

# Philosophy Beyond Nihilism

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When everything appears similar, nothing really is...

~ Alain Badiou

Reality is that which, when you stop believing in it, doesn't go away...

~ Philip K. Dick

"Why is it easier for some people to imagine the end of the world than it is  
to imagine the end of capitalism?"

~ Anonymous

If you are trapped within the dream of the other you are fucked...

~ Gilles Deleuze

The Satyr, at his first sight of fire, wished to kiss and embrace it, but Prometheus said: You, goat, will mourn your vanished beard, for fire burns him who touches it, yet it furnishes light and heat, and is an instrument of every craft for those who have learned to use it...

~ Plutarch

False words are not only evil in themselves, but they infect the soul with evil...

~ Socrates as quoted by Plato in "Phaedo"

## **Why has there never been a noumenology but ever a phenomenology within the philosophical field, and what if this doesn't mean that there never will be one?**

There is indeed a spectre haunting our world, as Karl Marx has once put it... It's the spectre of a future to come, it is the ghostly presence of the future here and now... For the future itself has become possible again after many movies which could imagine the end of the world but not even a slight change in capitalism itself... A speculative move in the way of mapping the cartography of an ontology of non-being, of that which is yet to come, post-nihilism clears or excavates the old ground, thereby suspending the dominant presumptions, therefore rendering the void, non-being, or the Real itself as the new ground on and out of which a new subject can emerge and present the paradoxical and contingent natures of Truth and Necessity, as well as the non-correlation of Being and Thought... We subversively call this subject the non-mortal subject beyond the Life-Death-Drives and inversely...

As a speculative attempt to situate the thought-worlds of ontology/epistemology and noumenology/phenomenology within one another, this essay aims at explicating why the life drive and the death drive are rooted in transcendence, whereas immanent theory requires conscious desiring to produce new modes of being and thinking as yet not conceivable from within the dominant model of projection-introjection mechanism based on identification. It even goes further than that by way of presenting the life drive and the death drive, each divided within itself, as constitutive of the two sides of a single projection-introjection mechanism driven by capitalist axiomatics governed by a virtual domain of being beyond and yet immanent to the human-condition at present, at once a

cause and an effect of human existence which wills its own servility to and subsumption under the virtual world of capital driven by big-data-mining finance centres.

My primary objective is to develop a strategy of reading/writing, thinking/acting or simply living/being in accordance with a philo-fictional thought-world in and through which it becomes possible to immanently negate and transcendently affirm the concepts of life drive and death drive as modes of being and thinking. I claim that by way of turning these concepts from forms of knowledge to modes of being and thinking, the life/death drives emerge as the two components of a dynamic and mobile speculative apparatus born of and giving birth to a fragile cont(r)act between immanence and transcendence, as well as between affirmation and negation, hence sustaining the conditions of possibility out of the conditions of impossibility for intervening in the thought processes of contemporary nihilism in such a way as to transcend the Anthropocentric modes of being and thinking inherent to it. This is a presentation of what I have designated as affirmative recreation of that which is not-I...

A revoiding of nothing and devoiding the void of its non-existent essence, it is a performative act of thought in the way of presenting that which is within and without it less and more than itself at the same time, a future anterior mode of being nothing and everything at once... Consequently this subject takes it upon itself the creation of the conditions of possibility for the generation of a post-nihilistic thought-world ever yet to come, always already history, eternally here and now...

The nihil and the infinite are conjunctively and disjunctively presented as one, an act of engaged indifference disjoins and conjoins them in one simultaneous movement of thought-force manifesting and manifested by a sense-logic of modulation as yet not conceivable from within the dominant projection-introjection mechanism driven by correlationist axiomatics in

which the subject as non-being realizes its own (self)entrapment in a process of becoming other than itself, the executor of the actualization of its own annihilation without end...

It begins to appear as a being but not yet as an existent... Noumenology brings forth the force of thought necessary to intervene in the process of its (self)entrapment and in its break the vicious cycle of its own dispersal. The nihil annihilates itself, the void is filled with a void, and hence the intensity of the degree of existence increases, thought contracts to cope with the expansion of its dimension and undergoes a qualitative change...

## **The Unilateral Dualities of Prometheus/Hermes and Projective-Identification/Introjection, or, A Genealogy of the Non-Relation Between the Dialectical Couples of Ontology/Epistemology and Noumenology/Phenomenology**

The above title attempts to say almost all in one go and probably fails in doing so even in two goes. But this failure should not discourage the reader from even beginning to engage in an encounter with this essay. This essay is a performative projection of a totalizing gaze, a vision-in-one if we are to act-out a Laruellean sense, or a count-as-one if we wish to activate a Badiouian logic, upon the concept of Phenomenology as a field of study in this time of absolute torpidity of thought. To be more precise, this study is an investigation of the phenomenological theories of the world as it manifests itself within the contemporary climate of thought, that is, at a period of transition from the 20th century to the 21st century, from Nihilism to Post-Nihilism, away from a Life-Driven-by-Death, and towards the Non-Mortal-Subject beyond the Life-Death-Drives...

