machines operating, therefore, from two key terms closely related and cyclical: the movements of *liberation* (innovation and production of continuous and unlimited desires) and of *control* (codification and normalization retro-food) of the populations. For the authors, in the contemporary conjunction of these two key terms, populations are constantly in domains that aim to reduce their modes of existence from the double movement of production and exploitation: of *social subjection* and *machinic enslavement*.

As clarifies and supplements Lazzarato (2010; 2014), the notions of social subjection and machinic enslavement highlight the semiotic components of capital. Social subjection appears as the significant semiotic process of subjugation ("humanistic" cynicism, according to Lazzarato), normalization or governmentality. It is the regime that – as explained by Marx, and then updated and ascertained by Foucault – subjects individuals to the social machine, based on speeches, ideologies, orders of segmentation of powers, seeking to organize the formation of the worker-entrepreneur, the consumer, the patriot, the sexual orientations and gender identities, and other governmentalities. It is a type of *molar* power over perceptual, sensitive, cognitive and linguistic affective behaviors, capable of being identifiable, manipulable and quantifiable. Nevertheless, as Lazzarato writes:

The concept of subjection, although with important variations, is a common thread in the philosophy and sociology of the last years. However, “machinic enslavement” is Deleuze and Guattari's original contribution to our understanding of how capitalism works. [...] What matters to capitalism is controlling the asignifying semiotic apparatuses (economic, scientific, technical, stock-market, etc.) through which it aims to depoliticize and depersonalize power relations. (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 37; 41).

Thus, in the algorithmic era, it would also be necessary to consider machinic enslavement [*asservissement*], as a second nature of production and exploitation; a

second modality of machining subjectivity in capitalism, working simultaneously and complementarily with the first in movements (here negative) of recoding, of social subjection, of decoding and of machine servitude. Such nature of production and exploitation of subjectivities corresponds to a system of men-machines, in the plural, requiring only, for its operation, semiotic machinations a-significant: coins, sounds, music, information, codes, algorithms, scientific diagrams, equations, architectures, etc. “Machinic enslavement activates pre-personal, pre-cognitive, and predictable forces (perception, sense, affects, desires) as well as suprapersonal forces (machinic, linguistic, social, media, economic systems, etc.) [...]” (Idem, p. 31), acting as nervous or brain machinations to capture individuals. Here, in the process of multiplication of machining actions, the fragmentation of the subject occurs, with the sole purpose of extracting, quantifying and instrumentalizing bodies – revealing this time the “dehumanizing cynicism” of capitalism. In the *molecular* power of machine servitude, the subject is disfigured, shattered, both in relation to his body-action, disposed as input / output, relay, piece, tool, and in relation to his body-mind, disposed as useful for some cognition, memory, intelligence, affection, sensation.

Within the legacies of Deleuze and Guattari, it is also important to highlight one last and no less relevant proposition about the contemporary. In history, “never before has a State lost so much of its power in order to enter with so much force into the service of the signs of economic power” (Deleuze; Guattari, 1983, p. 300). Under capitalism, a new *social machine* is produced from integrated, contrary and ambivalent flows, in pendular and diachronic movements; the decoders more identified as attributes of money-capital and “free labor”, and the encoders (axiomatic) more identified as attributes of State. The capitalist social machine confers an universe of different levels of *schizophrenic* desire in the populations, and such desire would be different from the *depressive* and *paranoid* operating orders, generated by the despotic state machines (centralizing, totalitarian, monarchical); and *hysterical*, generated by the territorial machines (savage, tribal). In explaining the meaning of the permanent innovation of capitalism, Deleuze and Guattari write that the populations are subjected to a continuous “schizoid time of the new creative cut”, so that the role of the State “[...] no longer determines the social system; it is itself determined by the social system into which it is incorporated in the exercise of its functions” (Idem, p. 221).

