

Chaosophy: Chaos, Chaosmosis, and Precarious Ethics

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Abstract: This article rethinks Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's theorization of chaos and chaosmosis, including their evolving configurations in the present. Initially, I elucidate chaos as a virtual totality and a vector of milieus. Through rhythm, chaos is creatively neutralized, and its affirmative potentials are unleashed. Furthermore, I explain the interplay between philosophy, art, and science, particularly their power to cast a plane over chaos through concepts, percepts, and functives. In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari critically assert that capitalism vis-a-vis chaos is a universal "disaster for thought." However, I engage with Franco Berardi's formulation of precarious ethics to make their engagement more contemporary. Such exploration seeks to probe chaosmosis' relevance and tensions with current predicaments and hopes to discover novel ways of breathing within chaos. Despite some divergences involving their projects, Berardi's ethics is substantially informed by Deleuze and Guattari's contention that initiating a direct or grand opposition against chaos is futile because it feeds on war. More importantly, they remain faithful to the definition of philosophy, i.e., the formulation of new concepts and practices that would capacitate people to creatively navigate and survive in contemporary society.

Keywords: chaos, chaosmosis, chaoid, semiocapitalism

Deleuze and Guattari view the May 1968 phenomenon as a "becoming breaking through history"¹ because it radically challenges the standard concepts of conventional psychoanalysis, party politics, social movements, and intellectual scholarship. Convergently, all these fields receive philosophical legitimization from the identitarian notion of the rational human subject. Sad to say, the French herd was unable to profoundly grasp the radical potential of this event defined by molecular lines of flight:

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. by Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 153.

“There is always something that flows or ... escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine: things that are attributed to a ‘change in values,’ the youth, women, the mad, etc.”² Significantly, this novel event eluded different forms of representation and, more importantly, opened the people to the future. Deleuze and Guattari explain:

The politicians, the parties, the unions, many leftists, were utterly vexed; they kept repeating over and over again that ‘conditions’ were not ripe. It was as though they had been temporarily deprived of the entire dualism machine that made them valid spokespeople ... A molecular flow was escaping, minuscule at first, then swelling, without, however, ceasing to be unassignable.³

Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* primarily seeks to reconstruct Wilhelm Reich’s query about the rise of fascism in the 20th century: *How could the masses be made to desire their own oppression?*⁴ As the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, this book launches a critique of the French people’s reactive instinct or voluntary submission to ‘State philosophy,’ especially in the post-1968 era. Despite the belligerency of this literature, *A Thousand Plateaus*, the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* received higher acclaim. The apparently restrained language of the second book moderates the militant fervor of the first. Historically, *A Thousand Plateaus* was informed by the 1973 oil crisis in France, which abolished the people’s hope for a grand societal reconfiguration. Including other revolutionaries, Deleuze and Guattari criticize capitalist structures, and accentuates the necessity for novel forms of socio-political and economic interventions and organizations against the backdrop of global interdependencies. In his “Foreword” to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi opines that, “For many French intellectuals, the hyperactivism of post-May gave way to a mid-seventies slump, then a return to religion (*Tel Quel*) or political conservatism (*the Nouveaux Philosophes*) in a foreshadowing of the Reagan eighties.”⁵

Interestingly, Alain Badiou in *The Communist Hypothesis* presents a nuanced appropriation that cuts across Deleuze and Guattari’s critical

² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 216.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 38.

⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, xi.

affirmation of May 1968 and its subsequent criticisms. For him, this event is not a unitary festival but a complexity and heterogenous multiplicity.⁶ As a complexity, it is associated with both positive and negative relevance and implications. As a heterogenous multiplicity, Badiou contends that there are 'four different 'May '68s.'⁷ Badiou earnestly encourages scholars and revolutionaries to revisit these four hypotheses to comprehensively understand this event, especially in the context of the contemporary epoch. More importantly, he wants to salvage the revolutionary spirit of May '68 despite its contradictory aftermaths. As no universal historical agent would enact revolution and emancipation, there is likewise no singular way to interpret it. Notwithstanding its varying trajectories, it remains a fecund depository for education, inspiration, and revolutionary transformation. In this regard, Badiou fiercely pushes for a genealogical reinvention of May 1968 to reformulate communism as a viable revolutionary alternative and a continuing hypothesis. Ultimately, abhorrence to this ongoing project may lead to a cursory acceptance of "the inevitability of the unbridled capitalist economy and the parliamentary politics that supports it, then we quite simply cannot see the other possibilities that are inherent in the situation in which we find ourselves."⁸

A decade after May 1968, the same thinkers who played vital roles in the protest, such as Deleuze, Guattari, Barthes, Sartre, and Kristeva, also participated in the July 1977 revolution in Italy.⁹ Generally, the Italian Autonomous movement called for an international meeting whose main agenda revolved around the idea of repression. However, these French intellectuals clarified that revolution should not focus on the shattering of the state. Instead, the optimal technique to define the new revolution, Berardi underlines, is through

the Deleuzian concept of line of flight: exodus from the
kingdom of exploitation and the creation of a new social

⁶ Alain Badiou, *The Communist Hypothesis*, trans. by David Macey and Steve Corcoran (London and New York: Verso, 2010), 45.

⁷ The first sense or hypothesis involved the prominent revolt of the young university and school students; the second dealt with an enormous general strike headed by young workers and union members; the third talked about the libertarian May, which sought to transform the broader moral climate, sexual relations, individual freedom, and gender difference; and lastly, revolved around the incredulity towards the universal historical agency capable of leading the revolution and liberation (see *Ibid.*, 45–53).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁹ Franco Berardi, *The Precarious Rhapsody: Semiocapitalism and the Pathologies of the Post-Alpha Generation*, ed. by Erik Empson & Stevphen Shukaitis. Trans. by Arianna Bove, Erik Empson, Michael Goddard, Giuseppina Mecchia, Antonella Schintu, and Steve Wright. London: Minor Compositions, 2009), 25.

sphere, which has nothing to do with power, labor or the market ... The main subject ought not to have been repression, but the way of escaping the coming capitalist restoration, the possibility of launching a new idea of autonomy.¹⁰

As one of the leading proponents of *Autonomia Operaia*, Berardi polemically describes May 1968 as a period of devolution, “the peak of human progress ... of democracy as critical participation; since then we have been living through a continuous process of cultural devolution, political regression, and social impoverishment.”¹¹ 1968 and the years that followed paved way for the maximal convergence between technological knowledge and social consciousness. As years passed, technology surmounted and totalized society and started to increasingly dominate the social body, while society became impotent in governing itself. Democracy, which for Badiou is already totalized by the market economy, turned bankrupt of political resources in controlling capitalist deregulation of finance and technology, while individuals underwent accelerated technological mutation.¹² Berardi expounds:

... social consciousness was expected to take control of technological change and to direct it for the common good. But the opposite happened: the leftist parties and unions regarded technology as a danger rather than as an opportunity to be mastered and submitted to the social interest. Liberation from work was labeled “unemployment,” and the Left engaged in countering the unstoppable technical transformation. As democracy proved unable to govern the techno-anthropological change, the deregulation of finance and technology carried on dismantling preexisting forms of social consciousness. As an effect of neoliberal privatization, the educational system was subjugated to the need for profit, and critical thought was separated from research and development.¹³

Chaos: A Virtual Totality and Vector of Milieus

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Franco Berardi, *Breathing: Chaos and Poetry* (CA: Semiotext(e), 2015), 122.