A thought thinking itself is thinking nothing other than nothing. It thinks itself as its own object, which means that it thinks nothing as something.

This circular thought we designate as the thought of nihilism. It is this thought thinking itself as the thought of nihilism which we name post-nihilism. Primarily driven by the thoughts of Alain Badiou, Gilles Deleuze, François Laruelle and Michel Henry respectively, the post-nihilistic thought attempts to theorize a non-reductive duality of the dialectical conceptions of immanence/transcendence and affirmation/negation.

Signifying a stance away from Freud and towards Lacan, the center of attention has shifted from Eros/Thanatos (life drive and death drive) to Hermes/Prometheus (the drives to which they correspond are yet to be found). But the formal structure of thought remains the same in that Melanie Klein's projective-identification and introjection mechanism is still constitutive of the governing principle, the philosophical decision common to all is that the Real is external to the subject and can be an object be it ontological/epistemological or noumenal/phenomenal.

## **The Subject as the Non-Real, Performing the Effects of the Real in Accordance with the Real**

Our philo-fiction begins, to borrow a term from Laruelle, with the affirmative negation of a philosophical decision: the dialectical correlate of phenomenology is not noumenology but ontology. At the same time, the dialectical correlate of ontology is not epistemology but phenomenology. The philosophical orientation of this essay is a politics of being, which can also be designated as an ontological politics. If we keep in mind that the ontological structures do exist outside the phenomenological world, then we can say that there is an epistemology of being beyond the phenomenal world. It is the study of this noumenal politics of phenomenal being which we call noumenology. It would be easy to choose the road more travelled and simply designate our orientation as yet another version of nihilism...

We live at a time of nihilism's dispersal. This time in which we find ourselves constantly failing to actualise the transition to another mode of being and thinking, we designate as postmodern nihilism. But instead of calling for a resurrection of the past, of the before of postmodernity, that is, of modernity, we call for a post-nihilistic approach to the three questions of "what is to be done?, what can be done?, how can it be done?" asked and answered in different ways by Marx, Nietzsche and Freud among many others. And as we all know, that which is common to these three non-philosophers is their will to take it upon themselves to change the axiomatic structure of the thought-world in which they found themselves. By way of creating new critical, speculative and clinical apparatuses of understanding, sensing and conceptualising in the way of transforming the world, Marx, Nietzsche and Freud became probably the most eminent figures of 20th century Prometheanism. They became the symbols of Man's taking his own destiny in his own hands, stealing the fire from the higher Gods up in the sky and delivering it to the people here on earth to be put to new uses not against but for us all, we humans, we animals and we the plants...

A new Prometheus need not take the form of the 'Modern Prince', the party, if the latter is regarded as a commanding height and centre supervenient on any other council, association or organisational form. Collective control must involve the control and 'recall', to use that important slogan of delegation in communes and soviets, of its inevitable instances of centralisation. But whether the horizon be one of radical reform or revolution, a systemic challenge cannot but take on, rather than blithely ignore, the risks of Prometheanism, outside of any forgetful apologia for state power or survivalist, primitivist mirage. Most significantly, the unreflected habit of associating power's corruption with certain seemingly intractable contents—the possibility of violence, the proliferation of

bureaucracies, the mediation of machines—needs to give way to an engagement with the social forms and relations of control. Warning against the menace of Prometheanism at a time when the everyday experience of the immense majority is one of disorientation, powerlessness and opacity—that is, one where knowledge, scale and purpose are rent asunder—is simply to acquiesce in the exercise of power in the usual sites and by the usual agents, in that particular mix of anarchy and despotism that marks the rule of and for capital.[1]

As the exposition of an old problem's imposition as a new problem, the inversion and/or the subversion of a problem of decision disguised as a limitation to thought, *Speculative Realism* has become an anchoring term for what we consider to be the emergence of a post-nihilistic thought-world. Hermetically Promethean in orientation, driven by a will to sustain a unilateral duality of Prometheus and Hermes as modes of being and thinking, Speculative Realism as a form of post-nihilism which thinks and lives according to nothing as something, is a venture into the Noumenal world of transcendent *a priori(s)* within the Phenomenal realm itself, if we can make such a distinction, that is... With roots reaching back to Kant and Schelling, unless to Zeno of Citium the founder of Stoicism and Epictetus the pragmatic, eventually finding its utmost expression in the transcendental materialism/realism of François Laruelle (non-philosophy and quantum mechanics) and Michel Henry (meta-psychology and theology), Speculative Realism constitutes a post-nihilistic thought-world wherein the distinctions between idealism/materialism, immanence/transcendence and affirmation/negation have collapsed in on themselves. A philosophical decision introducing a split between these dialectical couples is suspended, as such it has once again become possible to create another mode of being and thinking, and perchance even another world perhaps, beyond the vicious cycles of the axiomatics of capital, away

from a life driven by death and towards more non-mortal and less mortal subjects of the future to come. It is the future itself that has become possible again, future is yet again possible in this new conceptualisation of space as time and time as space, a *futur anterior*...