No longer being an independent and imperative overcoding vehicle, the State would stick to fulfilling precisely the cynical function of the “bourgeois immanence

field”, interrupting what was liberated, in order to ensure, before liberating again, certain landscapes of social subjection and machinic enslavement. In this sense, the State machine, as well as technical machines, make up the broad diagram, where:

[...] there are no longer even any masters, but only slaves commanding other slaves; there is no longer any need to burden the animal from the outside, it shoulders its own burden. Not that man is ever the slave of technical machines; he is rather the slave of the social machine. The bourgeois sets the example, he absorbs surplus value for ends that, taken as a whole, have nothing to do with his own enjoyment: more utterly enslaved than the lowest of slaves, he is the first servant of the ravenous machine, the beast of the reproduction of capital, internalization of the infinite debt. “I too am a slave” – these are the new words spoken by the master. (Deleuze; Guattari, 1983, p. 254).

#### 4. POSTCAPITALIST ACCELERATION

Deleuze and Guattari announced the decentralized machinations in the French intellectual context of the early 1970s from a revision of Marxism and Freudism, going beyond the dominant notions of ideologies and dialectics of “master and slave” (class struggle) and “father and mother” (Oedipus complex). The year of 1972, when *Anti-Oedipus - Capitalism and schizophrenia I* was published, is marked by the space race of the Cold War, the first neoliberal attacks against the Keynesian axiomatic of capitalist states, the signs of exhaustion of despotic states in the Soviet Bloc and the developments of the “cultural revolutions” post-May 1968.

In this context, Deleuze and Guattari sought to redefine the nature of capitalist production, considering the social as immersed in the subjective machinations, of desire. Thus, ponders Lazzarato (2010, p. 179), the political action that might be revolutionary, the one that should feed the flows of desubjectification and, then, of a new subjectivity, must be to “[...] refuse the injunction to occupy the places and roles within the social division of labor, and to construct, problematize and reconfigure the machining agency, that is, a world and its possible”. Here, the famous passage from *Anti-Oedipus* (too much publicized by postcapitalist accelerationists) can be better understood.

It is at the level of flows, the monetary flows included, and not at the level of ideology, that the integration of desire is achieved. So what is the solution? Which is the revolutionary path? Psychoanalysis is of little help, entertaining as it does the most intimate of relations with money, and recording – while refusing to recognize it – an entire system of

economic-monetary dependences at the heart of the desire of every subject it treats. Psychoanalysis constitutes for its part a gigantic enterprise of absorption of surplus value. But which is the revolutionary path? Is there one? – To withdraw from the world market, as Samir Amin advises Third World countries to do, in a curious revival of the fascist “economic solution”? Or might it be to go in the opposite direction? To go still further, that is, in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialization? For perhaps the flows are not yet deterritorialized enough, not decoded enough, from the viewpoint of a theory and a practice of a highly schizophrenic character. Not to withdraw from the process, but to go further, to “accelerate the process”, as Nietzsche puts it: in this matter, the truth is that we haven't seen anything yet. (Deleuze; Guattari, 1983, p. 239-40).

As Pelbart (2015, p. 81) writes, Deleuze and Guattari bet that the fight against the reactive nihilistic desires of capitalism could only happen from a nihilism “[...] that intends to surpass, turning it around against itself [...]”; so that the countermovement would not mean “[...] to halt, to brake, to block the escalation of nihilism - but precisely to intensify it, to exhaust it, to bring it to its end, to make it so it is completed and turn it around against itself”. It follows that *Anti-Oedipus*' provocative and innovative proposition, “accelerate the process”, in Nietzschean reference, will be adopted, as we will see, as the political motto of the post-capitalist accelerationists; and, obviously, this motto opens to controversial intellectual and political tensions, of active nihilism, in other words, that advocates a certain progress of political liberalism, based on tactics and strategies of advancing the “productive forces”, so that these may no longer be the vehicles held back by the axiomatic of the capitalist machine. In theory, such tactics and strategies would rest on counter-performativities, activating machinic assemblies capable of real dismantling the axiomatized subjectivities, so that they might be liberated, constituting democratic sociability, emancipatory public spaces.

As we did with the capitalist accelerationists, it will be necessary to periodize and understand the main supporters and discourses by postcapitalist accelerationists, entering into their arrangements of meanings, practices, affections, dreams; that is, a different *political culture*.

