© EUSP, 2019 ISSN 2310-3817 Vol. 7 stasis No. 1 p. 390–414

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Gilles Deleuze among the New Materialists: Materialist Dialectic versus Neovitalism

Abstract
This article is dedicated to examining the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze in the context of the debates unfolding within contemporary materialism between two currents: materialist dialectic and neovitalism. For the neovitalists (Iain Hamilton Grant and Jane Bennett), Deleuze is a crucial precursor, while for the materialist dialecticians (Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, and others) he is rather an object of critique. This article, however,

points to the proximity between Deleuze's philosophy and none other than materialist dialectic. Paradoxically, this proximity is revealed in Deleuze's understanding of life, which proposes the division of life into inorganic and organic forms, an affirmative reinterpretation of the death instinct and the necessity of subjective counter-actualization.

Keywords:
Gilles Deleuze, materialist dialectic, neovitalism, inorganic life, counter-actualization

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New Materialisms

The past two decades in contemporary philosophy have been marked by a turn toward materialism, taking place after a long period of dominance by phenomenology, hermeneutics, and the logical analysis of language. As a result of this turn, the old debate between idealism and materialism has become history: it is as if idealism has completely vanished and everyone has become a materialist. But this debate between idealism and materialism has not been abolished, but has merely relocated to within materialism itself. This new debate has, first and foremost, two materialist philosophies as its participants: materialist dialectic and neovitalism.[1]

Contemporary materialist dialectic as a theoretical movement arises due to Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek, who propose a new method for a materialist reinterpretation of the Hegelian dialectic, distinct from that of the Frankfurt school of critical theory and Soviet dialectical materialism. To that purpose, Badiou and Žižek turn to numerous sources: mathematical set theory, quantum physics, Lacanian psychoanalysis, the political works of Lenin, and even to the figure of St Paul.[2] Badiou, Žižek, and their followers all share an attempt toward the materialist rehabilitation of

[1] Another important current of contemporary materialist philosophy, irreducible to materialist dialectic or neovitalism, is the transcendental nihilism of Ray Brassier (2007). I, however, do not believe its role in considering the relationship between Deleuze and new materialism to be substantial.

[2] Consequently, their disciples and followers (most notably Adrian Johnston [2014], Frank Ruda [2015], and Lorenzo Chiesa [2016]) give contemporary materialist dialectic institutional academic form: thematic journals are issued and conferences are convened.

concepts like subject, truth and the absolute.

The name "neovitalism" unite a multitude of philosophical projects that reject the anthropocentric understanding of the world.[3] On one hand, there are the flat ontologies of Manuel DeLanda (2006) and the object-oriented philosophies of Graham Harman (2011), Levi Bryant (2011), and Timothy Morton (2016), all insisting on the irreducible manifoldness of the world, each element of which has relative autonomy at the least.[4] On the other hand, there are the "naturephilosophical" frameworks, striving to give nature the status of an active creative element.[5] Finally, there are the "new materialists"—Jane Bennett (2010) and William Connolly (2010)—who simultaneously affirm the existence of a unified matter-energy, of which the world consists, and insist at that on the heterogeneity of its elements. Both contemporary materialist dialectic and neovitalism strive to consolidate their status as new materialism, but their strategies differ. Contemporary materialist dialectic continues, following Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach (Marx 2000: 171–75), to view as its goal not merely interpreting the world, but also a political "changing" of the world. A neovitalist philosophy, on the contrary, opposes orthodox historical materialism. Therein lies their conflict: if a contemporary materialist dialectic portrays neovitalism to be a new version of "old materialism," that is, a return to the pre-Marxist contemplative and apolitical materialism, for neovitalism, in turn, the contemporary materialist dialectic turns out to be an old version of new materialism[6] with its anthropocentric humanism and the threat of political violence.

Of special interest is the position of Gilles Deleuze's philosophy in this debate, which is related to two lines of reception his philosophy received. Neovitalists see him as a crucial precursor (Dolphijn and van der

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[3] In this article, I understand "neovitalism" to be that heterogeneous intellectual movement that appeared during the crisis of Marxism at the end of the '80s and in the '90s, and which has partly returned to the idealism of vitalism, developed at the beginning of the twentieth century—that vitalism which was upheld by authors such as Henri Bergson (1944) and Hans Driesch (2010). In this sense, neovitalism is a kind of materialism, which ascribes properties of organic (and inorganic) life to matter.

[4] The object-oriented ontologists themselves criticize vitalism in its classical (Bergson and Driesch) and contemporary forms (Deleuze, new materialists) for its "lumpy" ontology, within the framework of which individual objects lose their autonomy. But in reality, object-oriented ontologists merely increase the number of vital impulses, locating them within objects. Hence, if Grant and the classical vitalists can be called panpsychist, the object-oriented ontologists are polypsychist (Harman [2009] himself agrees with calling his philosophy polypsychist).

[5] Iain Hamilton Grant's (2006) historico-philosophical work on Schelling is the most representative example of such naturephilosophical monism in its contemporary form.

[6] In his "Theses on Feuerbach," Marx gives a famous definition of his philosophy, calling it a "new materialism" (Marx 2000: 173).

Tuinen 2012), while contemporary materialist dialecticians dedicate numerous critical texts to him, accusing him of either mystical flight from the world or of a cynical apology for the current order (Badiou 1997; Žižek 2012a; Hallward 2006). The goal of this article is twofold: first, to put this presentation of the Deleuzian heritage in question, and second, to demonstrate its possible productivity for the development of contemporary materialist dialectic.

I will begin with a detailed description of two rival projects of materialist philosophy. For the analysis of the *contemporary materialist dialectic*, I will turn to the projects of Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek, and highlight the point at which their philosophical systems diverge. I will also examine the theoretical strategy of *neovitalism*, exemplified by the ontological constructions of Iain Hamilton Grant and Jane Bennett. Moving from the discovered contradictions between contemporary materialist dialectic and neovitalism, I will then turn to discuss Deleuze's philosophy. I will especially focus on the interlacing of vitalist and dialectic elements in his theoretical heritage—particularly on his understanding of inorganic life and the Freudian death instinct.[7] In conclusion, I will point to a possible interpretation of Deleuze's politics in light of materialist dialectic.