Philosophy originates with one fundamental principle: that everything is philosophisable. This is philosophy's narcissism, its philocentrism. Laruelle calls this the 'Principle of Sufficient Philosophy'. Parmenides is rightfully the (covert) patron saint of all philosophy in seeing a perfect adequation between being and thought (that we saw Badiou, for one, endorse). Taking exception to this, Laruelle playfully asserts that 'not everything is philosophisable, such is the good news I bring'. Philosophy must have a *limit*, namely whatever is non-philosophy, which must itself exist at least in principle (or as a last resort), on pain of otherwise assuming that philosophy is indeed the measure of everything. In place of this principle of self-sufficiency or auto-positionality, non-philosophy sees no justification for philosophy's supposed ability to apply itself to everything – the philosophy of art, the philosophy of science, and so on – in a manner that allows it a fundamental status in the discourse of those subjects. It has limits: its autonomy is relative (to the Real) and not absolute (to itself). For Laruelle, the conditions of possibility of experience and the object of experience are the same. As a consequence, there is no first philosophy. Non-philosophy accordingly installs an equality between the 'fundamental' and the 'regional' – though without losing their heterogeneity – in a drastically anti-hierarchical approach.<sup>[2]</sup>

One traverses the nothing in order to think something and say what he may against all odds. Absolute affirmation is total negation, Deleuze's mode of being and thinking... Consciousness is the knowing of what we say,

self-consciousness is the truth of what we say, it is the knowledge of what we are doing when we say something, so there is indeed the introduction of a distinction between the subject of enunciation and the enunciated content. The subject is always a formal manifestation of that which is, it is that which is not, non-being, thought. This modification of the Parmenidean axiom concerning the correlation of being and thought, this inversal, reversal or subversal of the Parmenidean subject-object relations, constitutes and delivers a post-dialectical, that is, a post-nihilistic mode of being and thinking which is situated beyond, before and after the life death drives and the death life drives, it is the mode of being of the non-mortal subject, or the non-being of the mortal subject, call it what you may, it is the becoming of what one already is, has always been, and will always be, that is, an object whose death is driven by life or a subject whose life is driven by death. As Deleuze puts in his *Post-script on the societies of control*, when and if the subject becomes thought, non-being, life becomes a resistance against its present tense or sense of self at present and a striving for its future absence or the sense of its absence of self, its non-self in the future of its own life driven by death and its own death driven by life.

A refusal of Heidegger's conception of being-in-the-world as being-towards-death, the thoughts of Deleuze-Badiou and Henry-Laruelle constitute a lineage of thought-world driven by a will to immanence and affirmation. It is this despise of transcendence and negation that constitutes a unilateral (Laruelle) and perhaps even univocal (Deleuze) lineage common to them all, manifesting itself as a stance against the treatment of that which is not as though it is that which is, culminating in a stance against God, that is, a secularisation of the infinite, it is this transcendental materialism/realism, this affirmation of the immanence of eternity, this presentation of the human in human more human than the human which we call post-nihilism.

In the act of life in-between birth and death there is a cycle of expansion and contraction at work; without the one the other cannot be... Life as a creative act is a resistance against reaction which is a disease that feeds on life as a creative act... One is eventually doomed unless one stops reacting to the reactive forces and instead takes it upon oneself to create something new out of one's engaged indifference to the governing rules of the game imposed by the predominant order of meaning and being...

Wherever there is an increase in the intensity of existence there emerges something new... It's all a matter of the degree of being alive; the more dead you are the less intense your existence is and hence less creative you become in time... We call it being comfortably numb, or dumb as it is generally put by the public; all these details in the way of becoming more exacting and precise as to the nature of life as a creative act...

We open up passages in the internal structure of the dominant projection-introjection mechanism through which new meanings flow in new directions and initiate change in the way of opening up new paths towards new modes of being and thinking... A creative revolution is always a live act, a process of progressive change in and through which the fundamental principles of our way of life are shattered and created anew in such a way as to act out a continuity in change contiguous to the demands of the present...

Revolutions are infinite, once they begin they never end... Every creative revolution bears within itself a truth which had hitherto been repressed and/or oppressed... A creative revolution is a ceaseless act of creation which manifests a new truth given birth in a particular situation, but having at the same time an eternal significance nevertheless... Clarity, precision and exactitude are vehemently significant in the production process of truths... Every truth procedure requires an inordinate measure of mental, physical and psychological strength to endure the reactions of the obscure and

conservative entities... Every truth arises out of a particular situation, but transcends the particularity of this very situation nevertheless, actualizing a timely and yet eternal subject...