#### **4.1 – Immanent critique**

At the beginning of the 21st century, in a pioneering attempt to achieve technopolitical tactics and strategies that escaped the double movement of liberation and control of social subjection and machinic enslavement, Antonio Negri and Michael

Hardt published the book *Empire*, in which they consider the thought and provocation of “accelerate the process”. In that book, Negri and Hardt would not only aim *to resist*, but, above all, bet that, through the real decentralization of political materialities, an immanent critique and overcoming of capitalism could be carried out.

Deleuze and Guattari argued that rather than resist capital’s globalization, we have to accelerate the process. “But which,” they ask, “is the revolutionary path? Is there one? – To withdraw from the world market...? Or might it be to go in the opposite direction? To go still further, that is, in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialization?” *Empire* can be effectively contested only on its own level of generality and by pushing the processes that it offers past their present limitations. We have to accept that challenge and learn to think globally and act globally. (Negri; Hardt, 2000, p. 206-07).

From *Empire*, Negri and Hardt raise technopolitical propositions that aimed, fundamentally, to produce changes in the way of thinking of the traditional left, since traditional leftists always insist on criticism and mobilization via breaking, stoppage or immediate revolution of the capitalist mode of production, through the uprising of the proletarian social class – thus disregarding the ideas of immanent critique, subversion and emancipatory *détournements* from “within” capitalism.

The assumptions of Negri and Hardt would gain greater prominence in 2013, when a manifesto entitled *#Accelerate manifesto: for an accelerationist politics*, signed by two British scholars and activists Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek, was published first in the site *Critical Legal Thinking* and viralized on the internet. The following year, Robin Mackay and Armen Avanessian released *#Accelerate: The Accelerationist Reader* (Mackay; Avanessian, 2014), in which they republish 27 inspiring classic and contemporary texts of accelerationists technopolitical thinkers of postcapitalism, such as: K. Marx (*Fragment on Machines*), T. Veblen (*The Machine Process and the Natural Decay of the Business Enterprise*), Lyotard (*Energumen Capitalism*), G. Lipovetsky (*Power of Repetition*) and N. Land (*Circuits*). Williams and Srnicek still co-author the book *Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work* (2015), and Srnicek publishes *Platform Capitalism* (2017), a work that aims to bring guidelines and propositions to their political views. Here are two excerpts from the above mentioned *#Accelerate manifesto*, in which they weave political and economic conjuncture aspects:

That the forces of right wing governmental, non-governmental, and corporate power have been able to press forth with neoliberalisation is at least in part a result of the continued paralysis and ineffectual nature of

much what remains of the left. Thirty years of neoliberalism have rendered most left-leaning political parties bereft of radical thought, hollowed out, and without a popular mandate. At best they have responded to our present crises with calls for a return to a Keynesian economics. [...] The new social movements which emerged since the end of the Cold War, experiencing a resurgence in the years after 2008, have been similarly unable to devise a new political ideological vision. Instead they expend considerable energy on internal direct-democratic process and affective self-valorisation over strategic efficacy, and frequently propound a variant of neo-primitivist localism, as if to oppose the abstract violence of globalised capital with the flimsy and ephemeral “authenticity” of communal immediacy. [...] Accelerationists want to unleash latent productive forces. In this project, the material platform of neoliberalism does not need to be destroyed. It needs to be repurposed towards common ends. The existing infrastructure is not a capitalist stage to be smashed, but a springboard to launch towards post-capitalism (Williams; Srnicek, 2013, n.p.).

Negri (2014) would comment on the manifest as having, in general, a positive balance, highlighting the capacity of critical accelerationists to construct a productive and purposeful approach to the “revolutionary materialism” in times of “cognitive capitalism”.

