Gemeinwesen Group

Stefano Borselli • Giacomo Di Meo • Stefano Isola • Alberto Lofoco

Minimal Theory of the Process of Abstraction: Diagnosis

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> « Certitude: Adhérence à l'éternité »
> Jacques Camatte (*Glossaire*).
> *In memoriam.*

❧ Preface

This text offers a necessarily incomplete exposition—defined as minimal also because it avoids arbitrary explanations of mechanisms and situations that remain unknown—of a process unfolding over millennia, and of concepts already formulated, some of them ancient, bearing witness to the fact that this process was intuited and spoken of from the very beginning. These concepts recur, though often misunderstood, confused, or distorted. The aim is to give shape, coherence, and explicit language to what has already been clearly seen, written, and said by individuals who often devoted their entire lives to such reflection. Some of their formulations have been directly incorporated here, in recognition and homage to their precision. A few names may be mentioned: Lao Tzu and Epicurus, ancient masters; and among the moderns, Karl Marx, Lewis Mumford, Martin Heidegger, Alfred Sohn-Rethel, Guy Debord, Ivan Illich, Jerry Mander, Jean Baudrillard, Jacques Camatte. Some of the modern thinkers, even through their writings, have contributed to the very process they claimed to oppose. Yet within the theoretical framework, it is the concepts that matter—nothing else—and that is why they are cited here. Others are not named, even though they have spoken decisive words: they did not express themselves in books, but through gestures, forms, and ways of living.

This is a diagnosis, not a system. It follows a genealogical thread—abstraction—that runs through religion, the State, capital, and technology. Some concepts appear before they are clarified and must be followed through their development. The final "Postilla" does not offer consolation, but rather, in acknowledging the gravity of the diagnosis itself, points toward a path—which has always existed—of active acceptance.

❧ 0. Abstraction

The removal of human experience from sensory and relational reality, transforming it into something separate, repeatable, and combinable. Abstraction turns reality into concept; it reduces living beings to functions; it replaces lived experience with representations and simulacra. It turns a jug into a mere container—and man into a phantom, a vessel of linear and mechanical time. It severs sensory, emotional, and territorial bonds, evades the joy of presence, and displaces it into ever-deferred hopes (redemption, *les lendemains qui chantent*). But abstraction is not mere evanescence: it produces concrete reality. Money, the State, and the media are embodied abstractions; they act upon imagination and bodies, imposing their own order.

❧ 1. On the path of the day. Observed facts

Phenomenology of a present that contradicts the dominant narrative: from the misery of modern life to the erosion of creativity, from pervasive anxiety to deepening isolation—telling symptoms that most cannot, or will not, hear.

1.1. Poverty of the ancients and wealth of the moderns — or the other way around? The other way around.

The prevailing narrative remains the counterfactual, historical one: poverty is archaic, wealth is modern. Yet anthropological research over the past fifty years tells a different story. Ancient and so-called "primitive" societies—each distinct, and none paradisiacal (the idea of a conflict-free, power-free, violence-free world is merely an ideological caricature of the noble savage)—were labeled "poor," yet they embodied an economy of abundance: ample free time, non-commodified relationships, trust in life's spontaneous reproduction, and vibrant creativity. In contrast, modern societies exhibit a supposed opulence that is, in fact, a radical form of deprivation—relational, existential, and experiential—driven by engineered scarcity, systemic competition, compulsive productivity, and the inability to pause.

1.2. Evanescence of Immediacy and Loss of the Simple

Immediacy—as direct contact with others and with sensory reality—and the Simple—as the elementary form of experience: growing, learning, doing in order to nourish oneself, generating—are steadily fading. Earlier forms of existence—gratuitous, spontaneous, rich in meaning—are being dismantled and reinterpreted through technical and productive lenses. Human relationships are designed and marketed as experiences; becoming an adult, learning, caring for others are subjected to competitive procedures. Technical intervention separates people from their actions, reducing bodily experience to an error to be corrected. This process does not simplify—it reduces. The Simple is not what is small, but what is given in its immediate fullness: a light on a wall, the way life begins or death arrives. When the senses shut down—through distraction or saturation—the Simple appears uniform. The uniform bores. Those who feel boredom find nothing but monotony. The Simple vanishes. Its quiet strength its quiet strength drains away.

1.3. Disappearance of creativity

The cornerstone of human expression—the ability to create with our hands and our tongues—is gradually atrophying. Men and women have always lived through daily acts of creation: gestures, words, and objects that gave meaning to existence because they arose from an immediate, practical, and emotional relationship with the world, responding to everyday needs. Gathering berries and weaving a basket larger than one's hands, carrying them elsewhere, crushing and eating them—simple gestures that gave the day its meaning and fullness. With the division of labor, entire aspects of life began to be delegated to certain members of the community, who became specialized in one domain, inevitably closing themselves off from others. With the advent of machines, the dispossession of creativity reached its peak. And with the ultimate machine—artificial intelligence—even the ability to create language and thought is on the verge of vanishing. ¶ For thousands of years, singing and dancing were part of everyday life. They were not skills, but ways of being present. People sang and danced everywhere: in groups or alone, young and old, in daily life and in rites of passage—births, deaths, weddings, celebrations. These were shared, continuous practices that wove together work, nourishment, mourning, and joy. Individual singing expressed manifest delight. Dance, even when barely suggested, signaled the vitality of the body. Today, these practices have vanished from lived experience. They survive, disfigured, in the entertainment industry—among the many already absorbed, or soon to be absorbed, by combinatory logic.