Here is yet another repressed truth for you... If all these repressed truths were allowed to manifest themselves in our lives with real effects, then most of the problems of humanity - which are used as excuses to access inordinate measures of financial gain and uncontrollable power over the lives of many - would cease to exist at once...

Just as the flower is the reproductive organ of a plant, so too the human brain can be considered a reproductive organ rather than a destructive one, depending of course, on the thoughts it produces... At the end of the day both the flower and the brain create and emit sensible signs; the human brain produces thoughts and the flowers produce scents... Long story short, you are actually a mobile plant...

A wall may very well be just a wall indeed, one can always tear it down at will, but this heart is not just a heart, for it can never really be broken up or down, except into its beats perhaps, which are always already all over the universe at once and as one, even though in the form of a broken irregularity at times... So forgive us for interrupting the narrative here and now, but we have always thought it is important to somehow note that some aliens enter our world via the fungi, at least from time to time...

**The Non-Mortal Subject Engagingly Indifferent to the Life-Death-Drives**

Probably the most philosophical one among all the Saramago novels, *Death at Intervals* portrays a world wherein death has ceased its operations and stopped taking lives. Of all the countries in the world, only within the particular country the name of which is not given in the way of creating a sense of universality, people do not die any more. Confronted with an unexpected absence of death and a sudden presence of immortality here and now, the dominant system as a whole (both in its state form and in the private domain) begins to collapse in on itself. If that is the case, then Saramago is implying that the predominant order is run by the dominance of death. Death having a central role to play in the predominant order of governance means that a subtraction of death from the system will bring about a void, a kind of black hole within the system, a gap causing an inward spiraling, an interruption of life as it is, with death at its center, now devoid of it, producing a contraction of the dominant mode of being alive...

Capitalism is a mega death-drive, an ever regressive process of production and consumption in and through which time becomes capital... The value of your life is measured by how much money you have in the bank, higher the number all the more immune to death you feel you are... In capitalism the future has succumbed to retrospection, but still there are signs all around for the possibility of a reversal, one only needs to have the eyes to see them in this time...

Of course the dreadful has already happened, in several occasions throughout history we should say, that's not even worth mentioning in our nihilistic times; but then again, also needless to say is that the worst is yet to come and it will only come when and if the number of people responding to this simple and direct question of "whether we are really going to let a

bunch of greedy selfish fools do in this whole planet" by saying "get on with it" exceeds the number of those who simply and directly say no... We reckon there is still hope for a global post-nihilistic society...

Capitalism is not only failing real big time, it is crumbling and disintegrating into very little pieces by the minute as well... Capitalism cannot sustain itself under its own conditions, because it is becoming more and more vulnerable as the technology produced by it keeps turning against the capitalists themselves... So we can say that capitalism is a system that continually develops, but this development is also its process of falling apart, its progress is also its regress, such is its paradox... And needless to say its process of turning against itself is also its turning against humanity and against the world in general, with all those plants and animals residing therein... It is a self-destructive organisation of social, political and global economic relations, a system driven by its own annihilation... To cut a long story short and put it simply: "The shit is fucked up and stuff."

Some sentences always ring true, that's why we designate them as one among many manifestations of eternal and yet singular truths... A truth is that which once established remains eternally true in its singularity... Truth is an infinite multiplicity which nevertheless belongs to a particular time and space but also expresses a part of being which doesn't change... To become capable of touching the real and manifesting a truth of one's time requires a sensitivity to that which persists in its existence as an affirmative negativity... This negativity is affirmative because it only negates the world and life as they exist for humans at present, not as they are in themselves... A truth always emerges out of this affirmative negativity which sees world and life as they are in-themselves, independently of the human consciousness... A truth, therefore, lays the foundations of a future to come which is based on reality as it is in-itself rather than its particular representations for us... Every truth, once it is realized in actuality, smashes the illusions propagated by the

contemporary militarist-capitalism... The subject of a truth must always be prepared to shake its own foundations in the way of a better future, a future liberated from the shackles of lies and slavery imposed upon humanity for more money and power at all costs...

Many guns and ammunition as well as much artillery without a grain of sense or common sense make economy run wild while ecology faces its demise... The will to virtual perfection, the desire of the capitalists to actualize their illusions contradict the real, immediate demands of the people making up society as the servant of the states and corporations... The governments all around the world should act in accordance with the will of the people... The governments must not organize themselves against their own people. They must rather turn towards the people, and work for we humans, we animals and we the plants, because everyone is people in this world and in this time...

If we look at the big picture of today, we can without a doubt say that the level of death is increasing inordinately, almost beyond measure compared to the times before us in our world, which is a clear sign that there is something absolutely wrong with the whole thing, ready to give birth to more horrible consequences than those that are already beyond our rationalities and imaginations...