¹² See Berardi, *The Precarious Rhapsody*, 1–29; cf. Berardi, *Breathing*, 123.

¹³ Berardi, *Breathing*, 122.

In *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, one of Deleuze's early works, chaos is explicated in conjunction with the principle of the eternal return. Specifically, chaos eternally appears in every cyclical movement: "What this means is that chaos and cycle, becoming and eternal return have often been brought together, but as if they were opposites."¹⁴ However, opposition finds no place in their relationship. The eternal return is the affirmation of necessity and chance. As a physical and ethical doctrine, it affirms the being of becoming (the return of the difference) and the being of becoming as the 'self-affirming' of becoming-active, respectively.¹⁵ The world of the affirmation of chance is the world of chaosmos (chaos and cosmos). In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze explains,

The secret of the eternal return is that it does not express an order opposed to the chaos engulfing it. On the contrary, it is nothing other than chaos itself, or the power of affirming chaos ... To the coherence of representation, the eternal return substitutes something else entirely – its own chaodysey.¹⁶

Deleuze furthers the mutual relation between chaos and the eternal return in *Difference and Repetition*—the product of his *Doctorat d'État*. This sophisticated literature portrays chaos as a virtual totality and a fundamental aspect of difference and repetition. It refers to the unity of all chance irreducible to any subjective or objective representation. Writ large, chaosmos antagonizes the philosophies of representation essentially grounded on God, the World, and the Subject. In his words,

Nietzsche had already said that chaos and eternal return were not two distinct things but a single and same affirmation ... With eternal return, chaos-errancy is opposed to the coherence of representation; it excludes both the coherence of a subject which represents itself and that of an object represented. Re-petition opposes representation¹⁷

¹⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone Press, 1983), 28.

¹⁵ See *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. by Constantin Boundas, trans. by Mark Lester with Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 264.

¹⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 57.

Immanent in the inextricable relation between chaos and the eternal return is the concept of repetition. Contrary to the reductive tendencies of the Hegelian dialectics, repetition is a permeable principle constituting singularities permeated by difference. Against the Platonic notion of repetition, it emerges through difference and not via mimesis. In this manner, repetition pursues an incessant affirmation and experimentation of life repeated in its chaotic complexity and heterogeneity towards the new. The new or difference evinces “the power of beginning and beginning again,” and it summons “process in thought which are ... the powers of completely other model, from an unrecognized and unrecognizable *terra incognita*.”¹⁸

The symbiotic relationship between chaos, the eternal return, difference, and repetition is analogous to the distinction between the life-typologies of the bad and the good player in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. The bad player counts on several throws of the dice on a significant number of throws. In utilizing causality and probability, he epitomizes representation. Nevertheless, the dicethrow fails, according to Deleuze, because chance is not affirmed enough in one throw.¹⁹ On the other hand, the good player embodies the Dionysian correlation of chance and necessity in the sense that it is not a probability distributed over numerous throws but all chance at once, “not a final desired combination, but the fatal combination, fatal and loved, not the return of combination by the number of throws, but the repetition of a dicethrow by the nature of the fatally obtained number.”²⁰

Meanwhile, in the collaborative work, *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari critically appraise chaos and the eternal return. They perceive these principles as an inadequate fortification, i.e., a reactive return of the One and representation. In relation to chaos, they operationalize the concepts of milieu and rhythm and claim that chaos is a vector of milieus and rhythms. According to them:

Chaos is not without its own directional components, which are its own ecstasies. We have seen elsewhere how all kinds of milieus ... slide in relation to one another ... Every milieu is vibratory, ... coded ... but each code is in a perpetual state of transcoding or transduction ... The notion of the milieu is not unitary: not only does the living thing continually pass from one

¹⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 136 and Adrian Parr, *The Deleuze Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 226.

¹⁹ See Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 27.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

milieu to another, but the milieus pass into one another ... The milieus are open to chaos, which threatens them with exhaustion or intrusion. Rhythm is the milieu answer to chaos. What chaos and rhythm have in common is the in-between—between two milieus, rhythm-chaos or the chaosmos ... Chaos is not the opposite of rhythm, but the milieu of all milieus.²¹

Contrary to the conventional description of chaos as an agent of catastrophe and a principle of pure indeterminacy, chaos is differentiated and creative. Moreover, even though chaos is compared to an enormous black hole, a person can still craft a fragile point as a center or a home within it. In addition, chaos is not the opposite of milieus, but the totality of all milieus. Milieus are characterized by vibrations and coding. Likewise, they are determined by recurring repetitions of elements by virtue of their protean and active attributes. Significantly, milieus are defined by "a periodic repetition ... whose only effect is to produce a difference by which the milieu passes into another milieu. It is the difference that is rhythmic, not the repetition, which nevertheless produces it"²²

It is tempting to use the concepts milieus and territory interchangeably in *A Thousand Plateaus*. However, they are not synonymous, since the former belongs to a broader category than the former. Territory "is in fact an act that affects milieus and rhythms, that 'territorializes' them. The territory is the product of a territorialization of milieus and rhythms ... In fact, territory is a mode of actively territorializing milieus."²³ When the codes, elements, and structures of milieus are modified and transfigured, territories emerge. Subsequently, territories serve as a fertile ground for the conjunction and proliferation of identities and the cultivation of numerous becomings. In nuancing the dynamic relationship between milieu and territory, Deleuze and Guattari introduce two other important concepts—'deterritorialization' and 'reterritorialization'.²⁴ The former is immanent in all territories as a catalyst or a vector of the new. Since all territories constitute assemblages²⁵ in perpetual interplay and lines of escape, deterritorialization, therefore, is an

²¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 313.

²² *Ibid.*, 314.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari describe this process as *a coming undone* (see Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 322). In *A Thousand Plateaus*, it is classified into absolute deterritorialization and relative deterritorialization (see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 55–56).

²⁵ See Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 88.

inherent principle and process in all territories. The latter, on the other hand, is a correlated process that ensues deterritorialization. It does not endorse a return to old territories, but instead prompts the qualitative recombination of deterritorialized codes or forces toward novel eruption of events, such as the EDSA 1 Revolution (1986) and the Arab Spring (2010-2012) or segmentarized functions and inhuman practices, as exemplified by the Holocaust (1941-1945) and the bombing of Hiroshima (1945).

In navigating the relationship between chaos, milieu, and territory, Deleuze and Guattari utilize the concept 'rhythm' as an in-between principle that regulates chaos' disruptive force and simultaneously the interaction and recombination of milieus or territories. Rhythm is not only a social, environmental, and ethnographic principle of becoming, but it is also relevant in the arts, especially in musicology.

In music, whereas rhythm regulates the inherent chaos that undergirds its movement and transformation, the refrain (*ritournello*) serves as a marker capacitated in territorializing assemblages. The term 'refrain' originally appears in Guattari's book, *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*. When it appears in *A Thousand Plateaus*, it is associated with music: "... refrain is properly musical content, the block of content proper to music. A child comforts itself in the dark or claps its hands or invents a way of walking, adapting it to the cracks in the sidewalk...."²⁶ In other words, the refrain is a principle of consistency or territoriality. Even the most deterritorialized component or elements of territories can be territorialized by the refrain and subjected to consistency. In Guattari's perspective, the deterritorialization of man's *Umwelt* has led man to reinvent diagrammatic operators such as faciality and refrains enabling him to produce new machinic territorialities."²⁷ At this juncture, however, it must be underscored that as a territorial assemblage, it only establishes temporary territories, landscapes, and assemblages constitutive of heterogeneous resources and then deterritorializes recurrently to reshuffle the relations of elements. In addition, the refrain also assumes other functions, such as "professional or social, liturgical or cosmic: it always carries earth with it; it has a land ... as its concomitant; it has an essential relation to a Natal, a Native."²⁸ Ultimately, the 'refrain' can uncork hidden potentialities within and beyond a particular territory.²⁹

²⁶ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 209.

²⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 116, Felix Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*, trans. by Taylor Adkins (MA: Semiotext(e), 2011), 110, and Eugene Young, Gary Genosko, and Janell Watson, *The Deleuze & Guattari Dictionary*, 255.

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 312.

²⁹ See *Ibid.*, 325-326.

Chaosmosis: An Ethics of Chaos

In the last collaborative work, *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that philosophy is not contemplation, reflection, and communication but rather the creation of new concepts. In the process of formulation, philosophy has to “determine its moment, its occasion and circumstances, its landscapes and personae, its conditions and unknowns. It had to be possible to ask the question ‘between friends,’ as a secret or a confidence, or as a challenge when confronting the enemy, and at the same time to reach that twilight hour when one distrusts even the friend.”³⁰ In this regard, philosophy is the concept’s friend in the Greek sense of the word. The principal objective of philosophy is “to create concepts that are always new. Because the concept must be created, it refers back to the philosopher as the one who has it potentially, or who has its power and competence.”³¹

In creating concepts, philosophy presupposes the plane of immanence, “a powerful Whole that, while remaining open, is not fragmented: an unlimited One-All, an ‘Omnitudo’ that includes all the concepts on one and the same plane.”³² The plane of immanence is likewise posited as a pre-philosophical plane that acts as philosophy’s internal conditions. Remarkably, Deleuze and Guattari underscore that the non-philosophical (philosophy’s Other) is much “closer to the heart of philosophy, than philosophy itself.”³³ Indeed, they make sense, especially concerning the moments or periods when signed philosophical concepts metamorphose into totalizing principles that annihilate their dynamicity and assemblagic attributes.

In *What is Philosophy?*, furthermore, the appropriation of chaos becomes more pronounced and critical. The plane of immanence serves like a sieve or a section of chaos. In this sense, chaos should be perceived as the absence of a connection between determinations rather than the absence of determinations. Deleuze and Guattari explicate:

[Chaos] is not a movement from one determination to the other, but, on the contrary, the impossibility of a connection between them, since one does not appear without the other having already disappeared, and one disappears as disappearance when the other disappears

³⁰ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 2.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

³² *Ibid.*, 35.

³³ *Ibid.*, 41.

as outline. Chaos is not inert or stationary state, nor it is a chance mixture. Chaos makes chaotic and undoes every consistency in the infinite.³⁴

Using the language of *A Thousand Plateaus*, chaos depicts the breakdown of rhythms—an intermediary principle that facilitates chaos' displacing power and territories' possibility of becoming-other. Paradoxically, chaos signifies a kind of complexity, a *lack of presence* because of its infinite speed. In this vein, its indeterminacy and formlessness are conditioned by determinations that merely connect or become comprehensible in small or vague spaces and metamorphose at a highly accelerated speed.

In the plane of immanence, philosophy is confronted with the quandary of achieving consistency without losing grip of the infinite. Philosophy's created concepts can striate the intensive ordinates of the infinite movements "as movements which are themselves finite which form, at infinite speed, variable *contours* inscribed on the plane."³⁵ In this way, the plane of immanence necessitates the creation of concepts by making a section of chaos.

Deleuze and Guattari's appropriation of chaos distinctly depicts the contemporary condition under the supremacy of neoliberal capitalism. They lament: "Nothing is more distressing than a thought that escapes itself, than ideas that fly-off, that disappear hardly formed, already eroded by forgetfulness..."³⁶ More concretely, chaos is characterized by a vortex of accelerated rhythm of information technology and experience, depleted resources, impoverished human relations, and psychopathologized individuals. This plethora of quandaries, frequently referred to as neoliberal chaos, is responsible for different psychopathologies, such as neurosis, panic, and depression. Panic, for example, occurs when the environment moves at an incomprehensible speed. After a panicked acceleration, desire is activated, thus engendering depression: "When you are no longer able to understand the flow of information stimulating your brain, you tend to desert the field of communication, disabling any intellectual and psychological response."³⁷

Interestingly, other contemporary thinkers similarly pursued this philosophical theorization, such as Byung-Chul Han. Distinctively, he opines that the age of acceleration is already over. What conditions burnout or depression, instead, is 'dyschronicity:

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 201.

³⁷ Franco Berardi, *The Soul at Work: From Alienation to Autonomy*, trans. by Francesca Cadel and Guiseppina Mecchia (CA: Semiotext(e), 2009).

Today's temporal crisis is caused by a dyschronicity which leads to various temporal disturbances and irritations. Time is lacking a rhythm that would provide order, and thus it falls out of step ... The feeling that life is accelerating is really the experience of a time that is whizzing without a direction.³⁸

Against neoliberal chaos, this temporal crisis refers to a time devoid of rhythm and a life without end and conclusion. Appallingly, this temporal anomaly engenders narcissistic and depressive individuals and, worse, conditions blind nationalists and extremists.³⁹ However, despite Han's post-immunological critique, his formulation of dyschronicity still exemplifies the neoliberal chaos that Deleuze and Guattari discussed in *What is Philosophy?*, but on a more sophisticated configuration.

What aggravates these chaos-authored pathologies is the realization that they are closely knitted to or conditioned by much broader socio-political problems and, more importantly, chaos is impossible to eradicate or overcome wholly. Deleuze and Guattari claim that launching an explicitly belligerent war against chaos is futile and self-destructive because war is its fuel. Individuals should, therefore, moderate their relationship with it by acclimatizing with the rhythm of the cosmos and maintaining a critical alliance with it through the principle of *chaosmosis*. In their words: "It is as if the struggle against chaos does not take place without an affinity with the enemy, because another struggle develops and takes on more importance—the struggle against opinion, which claims to protect us from chaos itself."⁴⁰ This incommensurable realization necessitates humility and prudence or, as Deleuze describes in *The Logic of Sense*, becoming a "little alcoholic, a little crazy, a little suicidal, a little guerilla."⁴¹ However, confronting chaos is not just the solitary task of the individual revolutionary. It is through friendship and/or solidarity that depression can be surmounted because it espouses an ethics of sharing or a common rhythm.

In a more enormous scope, this realization likewise admits that philosophy does not hold the single key in dealing with the problem of chaos vis-a-vis capitalism as a disaster of thought. In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari underscore the importance of the three powers of thinking:

³⁸ Byung-Chul Han, *The Scent of Time: A Philosophical Essay on the Art of Lingerin*, trans. by Daniel Steuer (UK: Polity Press, 2017), 5.

³⁹ Byung-Chul Han, *The Expulsion of the Other: Society, Perception and Communication Today*, trans. by Wieland Hoban (UK: Polity Press, 2018), 11-13. See Berardi, *Breathing*, 52.

⁴⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 203.

⁴¹ Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 157.

philosophy, art, and science. On one hand, they avow that these powers can transform life totalized by chaos (as a hybridity of entropy and creativity). On the other hand, chaos rhizomically traverses and enlivens philosophy, art, and science. Art and science are allies (or “friends”) of philosophy and thought, not only in confronting chaos, but also in embattling opinion (*doxa*).