1.4. Solitude and ecstasy of promiscuity

Today we witness a new and paradoxical form of loneliness: solitude immersed in the crowd, sustained by constant proximity. Cities, transport systems, and public spaces are filled with bodies that do not touch, eyes that do not meet, voices that do not listen. In everyday gestures—eating, walking, waiting—a loneliness multiplies that is not isolation, but mutual absence within real presence: closeness without connection. Promiscuity, as mere physical aggregation—the crowd—does not generate relationship, but saturation: a kind of magnetic ecstasy without release, which intensifies loneliness rather than easing it

1.5. Generalized anxiety and depression

Anxiety and depression are no longer exceptional states; they become cyclical polarities of ordinary existence in a performance-driven society. Anxiety is fueled by the imperative of constant self-promotion: every aspect of life is subjected to market logic, demanding that we appear desirable, efficient, and competitive. Personal value is measured in real time through achievements, images, and self-narratives, generating chronic tension. Man becomes a commodity that sells itself; the subject becomes a company of himself, compelled to optimize his survival as human capital. Depression emerges as the effect of devaluation: invisibility and failure in competition plunge the individual into subjective collapse, where psychological and symbolic bankruptcy converge. ¶ The relentless expansion of pharmacological intervention—and the recourse to suicide, beginning in pre-adolescence—are irrefutable evidence of this.

1.6. Control and surveillance

Control now permeates every aspect of daily life: every action, communication, and gesture can be tracked, measured, and recorded. Surveillance is no longer an exception, but a pervasive practice embedded in everyday technologies. ¶ Especially during childhood and adolescence, constant intervention in every gesture, word, or conflict—even minimal, verbal, or merely gestural—prevents the direct experience of relationships, the testing of boundaries, and the learning of how to navigate one's own strengths and vulnerabilities. This makes it impossible to construct a self capable of orienting itself within reality.

1.7. Shutting-in

Life unfolds in spaces that are increasingly isolated and monitored. The condition of Hikikomori is not a marginal pathology: it appears to be a destiny. More and more people live day after day, entire lives, in closed environments. ¶ Until a few decades ago, however, the condition of the majority of humanity was not urban: they lived outdoors, in contact with the earth, amid shared noises and smells, in the Aristophanic*penía*, the living and shared poverty that nurtured the enjoyment of presence. The trees were close by, as were the wild animals, which constantly invaded the space of living and working. ¶ But urban life was also different: what a difference between a Neapolitan basement apartment, with its door open onto the street — from whose windows Liszt could still capture the notes of *Fenesta vascia* — and a sixteenth-floor apartment, accessible only by elevator. ¶ The shutting-in of children and young people, once the misfortune of a few (the sick or the wealthy) and now the majority, is the foundation of the cognitive schism, which will be discussed later. ¶ How much life was missing from the childhood of Giacomo Leopardi, who sees neither the scents nor the colors of a rose garden, the swarming of winged and crawling creatures, but only decay and death? Or in that of Charles Baudelaire, who preferred the artificial smell of benzoin to the simple scent of roses and violets? ¶ What sterile perception prevented little Eugenio Montale from seeing that "barely visible splendor that spread over all things" that instead illuminated Martin Heidegger as a child while his bark boats sailed in the fountain of the school? The same splendor that enveloped Vincenzo Bugliani as a child in races with zucchini boats in the small millpond of Monte di Pasta, which seemed to him "heaven on earth." Montale must have observed them from afar, like Leopardi, as a recluse, and those xebecs that for little Martin "still easily reached their destination," he saw only shipwrecked "in the whirlpools of soapy water." ¶ Leopardi—and like him, ¶ Leopardi—and like him, other poets, though not all—does not

grasp reality "more deeply": he sees it *less*. The case of so-called feral children shows that if language learning is missed within a critical window, it is difficult to recover. Thus, perhaps, those who lose in childhood the immediate communication with the simple—spontaneous games, uncontrolled adventures, quarrels and reconciliations that teach us to feel and measure others and the world—are unlikely to find its fullness later on. The missed opportunity leaves a mark: perception remains amputated, and powerful but split imaginations graft themselves onto this wound. ¶ Those poets understood less about the simplest and most beautiful things, but they possessed the genius to construct a distorted reality that still embodies the profound uncertainties of everyone. ¶ Precisely for this reason, their vision supports the powerful myth of the need for redemption. Thus Montale's *passage* becomes a saving expectation, and Leopardi's *stepmother nature* an enemy to be fought. It is this promise of redemption, a constituent component of the process of abstraction, that shapes the modern imagination: reality is not enough, it must be fought, overcome, conquered. ¶ Shutting-in, then, is not only physical, but a condition of the soul, which, educated not to trust what is, what is shown, what is touched, no longer knows how to walk the path of the day and, becoming one of Heraclitus' sleepers, wraps itself in a private world.