The MAP’s [Manifesto for an Accelerationist Politics] argument is entirely based on this capacity to liberate the productive forces of cognitive labor. We have to remove any illusion of a return to Fordist labor; we have to finally grasp the shift from the hegemony of material labor to the hegemony of immaterial labor. Therefore, considering the command of capital over technology, it is necessary to attack “capital’s increasingly retrograde approach to technology.” Productive forces are limited by the command of capital. The key issue is then to liberate the latent productive forces, as revolutionary materialism has always done. It is on this “latency” that we must now dwell. (Negri, 2014, p. 3).

The postcapitalist accelerationist propositions would have repercussions in the left-wing environments, making critical discussions about the anachronisms and futurisms of the left political actions prosper; in *To Our Friends* (2015), we read:

Contemporary power is of an architectural and impersonal, and not a representative or personal, nature. [...] Power is the very organization of this world, this engineered, configured, purposed world. That is the secret, and it’s that there isn’t one. [...] Power is now immanent in life as it is technologically organized and commodified. It has the neutral appearance of facilities or of Google’s blank page. (*The Invisible*

*Committee*, 2015, p. 83-84)

A consensual point among supporters for leftist political action tactics and strategies is the diagnosis advocated by Marx, in *Grundisse*, in the section *The Fragment on Machines*, which advocated the thesis in which the emergence of great industry would imply in making science and technology the central elements of production, removing this role from wage labor. In this sense, different collectives emerge that search their political aspirations for horizontal knowledges and structures, in the construction of digital materialities that satisfy real decentralized environments and democratic advance. *FabLab*, *Hackerspace*, *Wikispace*, *Crowdfunding*, these collaborative platforms are mostly associated to the invention of virtual and non-virtual environments and mobilizations for monitoring public works and actions by public representatives, access information, finance and promote educational and artistic projects, creating interactions between city dwellers to support managing urban ecology, introducing social and ecological forms of transactions and currency, stimulating actions closer to or coming from the populations. Here, the question is to create interactive and active collectivities, in opposition to the sphere of market disruption and the centralization of think-tanks and startups of the Silicon Valley technological pole, especially those based on social subjection and machine enslavement for extracting, processing and selling information and products by *advertising* platforms (Google, Facebook), *products* (Spotify), *lean* (Uber, Airbnb), *cloud* (SalesForce, Amazon) and *industrial* (GE, Siemens) (Srnicek, 2017).

At the objective level, the issue of postcapitalist accelerationism, as Srnicek (*Idem*) points out, is to go from and beyond the traditional forms of political actions (*folks politics*), to wit, those that are based on or depart from petitions, occupations, strikes, party actions, affinity groups, unions; that is, common-sense tactics and strategies, sometimes anachronistic and empty, but which are repeated and seen as the most “authentic” and “natural”. For example, even the new political experiences of the left, horizontal and localist, *Occupy*, *15M*, *Tiqqun* and *Invisible Committee*, would be still based on such tactics and strategies. Furthermore, the issue would not be to deny traditional working class politics, On the contrary, Srnicek says, it is to be esteemed necessary still, but insufficient, since the transformation from neoliberalism to something better would depend on global action platforms, and an infinite number of changes in value systems and governance arrangements, involving design,

quantification and computing experiences.

The Promethean horizon of postcapitalist accelerationism raises several discussions. A relevant one is this: by focusing on the issue of diverse technological materialities (designs, architectures, forms of flows and agencies, algorithmic performances) they move away from the political view based on discursive praxis for constructing political subjectivations.

To say, like Badiou or Rancière, that political subjectivation is not deductible to the economy, is quite different from the fact of posing the question from its paradoxical articulation. The first case illustrates the illusion of a “pure” policy, because subjectification does not articulate with anything, it never expects a consistency necessary to exist; the second, on the contrary, opens up beds of experimentation and political construction, since it must, if it wishes to exist and have consistency, operate a rupture, crossing and reconfiguring the economic, the social, the political, etc. (Lazzarato, 2011, p. 44).