In philosophy, for instance, friendship “no longer stands for an extrinsic persona ... but rather for a presence that is intrinsic to thought, a condition of possibility of thought itself, a living category, a transcendental lived reality.”⁴² Through friendship, philosophers create concepts: “With the creation of philosophy, the Greeks violently force the friend into a relationship that is no longer a relationship with an other but one with an Entity..., an Essence, Plato’s friend, but even more the friend of wisdom, of truth, or the concept.”⁴³ The concept, additionally, interpenetrates with the *Other*. However, the other in the Deleuzo-Guattarian parlance is beyond the anthropological or is irreducible to being a subject or an object. Rather, it refers to a possible world under which “not only subject and object are redistributed but also figure and ground, margins and center, moving object and reference point, transitive and substantial, length and depth. The Other Person is always perceived as an other, but in its concept, it is the condition of all perception, for others as for ourselves. It is the condition for our passing from one world to another.”⁴⁴ This theorization of the Other bears a close affinity with the conceptualization of the atopic other in Byung-Chul Han’s *The Agony of Eros*:

Our relationship to futurity concerns the atopic Other, which cannot be assimilated into the language of the Same ... The future is the time of the Other. The totalization of the present as the time of the Same eliminates the absence that otherwise makes the Other unattainable.”⁴⁵

Albeit the creation of concepts is the sole power of philosophy, it maintains a critical friendship and intersects with the other powers of thinking, which are also principles of creation. Whereas philosophy creates

⁴² Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 3.

⁴³ *Ibid.* In *The Agony of Eros*, Han claims that friendship and thinking presuppose or begin with eros: “To be able to think, one must first have been a friend, a lover. Without eros, thinking loses all vitality and turmoil, and becomes repetitive and reactive. Eros infuses thinking with desire for the atopic Other” (Byung-Chul Han, *The Agony of Eros*, trans. by Erik Butler (MA: MIT Press, 2017), 53.

⁴⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 18.

⁴⁵ Han, *The Agony of Eros*, 15.

concepts and diagrams a virtual community (plane of immanence), art creates affects and percepts (plane of composition), and science creates state of affairs and functions (plane of reference).

In relation to chaos, philosophy, art, and science are deemed as *chaoids* or the three daughters of chaos that cut chaos in different ways. For Guattari, they are decoders or elaborators of chaos: "The primary purpose of ecosophical cartography will not have the finality of communicating, but of producing enunciation concatenations able to capture the points of singularity of a situation."⁴⁶ Their relation to chaos makes philosophy, art, and science significant to thought. They do not create metaphysical illusions or invoke unitarian principles to protect us from chaos like opinions. Lengthily, Deleuze and Guattari contend:

We require just a little order to protect us from chaos. Nothing is more distressing than a thought that escapes itself ... This is all that we ask for ... to make an opinion for ourselves, like a sort of 'umbrella,' which protects us from chaos ... But art, science, and philosophy require more: they cast planes over the chaos ... What the philosopher brings back from the chaos are *variations* that are still infinite but that have become inseparable on the absolute surfaces or ... volumes that layout a secant plane of immanence ... The scientist brings back from the chaos *variables* that have become independent by slowing down ... so that the variables that are retained enter into determinable relations in a function ... The artist brings back from the chaos *varieties* that no longer constitute a reproduction of the sensory in the organ, but set up a ... a being of sensation, on an organic plane of composition⁴⁷

Instead of protecting us from chaos, philosophy, art, and science affirmatively challenge or encourage people to immerse themselves in chaos by slitting the umbrella and tearing the firmament itself "to let in a bit of free and windy chaos and to frame in a sudden light a vision that appears through the rent"⁴⁸ Eventually, the three disciplines' inevitable experience of catastrophes brings back from chaos variations, variables, and varieties,

⁴⁶ Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. by Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Sydney: Power Publications, 2006), 128. See Franco Berardi, *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide* (London and New York: Verso, 2015), 221–222.

⁴⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 201–202.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 203.

respectively. In doing so, the artist, for example, struggles and initiates a leap from chaos to composition. Deleuze and Guattari emphasize that if art struggles against chaos, it commences by borrowing some armaments from chaos itself to craft sensations capable of confronting opinions:

Art is not chaos but a composition of chaos that yields the vision or sensation, so that it constitutes ... a *chaosmos*, a composed chaos--neither foreseen nor preconceived. Art transforms chaotic variability into *chaoid* variety ... Art struggles with chaos but it does so in order to render it sensory⁴⁹

Moreover, science struggles with chaos by decelerating variability. Despite its ability to decelerate chaos' speed, science is inevitably attracted to the very thing it seeks to confront. Whereas art partially frames chaos towards a composed and sensible chaos, science subjects a fragment of chaos to a "system of coordinates and forms a referenced chaos that becomes Nature, and from which it extracts an aleatory function and chaoid variables."⁵⁰ Consecutively, philosophy struggles with chaos as an

undifferentiated abyss or ocean of dissemblance. But this does not mean that philosophy ranges itself on the side of opinion, nor that opinion can take its place ... To reach the concept it is not even enough for phenomena to be subject to principles analogous to those that associate ideas or things, or to principles that order reasons.⁵¹

The concept that philosophy creates forms inseparable variations fashioned on a plane of immanence, since it cuts across insofar as the latter crosscuts the chaotic variability and gives it consistency (reality). "A concept is therefore a chaoid state par excellence; it refers back to a chaos rendered consistent, become Thought, mental chaosmos."⁵²

The brain serves as the junction of philosophy, art, and science. Reciprocally, the brain transforms into a 'subject' through these three powers of thinking. Additionally, these three constitute the brain's rafts in confronting chaos.⁵³ The brain initially appears as the faculty responsible for

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 204-205.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 206.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 207.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 208.

⁵³ See *Ibid.*, 210.

the creation of concepts and for outlining the plane of immanence, which further grounds the concept's geography (place), movement, and relation. As it metamorphoses as a subject, "the concept becomes object as created, as event or creation itself; and philosophy becomes the plane of immanence that supports the concepts and that the brain lays out."⁵⁴

These territorializations interfere with each other through the *no*, which radicalizes each's potential without assimilating them into the Same, such as interferences of philosophy in art or science or art in science or philosophy. These interferences are vital in comprehending thought and its creative struggle with chaos. But of course, some interferences surmount the planes of the three, thus exhibiting the possibility of a future or a different world. Ultimately, Deleuze and Guattari's radicalization of the brain points towards a new way to confront chaos—a new future summoned by a discipline or principle other than philosophy, art, and philosophy.⁵⁵ For them:

They do not need the No as beginning, or as the end in which they would be called upon to disappear by being realized, but at every moment of their becoming or their development. Now, if the three Nos are still distinct in relation to the cerebral plane, they are no longer distinct in relation to the chaos into which the brain plunges. In this submersion it seems that there is extracted from chaos the shadow of the 'people to come' in the form that art, but also philosophy and science, summon forth: mass-people, worlds-people, brain-people, chaos-people - nothinking thought that lodges in the three ... It is here that concepts, sensations, and functions become indiscernible, as if they shared the same shadow that extends itself across their different nature and constantly accompanies them.⁵⁶

Indeed, these interferences are non-localizable, which are relatively summoned by localizable interferences. Despite their distinct characteristics and radical capacities, philosophy, art, and science converge through the concept of the 'people-to-come.' Of course, thinking does not stop from simply positing this virtuality, and the problems plaguing contemporary society do not just evaporate instantly. What is certain is that they mutate

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 211.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 217-218. See Arkady Plotnitsky, "Chaomologies: Quantum Field Theory, Chaos and Thought in Deleuze and Guattari's What is Philosophy?," in *Paragraph*, 29:2 (July 2006), *Deleuze and Science*, 55.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

and recombine with other predicaments and add more misery to the people's lives. All revolutionaries and thinkers should be aware of these inevitable pathways or possibilities. What comes after the 'people-to-come'? Given the immensity and fluidity of the capitalist adversary, should people abandon this project or think of a more realistic, if not paradoxical way to rhythmically survive in the present?