Capitalism kills... The whole thing is built on this exploitation of life and this production of death... The capitalist reality is itself driven by the death of humanity and the destruction of nature... Life under the capitalist relations of production-consumption is a life driven by death... It is a mode of being which values money more than anything else and therefore reduces life to a process of dying in search of more profit above all else... Corporate capitalism and real democracy are mutually exclusive, because in a democracy the people talk and are listened, whereas in capitalism money talks and the government listens to the corporations only...

True communism is not repressive, it rather eradicates the conditions under which repression becomes necessary... The idea of communism in its true sense is stateless and no repressive state apparatuses are required in this new sense of communism... For us the false versions of the idea of communism applied in Soviet Russia and China were merely versions of militarist state-capitalism... In true communism, which is stateless and anarchic, the subjects become capable of constituting themselves in such a way as to render the necessity of violence, repression, oppression and all the other negative qualities produced by capitalism irrelevant and meaningless...

Below is the structure of oppression and exploitation as well as murder and death for dummies... Illuminate yourselves as much as you can and keep destroying the system from within... For we are already in the process of constructing another one wherein the orders come not from above but from below, commands are form the people rather than the governors of states and corporations... That's what we mean when we say "power to the people", we humans, we animals and we the plants, because everyone is people in this time...

We live in such times and spaces wherein time and space have themselves become rare commodities... If we keep in mind that scarcity is that which determines the value of a commodity, we can understand why and how the interruption of the ordinary run of things, socially accepted forms of using time and space, can open the gates to a new mode of being and thinking in a new space and time...

In a world where time is used as the currency, wherein you can earn more time at work to sell it for goods, foods and other services, you are caught in an ever regressive process of production and consumption in and through which time becomes capital and capital becomes life... Once your time as capital runs out, you die...

The situation depicted in the film *In Time* (2011) is very similar to contemporary capitalism in which the value of your life is measured by how much money you have in the bank, higher the number all the more immune to death you feel you are... The rich survive death forever, while the poor run out of time and die...

What Zeno of Elea actually wants to say is that we can only perceive the world as it is for us, not as it is in-itself... In a similar fashion, we perceive time only as divided units represented by clocks rather than as it is in-itself, that is as eternal... In other words, human brain introduces motion into immobility and finitude into eternity in the process of perception because humans are naturally mortal becomings, whereas being in-itself is infinite and immobile, an absolute and eternal void continually consuming that which it produces... Driven by this kind of a self-creative/destructive void within and without at the same time, a human can only perceive itself as it desires itself to be, rather than as it really is in-itself, independently of human consciousness... To cut a long story short let us recall Kant and simply say this: The things-in-themselves can always be thought, but can never be known in any form other than they are for us, we humans, we animals and we the plants...

Now, we know that according to Plato time doesn't really exist and that it is merely a representation of the real, an image of eternity beyond life as we live it... Needless to say it is the human finitude, the fact of mortality that produces human subjects as beings in time. The change of seasons, for instance, signifies the passage of time for humans, but this is an illusion, because the change of seasons doesn't mean anything for the universe itself, it signifies the passage of time only for mortal human consciousness... For nature and the universe as they are in-themselves it's business as usual in a never ending circular movement, a continuity in change within itself ad infinitum... Never mind the clocks, time outside of capital is itself eternal,

and once you break the vicious cycle of capitalist axiomatics you shall yourself become immortal, for then you will have also broken out of the dialectics of time and capital, therefore transcending this mortal, all too mortal life imposed upon you by the pre-dominant order of being...

Philosophical dualities can play games of mutual supplementation of their terms, move in circles *ad nauseam*, invert their duality, overturn their duality, and so on, but they always perpetuate the duality nonetheless. Philosophy never goes beyond a widened *cogito*: any putative immanence it might have is limited to a self-reflection or self-affection. To think 'of' the Real is to miss it for the representation itself. Deconstruction tried to break the mirror of representation by substituting the Other for Being. But still the dyadic relation – and the decision – is there. A genuine transformation of thought, by contrast, will not consist in playing new games with representation, but rather in determining representation through, as Laruelle himself puts it, 'a radically un-representable agency or instance – more precisely, through a without-representation that allows itself to be thought by means of representations which have been reduced to the status of philosophically inert material'.[3]

One of the issues on which both Žižek and Badiou agree is that Plato is the first philosopher of the traumatic incident. And one of the major insights of Plato is that an Idea is that which interrupts the order of being. With the emergence of a new Idea another dimension intervenes the ordinary reality and creates a rupture within the process of becoming. If we keep in mind the Parmenidean and the Cartesian axiom that "thought is being", it becomes clear why Ray Brassier, in his lecture on *Prometheanism* wherein he tries to answer the question of *how to orient ourselves towards the future*, pits against this stance the idea that "thought is non-being" rather than being. Put otherwise, the correlate of thought is non-being rather than

being. Brassier also says in the same lecture that “being and non-being are entwined.” To my mind the interwoven nature of being and non-being signifies nothing but the correlation of becoming and finitude. It is at this point that the question arises as to whether a dynamic infinity is possible. Is it possible for change to take place within infinity? Can an eternal being not only exist but also change?