Contemporary Materialist Dialectic: from the Subject to the Absolute

a) Alain Badiou and the Processes of Truth

Badiou develops one of his most consistent projects of materialist dialectic in his later texts. In his *Logic of Worlds* (2009) he opposes materialist dialectic in favor of *democratic materialism* (Badiou 2009: 1).[8] The latter is based on the ontological axiom "there are only bodies and languages" (Badiou 2009: 1), which is occasionally complemented by the corresponding political axiom "there are only individuals and communities" (Ibid.: 8). In other words, democratic materialism naturalizes the given, the ontological components of which are bodies and languages, and the political components of which are individuals and communities. That which does not fall within the order of the given, be it event, subject or truth, is declared non-existent. As a result of such a naturalization, human existence is reduced to animal existence, that is, ultimately, to an existence in a certain closed environment. To use Badiou's own terminol-

[7] Deleuze uses the expression "death instinct" (*Instinct de mort*), although Freud himself writes of the "death drive" (*Todestrieb*).

[8] This article considers specifically Badiou's late materialist dialectic, subjected to the mathematical formalization of "Being and Event"

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ogy, this naturalization reveals itself at four basic levels[9] as naivety in scientific investigation (reducing the numerical series to prime natural numbers), political indecision (limiting freedom through choice within the frame of the capitalo-parliamentarist system), cynical love (identifying love with sexuality, understood as the reciprocal use of bodies) and artistic impotence (the inability to create a new, large modernist style).

Badiou uses a mathematical formalization of ontology in order to put into question the naturalization of the given: within the framework of a mathematical meta-ontology all given is the result of an operation of counting-as-one. The given for Badiou exists at the level of the situation, without coinciding with being as such. While the given is produced by the count, being is used as "material" for this count. Being pre-exists the counting-as-one, but access to it opens only from within the situation, on the basis of a retroactive positing. Since the one (just as the given) turns out to be the result of counting-as-one, Badiou calls the being antecedent to count non-unity, or void. The existence of an ontological void, thus, undermines the uniformity of the given, standing in relation to it as excluded. Instead of the substance of the given, expressed in the attributes of bodies and languages or of individuals and communities, Badiou proposes a substance, originally cleft into unity and void. This split sets the dynamic of Badiou's materialist dialectic. The void is "in a position of universal inclusion" into every situation without having a definite place in it (Badiou 2007: 87). The localization of the void within materialist dialectic and its presentation in a situation are carried out thanks to the event. According to Badiou, it is precisely the event that is located "at the edge of the void," at the intersection between void and situation. However, without a subjective intervention, recognizing that the event has indeed taken place, it remains a merely internal dead end of the situation. The recognition of the event sets off the process of subjectively deriving its consequences—the process of truth.

A complicated relationship ensues between the event and truth—a relationship that can be simultaneously represented with the help of the metaphor of a cycle and with the help of the metaphor of a leap.[10] The event is a condition for the emergence of truth as the entirety of the consequences derived from the event. Furthermore, the event can be judged only on the basis of its consequences within a situation, that is, on the basis of truth. Thus, event and truth are cyclically short-circuited on each other. With that, the event ensures the transition of the human from the

[9] These levels correspond to the four conditions of philosophy: science, politics, love, and art.

[10] The relation between the dialectic and the non-dialectic, the "cyclical" and the "leap" logic in Badiou's philosophy is described in detail by Bruno Bosteels in his book *Badiou and Politics* (2011a).

level of the human animal to the level of the subject of truth, where access to infinity is gained. If the event had an endpoint, it would have been law, and truth would have become knowledge, which Badiou is trying to avoid in every possible way. Thus the finite subject, deciding every time that an event has taken place, becomes part of the infinite process of truth.

As a post-Hegelian, Badiou posits the absolute not only as a substance, but as a subject.[11] The split substance is not absolute in itself: it gives space to the event, but this latter does not yet have actuality. It is given actuality only through a subjective irruption, deriving from it all the possible consequences within the situation. Thus, the process of truth amounts to the absolute, in which the substance frees itself from adverse forms of its existence (from "the state of the situation") with the help of a subjective irruption. In this regard, the two axioms of Badiou's materialist dialectic are formulated as follows: "there are bodies and languages, except that there are truths" (2008: 4), and, to somewhat paraphrase, there are individuals and communities, except there are subjects (Ibid.: 8–9).

Since Badiou implements a materialist appropriation of the dialectic, the process of truth takes, for him, the place of changing the world: in this process, not only the localization of the void, but a "generic extension" of the situation take place (Badiou 2007: 342). In relation to the conditions of philosophy, which Badiou highlights, the transformation of the world means, first, a science, implementing the formalization of infinity; second, communist politics, directed at instituting universal equality; third, love as the experience of considering the world from the point of view of the Two, irreducible merely to sexuality; and fourth, modernist art, continuing to create new kinds of sensuality.

b) Slavoj Žižek and the Death Drive

It is remarkable that Žižek also opposes his project of materialist dialectic to democratic materialism.[12] He counts cognitivism, new atheism and post-Deleuzian vitalism among the representatives of vulgar democratic materialism (Žižek 2012a: 6). According to Žižek, all these materialistic tendencies are united by the inability to recognize the fundamental split within substance and to derive from it the existence of subject and truth.[13] To create his own materialist dialectic, Žižek implements a syn-

[11] Badiou himself views Hegel as, on the one hand, one of his most important interlocutors in the history of philosophy and, on the other hand, as an "idealist" rival, who has subjugated event to law. Badiou needs the mathematical formalization in order to underline the event-driven, "leap" character of the dialectic, without denying at that the affirmative consequent of the dialectic process—truth.

[12] It is worth noting, that if for Badiou democratic materialism is a general theoretical frame, within which he creates his project, Žižek fills it with a concrete polemical content.

[13] Žižek attempts to solve both those problems in his books Less than Nothing

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thesis of Hegelian absolute idealism and Lacanian psychoanalysis, transferring it onto the soil of Marxist ideology critique. Thus, Žižek finds the rational kernel of the Hegelian idealist dialectic in the movement from critical outer reflection toward the defining speculative reflection, from the split between the given and being toward the split within being itself (Ibid.: 292–311). The idealist movement of Hegelian reflection best of all establishes the materialist split within substance itself. G.W.F. Hegel, in Žižek's interpretation, is not at all a philosopher pacifying all contradictions and overcoming all ruptures. Quite to the contrary, Hegel's speculative gesture lies in demonstrating that every notion of substance as lacking an inner split is an ideological fantasy.