Materiality, productive force, political economy: *planning*. The specter of the disastrous political and economic plans of the 20th century socialist countries may come to mind; after all, the centralization of powers built in these countries did not exactly lead to the overcoming of authoritarianism, scarcity and the real emancipation of workers. In fact, as Robert Kurz (1992) has demonstrated, the effective meaning of “public policies” was the construction of a “wall”, a “technological race” and a “barracks socialism”. To say nothing of the 20th century socialist theory: applied to the State under the *mechanical era*, it promptly engenders control, centralization and the peremptory modeling of social subjection. However, today and fortunately, the proposed sense of left-wing planning is quite another: that of collaborative, multiple, decentralized and open source democratic platforms.

The “infrastructures of society”, write Williams and Srnicek (2013, n.p.), “establish the basic parameters of what is possible, both in terms of behavior and in ideological terms”. Through immanent critique, postcapitalist politicization is converted, especially, into the creation of laboratory arenas of ideas and affections, in order to build, regain, reprogram or reform the diverse *platforms* of daily life: production, logistics, exchange, finance, media, culture and ecology.

Whether authoritarian-conservative governments are in office or not, the processes of algorithmic governmentality remain exactly the same, orchestrated by state-business machination. Obviously insufficient, the retroactive public-legislative governance, carried out by national and international institutions and organizations, is

still proving to be an accomplice. Responses by means of resistance, “profanation” or escapism are naturally found within their micro-social limits. *What is to be done?* Observing the global geopolitics being modified precisely by computational engineering, which leaves behind the traditional diplomatic nexus between the countries – the “sovereignty of Westphalia” (Bratton, 2015) –, it is evident that the socio-political problem of redefining the constituent power it will not be solved without the construction of a *socio-technical counter-hegemony*.

We must note that postcapitalist accelerationists, who emphasize debates and answers to the questions above, do not do this in an exclusive and original way. Here are just a few other academic authors who coordinate *labs* with significant propositions or studies in this subject-matter: Gerald Raunig (knowledge factories; creative industries), MacKenzie Wark (hacker class; molecular red), Pierre Lévy (cyberdemocracy; semantic sphere), Adrian Mackenzie (software; sociability), Peter Sloterdijk (spheres; foams), Saskia Sassen (cities; open source), Trebor Scholz (cooperativism; platform), Bernard Stiegler (relational ecology; contribution economics), Tiziana Terranova (decentralized virtual currencies; bio-hypermedia), Bruno Latour (cosmopolitics; compositions), Nicolas Nova (designs; environments), Dominique Cardon (structures; semantic web), Geert Lovinky (netcritique, network culture), Mangabeira Unger (knowledge economy), Matteo Pasquinelli (critic of artificial intelligence), Mark Poster (flows; free information). Explaining different left-wing political temperaments, these authors have contributed with propositions of theoretical and practical tools in order to potentiate political expressions through collective intelligences, multiple and joint coexistences, strengthening the bonds of horizontal social identities.

#### **4.2 – Reverse eschatology?**

What should be expected from the Deleuze-Guattarian provocation to “accelerate the process”, raised as political banner of accelerationists? A political eschatology reversing that first form of accelerationism? In times when it is an imperative to raise consciousness about the “destructive destruction” of the anthropocentric dimension, how could the Promethean volition of the postcapitalist accelerationists differ from that of the neoliberal capitalist accelerationists? In other words: neither accelerationists would share the logic of the moderns, the crudest, of the destruction of Gaia. One demands the maximization of profits, of “abundance”; The

other looks for revolutionary "redemption"? Are these postcapitalist accelerationists summoning, in an (old) messianic tone (of a certain Marxism), the liberating development of the productive forces and, thus, also representing, in parallel with those who criticize it, another eschatology?

We could mistrust such an eschatological character. Let us consider Mackay and Avanessian's (2014, p. 4) definition of this movement: "Accelerationism is the name of a contemporary political heresy: the insistence that the only radical political response to capitalism is not to protest, disrupt, critique, or détourne it, but to accelerate and exacerbate its uprooting, alienating, decoding, abstractive tendencies".