From Chaosis to Precarious Ethics

The Twilight of Philosophical Thinking?

Deleuze and Guattari conclude the "Introduction" of *What is Philosophy?* by lamenting that only 'pedagogy' or the 'pedagogy of the concept' can redeem us from the quicksand of 'commercial professional training' (capitalism), which is an "absolute disaster for thought."⁵⁷ Despite its immanent aptitude to elude segmentations or quantifications, thinking cannot avoid the fate of being commodified by the market. This is also true of the three powers of thinking: philosophy, art, and science. They narrate:

The most shameful moment came when computer science, marketing, design, and advertising, all the disciplines of communication, seized hold of the word concept itself and said: 'This is our concern, we are the creative ones, we are the ideas men! We are the friends of the concept, we put it in our computers ... Marketing has preserved the idea of a certain relationship between the concept and the event ... The only events are exhibitions, and the only concepts are products that can be sold. Philosophy has not remained unaffected by the general movement that replaced critique with sales promotion. The ... simulation of a packet of noodles, has become the true concept; and the one who packages the product, commodity, or work of art has become the philosopher, conceptual persona, or artist.'⁵⁸

When the pedagogy is unable to save these disciplines, their becomings are captured by capitalism, and they become conduits or

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 10. See *Ibid.*, 99 and Hans Radder ed., *The Commodification of Academic Research: Science and the Modern University* (PA: University of Pittsburg Press, 2010).

instruments for the proliferation of arborescent structures and oppressive conditions.

Significantly, the concept's 'plurivocity' is solely determined by its internal and external neighborhoods. Its internal neighborhood or consistency, Deleuze and Guattari elucidate, "is secured by the connection of its components in zones of indiscernibility; its external neighborhood or exoconsistency is secured by the bridges thrown from one concept to another when the components of one of them are saturated."⁵⁹ All these are subsumed, albeit combined, under the axiomatic of capitalism as a new form of transcendence that fashions new forms of arborescent structures and blockages to thinking. Thinking as the creation of concepts is syntagmatic, connective, linking, consistent, and not paradigmatic, projective, hierarchical, and referential. Philosophy, art, and science offer pedagogy of the concept of this sort independently in the sense that they are "no longer organized as levels of a single projection and are not even differentiated according to a common matrix but are immediately posited or reconstituted in a respective independence, in a division of labor that gives rise to relationships of connection between them."⁶⁰

In the context of absolute deterritorialization, thinking involves radicalizing a plane of immanence, of deterritorializing movements which may be fast or slow: "Deterritorialization of such plane does not preclude reterritorialization but posits it as the creation of a future earth."⁶¹ Of course, the earth-to-come can only be comprehended or territorialized through relative deterritorialization, which are historical, geographical, and psychological. Whereas the movements of the former are characterized by virtuality, the latter is characterized by actuality. Furthermore, while philosophy is an example of absolute deterritorialization, capitalism is an example of relative deterritorialization. The latter perpetually deterritorializes conventional socio-economic structures, cultural values, and geographical borders towards novel relations and living. However, the seemingly liberatory consequences of this dynamic process are constantly reterritorialized by capitalism to reinforce itself. As such, despite capitalism's immanent creativity or its function "as an immanent axiomatic of decoded flows (of money, labor, products),"⁶² it remains conservative. Deleuze and Guattari made a similar pronouncement as early as *Anti-Oedipus*. They argue that despite capitalism's emancipatory potential or aptitude to decode all symbolic codes, it remains tarnished by its concealed conservatism and

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 90.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 106.

ideological propensity to reterritorialize into capture. Hence, it cannot serve as the absolute limit of society.⁶³

As an example of absolute deterritorialization, philosophy must subject the relative deterritorialization of capital “to the absolute; it makes it pass over the plane of immanence as movement of the infinite and suppresses it as internal limit, *turns it back, against itself so as to summon forth a new earth, a new people.*”⁶⁴

The enormous relative deterritorialization of global capitalism is reterritorialized on the democratic state, “the capitalist version of the society of friends.”⁶⁵ However, in the current period, democracy is indistinguishable from the market economy. As a new society of friendship (albeit in a degenerative manner), it actualizes as capitalism’s frontliner—a society defined by fractalized labor and hyperactivity as new modes of activity, competition as a new logic of relations, and psychopathologies as new features of subjectivity. Even authoritarian states can be penetrated by the fluid capitalist economy. In other words, the possibility of deliberative intersubjectivity (in democracy) or human rights violation (in authoritarianism) only occupies capitalism’s outer layer. Deleuze and Guattari explain:

... the market is the only thing that is universal in capitalism. In contrast with the ancient empires that carried out transcendent overcodings, capitalism functions as an immanent axiomatic of decoded flows (of money, labor, products). National States are no longer paradigms of overcoding but constitute the ‘models of realization’ of this immanent axiomatic. In an axiomatic, models do not refer back to a transcendence; quite the contrary. It is as if the deterritorialization of States tempered that of capital and provided it with compensatory reterritorializations.⁶⁶

Hyper-communication, or the lack of it, is only a secondary, if not tertiary, problem today. On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari argue, “we have too much of it. We lack creation. *We lack resistance to the present.* The

⁶³ “But it is the relative limit of every society; it effects relative breaks, because it substitutes for the codes an extremely rigorous axiomatic that maintains the energy of the flows in a bound state on the body of capital as a socius that is deterritorialized, but also a socius that is even more pitiless than any other” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 246).

⁶⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 99.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 106.

creation of concepts in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist.”⁶⁷ It is in this sense that philosophy starts to assume a political or revolutionary form whose challenging task is “to posit a revolution as plane of immanence, infinite movement and absolute survey, but to the extent that these features connect up with what is real here and now in the struggle against capitalism, relaunching new struggles whenever the earlier one is betrayed.”⁶⁸

Unfortunately, the virtual people or earth appears to have decreased its revolutionary viability in the age of semiocapitalism. In fact, the brain or the mind, as a radical site of conceptual innovation and aesthetic production, is now subjected to endless and accelerated mutation thanks to the complex connivance of semiocapitalism and digital technology.

Breathing within Chaos

Semiocapitalism is a new mutation of capitalism based on the subjugation of the social nervous system through digital technology and semiotic algorithms. It is peopled by what Berardi calls the cognitariats or cognitive laborers who are required to invest their 24/7 investment of nervous energy and creativity in the process of production. This new semiocapitalist subjectivity is “motivated to invest their creativity in the process of production, in expectation of the success and profit that would be their reward—they were persuaded that work and capital could be forged together in the same process of mutual enrichment. Workers were encouraged to think of themselves as free agents.”⁶⁹ In other words, these creative investments are exhausted and ironically performed using the delusion of freedom or productivity. In *Heroes*, Berardi elaborates on the precarious condition of the cognitariats:

The essential feature of precarity in the social sphere is not the loss of regularity in the labour relation, since labour has always been more or less precarious, notwithstanding legal regulations. The essential transformation induced by the digitalization of the labour process is the fragmentation of the personal continuity of work, the fractalization and cellularization

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 108. See Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 100.