1.8. Unlimited commodification • They have brought whores for Eleusis (E. Pound)

Every aspect of human experience—emotions, relationships, memories, identity—can now be isolated, evaluated, and transformed into merchandise. Even what was once unmarketable—poetry and stories, words, plant and animal varieties—now carries a price. Feelings become content; personal stories, packages to be sold; suffering, a media opportunity. ¶ Even the body is dismantled and reassembled: organs, oocytes, and uteruses are sold; reproductive capacity is rented, identity is purchased, and appearances at dinners are paid for. Nothing is off-limits anymore. Nothing is sacred. ¶ Human beings are no longer merely exposed to the market—they have become commodities: offered, displayed, monetized, updated.

1.9. Plasticization of language

The loss of connection with phenomena and with the world of life translates into the plasticization of language, where plastic words, merely connotative and devoid of definitional power, are the bridgeheads of the technical system in common language, which is colonized and disarticulated in its richness and semantic plasticity. This phenomenon is part of an ancient trend, already evident in the loss of immediacy in the oldest civilizational languages compared to the performative and ritual density of oral cultures. Parallel to semantic impoverishment, languages have undergone morphological degradation: the progressive disappearance of cases, the dual, and subtle verbal inflections, replaced by prepositions and auxiliary constructions, has made words more rigid and less capable of modulating nuances. Thus, what once bent and shaped itself into infinite variations is now reduced to standardized sequences, more transparent but also poorer. Contemporary plasticization only accelerates this trajectory, naturalizing all historicity to make it immune to criticism, and is consubstantial with the conversion of the world of life into a laboratory, with all the consequences in terms of loss of immediacy and creativity that this entails.

1.10. Loss of enjoyment • Murdering Epicurus

Especially in the West, the loss of enjoyment is already visible in the faces of passers-by— the fading of fullness in one's relationship with life, the cosmos, others, and oneself. Enjoyment means integrating the spontaneity of being, embracing both the expected and the unforeseen, weaving together sensory experience, freedom, and continuity. ¶ This continuity is broken by the growing mediation of technology: experience detaches from the body, relationship is replaced by representation, pleasure by efficiency, joy by entertainment, spontaneity by control. Enjoyment is absent.

1.11. Metafact: the cognitive schism

In light of the facts presented so far, a cognitive schism becomes apparent. On one side, a minority—even within the "intellectual" sphere—is capable of perceiving and feeling

them, yet often tempted to look away, to avoid thinking about them. On the other side, a blind majority either mystifies or represses them. ¶

This is not merely another fact. It is the way facts themselves are perceived—or denied. An observable *metafact*.

❧ 2. Remote stage of the abstraction process

Anamnesis: the remote unfolding of the process and its earliest traces. Abstraction does not erupt suddenly into human history—it has deep roots, a prehistoric genesis. Already in the earliest stages of humanization, as symbolic capacities emerged and language took shape, a slow attempt began to escape the chaotic rhythm of nature and replace it with artificial structures of time and space. ¶ In this embryonic phase, the symbol—and with it, language, technical gestures, and dwelling—is not yet severed from the body or from reality, but begins to function as an instrument of symbolic domination. Time ceases to be experienced as an organic flow (seasons, pregnancies, lunar cycles) and becomes isomorphic, reducible to a codified sequence: calendar, hour, measurement. The same applies to space, which shifts from being a lived path to becoming homogeneous, isomorphic, an orderly grid—first in the village, then in the city. ¶ The domestication of nature thus begins primarily on a symbolic level, preceding any infrastructure or machine. The result is an incipient regularization of existence: a space-time grid that prepares the ground for the full activation of the process. This moment can be situated at the dawn of the Neolithic era, perhaps catalyzed by a real threat of extinction, which triggered latent human dispositions.

2.1. Human kind cannot bear very much reality (T.S. Eliot)

The rejection of reality—understood as excess, as an experience too intense and uncontrollable—appears to be ancient. Reality presents itself as urgency, as an unbearable pressure that human beings seek to deny, distance themselves from, or neutralize.

2.1.1. Creating an imaginary world

The inability to endure reality gives rise to imaginary worlds—private or collective—that replace or distort shared experience. The mind, retreating from the common and the sensible, constructs fragments of autonomous reality: incoherent or partial, yet self-sufficient in relation to the lived world.

2.1.1.1. Representation • Spectacle

Content separated from experience is externalized as mythical or reconstructive narrative, ritual, or performance. Originally, representations mainly concerned the sacred, divinities, and imaginary figures; over time, they also became historical memory and self-representation of a people—wars, genealogies, deeds. With the formation of the modern individual, representation shifted toward personal experience, up to contemporary forms in which the daily and private exposure of oneself becomes spectacle—reality TV, social media—and everything that was directly experienced is distanced in a representation.

2.1.2. Repression • Escamotage • Détournement

The rejection of reality unfolds through deep, continuous, and universal psychic operations.