Žižek makes a similar theoretical move in relation to Lacanian psychoanalysis, opposing desire to the death drive (Ibid.: 496). Desire, immersed into the symbolic order, is always related to the lack of being, and hence to the master signifier, or the figure of the big Other. When the subject of desire does not reach the completeness of pleasure, he supposes that this completeness slips away from him, and continues his pursuit. The death drive means a halt in the pursuit of pleasure: it is discovered that there is no real completeness behind the lack of symbolic being, but only the real being of a lack. The real turns out to be just as split as the symbolic. In the movement from desire toward the death drive, which Žižek calls the act of traversing the fantasy, the subject is faced with the abyss of his own freedom.

Death drive is the name of the absolute in Žižek's materialist dialectic. The absolute turns out to be a split substance, arriving at itself through being mediated by subjective reflection. This presupposes a dual parallax movement: on the one hand, subjective reflection identifies the split substance with the absolute, and on the other, the split substance frees the subject from ideological or phantasmic interpellation. Within Žižek's materialist dialectic, the finite subject discovers access to the infinite. But it is not the infinite that lies beyond the finite, but an internal failure of finitude, its inability to attain autonomous status.

Sometimes Žižek provocatively claims that the goal of his philosophical project is not a Marxist changing of the world, but, quite to the contrary, its interpretation in the spirit of Hegel, which then has revolutionary consequences (Žižek 2012a: 241–65). Under a Hegelian interpretation he understands "the retroactive positing of presuppositions" (Ibid.: 323), in which every act creates its own past anew, thanks to the split character of the past into actual and virtual counterparts. The Hegelian strategy, understood thus, by repeating in every situation the virtual, still unactualized past of this situation, hence also changes its present.

(2012a) and Absolute Recoil (2014).

The Processes of Truth Versus the Death Drive

What unites the philosophical projects of Badiou and Žižek, and what are the principal differences among them? As Adrian Johnston (2008, 2014) points out, a shared characteristic of contemporary materialist dialectic is the idea of the material genesis of the ideal. Matter or substance precedes the existence of the subject, at least in the ontological sense. However, unlike in mechanistic materialism, the existence of the subject in materialist dialectic is not exhausted by its definition through substance. The internally split character of the substance allows the subject, emerging into this split, to possess a relative autonomy. Johnston also gives a second, more precise name for contemporary materialist dialectic: "transcendental materialism"—that materialism where the role of the substance is limited, on one hand, to the "material" for the emergence of the subject, and, on the other hand, to an inner obstacle, preventing the subject from attaining idealist self-identity. If applied to politics, this means identifying the idea of communism with an organized party or government politics, although it may have its own limits.

Johnston has put forth the most systematic description of contemporary materialist dialectic to date, but even it remains insufficient. It is needed to take yet another step: from transcendental subjective materialism toward speculative absolute materialism. This does not mean that Badiou and Žižek must become speculative materialists, glorifying hyperchaos and a virtual God, à la Quentin Meillassoux (2006). Speculative materialism here means that the subject is not the terminal point of the philosophical process in Badiou or Žižek. After the material genesis of the ideal, described perfectly by Johnston, there comes the idealization of the material, where the subject has meaning not in and of itself, but as an active participant in this idealization.

In the case of Badiou, the idealization of matter is implemented in the process of truth, in which the subject reconsiders the situation at hand from the point of view of the event. Badiou's subject is a radically activist subject, but all his actions have meaning only insofar as they localize the void in a situation. Without relying on the void and its evental manifestation, Badiou's activist subject inevitably turns into the terrorist subject of a catastrophe. In Žižek's case, the idealization is implemented in the process of a reflexive return to the death drive. In this process, the ontological incompleteness, the "not-all" of the split substance turns, from a limitation, foreclosing access to infinity, into a condition of this very access. Hence, in both cases, the *process of truth* and the *death drive* name the absolute dimension of materialist dialectic, where the split substance is mediated by subjective reflection (or intervention) and is freed from false forms of its own existence (be it the "state of the situation" according to Badiou or "ideological fantasy" according to Žižek).

Despite a shared theoretical frame, the two views of the absolute—as the process of truth in Badiou and as the death drive in Žižek—there is a certain incompatibility between them. One can say that Badiou thinks the absolute within the logic of exception, while Žižek describes it within the logic of not-all. Each accuses the other of closet Kantianism:[14] Badiou views the logic of "not-all" as retaining the unknowable thing-in-itself from the first *Critique*, while Žižek reads the logic of exception as the dualism of freedom and necessity from the second *Critique* (Livingston 2012: 238–91).

This conflict determines all further discrepancies between Badiou and Žižek's projects when it comes to both the role of philosophy and to communist politics. Badiou identifies philosophy with the link between mathematized ontology and the processes of truth, the difference between which should protect philosophy from becoming an all-encompassing ideology. Žižek, on the other hand, combines philosophy and antiphilosophy, ontology and various processes of truth into one indistinguishable whole of "speculative antiphilosophy." Badiou sees the goal of communist politics to be the creation of a community of equals beyond the state, hence the expression "communist state" is for him an oxymoron. The transition to a communist community of equals is accomplished through revolutionary political organization. Žižek, unlike Badiou, returns in his latest texts to the idea of a communist state, which continues to exist in the process of its own withering off. Hence, in the conflict between the logic of exception and the logic of not-all, philosophy of truth processes and speculative antiphilosophy, communist political organization of a new kind and the continuously obsolescing communist state, a common field of contemporary materialist dialectic is formed.

Neovitalism: Between the Single Nature and Multiple Assemblages

a) Iain Hamilton Grant and Active Nature

Iain Hamilton Grant (2006) develops his own, rather original version of contemporary neovitalism: turning to F.W.J. Schelling's nature philosophy, he strives to bring back to contemporary thought the notion of Na-

[14] Žižek engages in polemic with Badiou's philosophy in many of his books, while Badiou appeals directly to Žižek and the Ljubljana school very rarely, only once describing them as Kantians (Badiou 2009: 536, 562).

ture as an active principle.[15][16] Grant challenges the entire post-Kantian philosophy, which he, as a participant of the speculative realist movement, calls correlationist, because it neglects Nature. This neglect begins already in Aristotle, who destroys the one-world physics of Plato through his distinction between active form and passive matter, which generates the philosophical somatism, reducing nature to the body (Ibid.: 32–34). Kant's critical revolution, overthrowing the pantheistic systems of early modern rationalism continues Aristotle's line of thought and cements his somatic understanding of nature (Ibid.: 77). After Kant, philosophy can only tackle the relation of the knowing subject to the known object, and not the participation of both subject and object in a single creative process of Nature. Neglecting nature reaches its ultimate point in Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who subordinates it to the activity of the subject laying claim to self-identity (Ibid.: 96–107). Nature in Fichte and his followers can be presented only negatively: substance negates itself, hence generating subjectivity and becoming passive "material" for the infinite growth and ramification of this subjectivity. Grant, without hesitation, counts among Fichte's followers almost all modern and contemporary philosophers: from Hegel to Heidegger up until Badiou and Žižek.