As Badiou exactly puts it in his lecture on *Eternity in Time*, “philosophy is the conceptual organisation of the relationship between time and eternity.” Therein Badiou distinguishes four distinct conceptualisations of the immanence of eternity to time.

The first one of these is the mystical experience where eternity is reduced to a point in time.

The second one claims that the time is the realisation of eternity, eternity is time itself from the point of view of becoming, becoming is the immanent realisation of something which is eternal in nature. This second one is split within itself and has two different versions: Hegelian and Nietzschean... Hegelian version sees time as the realisation of the absolute. For Hegel historical time is not in contradiction with eternity, the history itself moves in the direction of the complete realisation of the absolute idea; totality of time creates the absolute idea. In the second version of this second approach developed by Bergson and Deleuze, history is replaced by the potency of life and infinity is understood as life itself. The tension between time and eternity is resolved in the constant creative capacity of life itself. For Bergson as it is for Deleuze, life is in time but goes beyond time, life is the name of the immanence of eternity.

The third one is the Platonic conception of time as an image of eternity.

And the fourth one is the Cartesian claim that eternity can be created within

time, that truth is a form of eternity in time.

Badiou situates himself within the Cartesian tradition and clearly states that his whole project has been to prove that eternal truths can be created within time.

As far as I know Heidegger's aim in his *Being and Time* is precisely what Badiou claims the philosophical task to be, namely "the conceptual organisation of the relationship between time and eternity." For Heidegger, being in time is being towards death, but rather than simply implying that we will all die and there's nothing we can do about it, Heidegger's claim is that human finitude is a condition of possibility for change to take place, that change can only take place within time, and also that we humans should approach death with resoluteness. The fact of our mortality shouldn't paralyse us, quite the contrary, it should move us in the way of acting so as to change our condition of being in the world. For Heidegger the meaning of death is not simply that we are all doomed because of the inescapability of our eventual demise, but that the thought of death is itself an opening within finitude. Is it worth mentioning that Heidegger does indeed introduce negativity, thought of non-being into the order of being? Yes, it is worth mentioning, but it is not sufficient. For there's always quite a few more steps to be taken further in these fields where thought and language become one. And Brassier is one of those who have taken some of these steps.

In his *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction*, Brassier asserts that "thought has interests that do not coincide with those of the living." If I understand him correctly, Brassier's philosophical project is driven by a will to philosophize in the name of those who are either dead or about to die; those who live on the edge of life and on the verge of death at the same time. For Brassier nihilism is not a closure but an opportunity for a new beginning, precisely because "to be able to think that which is, we have to

think that which is not.” As is clear from the title of his book, his goal is to unbind that which is not, to give a voice to non-being. Contra Parmenides and Descartes, Brassier claims that the correlate of thought is non-being rather than being and the capacity of thought to interrupt the usual flow of things is something to be defended.

A traumatic incident usually interrupts the usual passage of time for the traumatized subject. It is as though time doesn't pass any more, time is frozen and the subject who has lost a loved one or had any other kind of disfiguration in his/her life is stuck in this frozen time. The traumatized subject usually locks him/herself at a time before that traumatic incident and is trapped within an endless process of mourning. As I've put it in my previous post, according to the orthodox interpretation of Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia*, this subject is melancholic. But as you may remember therein I also say, referring to Žižek's lecture *On Melancholy*, that according to Agamben's unorthodox reading of Freud's text in his *Stanzas*, melancholia occurs not when the process of mourning fails and becomes endless, but when the desire itself is lost rather than the desired object. And when the desire for the object is lost the death-drive intervenes and splits the subject into the two always already within itself; into something and nothing, in-between which there is less than nothing. The subject is henceforth split within itself into that which it was before the traumatic incident and what it will have been after the traumatic incident, into the subject before the loss and the subject after the loss. This also means that the subject is divided by an absolute presence, a non-existent absent object, a lack of lack. In a situation driven by a lack of lack the subject lives in another time within and without the ordinary time of clocks at once. A time in which nothing is present as an absence, the time of the lack of lack is the condition of possibility for the change of the status of the impossible within the pre-dominant order of meaning/being to take place. And needless to say only therein can a new truth emerge, wherein time takes the shape of

the space itself.