Repression is the first. It does not merely conceal content—it prevents its very emergence. It erases the trace before it can become thought. Pain, rupture, loss—what cannot be endured, what cannot even be named—is excluded from consciousness.

Escamotage does not erase, but removes from view. What is unbearable or disturbing is not destroyed, but *escamoté*—set aside, eluded, rendered invisible through a swift maneuver. To *escamoter* is not to negate, but to displace: a gesture of disappearance without annihilation.

*Détournement*does not repress, but diverts. The flow of discourse or consciousness is imperceptibly rerouted, steered away from what disturbs, through subtle operations of redirection.

These three mechanisms—repression, escamotage, and détournement—originate as psychic defense strategies. But they evolve into instruments of domination: invisible foundations of domestication.

2.2. Correcting the creation - Aspirations for redemption from "stepmotherly nature"

The inability to bear reality as unbearable excess has, since ancient times, given rise to the idea of radical change, correction, and total redemption. From Gilgamesh's quest for immortality—denounced as madness in the very poem that recounts it (19th century BC) —to the vision of the Millennial Kingdom, the impulse to transform reality has persisted. Transformation, in itself, is not abstract: every living being transforms. What is abstract is the gesture that believes itself redemptive—one that seeks to replace or improve nature, unable to recognize the sufficiency of the living. The power of the redemptive idea, once taken as a normative reference, is transmitted to other abstract constructs: universal rights, free trade, democracy, socialism, hierarchy, equality, property, Bentham. These present themselves as its passages and concretizations, condemning every given social condition without ever proving that the new proposal will be better— and often producing consequences opposite to those intended: the heterogenesis of ends. This aspiration is thus one of the driving forces behind the abstraction process. Without the promise of redemption, abstraction would lack its militant and visionary momentum—its capacity to advance and reproduce itself.

2.2.1. Immortality

At the heart of the idea of redemption lies a hope—an expectation—of possible earthly immortality. It is not merely a denial of finitude, but a project to overcome it: to save oneself from corruption, to survive time by extending it indefinitely. This is the underlying promise of every salvific power. From Gilgamesh's longing to the conception of

death as the wages of sin, from messianic and mystical expectations to the technological myth of contemporary transhumanism, the same hope hostile to life returns. Yes, that hope —that idea—is an ancient and profound madness. The desire for immortality, the promise of a world without tears or frustration, is incompatible with the living world, with given reality, which it rejects in favor of nothingness. Humanity has tried to restrain this impulse, but seems to have failed. This quest for immortality betrays a deep misunderstanding of what eternity truly means. Reducing life-time to a homogeneous and measurable dimension transforms what could be an authentic experience of the eternal— that fullness felt in moments of maximum vital intensity— into a mere expectation of perpetuity, already perfectly described in the myth of Sisyphus.

2.2.1.1. Enmity • Eradicating "evil"

Redemption creates enemies. Whatever causes the fall—evil, imperfection, or even mere obstacles to salvation—must be eliminated or neutralized, whether it be a plant, an animal, a human being, or an entire people.¶ The relationship with the other is no longer grounded in encounter, cooperation, or conflict as vital forms, but in an abstract order that demands a world purged of all negativity — a world in which even natural conflict is excluded as a living mode of relation. ¶ This redemptive dimension, which cultivates enmity, underlies modern scientific restoration. It rests on an implicit and unresolved tension between two opposing interpretations of the idea of discovery: One is cognitive, rooted on the one hand in the exuberant and varied creativity of the medieval polytechnic, and on the other in the epistemological legacy of Greek thought, where scientific hypotheses guide discovery through theoretical models of real phenomena — an approach focused not on nature itself, but on the relationship between humans and nature; The other is pre-scientific, with obscure and ramified roots in the ruins of ancient empires. It conceives discovery as conquest— an archaic military term that implies the intrusion of the discoverer's will into the being of the discovered, destroying its nature and reducing it to the image of the conqueror. ¶ This second interpretation gradually subordinated

the first, undermining its meaning without explicit confrontation— despite the fact that discovery as conquest and discovery as cultivation, knowledge, and organic development stand at two radically opposed poles.

2.2.2. IDEA OF POWER • TOTAL CONTROL

Perhaps due to a pre-Neolithic crisis —a species-level trauma, though this origin remains conjectural, a retrospective hypothesis to interpret the initial fracture— humanity chose to build a world separate from nature: no longer an environment to inhabit, but a reality to regulate. Thus were born the instruments of symbolic control: division, measurement, surveillance. A new central power emerges as a prosthesis against the instability of life. Offering itself as protection from uncertainty, it is internalized not merely as a necessity, but as the very constitution of a separate identity. Every subsequent form of government bears the imprint of this ancestral choice: an anxious search for unattainable absolute security, a response to fear.

2.2.3. EGALITÉ • DELETION OF DIFFERENCES

Equality among humans is conceived as the elimination of qualitative differences. Everything about the human must be made measurable. Heterogeneity becomes suspect. Equivalence replaces relationship, laying the groundwork for the revocation of individual faculties in favor of a higher institution that becomes the sole regulator of action. Equality thus coincides with the equal subordination of all to the institution. The bond of proximity is broken, replaced by a condition of estrangement in which indifference prevails.