Although key figures in philosophy for Grant are Schelling and Deleuze, his speculative physics has all the features of Spinozism in his renewed form.[17] It posits substance as a dark abyss, hidden behind an apparent surface of attributes and modes, devoid of their own ontological meaning. Distinctions between chemistry and mechanics or the organic and the inorganic worlds are not fundamental to him. Instead of a dialectical recognition of a simultaneous identity and difference of various layers of nature, he underlines the continuity and homogeneity of all things. Grant celebrates Nature as a total cosmic substance, within which no distinction has a substantial ontological status.

Rejecting both Aristotelian dualism of form and matter and the Kantian dualism of knowing subject and object of knowledge, Grant does not arrive at a monism, but at a dualism: the dualism of the single active Nature and the multiplicity of passive bodies. Returning to Nature its onto-

[15] In this book, Grant reduces all of Schelling's philosophy to *Naturphilosophie* and identity philosophy, rejecting the independent significance of his philosophy of freedom and revelation, thus downplaying the importance of the speculative-dialectical logic in Schelling's constructions.

[16] Grant does not take his philosophy to be vitalist, as he rejects the fundamental distinction between organic and inorganic nature. Hence, I label his philosophy as "neovitalist." However, a more precise classification of Grant's nature philosophy would, perhaps, be to label it panpsychist (such a classification is proposed, in particular, by Steven Shaviro in his book *The Universe of Things* [2014: 65]).

[17] Adrian Johnston (2014: 55) also takes Grant's nature philosophy to neospinozism.

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logical worth, he inevitably devalues the multiplicity of ontic bodies and opposes speculative physics, investigating Nature ontologically to empirical sciences, which study its ontic dimension. Such a speculative physics loses a strong connection to experimental sciences, approaching obscurantist panpsychism.

In the language of German idealism, active Nature is nothing but substance, immediately identical to the subject. Precisely such a Nature, in Grant's speculative physics, is made into a naturalist *megasubject* (Ibid.: 160). If the subject of T: Fichte and neofichtean materialist dialecticians is the subject of a political transformation of the world, Grant's neoschellingian subject is an ontic body, engaging in self-renunciation in the name of the naturalist megasubject. A rejection of the idea of political revolution necessarily follows, or rather: revolution is relocated to the ontological level of Nature itself—all political revolutions turn out to be epiphenomena of the permanent cosmic revolution.

b) Jane Bennett and Matter-energy

An alternative version of neovitalism is proposed by Jane Bennett. For her, the main problem of Marxist historical materialism is not reducing active nature to passive body (like it is for Grant), but dualism—the hierarchical distinction between man and world, subject and object. Bennett's vital materialism follows the tradition of Democritus-Epicurus-Spinoza-Diderot-Deleuze, and not the tradition of Hegel-Marx-Adorno (Bennett 2010: 13). Thus, she explicitly opposes her neovitalist project to materialist dialectic, at least to its humanist examples.

The key concept of Bennett's vital materialism is that of assemblage (Ibid.: 20–39). The assemblage conveys dynamics to things and objects, which turn out on Bennett's view to be plastic modifications of a single natural substance, understood in a Spinozist spirit. Substance is here thought not as organic totality, but rather as a sum of all its elements, irreducible to a whole. The assemblage and its elements reciprocally determine each other: the assemblage grants its elements a greater generating power, and the engagement of the elements hinder the assemblage's transformation into an inert and immobile object. Hence, the assemblage is an open process, at the ground of which lies unpredictable chance. Here Bennett enters the debate between vitalism and mechanism: on the one hand, she criticizes the vitalism of Henri Bergson and Hans Driesch for opposing the vital impulse to matter, which inevitably becomes passive and lifeless material (Ibid.: 62–93). On the other hand, mechanism, eliminating the vital impulse, turns out to be a scientistic version of determinism. According to Bennett, this debate can only be resolved through positing the vital impulse within the bodies themselves (Ibid.: 116). The vital impulse exists only within bodies, introducing into them a moment of chance and unpredictability, thus preventing them from becoming static

objects. Bodies, in turn, allow the vital impulse to be incorporated, protecting it from the fate of an idealist illusion. Bennett herself proposes the following formula of, as she puts it, the "NiceneCreed" (Ibid.: 122) for vital materialism: behind all seen and unseen, human and inhuman, cultural and natural things there stands the activity of a single matter-energy, but the multiplicious universe that arose due to it is irreducible to a single principle. The universe is rather permeated with heterogeneity, forcing the matter-energy to ceaselessly recreate itself. The opportunity of participation in this recreation belongs to all human and inhuman agents, as the recognition of universal materiality distributes agency between all existents.

Vital materialism has, as its consequence, the extension of democracy to inhuman agents. Bennett, as if following Bruno Latour, insists on the need for a universal assemblage democracy. She rejects limiting democracy to the human world, characteristic, in her view, to the project of Jacques Rancière (and, we may add, those of Badiou and Žižek). William Connolly clarifies those political differences by opposing the idea of macropolitical revolution, characteristic to materialist dialectic, to the micropolitical practice of the self, which vital materialism borrows from late Foucault (Connolly 2013: 179–97). All agents who enter the assemblage practice self-care, which saves them from extremist striving toward revolution,[18] and interact with each other democratically.

If in Grant's speculative physics substance is identified with the megasubject, in the vital materialism of Bennett and Connolly, substance exists only as the assemblage of many mini-subjects. Their projects can be treated as the two sides of contemporary Spinozism—the metaphysical and the empirical. The first presupposes an intuitive grasp of the infinite productivity of substance, while the second presupposes the dissolution of substance in a multiplicity of empirical interaction. They are only united through their rejection of the dialectical-materialist idea of world transformation. For Grant, only the naturalist megasubject can change the world, and for Bennett and Connolly, changing the world is reduced to practices of self-modification, undertaken by mini-subjects.