*Uprooting, alienating, decoding and abstracting* elect controversial philosophical-political terms. A peculiar reading of the work of Deleuze and Guattari, to say the least. In the abyssal *maelström* in which we live, futurology and speed captivate and mesmerize the Promethean eyes of moderns. The conjuncture of progress, of advancement, has already been precisely seen as the forgetfulness of Epimetheus, marking the elimination of *backwardness*, that is, of *reflection* (Stiegler, 1994). One of them, highlighted by Wark (2015; 2019), is the consideration that the realization of a contemporary *prolekult*, namely, the rescue of the creativity, collectivity and universalism of the crowd from a focus on the daily life of the city as a whole, as Alexander Bogdanov and Henri Lefebvre first thought, need to overcome the restrictive view of history: "What accelerationist and negationist Marxism have in common is that they conceive of history as *social* history. Both make a prior cut between the human and the nonhuman and concern themselves mostly with the former" (Wark, 2019, 127, emphasis by the author).

After all, to give some thought on materialities of an altruistic, democratic, communal, slow, non-alienated ecology, calls us to a provocative dilemma *accelerate* or *deaccelerate* the process? Danowski and Viveiros (2014, p. 150 et seq.) make inquiries about, confronting the "political economy of acceleration" with the "political ecology of slowdown"; and the latter seems to have distinct philosophical-political terms, such as *attention* and *opening space for others*. In their criticisms, the authors contest and condemn the accelerationists – of reductionism, technological determinism, of nostalgia for a "rationalist, imperialist and triumphalist" past, and even of negation of climate change. But all this is undoubtedly a hyperbolic discourse of critical evaluation. However, the mistrust towards unilateralisms and authoritarianisms in the discourse of the postcapitalist accelerationism is symptomatic at the current crossroads at which the

Left stands. In response, Danowski and Viveiros (Idem, p. 153) – like Bruno Latour, and maybe Isabelle Stengers – cast another provocation, the “anti-modern” one.

That is why the name of Gaia is an anti-modernist provocation, a way of exposing the 'almost negationist' position [Stengers] of the heralds of 'acceleration on the left'[, that] fear that Gaia's intrusion will disturb the dream of perfect freedom, the freedom resulting from Promethean mastery capable of taking us to an ontologically disincarnated state, to a techno-anangelic transfiguration. It is a case of asking who has been smoking opium these days.

Such a provocation is equally purposeful; exalts, according to them, the *becoming-Indian*, the techno-primitive bricolages, the high-intensity syncretic assemblages, the lines of flight and the political-metaphysical metamorphoses capable of forming local experiences as well as global or particular as well as general (Idem, p. 158). A political volition that starts from micro resistances and temporary autonomous zones, thus expecting a global change...

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Pinker (2018, p. 56, emphasis added) stated in his Panglossian book *Enlightenment Now*: “Intellectuals hate progress. Intellectuals who call themselves ‘progressive’ *really* hate progress”. In the old-fashioned order of “for or against progress” discourse, or in that “[...] 19th-century Romantic belief in mystical forces, laws, dialectics, struggles, unfoldings, destinies, ages of man, and evolutionary forces that propel mankind ever upward toward utopia”; intellectuals confuse everything with those ideals of the twentieth century, which aimed at “[...] re-engineer society for the convenience of technocrats and planners, which the political scientist James Scott calls Authoritarian High Modernism” (Idem, p. 25).

Instead, the accelerationists (capitalists and post-capitalists), with their Prometheus *ostentations* - including here also the anti-moderns, with their primitivist *hesitations* –, fall on the anachronistic margins of "technical progress". After all, is the question metaphorical – *(de)accelerating* – or is it allowing creations, deviations, decentralizations, experiences, differences, collective singularities through the strengthening of techno-ecological structures, tactics and strategies of digital democracy? Facing this question, Pelbart's (2015, p. 89) reflective prudence would fit

here: “We know that capitalism is quite capable against this and much more than what was believed at the time, but perhaps, much less – in any case, nowadays such an evaluation would demand a thorough ‘update’”; let us also complete: update that is realistic, pragmatic and programmatic. Left techno-utopian weak discourses – the last, that of “luxurious communism” that would be coming with the full automation of work (Bastani, 2019), and the penultimate one, “liberation” from blockchains –, only result in more delusion games of opacity and transparency, determining various suspicions, as Noys (2014) did.