2.2.4. PROMETHEAN SHAME

Promethean shame arises from the comparison between human imperfection and the presumed perfection of technical creations. Man feels ashamed of his biological randomness in the face of the machine's design— ashamed of the stain of being born rather than built. This shame reveals a fundamental inversion: what has been created by man is now perceived as superior to the world of life. The technical object becomes a normative model. Man internalizes the criteria of the machine: precision, speed, repeatability, optimization.

2.3. ANTHROPOMORPHOSIS: IDEAS THAT CAPTURE AND BECOME OPERATIONAL

Some abstract ideas—divinity, the State, land ownership, labor, capital, redemption — first take on human form through symbolic representations: paintings, sculptures, linguistic allegories that give them a face, a name, a body. Then they capture real human beings, who cease to exist as autonomous subjects and become possessed— living incarnations of the idea. The landowner who ruins himself trying to preserve the land he inherited. The capitalist who embodies the logic of capital. The missionary and the militant who transform themselves into machines of the idea of redemption. The banker who turns his financial activity into a mandate for the salvific transformation of the world.

2.4. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE PROCESS: ABSTRACTIVE DRIFT VS. ALTERNATIVE PATTERNS

The Neolithic choice was neither inevitable nor universal. For millennia, the two options coexisted: sedentary societies that fell into abstractive drift alongside peoples who maintained organic forms of life. The latter, gradually eliminated through systematic genocide, survive in increasingly small numbers to this day. The following data document this almost at the origin of the bifurcation.

Instruments of control in Early Sedentary Societies
• Rigidly codified agricultural calendars Sumerian tablets, Uruk III, 3000 BCE
• Geometrization of urban space Orthogonal grids in Mohenjo-Daro, 2500 BCE
• Defensive walls with separative function Jericho, 9000 BCE — 3m thick, 5m high
• Taxonomies of "useful–harmful" species Egyptian papyrus from Memphis, 2400 BCE — 37 harmful animals catalogued
• Surplus accumulation Granaries of Çatalhöyük, 6000 BCE — 12 tons capacity vs. 1.2 tons annual need

Alternative patterns in societies that remained organic
• Absence of time measurement San peoples of the Kalahari — activities regulated by light and seasons
• Circular camps without geometry Bushmen

ethnography (!Kung)
• Environmental permeability Baka Pygmies — living spaces without physical or conceptual barriers
• Non-antagonistic relationships with the non-human Warlpiri — Earth as relational subject Nayaka — animals as "people"
• Non-competitive subsistence economies Hadza — immediate distribution, no accumulation Batek — rejection of storage

Systemic Collapses and Resilience

• Implosion due to hyper-complexity Çatalhöyük, 6000 BCE — 10,000 inhabitants/km², bone epidemics documented
• Ecological failure Harappan cities, 1900 BCE — salinization layers in Mohenjo-Daro
• Survival of non-hierarchical models Aché peoples during Inca collapse — 0 monumental structures, forest adaptation
• Ritual resilience Hopi vs. Chaco Canyon — flexible rain ceremonies vs. rigid irrigation systems.

❧ 3. The abstraction process: affine components, in movement and conflictual interweaving

The process is neither linear nor monocentric: it arises from different and autonomous centers and components of irradiation, which propagate in forms that are sometimes highly conflictual. History records interruptions, partial blocks, and setbacks, such as after the fall of the Roman Empire, but also deliberate attempts at arrest (China blocking the military use of gunpowder) and moments of resistance or delay that prevent purely linear readings. ¶ A genealogical analysis can reveal long-term continuity without implying necessity: identifying an origin does not always mean predicting an outcome. In medical science, it is standard practice to seek, and retrospectively find, early and remote signs of a disease, such as cancer or Alzheimer's, not because of the deterministic assumption that all pathological forms are destined to develop: the immune system, lifestyle, and therapeutic action can eliminate, block, or slow them down. The same applies to the process of abstraction: describing its trajectory does not mean decreeing its inevitability.

3.1. Religion

A union between a worldview and ritual practices. Historically intertwined with the state, with which it arises through a double anthropomorphic movement, it is based on the promise of restoring a lost original condition.

It is part of the general process, which it sometimes claims to guide, sometimes to contain or block.

3.2. State

In its earliest form, the state arises through a separation of the community that generates a higher unity (pharaoh, lugal, king of kings, etc.) that represents its totality. This occurs at the same time as the movement of value as a process of valorization is established. At the same time, an anthropomorphism of the deity and a divinomorphism of the higher unity take place, and religion is established. ¶ Subsequently, a second form is imposed, determined by the continuation of the movement of value, a phenomenon that cannot be reduced exclusively to the economic sphere.

3.2.1. City

The city is the spatial embodiment of the state and of value: an enclosure that separates and organizes, geometrizes life, transforms the territory into a grid. The first cities were born as simultaneous devices of protection, power, and accumulation: mighty walls, central granaries, temples. ¶ From the outset, the city carries with it the implicit promise of immortality: to endure beyond bodies, beyond seasons, offering a second nature more stable than nature itself. ¶ It defines itself in opposition to the countryside: if not with open contempt for peasants, then always with forms of distancing that mark evolutionary, cultural, and moral superiority.