Old "New Materialism" versus New "Old Materialism"

Neovitalism is merely a renewed variant of old materialism: it merely describes the world, but does not change it. In the views of contempo-

[18] Thus Peter Sloterdijk, close in his position to vital materialism, albeit more conservative, calls one of the chapters in his critical work on Badiou, "Toward a Critique of Extremist Reason" (Sloterdijk 2018).

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rary materialist dialectic, the neovitalist philosophy is today's embodiment of depoliticized and consequently idealist thought. If we were to trace the ontological reasons for such a depoliticization, we could name the systematic diminishing of the subject, conditioned by the conception of substance as a positive and productive principle without any split within it. Both Grant's naturalistic megasubject and Bennett's assemblage mini-subjects are, at the end of the day, pseudonyms for substance: they do not change the world because they are indistinguishable from it.

The contemporary materialist dialectic of Badiou and Žižek, on the other hand, maintains its connection to the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, continuing to orient itself toward the transformation of the world. This transformation is implemented thanks to the activity of the subject, emerging from the split within substance itself. Hence, a substance split and subjective intervention are necessary features of a materialist dialectical absolute (be it the process of truth or the death drive).[19] Without these features, the absolute inevitably becomes an ideological phantasm. This is the fate, from the perspective of materialist dialectic, of neovitalist absolutes—Grant's self-producing Nature and Bennett's assemblage.

Deleuze on the Materialist *Kampfplatz*

At a first glance, the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze is inscribed within the context of the contemporary debate between materialists in a rather determined fashion. For neovitalists, Deleuze plays the role of a "heavenly father" of sorts—one of the few representatives of twentieth-century philosophy, whose importance does not diminish with time, but grows instead. In academic studies of Deleuzian thought, it was common to relate the theory of virtual being with other historical-philosophical examples of a vitalist understanding of nature: from Spinoza and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling to Henri Bergson, Alfred North Whitehead and Gilbert Simondon (e.g., Shaviro 2014). In this sense, Grant, who with the help of Deleuze is creating a contemporary neo-Schellingian vitalism, fits well within the frame of academic Deleuzianism.[20] In such studies, the question of Deleuze's political stance is often relegated to secondary status, although analysis shows that Deleuze's politics could be found in the ascetic "flight out of this world" (Hallward 2006).

[19] In this sense, the materialist dialectical absolute exists only in the infinite process of its own unfolding: it cannot be identified with substantial givenness at-hand, the "state of the situation" (Badiou) or "ideological fantasy" (Žižek).

[20] Among academic Deleuzians closest to Grant, one could name Isabelle Stengers and Steven Shaviro.

It is remarkable that within sociological, anthropological, and political theories, the significance of the notion of "assemblage" gains momentum. On the basis of this notion, Manuel DeLanda (2006) creates a new hierarchical theory of society. It furthermore has a tremendous significance for the "ontological turn" in contemporary anthropology (de Castro 2014). Moreover, many political projects arise, inspired by Deleuze: besides the aforementioned assemblage democracy of Bennett and Connolly, we can name, for instance, Levi Bryant's "democracy of objects" (2011) and Timothy Morton's "dark ecology" (2016). All these projects share, on one hand, an anti-totalitarian pathos, directed against modern states, and on the other—their own inability to break off from capitalist logic. Thus, DeLanda, criticizing the hierarchical quality of monopolist capitalism opposes to it the assemblages that arise on small local markets. His political ideal turns out to be a "market without capitalism," that is, essentially, capitalism without the negative feature of capitalism itself (DeLanda 1998). In this regard, materialist dialecticians heap vehement critique on Deleuze, condemning him as a vitalist who has created a late capitalist utopia with markets devoid of monopolies and with communication networks devoid of control. In addition to that, despite the polemic, they accept the paradoxical proximity of Deleuzian philosophy to their own projects.

Thus, Badiou distinguishes between the Deleuze of academic studies (*Deleuze of the virtual*) from that Deleuze, whose philosophy is applied to a specific analysis of modernity (*Deleuze of the assemblage*). Badiou insists that in order to express the univocity of being, Deleuze always needs two terms—the *virtual* and the *actual*—which stand in a hierarchical relationship to one another. The virtual, just like the Spinozist substance, is its own ground, while the actual has its ground only in the virtual. In Badiou's reading, Deleuze attempts to overcome the danger of hierarchical dualism (albeit not quite successfully), identifying being with a circular dynamic motion of the virtual and the actual. Badiou interprets other key notions of Deleuze's philosophy (intuition, sense, time, fold, and eternal return) precisely with a focus on the relation between the virtual and the actual. He also discovers, in Deleuze's system, a resemblance with his own materialist dialectic—in the theory of event as immanent, and, hence, materialist exception (Badiou 1997: 67–78). The Deleuzian immanent exception is a region of the actual overfilled with the virtual, which hence opens the possibility for its counter-actualization. However, for Deleuze the virtual exists beyond the evental region of the actual; it is self-sufficient, and counter-actualization (or virtualization) is not an evental happening, but one of the moments of circular ontological motion. The exclusive character of Deleuze's event turns out to, ultimately, be illusory. The only true event in Deleuze, according to Badiou, is the virtual being itself, ceaselessly repeating itself in every region of the actual. Badiou, on the con-

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trary, insists that the multiplicity of events, which launches the multiplicity of truth processes, does not coincide with the ontological void, and hence maintains the characteristics of exception. As a result, the similarity between Badiou and Deleuze merely radicalizes their divergence, but with that, this similarity cannot be discovered in principle between Badiou and any of the other neovitalists (that is, with the exception of Deleuze).[21]

Žižek goes further than Badiou and insists on the existence of, so to speak, *two incompatible Deleuzes* (Žižek 2012b: 17–23). The first, one of the authors of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, affirms an absolute univocity of being, maintaining at that a fundamental distinction between production and representation, schizophrenia and paranoia, body-without-organs and organism. In the vitalist logic of the "first Deleuze," whom he, after Badiou, construes as the *Deleuze of the virtual*, representation is a reification, the sediment of ontological production.[22]

The novelty of Žižek's approach lies in his discovery of a "second Deleuze"—the *Deleuze of quasi-causality* (Ibid.: 23). The latter, author of the monographs from the end of the '60s, enters the philosophical territories of Hegel and Lacan far more often than the *Deleuze of the virtual*. Specifically, according to Žižek, in his logic of difference and repetition, Deleuze reproduces Hegelian retroactivity, and within the logic of quasi-causality (or that of a paradoxical object within incompatible series)—the Lacanian "objet a." All this gives Žižek reason to call the *Deleuze of quasi-causality* a closet materialist dialectician (Ibid.: 28). But the Deleuzian materialist dialectic has not passed the test of May 1968, since it cannot offer a coherent political program starting from its own ontology: the *Deleuze of quasi-causality* remains an apolitical thinker. In order for quasi-causality and retroactivity to acquire revolutionary political status, Žižek himself needs to make an appearance.