⁶⁹ Berardi, *Heroes*, 137. See Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody*, 56–73.

of time. The worker disappears as a person, and is replaced by abstract fragments of time.⁷⁰

In the age of cognitive labor, there is no longer a need to invest in the availability of a person for eight hours daily because capital merely utilizes packets of time. Thanks to capitalist deregulation, flexibility has evolved into fractalized work. Fractalization “is the modular and recombinant fragmentation of the period of activity.”⁷¹ As such, the cognitariat devolves into an interchangeable producer of “micro-fragments of recombinant semiosis that enter into the continuous flux of the internet.”⁷² Surely, it affects the workers as legal entities protected by rights and economic individuals who need to pay their food, house rent, etc.⁷³

The workers must undergo digital innovations and mutations to remain infinitely productive as if their minds need to mimic algorithmic digital transmitters. The physical, conscious, and sensitive individual is subjected to an acceleration of stimuli, i.e., a constant competitive, relentless electrocution which can lead to the pathologies of panic, attention disorder, information overload, and burnout (or psychopathologies). Since they invest everything, time for social relations, affection, and community engagement disappears (Viagra, cocaine, Prozac, coffee, game addiction, violence).⁷⁴ Given this post-capitalist context, how is resistance or revolution even possible today? Berardi writes:

Fractalized work ... does not set into motion any wave of struggle. The reason is easy to understand. In order for struggles to form a cycle there must be a spatial proximity of the bodies of labor and an existential temporal continuity. Without this proximity and this continuity, we lack the conditions for the cellularized bodies to become community. No wave can be created, because the workers do not share their existence in time, and behaviors can only become a wave when there is a continuous proximity in time that info-labor no longer allows.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 139.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ See Franco Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody*, 32–33.

⁷⁴ See *Ibid.*, 82.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

It is crucial to ask what is to be done in this hopeless situation. Unfortunately, when all these things rupture the flow or rhythm of mental time, and when people lost a meaningful connection with the external world, they experience chaos—"the inability to attribute meaning to the flow, the breakdown of our framework of relevance. A special vibration of the soul spreads out at this point, which we call 'panic': the subjective recording of chaos."⁷⁶ Depression is another inevitable consequence of semiocapitalist-manipulated life. Depression "is the inability to find sense through action, through communication."⁷⁷ When an individual overheats due to hyperactivity, fractalized work arrangement, and sometimes narcissism,⁷⁸ he/she ceases to build a shared space or bridge with his/her friends. In fact, the depressed does not perceive this bridge and the rhythmic connection between things and events. Concomitant with these political irregularities and impotence engendered or aggravated by semiocapitalism, is the rapid decay of the community and proliferation of psychopathologies.

To begin with, people should realize that chaos cannot be averted and surmounted. By virtue of its immensity, launching a war against it is pointless and self-destructive because it feeds on war."⁷⁹ This realization thus necessitates humility and prudence. In this vein, individuals should simply befriend chaos or acclimatize with the rhythm of the cosmos and maintain a critical alliance with it. One of the timeliest initiatives to do for Berardi is to labor for the fashioning of autonomous spaces of happy survival within this chaotic world—a horse pill that humanity should embrace critically and creatively.

How can a vibrational quest be initiated to attune oneself with the chaotic environment? In *Breathing*, survival, i.e., a radical and ethical survival, assumes an active stance. The search for new rhythms or forms of struggle is positively inspired by what the French call orgasm *petite mort* (little death): "an intense momentary ... weakening of consciousness that enables a vision of nothingness and simultaneously opens the possibility of listening to the sound of chaosmosis."⁸⁰

Firstly, the friendship among the people of *Sujonomo N*, in Seoul, South Korea, provides an initial step forward. These people, composed of artists, activists, professors, philosophers, a Buddhist, an anarchist, and young students, regularly meet in two spaces popular in Seoul for alternative learning, food sharing, cultural activities, and meetings.⁸¹ Affirmatively, this

⁷⁶ Berardi, *Breathing*, 42.

⁷⁷ Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody*, 117.

⁷⁸ Cf. Berardi, *The Soul at Work*, 124–139; Han, *The Agony of Eros*, 3.

⁷⁹ Berardi, *Breathing*, 131.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 140.

⁸¹ See Berardi, *Heroes*, 196.

collective inspired and convinced Berardi that learning, friendship, and autonomy are still possible in this hell. In his words "... only our sense of friendship and the pursuit of a project of common research can give us autonomy, and can allow us to create the conditions for a renaissance to follow the apocalypse which we are currently undergoing."⁸² Whereas in Deleuze and Guattari, friendship defines the relationship between the philosopher and the concept, in Berardi, friendship presupposes a proximity with the other, as actual people.⁸³ More specifically, this relation is informed by "]"a sense of solidarity, the perception of belonging to a community, a territory, a shared destiny, and aspired toward the communal search for a common future."⁸⁴ Nevertheless, these values are rare gems in a community defined by dissolved social relations, fluctuation of the economic order, and debased political revolutionary potentialities.

This paradoxical condition grounds Berardi's theorization of 'Precarious Ethics.' Against the backdrop of semiocapitalism, this new ethics is dynamically guided by uncertainty, transitoriness, and arbitrariness. Compared to other triumphalist or normative formulations of ethics, precarious ethics maintains a more realistic or moderate, yet still valiant project against the onslaught of semiocapitalism. His description of precariousness in *Heroes: Mass Murder and Suicide* is two-fold. Firstly, it deals with the precarity of labor through digital technology and semiocapitalism, as discussed earlier. Secondly, it deals with the environment's precariousness, because Nature is on a vengeance mode and humanity has reverted to survival mode, due to the Enlightenment project's enormous exhaustion of human and natural resources, birthing another form of barbarism.⁸⁵ This new dark enlightenment assumes its most distinct appearance in the age of the Anthropocene.

Geologically speaking, the Anthropocene refers to "the impact of man on the planet's environment" as now irreversible" and the "accumulation of greenhouse gas emissions has irreversibly altered the chemical composition of the earth's atmosphere and consequently its living environment."⁸⁶ The decomposition of the earthly life or the atmosphere is already irreversible. Parallel to this tragedy, a rehabilitation of the chemical composition of the social psyche, as well as the proliferation of nuclear

⁸² See *ibid.*, 196.

⁸³ In *What is Philosophy?*, the other as 'Other,' is conceived beyond anthropological configurations, i.e., "the condition for our passing from one world to another" (Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 18). Of course, this definition is implicit in Berardi's writings.

⁸⁴ Berardi, *Heroes*, 200.

⁸⁵ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments*, trans. by Edmund Jephcott (CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 3.