3.2.1.1. Death of the city

The city dies not from sudden collapse, but from the dissolution of its compact form: the explosion of boundaries, endless sprawl, the diffuse city. The center loses meaning; the urban dematerializes into digital flows (smart working, e-commerce, distributed surveillance). ¶ Its death coincides with the fulfillment of its purpose: the majority of humanity is now urbanized, the separation from the living is total. What the city promised—security, order, durability—is internalized and spreads everywhere: no longer visible walls, but invisible networks; no longer squares, but platforms.

3.2.2. Death of the State

In its extreme development, the State is increasingly controlled by Capital and the Technical System, and emptied of its functions and prerogatives, which are transferred to "autonomous" or supranational organizations. While laws, regulations, and control grow indefinitely, real political power dissolves.

3.3. Private Property

The idea of private property goes far beyond exclusive possession—which also exists in nature and is always concrete, limited, and circumstantial—and carries with it an often counterfactual idea of total separation of the object from its context of existence (the case of land ownership is emblematic) and the equally counterfactual idea of perpetuity: a transferred form of immortality.

3.3.1. From ownership to rental - Death of private property

Ownership is superseded by its functional emptying. Possession becomes temporary management, conditional use, paid access. The object no longer belongs, but circulates in a closed system of controlled availability.

3.4. Value

Value is what allows us to compare the incomparable. Everything is quantified according to a single parameter. Value dissolves quality, context, and meaning, reducing being to a number.

3.4.1. Use value • Exchange value

Use value is not a natural property of commodified reality, but a construct akin to exchange value: they are complementary forms of the same logic of equivalence. Both reduce reality to a measurable function, separating it from its living, qualitative relationship.

3.4.2. Robinsonades

Robinsonades are artificial narratives that derive economic movements from the isolated individual. Figures such as the solitary producer or the primitive trader are logical constructs that conceal the inherently social nature of the economy and the historicity of the economic process.

3.4.3. Commodity

A commodity is anything that, extracted and abstracted from its natural context, can be sold and bought. Land, objects, animals, people, services, labor, ideas, rights, patents, either in whole or in part, for an unlimited or defined period of time. Everything can be sold.

3.4.4. Alienation

A dynamic whereby what is one's own becomes foreign and often hostile. The products of human activity—objects, social relationships, organizational forms—become autonomous, posing as separate and dominant powers. What began as an extension of our abilities turns into dispossession: things take on the role of subjects, people become things. This reversal generates a figure hostile to its creator and a mechanism, often unconscious, that reverses the initial purpose, trapping men and women in a destiny they wanted to avoid.

3.4.5. Excluded commodity • General equivalent

In order to measure and compare all commodities, one of them must be removed from ordinary trade and elevated to a universal measure, a general equivalent. Thus gold becomes money precisely by ceasing to be a commodity among others: its exclusion transforms it into a representative of all possible commodities. ¶ This mechanism—exclusion that generates election—does not operate only in economics. Abstract concepts operate as general equivalents of thought: the "Man" of uni-

versal rights presupposes the exclusion of concrete men—women, slaves, barbarians, colonized peoples—and then sets himself up as their ideal representative.

3.5. Money

Money is the embodiment of value. It is a measure, a means of exchange, a reserve, power: the power to obtain anything that has become a commodity. It is mobile, neutral, impersonal and, in its initial form, has the infinite durability of gold: an abstraction that has become concrete, which you can carry in your pocket.

3.5.1. Loan • Credit • Debt • Insurance

Credit anticipates future value, debt mortgages the future, insurance monetizes the fear of chance. Together, they extend the domain of value to the temporal dimension, creating the illusion of total control over the future.

3.5.2. Real abstraction

Abstraction does not remain in the realm of ideas but materializes concretely. Two examples. Money represents value embodied in physical form: it is not the metal or paper that is important, but the power of universal equivalence—that is, of purchase—that it carries with it. Television is not just a household appliance but a form that structures perception and, too, expands an illusory sense of undifferentiated power. Abstractions are embodied in objects, spaces, and behaviors, becoming material forces that organize experience.

3.5.3. Immortality (sought in money)

Value promises permanence. It preserves, accumulates, and resists time. It projects the desire not to die. Harpagon dreams of lasting as long as his treasures; hoarding seeks immortality in gold.

3.6. Capital

Capital is value that increases in value: not a thing, but a social relationship in motion. Its logic is unlimited growth.

3.6.1. Crematistics

The unlimited accumulation of wealth for its own sake, without any purpose, defines the logic of chrematistics. The end dissolves. Only growth matters. Excess is a virtue.

3.6.2. Surplus Value

Surplus value is the part of production that exceeds the value returned to the worker and overhead costs, and which is absorbed by capital. It is the driving force behind accumulation.

3.6.3. Autonomization • Automatic subject

Capital becomes autonomous: it becomes an automatic subject. It is a self-sustaining movement, like a whirlwind with its own energy, mass, and direction.