The infinite, then, is within finitude and inversely, so in order to think the infinite we have to think the finite and inversely, that is, the thought of death within life and life within death. Although the thought of death has a high price which the subject pays by a loss of mental and physical health, it is nevertheless useful in opening up the way to limit experiences. The death drive devastates the predominant conceptualisations of the “good” of civilized progress and the “bad” of barbaric regress. The subject as the death drive situates itself as the traitor on the opposite pole of belief and faith in immortality. In the place of statues representing immortality, it erects nothing. That way it confronts the promised land of total security and harmony with a world governed by the anxiety of the feeling of being surrounded by nothingness. In this world there remains no ground beneath the symbolic order. Death is in the midst of life; it is life that surrounds death. Death is immanent to life, and life is a finite process of transcending death.

How can we produce new thoughts and new texts given the exhaustion of the orthodox form of thinking at the end of twentieth-century Continental philosophy? But the ‘non-’ in non-philosophy is not, as we will see, either the *destruktion*, deconstruction, withdrawal from, or end of philosophy. It implies the generalisation, universalisation and most consistent implementation of theory; one that rethinks the history of philosophy in a radically new style. This is a ‘post-deconstructive’ or ‘non-Heideggerian deconstruction’ searching for the means, tool, or *organon* by which we might renew theory without contenting ourselves simply with deconstructing philosophy.[4]

How would our lives change if we were to become capable of imagining ourselves as immortal beings? If we keep in mind that we are always already locked within the vicious cycle of the life and death drives governed by the law of capital, it becomes easier to understand why we need to break this

vicious cycle of Capitalism and its governor, liberal-democracy, based on unjust representations, in order to create, produce or present the realm of love beyond the rotary motion of drives. But it must also be kept in mind that when we say beyond, we are talking about a beyond which is always already within the pre-dominant symbolic order and yet not within the reach of mortal beings. It is a beyond only from the perspective of the present state. In our scenario, immortality is not something to be attained, rather, it is a virtual potential or an actual capacity within every mortal being, awaiting to be realised. The realisation of the immortality within us, or the realisation of the infinite potential that life contains, depends on our proper use of our powers of imagination. Let us imagine ourselves as immortal beings then, which we already are, but cannot enact because of the finitude imposed upon us by the already existing symbolic order. Would we need to get out of this order to become immortal? Yes and no. Yes, because the within which we said infinity resides is a within which is exterior only from the point of view of the already existing order. No, because only from within the already existing order can we present an outside of this order, “an outside”, in Deleuze’s words apropos of Foucault and Blanchot, “which is closer than any interiority and further away than any exteriority.”

In his *Theoretical Writings* Alain Badiou attempts to separate himself from the Romantic understanding of infinity, and the pursuit of immortality. According to Badiou, contemporary mathematics broke with the Romantic idea of infinity by dissolving the Romantic concept of finitude. For Badiou, as it is for mathematics, the infinite is nothing but indifferent multiplicity, whereas for the Romantics it was nothing more than a “historical envelopment of finitude.” Behind all this, of course, is Badiou’s strong opposition to historicism and temporalization of the concept. It is in this context that Badiou can say, “Romantic philosophy localizes the infinite in the temporalization of the concept as a historical envelopment of finitude.”[5]

Mathematics now treats the finite as a special case whose concept is derived from that of the infinite. The infinite is no longer that sacred exception co-ordinating an excess over the finite, or a negation, a sublation of finitude. For contemporary mathematics, it is the infinite that admits of a simple, positive definition, since it represents the ordinary form of multiplicities, while it is the finite that is deduced from the infinite by means of negation or limitation. If one places philosophy under the condition such a mathematics, it becomes impossible to maintain the discourse of the pathos of finitude. 'We' are infinite, like every multiple-situation, and the finite is a lacunal abstraction. Death itself merely inscribes us within the natural form of infinite being-multiple, that of the limit ordinal, which punctuates the recapitulation of our infinity in a pure, external 'dying.' [6]

The political implications of the move from Romantic infinity to mathematical infinity can be observed in Badiou's *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*. In this little book Badiou criticizes the hypocrisy of human rights for reducing being-human to being a mortal animal. Of course Badiou admits that what is called human is indeed a mortal animal, but what he objects to is the exploitation of this state of being. Against this deprecative attitude, Badiou pits the immortal subject, or rather, the subject who is capable of realising his/her immortality. [7]

For Laruelle, the establishment of a radically immanent philosophy, one which escapes transcendence, cannot be achieved in and through traditional philosophy at all: it can only be instituted through a 'non-philosophical' thought whose subject matter is the history of philosophy itself. This non-philosophy will thus appear similar to philosophy, but only because its raw-material is traditional philosophy in all of its inevitable intermixtures with and consequent corrupting transcendentalisation of the 'Real' or 'One'. Echoing the ideas of Derrida,