Therefore, it could be said that Deleuze's position in the contemporary materialist debate turns out to be far more problematic than it seems at first glance. Proclaiming their loyalty to Deleuze, the neovitalisms of Grant and Bennett nevertheless purge his philosophy from all the "inconvenient topics," which bring it dangerously close to transcendental and dialectic traditions. Neovitalist Deleuzianism becomes theoretically de-

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[21] A reverse critique of Badiou from the point of view of Deleuzian philosophy is a popular topic among academic Deleuzians. This critique is perhaps most systematically and with the greatest detail presented in the book *Badiou's Deleuze* (Roffe 2012).

[22] The political sense of the ontology of "virtual Deleuze" is expressed in the anarchist theory of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (2000), who oppose constitutive immanent power of the multiplicities to the constituted transcendent power of the Empire. Hence, every constituted political order is forced to continuously reconstitute itself in order to avoid reification and newly acquire ontological significance.

flationist and politically powerless—it either flees the world, or fetishistically hides the negativity characteristic of it. On the other hand, while criticizing Deleuze, Badiou and Žižek, as was shown above, uncover their own paradoxical proximity to him. Deleuze as the creator of the theory of quasi-causality, that is, of immanent evental exception, becomes, for them, a failed materialist dialectician, incapable of making the last step—that of separating the event from the void (according to Badiou) or identifying the event with the death drive (according to Žižek)—which leads him to a philosophical and political regress.

My hypothesis is that materialist dialectic and vitalism in Deleuze's heritage are so close to one another, that the boundary between them becomes almost indiscernible. In what follows, I will demonstrate that Deleuze's materialist dialectic (*Deleuze of quasi-causality*) is most clearly brought into play, of all possible spheres, in the vitalist problematic itself—in his reinterpretation of creative evolution. Precisely because of this, despite Žižek's reading, it is impossible, within the framework of Deleuzian philosophy, to localize the distinction between materialist dialectic and vitalism, explaining it by the beginning of his collaboration with Guattari. Even before that, in his book *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1983), Deleuze formulates the foundations of his vitalist project, and in the two volumes of Cinema (1986, 1989), written later, he returns to his early materialist dialectic. My task does not merely lie in drawing the boundary between those two perspectives, but also in clarifying their mutual conditioning.

Deleuze and Inorganic Life

Life is the most important name of being in Deleuze's philosophy. This statement needs elaboration straight away: in Deleuze's philosophy, two lives coexist—the organic and the inorganic. If organic life is by definition tied to the life of an organism and of the consciousness inherent to this organism, inorganic life is life beyond the organism. At the core of Deleuze's philosophy lies specifically the inorganic unconscious life.

In order to make inorganic life an object of thought, Deleuze rethinks Kantian transcendental philosophy. Inorganic life becomes a synonym of the transcendental field, inhabited by intensive singularities, irreducible to the unity of organism or consciousness, be this consciousness a Cartesian *cogito*, the transcendental unity of apperception or phenomenological perception (Deleuze 1990b: 98–99). At that, separating the transcendental field from consciousness, Deleuze does not bestow on this field the characteristics of a groundless abyss (*Abgrund*) in the sense of Jacob Böhme or late Schelling (Ibid.: 106–07). Although inorganic life always transcends the frame of the organism, it, nevertheless, requires a strict

organization of its transcendental field. Deleuze almost never uses the notion of "inorganic life" in his books from the end of the '60s, but the system developed by him in *Difference and Repetition* (1994) and in *Logic of Sense* (1990b) is directed precisely at fulfilling this requirement.

The difference between inorganic and organic life corresponds to the distinction between two kinds of plasma—germ and soma, borrowed from August Weismann, a biologist active in the second half of the nineteenth century (Deleuze 1994: 248–49).[23] In this sense, inorganic life also turns out to be germinal life, and organic life—somatic life. Germinal plasma transmits innate and unchanging qualities, and the somatic—those qualities that have been evolutionarily acquired. In Weismann himself, the primacy of germinal plasma over the somatic leads to a conservative and pessimistic view of evolution, devaluing acquired characteristics. But in his essay on Emile Zola, Deleuze paradoxically identifies germinal life with the crack of the death drive (1990b: 326). If the acquired instincts ceaselessly reproduce themselves, thus leading the evolution process to a state of entropy, the innate and unchanging death instinct always thwarts the entropy principle, forcing evolution to creatively reinvent itself and find new paths of development.

It is necessary here to draw a distinction between the death instinct in Deleuze and Freud: for Deleuze, Freud's understanding of the death instinct is too tragic and negative. The death instinct signifies the organism's desire to return to an inorganic inanimate state, to the undifferentiated triumph of Nirvana (Freud 1961). In this sense, Freud merely points to the negative boundary of the organism's existence, and inorganic life does not receive any positive content on its own. For Deleuze, however, the death instinct transitions from the sphere of the tragic to the space of epos. After Maurice Blanchot, he identifies two sides of death. Through one of its sides, it is closely bound to the personal existence of the human being, imposing a limit on him and transforming him into a Heideggerian being-toward-death. The other side of death is fully impersonal and bears no relation to individual existence: it is the germinal inorganic life, taken from the point of view of a finite organism. A meeting between the psychological death, tied to personal existence, and the ontological and impersonal death (Deleuze 1990b: 149) leads to, in accordance with the best Christian-dialectical traditions, which Deleuze so abhors at the level of rhetoric, the true realization of creative evolution—the birth of new life. Upon meeting with the crack of the death instinct, the organism ceases to entropically fold the transcendental field of intensive singularities within itself, and releases it outward, opening the possibility for new, inorganic

[23] The best analysis of Deleuzian biophilosophy and its connection to neodarwinian evolutionary theory, in my view, can be found in the book Germinal Life (Ansell-Pearson 1999).

organization. Thus, for Deleuze, speculative inorganic life always passes through a dialectical test by the death instinct.