3.6.4. The commodity of capital

In the realm of capital, commodities change status: they no longer need to last, but to circulate. Durability, which once increased value, becomes an obstacle and is discouraged. Every object is designed to be superseded, in various ways, including legislative ones, forcing obsolescence so as to continuously reactivate the cycle of capital.

3.6.5. Immortality (sought in the capital)

The idea of immortality, at the time of the dominance of the value attributed to the durability of gold, is transferred to the permanence of the circulation of capital.

3.6.6. Death of capital

Just as capital dissolved the state and emptied the concept of value—which presupposed persistence, and was therefore hostile to circulation—it dies when it can no longer valorize itself. But capital is not the process of abstraction: this and its modus operandi continue, we do not know whether by incorporating capital into the technical system or vice versa, or with a tangled *paso doble* between the two components, its path of global engulfment down to the individual cells of man. ❡ This is not a complete theory, but rather the observation of traces and symptoms visible to the observer: the process itself is heading towards the extinction of the species that set it in motion. Unless there is an unlikely reaction from the

species itself. Unlikely, as there are no signs of it, but not impossible: the real mechanisms of species generation and persistence are ultimately unknown. Sometimes reactions are generated by extreme situations, by the perception of real risks of extinction, as seems to have happened in the transition to the Neolithic era when humanity, perhaps faced with a profound environmental crisis, underwent a radical transformation of its ways of life—one that openly triggered the process of abstraction.

3.7. THE TECHNICAL SYSTEM (ORGANIZATION, TECHNIQUE, SCIENCE) OR THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES

Another major component of the abstraction process, now in the foreground: organization that neutralizes subjectivity, machines that replace humans, science reduced to technical power, time transformed into an operational grid.

3.7.1. ABNORMAL DEVELOPMENT OF PROSTHESES AND THERAPEUTICS • SURROGATES (ERSATZ) • SUBSTITUTIONS

Prostheses, common in nature as operative aids, now tend to substitute every human faculty. What was once carried out directly by body and mind is replaced by tools and mediations. ¶ The current apex is the externalization of cognitive functions into artificial devices of statistical optimization, to which predictive power is attributed (AI). Thus the natural disposition and activity of therapeutics are autonomized into a system with its own logic, justified by distorted metrics and by that ancient inclination to prefer willing nothing rather than not willing, which directs cost–benefit calculation in a way increasingly functional to the system and not to human beings.

3.7.2. ORGANIZATION • BUREAUCRACY

Organization produces structures that neutralize subjectivity and standardize operations. Every activity is pigeonholed into abstract procedures, regulated by impersonal criteria. With bureaucracy, the organizational form becomes dominant. Organization aspires to unlimited growth that anticipates that of capital.

3.7.3. MEGAMACHINE

The megamachine is the integrated totality of people and tools in a unified functional system. It is not a sum of machines, but a totality that encompasses bodies, rules, flows, and objectives. Every element is subordinate to it.

3.7.4. ABSTRACT TIME

Experienced time is replaced by a measurable, homogeneous, cumulative temporality. Abstract time is not an experience, but an operational grid. Every event must fit into this uniform, featureless structure.

3.7.5. THE MACHINES

Machines break down, repeat, automate, and render subjectivity superfluous. They replace human activities with their own operations. Automation is the completed form of technical abstraction, in which human beings become the terminals of a device that surpasses and dominates them, reversing the principle of the usefulness of technology into that of usefulness for technology.

3.7.6. ABSTRACT SCIENCE

Modern science no longer describes a reality to be inhabited, but constructs formalized models of functioning, creating an increasingly incomprehensible world. It separates itself from living labor to become the property of capital: the intellectual functions of production are concentrated against the workers, transforming themselves into a productive power independent of labor itself. ¶ The scientific object is reduced to quantities, laws, algorithms. The world becomes a laboratory and a mine to be exploited: research no longer seeks the essence of things, but their secret usability. Knowledge is converted into technical power, sharing the same quantitative logic as the mercantile economy. And the conversion of the whole of reality into a set of parameterized and controlled procedures ends up destroying science itself, turning it into mere proactive and thoughtless intervention.

3.8. MODUS OPERANDI

In retrospect, three central modes can be identified in the mature phase, present both in the long periods of continuity and in the brief moments of crisis: criticism of the present

state of affairs based on promises of redemption, the mechanism of combinatorics, and the subsumption that feeds it.

3.8.1. Combinatorics

A term originating in mathematics. In this case, combinatory refers to the mechanism through which every aspect of life—practices, knowledge, gestures, emotions, relationships—is broken down into minimal, separate, simplified units and made available for infinite reorganization, a combinatory calculation. Each element loses its roots, its proper meaning, its original location: it becomes a mobile, adaptable, interchangeable module. ¶ In the course of a centuries-long movement, everything is progressively broken down and recombined. The goal is operational compatibility: what matters is that everything is modular, flexible, ready to interface. Combinatorics is abstraction at work in everyday life. ¶ Reality then appears as a technical repertoire of interchangeable possibilities: sexuality, language, care, learning, imagining—everything can be combined. ¶ This logic also affects common language: on a linguistic level, plastic words operate like Lego bricks, converting common language into a combinatory game devoid of meaning but manageable by machines.