Laruelle claims that transcendence is the fundamental shape of all philosophy. But Laruelle's escape is not into the formalities of writing – philosophy as literature – nor a restituted (negative) theology. Non-philosophy is not just a theory but a practice. It re-writes or re-describes particular philosophies, but in a non-transcendental form – nonaesthetics, non-Spinozism, non-Deleuzianism, and so on. It takes philosophical concepts and subtracts any transcendence from them in order to see them, not as representations, but as parts of the Real or as *alongside* the Real. This practice is called 'cloning', 'determination-in-the-last-instance', or 'force (of) thought'. In this respect, Laruelle's non-philosophical discourse would be a *movement* between any polarised philosophies, given the subtraction of the Real from their positions.[8]

There is this transcendental field of immanence which requires a non-mortal mode of being in the world, neither for nor against it, but engagingly indifferent to it in such a way as to turn its own alienation from mortality into its driving force in its attempt to demolish the faculty of finite judgment and create the conditions of possibility out of the conditions of impossibility for an infinite judgment to take place beyond the subject/object of a Law that is mortal, all too mortal.

A truth comes into being through those subjects who maintain a resilient fidelity to the consequences of an event that took place in a situation but not of it. Fidelity, the commitment to truth, amounts to something like a disinterested enthusiasm, absorption in a compelling task or cause, a sense of elation, of being caught up in something that transcends all petty, private or material concerns.[9]

The non-mortal subject within and without the pre-dominant symbolic order is not only the cause, but also the effect of its own alienation from mortal life. This regulatory idea of immortality, which is also a constitutive

illusion, is inspired by the post-structuralist theme of becoming non-identical as we see in Deleuze and Derrida. If one could become non-identical, why would one not also become non-mortal? If one could become alienated from one's identity, why would one not also become alienated from one's mortality? Why not become immortal so as to become capable of criticizing the exploitations of this mortal, all too mortal life? But what motivated me to take immortality as a virtual mode of being was Badiou's theory of the subject as infinity which aimed at secularizing the concept of truth. Badiou's technique of secularizing the truth is inspired by the 19<sup>th</sup> century mathematician Georg Cantor's technique of secularizing the infinite. As Badiou claims, the secularization of infinity started with Cantor who stated that there was not one, but many infinities varying in size and intensity. From then onwards it became possible to link Deleuze's concepts of impersonal consciousness and transcendental empiricism with Badiou's theory of infinity and Kant's assertion that for reflective judgement to take place and turn the object into a subject a transcendental ground is necessary. Now I can say that for me a transcendental ground is necessary only to the extent that it enables the subject to shake the foundation of its own mode of being and opens a field for immanent critique to take place. In other words, the untimely indifference of immortality is required in order to actively engage in an exposition of the exploitation of mortality in this time...

There can be no future without the legacy of Marx, for he is beyond the artificial divisions imposed upon humanity as a whole. Marx transcends the illusory differentiations such as race, ethnicity, religious orientation, and introduces a split between the real, the actual, and the virtual. That split is a new form of differentiation which brings justice and equality down on earth rather than leaving it up in the sky, infinitely postponed to a non-existent life after death in the incapable hands of a non-existent being commonly known among we the human mortals as God...

I don't know if it is worth mentioning that in this time we are all slaves and yet some slaves dominate the others. Where time goes no one knows. There are necessary illusions in this life, some for life, some not. Both the extreme belief in *civilized progress* and *barbaric regress* are good for nothing. These two are now in the process of being left behind. A third possibility of developmental process is emerging in the form of a becoming-reconciled which is based on the recognition of the otherness of the other as it is, that is, prior to the additions and the subtractions imposed upon the self and the other, nature and culture, life and death. For a non-normative and progressive work it is necessary for the participants to become capable of making distinctions between their natures and cultures, their clinics and critiques. It is a matter of realizing that theory and practice are always already reconciled and yet the only way to actualise this reconciliation passes through carrying it out and across by introducing a split between the subject of statement (the enunciated) and the subject of enunciation...

## **Indefinite Consequences: The Finite Effects of the Real as Infinitude**

In and through this essay I attempted to perform a mode of thinking in and through which nothing is excluded and/or determined. This non-reflective and non-determinative mode of thinking has itself enabled me to situate myself in the middle of the reflective and the determinative modes of judgment. The critical mode employed in this article is still context-bound to a certain extent, and yet it tries to restrictively dissociate itself from the predetermined context, rather than freely associate within it. A new field is opened, the conditions are created for the possibility of a decision beyond the Law of Militarist Capitalism, Neo-Liberalism and the collapsing Welfare-State driven by and driving the exploitation of mortality on a massive scale. Engagingly indifferent to the ordinary reality of capitalism, this subject takes it upon itself "traversing the fantasy" of "the night of the

world", and thereby indeed creating the conditions of possibility out of impossibility for the generation of a post-nihilistic thought-world ever yet to come and always already history, unless it is the eternal memory of the here and now in-the-last-instance, consequently, that is...

### ***Reference Matter***

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[6] Badiou, 38

[7] Alain Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (London: Verso, 2001), 41

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