⁸⁶ Berardi, *Breathing*, 120.

weapons, water and food scarcity, demographic expansions, etc., is already nebulous. Overall, these encompassing features of contemporary society should compel humanity to realize or perceive the detrimental consequences involved in confronting chaos or the impossibility of overcoming chaos. At the G20 Summit in July 2017, many protesters and artists marched under the banner “Welcome 2 Hell.” With a pessimistic tone, Berardi contends: “In the past twenty years the global movement, from Seattle to Genova to Occupy, has tried to stop the hellification of the world. We have marched, we have chanted, we have ... expressed concepts and proclaimed predictions that have been confirmed by every deployment of the global crisis. In return, many of us have been beaten, repressed, imprisoned, and killed. In the end, everybody is now in hell.”⁸⁷

Disturbingly, the Anthropocene poses a problem beyond geology and research methodology.⁸⁸ This revolutionary goal poses a significant challenge to philosophy, art, and science. Individually, no philosophical concept, artistic production, scientific function, and even political theory can fully eradicate or neutralize it. But, of course, it may produce a divergent outcome when the three powers of thinking, along with other disciplines and principles, combine to form a radical assemblage. Guattari famously articulates this revolutionary conjunction in *Chaosmosis*: “Psychonanalysis, institutional analysis, film, literature, poetry, innovative pedagogies, town planning and architecture—all the discipline will have to combine their creativity to ward off the ordeals of barbarism, the mental implosion and chaotic spasms looming on the horizon, and transform them into riches and unforeseen pleasures...”⁸⁹

In the last decade, humanity witnessed the conceptualization of multifaceted and collaborative ways or modes of resistance to unshackle humanity from the market’s dictatorship. One of the innovatively radical ways was launched by the Occupy Movement in 2011. As a post-political revolutionary intervention, the Occupy movement, according to Thomas Nail,

underscores that state and/or semiocapitalism itself is the cause of the current crisis ... it also demands that we start creating some alternatives to the current system here and now, and not wait around for political

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 128–129.

⁸⁸ See Claire Colebrook, “We Have Always been Post-Anthropocene,” in Richard Grusin ed., *Anthropocene Feminism* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 1–20.

⁸⁹ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 135.

representatives or corporations to fix the problems they created.⁹⁰

More specifically, it “launched a campaign to denounce the plague of student loans, but the movement was unable to support a long-lasting action of organized insolvency and sabotage of the debt.”⁹¹ The Occupy started a long process of the reactivation of the cognitive workers’ social body and nervous system. Sadly, despite its post-political capillaries and vigor, the Occupy was unable to effectively launch a resistance at the semiological domain. Of course, semiocapitalism grounds its existence on the totalization of life’s semiological patterns, pracarizes the workings of the brain, and engenders other psycho-social maladies.

Given the debasement of all political avenues for resistance, Berardi claims that there is no political escape from the trap authored by semiocapitalism. This illustrates the sad fate of the Occupy Movement: “Financial absolutism was not shaken by the protests, and indeed only hardened its grip, further destroying social life. Then impotence, humiliation, and despair led people to abandon any sentiment of humanist universalism and turn toward aggression and fascism; chaos invaded social life and the geopolitical map of the world.”⁹² The Occupy is only one of the many insufficient socio-political responses that sadly convinces revolutionaries and theorists worldwide that they should look for novel modes and venues of revolution elsewhere. Even though it launched various novel and indirect democratic initiatives, the linguistic channels the participants used must also be re-conceived. Perhaps, a very important lesson can be learned from Deleuze:

Maybe speech and communication have been corrupted. They’re thoroughly permeated by money ... We’ve got to hijack speech. Creating has always been something different from communicating. The key thing may be to create vacuoles on noncommunication, circuit breakers, so that we can elude control.⁹³

For Berardi, on the other hand, hijacking or destabilizing speech is the task of poetry or poetic language. As a contemporary mutation, semiocapitalism is vastly regulated by algorithms that connect pockets of

⁹⁰ Thomas, Nail, *Returning to Revolution: Deleuze, Guattari, and the Zapatistas* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), viii–ix.

⁹¹ Berardi, *Heroes*, 145.

⁹² Berardi, *Breathing*, 9.

⁹³ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 175.

precarious labor and suffocate the social body with chaos. It is only through poetry (poetic language), Berardi underscores, that people can be liberated from semicapitalist suffocation: “Only poetry will soothe the suffering of the engineer’s mind and the poet’s mind, and will act to reverse the financial sphere’s grip upon language.”⁹⁴ In this regard, poetry serves as a possible conjunctive vector that would ignite the self-organization of the cognitive workers and the alliance between the engineer and the poet. In *The Uprising* and *Breathing*, Berardi calls for a poetical reactivation of the erotic body of the general intellect as the only pathway of liberation from the oppression of financial capitalism.⁹⁵

Of course, the alliance between the cognitariats and the poets should not be interpreted literally. The “poetic act” is a philosophical style of thinking and living in the semicapitalist abyss. It precariously empowers people to experiment

with the world by reshuffling semiotic patterns ... The act of composing signs (visual, linguistic, musical, and so on) may disclose a space of meaning that is neither preexistent in nature not based on a social convention ... The poetical act is a semiotic excess hinting beyond the limit of conventional meaning, and simultaneously it is a revelation of a possible sphere of experience not yet experienced.⁹⁶

Furthermore, the poetic act advocates a becoming-poetic, which also differentializes and engages with neighboring concepts, disciplines, and events. Hopefully, it could also serve as vector of alliance between other workers, professionals, and the young generation, like the one epitomized by *Sujonomo N.*

In *Breathing*, Berardi elaborates on some paradoxical values or refrains that may engender rhythms that can act as temporary grounds for human relations and existence, namely, ‘humility,’ ‘compassion,’ ‘empathy,’ and ‘friendship.’ Humility refers to the acceptance of the failure of the Enlightenment project. It also teaches us to bravely traverse life without any transcendental reference and blindness to enormous injustices unfolding in society. More importantly, humility frees us from the illusion of utterly governing chaos.

⁹⁴ Berardi, *Breathing*, 10.

⁹⁵ See *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 20–21.

In addition, Berardi emphasizes the significance of empathy in the semiocapitalist world. Since the demography of the young generation and the cognitive workers, today belong to the “generations that have learnt more words from a machine than from their mother,”⁹⁷ the resuscitation of empathy is truly a Herculean task. As Berardi writes, “Empathy, the perception of the Other’s body as an extension of one’s own, is under increasing threat. Since neoliberal reformers have put competition at the core of daily life, and since digital connectivity has replaced physical conjunction in the sphere of social communication, the psychocultural conditions of empathy have been undermined.”⁹⁸

Despite a seemingly impossible crop to grow in the decayed semiocapitalist soil, sharing one’s suffering or depression to a fellow worker embodies a kind of rupture, *a la* ‘little death’ for Berardi or ‘deep tiredness’ for Han.⁹⁹ It engenders an opening that can fashion both affirmative and negative implications for both parties involved. Optimistically, Berardi recounts:

But women and men can happily walk over this abyss if they understand that friendship resides in the ability to share the illusion of meaning. When the illusion of meaning is shared, it is no longer an illusion: it becomes reality. The bridge over the abyss is the dialogue that allows for the sharing of a vision ... This dialogue is based on refrains of nonattachment, and it emancipates us from the fear of not being. Getting freed from the will to live is the condition for being alive at last. The bridge over the abyss of the absence of meaning can take many forms: falling in love, tenderness, collective creation, hallucination, and movement. These forms give birth to the physical experience of meaning.¹⁰⁰

From art and ethics (philosophy), Berardi likewise frontlines science as a vital contributor in this revolutionary plot. This resonates with Deleuze

⁹⁷ Berardi, *Precarious Rhapsody*, 9.

⁹⁸ Berardi, *Breathing*, 136.

⁹⁹ In *The Burnout Society*, Han speaks of deep tiredness, i.e., a kind of tiredness that “loosens the strictures of identity.... This particular in-difference lends them an aura of friendliness.... This tiredness founds a deep friendship and makes it possible to conceive of a community that requires neither belonging nor relation” [Byung-Chul Han, *The Burnout Society*, trans. by Erik Butler (CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 32].