3.8.2. Increasingly profound subsumption of labor

Capital initially appropriates pre-existing working situations—the craftsman who becomes a wage earner in manufacturing while maintaining his way of working—which remain formally unchanged but are subordinated

to its logic: this is the initial, superficial subsumption. Subsequently, work is reorganized according to criteria of productivity and economy, technical division deepens, science is separated from the worker and made an autonomous force in the hands of capital. ¶ Intellectual capacities, once widespread among independent producers, are concentrated in capitalist command. The worker becomes partial, knowledge becomes external, opposing the worker as a power that dominates him. ¶ The process is continuous: every branch of the economy — even those that were initially autonomous or resistant — is gradually transformed and reabsorbed into capitalist logic.

3.8.3. Extension of subsumption to leisure time, society, the body

The dominance of capital deepens when the logic of valorization extends beyond working time, colonizing the whole of existence: leisure time, social life, communication, language, and the body. Time is restructured: leisure time becomes consumption time, and consumption itself is made productive. Digital technologies, automation, and widespread control accelerate the process: mental and emotional faculties, attention, speech, and relationships are put to work. It is no longer just manual labor that is exploited, but the expressive and sensitive power of the individual. The body, shaped by efficiency and standardized health, is in turn put to value. Thus, the distinction between production and life dissolves: the whole of society becomes a terrain of valorization, and the proletarian condition is generalized to the entire population.

4. Results and goals of the process

The outcome towards which the process is tending: the gradual replacement of the human community, of man himself and of nature with abstract and disembodied systems. Not a deliberate project, but the inherent logic of a movement that is proceeding towards the self-destruction of the species that generated it.

4.1. Suppression and substitution of community • Material community

The *Gemeinwesen* is broken apart and replaced. Capital becomes the material community: every aspect of subsistence turns into a commodity, accessible only through money. Bread, milk, clothing, care, even water — all require monetary mediation.

4.1.1. Gemeinwesen

The community (*Gemeinwesen*) is the environment that nourishes human beings: a network of living relationships that binds human beings to each other, to the earth, to animals, to natural cycles, to nourishment, to care, to language, to the rhythms of life. It is not an ideal to be restored, but an elementary reality that has made human life possible for tens of thousands of years. Historical and anthropological evidence demonstrates its concrete, never utopian, variety. Abstraction gradually erases the very possibility of "being-with": the loss of community is also a loss of shared presence, of certainty about one's position. Thus, the reality of earthly happiness—which, for Epicurus, is based on friendship, an elementary, lasting, and reciprocal form of relationship—vanishes.

4.1.2. The great organic and cosmic community

The community includes nature, humanity, living reality, and the cosmos. It is now increasingly clear that humans themselves are symbiotic aggregates, not just the microbiota: right down to the heart of their eukaryotic cells. But it is impossible to draw precise boundaries in this living continuum: where does the individual end and the environment begin? The very idea of an autonomous individual contradicts our symbiotic constitution. It knows no separation between subject and environment, between human and non-human.

4.2. Suppression and substitution of man

Human beings are becoming increasingly obsolete. Subjectivity is converted into an operational node, the body into an interface, identity into a profile. The individual becomes a functional residue, "an antiquated device for multiplying capital," destined to be discarded. Capital, having become an automatic subject, no longer limits itself to exploitation: it aims to replace. The functionalization of humans is only the first phase. This is followed by declared obsolescence—in which millions of lives are deemed "no longer necessary"—and planned replacement through automation, artificial intelligence, and genetic engineering. ¶ It is no longer just alienation, but erasure. It is a technical deactivation, presented as an improvement (as is the case with the progressive replacement of vital functions by automated tools).

4.3. Suppression and substitution of nature

Nature is degraded to a resource, the environment to a technical object. It no longer has any meaning in itself, but only an instrumental function: living reality is replaced by artificial environments and mineralized.

ᔍ Postilla

> "Let us not forget that all time is blessed, including our own, the time we have been given to live. Ivan Illich (oral tradition)

> "Death is nothing to us, for when we are present, it is not, and when it is present, we are no longer.. Epicuro (Letter to Menoeceus)

So death never wins: death is not a fact of life. And as long as there is breath, there is presence and joy. Jacques Camatte called his home and the land he tended, where he welcomed family and friends, "*Le domaine de la certitude*" (The domain of certainty). Even certainty, adherence to eternity, does not die. It is the feeling of having lost it that disorients us.

⁕ ⁕ ⁕

A diagnosis compatible with Stage IV cancer—even knowing the possibility, however slim but real, of a reversal—requires the diagnostician, if

he must communicate it, to bring the probable outcome back within the certain outcome of every form of life, individual and collective, including his own. And to point the way to acceptance as a real and present possibility of conscious and active serenity. This path is, in itself, already a hint, a *beginning, and a support for the hoped-for—unlikely, because there are only weak indications of it, such as cognitive schism and unexpected resistance during the pandemic, but not impossible—reaction of the species.*

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