Despite being friendly of those who manifest themselves politically on the basis of a “materialistic and extreme immanentist conception” of post-capitalist accelerators, Bifo (2013) warns notably that, today, accelerating may actually mean interruptions in the production of uniqueness from experiences; and desensitizations, reducing modes of existence to mere stimuli. Desterritorialization-decoding does not mean an immediate synonym for autonomy, creation of singularity, emancipation. In such a way, a pertinent question should be noted: the capacities to metabolize information, to create experiences of collective singularities in the midst of an already highly accelerated life, in which technological mutations would occur faster than mental-social mutations, would not the mutations of the latter be overloading and blocking?

Between *Anti-Oedipus* and *What is philosophy?*, that is, between 1972 and 1992, Bifo also notes that Deleuze and Guattari would have changed a lot: “[...] During this period, economic globalization and the info-technological revolution intensified the effects of acceleration on the desiring body” (Idem, Ibidem), and the effects of machine acceleration on social subjectivity would be different. This would appear in the problematic reversal when the authors address the relations within “chaos” (technological disruptions?) and “brain” (subjectivations?). In *What is philosophy?*, the authors wrote:

We require just a little order to protect us from chaos. Nothing is more distressing than a thought that escapes itself, than ideas that fly off, that disappear hardly formed, already eroded by forgetfulness or precipitated into others that we no longer master. (Deleuze; Guattari apud Bifo, 2013, p. 3).

*Making* politics or *making* democracy is, essentially and effectively, the creation of new spaces of life. Rancière (2005), even though he left aside the urgent discussion about the relations between materialities and democracy, clarifies that, far from being an institutional environment, democracy – the process of uninterrupted

struggle against the privatization of the public sphere –, ultimately, should (and must) not be reduced to a form of government, or a constitution; rather, democracy is the encounter and conflict between two opposing logics, the *political* (the government of "anyone"; the possibility of dissent) and the *police* (the separation, hierarchy and management of social skills; the formatting of a certain consensus)<sup>5</sup>. Democracy would be, therefore, the pragmatic process of emancipation from multiple forms and materialities, within aesthetic and affective dimensions. Something right now notorious in more conventional discourses. Wright (2017), in his latest book, *How to be an anti-capitalist in the twenty-first century*, would add in here: anti-capitalist ideals impose the construction of an effective economic democracy, based on technologies that today would build, notably, cooperative economies, mechanisms for universal income and democratization of business and banking spaces. In this sense, Unger (2019, p. 14; 49) with his pragmatic and programmatic socio-political thinking, would complements: studying the most advanced production practices, the "knowledge economy", is to attribute due value to what has the potential for "radically alter human life", as opposed to the pseudo-vanguardism (restricted, *hyperinsular*) of entrepreneurs, managers and technicians, "a few thousand people in California" – who only generate economic stagnation and inequality –, in order to create a genuine *inclusive vanguardism*, of "institutional arrangements by which we organize decentralized economic activity".

Materiality, aesthetics and politics. The propositions of postcapitalist accelerationism highlight as essential and inseparable such keywords; nevertheless, from a way very idiosyncratic subsidy, expanding a certain liberal-Nietzschean spirit present in the first joint work of Deleuze and Guattari. They suggest an inconvenient spiritual denomination for concerns and purposes of their own. They raise more opponents than supporters. They advocate a necessary and mandatory causal relationship between an accelerationist spirit and thinking of new spaces of life via materiality, aesthetics and politics... The "spiritual-ideological" debate is certainly inexorable, lasting and difficult; however, without a real pragmatic perspective, it is

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5 Here is a question: is this praxis the same as that of the *engineer* (consensus) or that of the *hacker* (dissent)? As defined by the *Committee Invisible* (2014, p. 126), while the figure of the *engineer* is that of a police officer who comes to make the world work, in the best possible way, according to a system; the figure of the *hacker*, in turn, seeks to find the flaws, to invent other uses, to experiment, that is, to release new aesthetics and ethics from technical experiments.

insufficient.

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