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 144–145; cf. Byung-Chul Han, *The Topology of Violence*, trans. by Amanda Demarco (MA: MIT Press), 2018), 47.

and Guattari's pronouncement in the chapter "Control and Becoming" in *Negotiations* that it is the audacious task of science to discover "new cerebral pathways and ways of thinking"¹⁰¹ capable of enabling people to breathe within chaos. Whereas mapping the processes and mental activity of the brain serve as science's task, wiring the activity of the collective brain will then be technology's job.¹⁰² Indeed, transhumanism is a new field of exploration for philosophers and humanity alike that can bestow positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, achieving transhumanism may perhaps come to fruition when the "conscious conjunction of sensible and sensitive singularities are able to self-organize and find pathways of sympathy, sharing, and collaboration."¹⁰³ On the other, this techno-scientific intervention can promote neuro-totalitarianism—a new technologically-mediated domination of "semio-corporations (the media) and psychocorporations (psychopharmacology), nonetheless also invites a process of sabotage and subversion of the dominant mode of mental wiring, opening the way to experimenting with forms of free neuro-psychic concatenation that corresponds to the social processes of self-organizing cognitive work."¹⁰⁴

Conclusion

In this article, I revisit Deleuze and Guattari's theorization of chaos and chaosmosis both from the historical context of their era and the contemporary period. To explore further their characterization of capitalism vis-a-vis chaos as a universal disaster for thought, I engage with Berardi's different formulations of precarious or apocalyptic ethics. This philosophical intervention aims to probe chaosmosis' relevance and tensions with current predicaments and scholarship to discover new ways of breathing within chaos.

Chaosmosis is the process of critically and creatively transfiguring chaos through philosophy, art, and science to become chaosmotic. Equally, it is the process of reactivating people's revolutionary imagination and capacity for social solidarity towards new horizons and rhythms beyond capitalist geographies. *Sujonomo N*, the Occupy Movement, the poetic act, and neuroplasticity, are chaosmotic interventions that intrepidly provided pathways to rhythmically breathe within chaos. However, it should not be forgotten that all these chaoids or vectors are grounded on an ethics

¹⁰¹ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 176.

¹⁰² See Berardi, *Heroes*, 204-205; cf. Franco Berardi, *And: Phenomenology of the End* (CA: Semiotext(e), 2015), 313-314.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 204. Of course, this remains a possibility because this sophisticated can be co-opted by multi-national corporations and promote neuro-totalitarianism.

¹⁰⁴ Berardi, *And*, 313-314.

characterized by uncertainty, transitoriness, and arbitrariness. Hence, they are always hunted by the possibility of being co-opted by the system to strengthen itself.

The creation of concepts, percepts, and functives, and the theorization of a precarious ethics, are activities and struggles always-in-the-making. Inopportunistly, these radical processes can reterritorialize into something life-degenerating when their revolutionary rhythms are corrupted by different arborescent structures and other pre-existing quandaries plaguing different territories or milieus; and more importantly, when the populace slavishly or despairingly thinks that the semicapitalist world is a fecund well-spring of thinking's and life's becoming.

Whereas the concept needs conceptual personas, the very act of creation needs mediators. In *Negotiations*, Deleuze remarks,

They can be people—for a philosopher, artists or scientists; for a scientist, philosophers or artists—but things too, even plants or animals ... Whether they're real or imaginary, animate or inanimate, you have to form your mediators ... I need my mediators to express myself, and they'd never express themselves without me: you're always working in a group, even when you seem to be on your own¹⁰⁵

At this point, it is crucial to ask: *Who and what are the potential mediators of this research?* Similarly, *what are the next games for the Deleuzo-Guattarian and Berardian philosophies?* This humble research earnestly invites researchers, cultural workers, and revolutionaries to delve deeper into the writings of Deleuze, Guattari, and Berardi in conjunction with the respective projects of other fellow travelers, namely Maurizio Lazzarato,¹⁰⁶ David Cole,¹⁰⁷ Hito Steyerl,¹⁰⁸ and the Raqs Media Collective¹⁰⁹; as well as kindred alleyways, such as neuropsychanalysis, cybernetics, new materialism, and even critical plant studies. In *Futurability: The Age of Impotence and the Horizon of Possibility*, Berardi describes what should be done in the years to come:

¹⁰⁵ Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 125.

¹⁰⁶ See Maurizio Lazzarato, *Capital Hates Everyone: Fascism or Revolution* (CA: Semiotext(e), 2021). Cf. Geert Lovink, *Stuck On the Platform: Reclaiming the Internet* (Valiz/Making Public Series, 2022) and Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: is There No Alternative?* (UK: Zero Books, 2009).

¹⁰⁷ See David Cole, *Education, the Anthropocene, and Deleuze/Guattari* (London and Boston: Brill, 2022).

¹⁰⁸ See for example, her artistic production, "How Not To Be Seen: A Fucking Didactic Educational.MOV File." (2013)

¹⁰⁹ See The Raqs Media Collective <<https://www.raqsmediacollective.net/>>.

The project for the next twenty years is to dismantle and reprogramme the meta-machine, creating a common consciousness and a common technical platform for the cognitive workers of the world ... Building a common consciousness and spreading the consciousness of a possible social solidarity among neuro-workers is the task for the next decade, and the ethical awakening of millions of engineers, artists, and scientists is the only chance of averting a frightening regression, whose contours we are glimpsing today.¹¹⁰

Befriending chaos, breathing within the suffocating semi-capitalist world, and diagramming a collectivity-to-come are arduous and paradoxical revolutionary tasks without conclusions. They are likewise defined by a nomadic mapping of new chaoids, territories, and conjunctions, without a radiant light awaiting at the end of the tunnel. A revolution's exhaustive and paradoxical characteristics are sometimes neutralized when it inspires the hopeless, disturbs the thoughtless, and reconstructs people's relationship with the world.¹¹¹ Inevitably, there are unfortunate times when it is conceptualized as a mere anthropological self-optimization, which is also one of the cornerstones that fortifies capitalism. Given the complexity of contemporary experiences, revolutionaries should learn how to pause and linger occasionally to search for differential gaps and uncharted zones of becoming and, more importantly, to rethink their principles, activities, and trajectories. It should likewise be fueled by hope, no matter how dystopian it is.¹¹² A revolution uninformed by hope is nothing but a bare activity devoid of rhythm and virtuality. Ultimately, a revolution, which may come in different names, should advocate for the cultural mutation of thinking, bodies, and relations. Provocatively, Guattari leaves everyone a life-time puzzle to unravel: "how do we change mentalities, how do we reinvent social practices that would give back to humanity—if it ever had it—a sense of responsibility, not only for its own survival, but equally for the future of all

¹¹⁰ Franco Berardi, *Futurability: The Age of Impotence and the Horizon of Possibility* (London and New: Verso, 2019), 238–239.

¹¹¹ See Raniel Reyes, *Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy of 'Becoming-Revolutionary'* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020), 218.

¹¹² Deleuze's theorization of *pietas* is defined by dystopian hope. *Pietas* refers to the "ability to resist control, or our submission to it, has to be assessed at the level of our every move. We need both creativity and a people" (Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 176). In the same chapter, Deleuze rhetorically writes, "It's not a question of worrying or of hoping for the best, but of finding new weapons (Deleuze, *Negotiations*, 178). See Berardi, *Heroes*, 215.

life on the planet, for animal and vegetable species, likewise for incorporeal species such as music, the arts, cinema, the relation with time, love and compassion for others, the feeling of fusion at the heart of cosmos?"¹¹³

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¹¹³ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, 119–120.

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