In his early works, primarily in *Masochism* (1991), Deleuze mentions masochism as an example of one such test.[24] Violence as a necessary element of masochist practice is directed not at the masochist himself, but at the father-like in him. In Deleuze's terms, father-likeness is nothing but the organism and consciousness, tying to themselves the entire field of sexual singularities. Hence, masochistic violence serves the goal of liberating sexual singularities from the power of organism and consciousness: after desexualization, in which the death instinct disturbs the usual work of the pleasure principle, there comes its sublimating resexualization on new inorganic grounds. Deleuze ascribes masochist tendencies to the Christian story of suffering on the cross: in his reading, Virgin Mary inflicts violence on Christ, in order to free her Son from the dominion of God the Father (Deleuze 1991: 97).

It is necessary to point out here, that for Deleuze the death instinct is not a tragically repressed traumatic desire, but rather an epic sign of the future new life, which can only emerge in the cracks of the present. However, in order for creative evolution to continue its movement forward, one more element is required—subjective recognition.[25] If organic life in the terminology of *Logic of Sense* represents the state of affairs, the crack of the death instinct traversing this state turns out to be event. Hence within the state of affairs, the event is always identified with a destructive catastrophe. It ceases to be the source of disintegration and becomes the beginning of a new life only after attaining its being thanks to a subjective calling. Deleuze compares this recognition with a stoic "leaping in place," fully changing the situation (1990b: 149).

First and foremost, the subject must see, in the catastrophic event, the action of germinal inorganic life, and in the process of disintegra-

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[24] Yoel Regev (2016) turns the opposition between masochism and sadism in *Masochism* into a methological key for reinterpreting the entire Deleuzian philosophy. Thus, he arrives to the necessity of separating the "Deleuze of the resonance" (sense between a series of singularities) from the "Deleuze of the transgression" (counter-actualization, a throw of dice or a "leaping in place"). But this separation, in my view, inevitably leads to a one-sided view of Deleuzian philosophy. It is required to dialectically hold together both these moments: counter-actualization without sense really does become sadistic violence, but sense without counter-actualization turns out to be merely a language game.

[25] When it comes to the subject, Deleuze's position varies. In some books he rejects this category entirely, while in others he proposes its vitalist reinterpretation in the spirit of Whitehead, defining the subject as a "superject." In this article, my point of departure is the Deleuzian understanding of the subject in Difference and Repetition and Logic of Sense, where the subject is opposed to the ego, and is understood as the "disintegrated ego," which has become the inception of a new organization.

tion—the liberation of singularities. At the first stage, he should place the event at a certain distance in relation to the state of affairs at hand in the disintegrated state. At the second stage, the event should be raised to the status of a quasi-cause to the new organization of liberated singularities. Consequently, the subjective recognition of the event, on one hand, is the counter-actualization of the event, separating it from the state of affairs and, on the other hand, its actualization, making the state of affairs adequate with respect to the event. The subject, at that, needs to accept both the difference between the event and the state of affairs and the identity between them. Singularities in a new "secondary organization" remain unconnected with each other, but they, nevertheless, enter into communication with the help of the quasi-cause as their paradoxical mediator (Deleuze 1990b: 239–52). Deleuze calls this new organization of singularities "sense," giving the event its true existence. In this manner, inorganic germinal life shows itself in creative evolution at the level of thinking and sublimated sexuality, which have a merely secondary relation to organism and consciousness.

The goal of Deleuze's philosophy—the creation of an autonomous and organized field of singularities, independent of organism and consciousness—cannot be attained without subjective recognition. The sense in which series of singularities, independent of each other, are bound together with a quasi-causal event, without obeying the transcendent principles of organization anymore, does not fall into the abyss of groundlessness. This happens because the quasi-cause, in subjective recognition, does not only attain virtual being, but also actual. Along with this, the subject emerging at the moment of the disintegration of consciousness attains freedom in relation to its own state of affairs through the affirmation of the event. Deleuze repeats multiple times the stoic imperative to "become worthy of what happens to us" (1990b: 149). This is the only ethical imperative. Deleuze also underlines that worthiness emerges only then, when we discover the event in what happens, and grant this even sense. Hence, Deleuzian stoicism has nothing to do with a meek acceptance of the world. In the stoic counter-actualization, the subject does not "flee out of this world" and does not engage in an individualistic "practice of the self," but rather changes the world, making the state of affairs adequate to the event, hence carrying on the process of creative evolution.

Deleuze and the Future of Materialist Dialectic

The distinction between neovitalism and materialist dialectic becomes evident now. While neovitalists, such as Grant and Bennett, proceed from the substance's capacity for self-organization, for Deleuze the substance of life is, first, always split into the organic and the inorganic,

and second, requires a subjective intervention to continue its own existence. Inorganic life, unlike active Nature in Grant, does not ground itself; it develops, passing as a crack through organic life and is implemented in subjective counter-actualization. Bennett's assemblages, in which elements coexist without being subordinated to an external principle, are also not inherent to life as such—they appear only in the disjunctive synthesis of sense. Without subjective mediation, the assemblage either falls into the abyss of groundlessness, or is subordinated to organism and consciousness. Thus, the most important divergence between Deleuze and neovitalists consists in that Deleuze supplements his notions of creative evolution with a theory of the subject, one which has an ethical and a political significance.

Materialist dialecticians, however, suppose that substance is initially split and can come to relative identity only with the help of a subjective intervention or subjective reflection. Instead of Spinozist substance, we have to deal with a reinvention of the Hegelian definition of the absolute, which is grasped "not just as substance but just as much as subject" (Hegel 2018: 12). Despite a clear interest in Spinoza and Gottfried Willhelm Leibniz, Deleuze acknowledges that access to "[a]n innocent way of thinking starting from the infinite" after Kant is impossible (Deleuze 1980). The path to the absolute lies only through finite human subjectivity.[26] Hence in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, Deleuze makes substance revolve around a finite mode, thus inverting the structure of Spinozist metaphysics (1990a: 191–200). This version of Spinozism indeed solves the problems posed by the Kantian "Copernican revolution," and acts as a contemporary continuation of the German idealist project. In this sense it is fully unsurprising that contemporary materialist dialecticians reveal a certain similarity between Deleuze's system and their own constructions.

Nevetheless, there is one feature of Deleuzian philosophy that does not allow Badiou and Žižek to accept Deleuze as their ally. This feature may be called Deleuze's affirmative monism. Unlike it, the void which Badiou takes to be substance and the death drive described by Žižek do not have positive content. The Deleuzian inorganic life, although falling into the abyss of groundlessness in the absence of counter-actualization on part of the subject, has positive existence. The danger of transforming into a passive carrier of inorganic germinal life looms over the subject here; thus Deleuze's affirmative monism always presupposes the possibility of a return to vitalism, against which materialist dialectic battles.

[26] A detailed account of Deleuze's interpretation of German idealism and an analysis of the German idealism's influence on Deleuze can be found in *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy* (Kerslake 2009). In Kerslake's reading, Deleuze becomes a transcendental and dialectical vitalist, following the late (and not the naturephilosophical, as Grant would have it) Schelling.

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But giving an account of Deleuze's philosophy within the general field of materialist dialectic can be in the interests of the latter. The main conflict within this field is that between Badiou's logic of exception, tearing the human animal away from the immortal subject of truth and the Žižekian logic of the not-all, in which the death drive opens up the space of undead (and, consequently, infinite) existence. In the first case, Badiou denies death its status of event-truth: death can only take place at the level of the human animal (2003: 65–74). Žižek, on the other hand, grants death the meaning of ontological incompleteness, from which the subject and truth both arise (2013: 81). This distinction manifests itself in their attempted analyses of Christianity, directed at revealing its materialist essence. According to Badiou (2003), Christ's death is merely a condition of the emergence of universal bliss, and it has no meaning on its own. Žižek (1989), however, sees bliss in Christ's very death, since it signifies the death of God and the enaction of ontological incompleteness.

The philosophy of inorganic germinal life, developed by Deleuze, points, for materialist dialectic, the way out of that dead end in which it has landed as a result of the conflict between the *logic of exception* and the *logic of the not-all*. On the one hand, contra Badiou, Deleuze identifies the death instinct with the event, hence making impossible the dualism of human animal and subject of truth. On the other hand, unlike Žižek, Deleuze does not grant the death instinct its own ontological significance. At the level of organism, the death instinct is merely a testament to the existence of germinal life. In his reading of Christianity, Deleuze claims that death on the cross is also a celebration of new life, in which the "second birth" of Christ takes place, and hence a second birth of all humanity without the transcendent God the Father (Deleuze 1991: 12). Inorganic life acquires sense and becomes speculative only after it is tested by the death instinct, which liberates intensive singularities from their rigid attachment to the organism. Hence Deleuze's monism—affirmative, but also absorbing negativity—points to the possibility of reconciliation between the affirmative dualism of Badiou's logic of exception and the negative monism of Žižek's logic of the not-all. However, the question of political stance that follows from the philosophy of inorganic life still re-

mains problematic for materialist dialectic. Does not the danger of regressing into vitalism, always present in this philosophy, lead to either a mystical flight out of this world, or to its cynical acceptance?

A Revolutionary-democratic Postscript

As has been said above, an important feature of materialist dialectic is its wager on changing the world politically. Deleuze makes this wager with the help of his notion of counter-actualization. This notion, however, did not have a specific political content before Deleuze's collaboration with Guattari. In the *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* books, Deleuze, quite contrary to what he has done before, implements a direct politicization of his philosophy. With that, he rejects counter-actualization as a central concept, which leads to equivocal consequences. Nick Land (2011), singing praise to the inhuman deterritorializing power of the Capital, and Manuel DeLanda (1998), dreaming of market assemblages without monopolies, draw precisely on the political heritage of Deleuze and Guattari's collective project. In this regard, the dialectical-materialist critique of this project (from Badiou [2012] to Hallward [2006]) remains significant.

Perhaps it is only in *What is Philosophy?* that Deleuze manages to find a precise political expression for the notion of counter-actualization (Deleuze and Guattari 1994). Here, the political goal of philosophy is the creation of "a new people," lacking within the frame of current capitalist order (Ibid.: 88–89, 99). At an ontological level of counter-actualization, intensive singularities are liberated from the power of organism and consciousness, taking inorganic form. Similarly, at the level of politics, philosophy gives the people a new life, pointing to an immanent utopia beyond capitalism (Ibid.: 99–100). The problem of Deleuzian politics lies in that it is not an autonomous area within the frame of his philosophy. In other words, Deleuzian politics is implement by philosophical means, and, ultimately, fully merges with philosophy.

Contemporary Deleuze scholars have already begun creating a political program on the basis of the philosophical theory of the "new people." In the context of contemporary discussions about the significance of populism and its relation to democratic or communist politics, Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc (2013) calls the late Deleuze's stance a "minoritarian populism." I think "revolutionary democracy" to be a better description. Democracy under the conditions of capitalism turns out to be split asunder and alienated from itself in its representative parliamentary forms. Only revolutionary organization, necessary linked to violence, can help democracy free itself from parliamentary forms of its existence. Furthermore, reliance on a democratic striving toward self-organization helps the revo-

lutionary movement avoid becoming revolutionary terror. Taking Deleuze as a theoretician of contemporary revolutionary democracy requires, of course, a more detailed analysis. But already we can point to some advantages of such an interpretation of Deleuze's politics in relation to the idea of communism, presented in the contemporary materialist dialectic. For example, insisting on a philosophical theory of the subject, Badiou and Žižek identify the idea of communism with one or another form of revolutionary organization. Badiou (2012: 62–70) writes of an affirmative party (or a new kind of organization), and Žižek (2012a: 843–44) of the negative state that abolishes itself. [27]The problem is that moving from the historical failures of "radical democracy" (Laclau and Mouffe 2014) and "absolute democracy" (Hardt and Negri 2000), contemporary materialist dialecticians come to an anti-democratic understanding of the idea of communism. In the cases of Badiou and Žižek, their opposing material dialectic to democratic materialism bears witness to that. This is not an abstract opposition, but a dialectical one: the communism of the materialist dialectic must also become democratic, but not in the sense of capitalist "democratic materialism." To demonstrate the necessity of the second step, returning communism to a true democratic character, an interpretation of Deleuze's politics as revolutionary democracy is needed. It appears that is would let the organizational-bolshevist component of the idea of communism be complemented with the anarcho-democratic elements it so needs.

Translated from the Russian by Diana Khamis

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