

Biopolitics and health production – a different humanism?

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The subject under examination here is biopolitics – and the production of health with a different kind of humanism. When we seek to innovate by means of our actions, we often do not realize that these themselves can be held hostage by our old ways of thinking, or, indeed, and perhaps, therefore, worse - to subconscious prejudgments or prejudices, such as [those that exist within] our very own ways of living. On rationalizing all this through the optic of common sense, changes in practices and particularly such changes in health habits, reveal themselves, at the end of the day, to be little more than a change in appearances – a mere front. Through this, we are able to carry on transmitting implicit but veiled commands, squeezed and betrayed in the trap that delivers life into the service of sad powers – indeed, are there any happy ones? Nothing that is decisive ever passes through the field of intentions, much less a field of good intentions. Intentionality is a mystification of consciousness, one which needs to be combated, particularly when speaking of benign powers and knowledge, even for those that claim to speak [on behalf] of the goodness in life! Perhaps, then, certain less than agreeable things will be uttered here. We should not, however, concern ourselves with any such likely discomfort, lest we lose sight of what is of fundamental essence. The attempt here, within the limits of this brief space is to extract –from the modes of wanting and valuing such practices that we elect as being both urgent and necessary for the transformation of the treatment of human life (so lacking in both healthcare and attention)– some of the major trends that may help to sketch out a picture which comprises the problem of the implementation of public health policies from the humanizational standpoint .

Another kind of humanism.

The call for humanism is perhaps a risky invitation, for such a concept poses us with both a question and a yet more urgent warning note: To what point may more humanized healthcare, inversely, mask mistreatment in relation to the noblest of life's forces? It is the same as in the opposition of the values "human versus dis-human" and in the relationship "civilization versus barbarism". On the one side, we have civilization, cultivated in law and language as a condition of peace, liberty and the progress of humanity, and on the other barbarism, sunken in tyranny, laced with violence and slavery, prey to unpredictable whims of a despot who governs by means of terror and brutality. What is never mentioned, however, is that it was the self same violent power of barbarian social formations that both invented and shaped it [Civilization- cultivated in law]; while, at the same time, raising the power of the State to a paradigm of human organization, the form of Law that was supposedly there to try to destroy such power (democratic or positive law having, in truth, just a difference in degree, and none in nature, in relation to despotic law). One also dare not utter the idea that the civilizing process (with its democratic States) is really a type of regulator of the relationship of sociability; but not even for this did it exorcise the relationship of violence and barbarism. Quite the contrary, it is under the seal of a violent manner of a man determined to establish his power – the manner of a man previously tyrannized by certain impulses and bathed in power relationships – against which we raise the standard of the universal rights of Man. Driven by an interest in conservation [or self-preservation], this man needs to deny and/or limit all intense action of any other kind of differential in life; thereby disqualifying, in name of the ideal of law or rule, every interested action (or idea) that is destitute of purpose, in favor of disinterested action (read as: well intentioned, which means, conscientiously guided by passive utility, by justice, by truth and by goodness), he invests, in reality, values that are directly related to his own interests of power and to the interests of the conservation of a community that sustains him, whose dominating impulse (made up of vengeance and a hatred of everything that is potentially autonomous and freely active) promotes a certain humanism, in the name of which, in practice, he ends up crushing and violating the vital intensities and their qualitative multiplicities, the subtler and more noble forces of life.

The very concept of man – should we consider the intrinsic quality of the dominant way of thinking, feeling and acting, implied in the universal values cultivated by our contemporaries – in a word, his way of wanting or existing, is conceived by Nietzsche as an essentially reactive manner. Attributing a reactive essence to man does not imply confusing it with a natural and invariable form, nor with some generic human substance, rather it places it in a historic process, which caused

the emergence of a dominant manner of using the forces that comprise it, whose relationship with itself and the world (which places under suspicion all that individualizes and argues vital differentiation) make up a type, a way of existing that is called Man. Such a “quality” invests conservation as the foremost value, to which it is expressed in the ways of cultivating the limits of the living. The extractions of the limit determine the use we make of identity, of similarity, of the ideal of truth, of universal objectivity, of competent subjectivity, of the efficient body, of the constitutive norm of moral responsibility and so on. We have contracted the habit of interpreting the constitutive difference of every desiring being as opposition, subject to conciliation or contradiction, which we then submit to the mediation of judgment which compares and places it as a judicial precedence in the order of a model finalist that would integrate it into the whole, a legitimator and controller of the living. Furthermore, could this cultivated reactive sense of life, dominant in the current human-form of being, hide itself in the new humanist appeal and thus continue, through this appeal, to carry with it all the involved and masked concessions in the relationship of force, power and the debilitating of life, which continues to make up man today?

Nietzsche will argue that man becomes effectively reactive when, under attack of a violent evil encounter that brings out his barbarian State, he ends up being put into a straight-jacket of derived social formations, which secrete a creditor as a superior ideal (the establishing of an exterior and superior reference to life) and organizing principle of societies of this sort, accordingly to a debt of existence imputed on all life devoid of the order that conducts it – the lender (creditor) and borrower ideal, around which every saving order becomes legitimate. Whether it is the reference to a God, to a State, to a law, whether the reference is to something eminent, or to whatever instance established as transcendental of nature, what is important is the effect of disqualification, of need, of dependence, of regulation and of obedience imposed on life, condemned to becoming a function of another ideal, and to sustain and develop the implicit knowledge and power within it, because, as such, one can preserve and share the spoils of the creditor, even if this costs this life his/her demotion to the most banal and ordinary states of existence.

In a word, the beginnings of decadence or of the production of an illness emerge with the reversal of the value of the qualities of forces that dominate the constituent out-comings of man, that is to say, when there is a deterioration in man's manner of living. The forces of conservation become dominant in relation to the forces of creation exactly at the point when life is not only driven to neighboring zero states, of zero intensity, but also when it is coerced into investing in them. It is thus that man starts to value more the forces of conservation than the forces of creation. He therefore becomes reactive, disoriented, sick!

Evidently, being the vision of an existential plane, this perspective expresses the essential

dimension of the modes of existence. We shall, then, discuss the horizon within this measure and further examine what is meant by humanism.

We know all too well that dis-humanity, the mistreatment of human life is something quite abominable. No one would say that being dis-human is a practice to be cultivated. However, one thing is dis-humanity, mistreatment, carelessness, but inhumane is another, a necessarily constitutive dimension of man, extremely rich but, nevertheless, so little explored! If man is constituted in the likes of these, then it is necessary for man to cultivate them, or risk defrauding and mutilating himself. We are not made up just of a human form; we are not even made up of form. Within us, as in everything, form is the effect of the meeting of forces. Essentially, we are composed of forces. There are certain forces that, on their own, create the human manner of being. If we were to change the manner of relating the forces of man, forces of imagining, of remembering, of perceiving, of acting, of thinking, of believing, and –ultimately– of wanting; could a new humanism arise? If the forces that singularly invent the human manner of being were to bathe themselves in the immediate affirmation of differential processes which create and sustain life, could an affirmative manner in the human way of being emerge? And if one were to put into motion an active and creative manner...? ...one where there would be no place for need from a wanting point of view in man...?

We do not know to what point man knows [or is familiar with] such a desire that is absent of need and dependence. If he is not familiar, he should invent it! And all the while such an occurrence is not produced within him, he remains hostage to pitiful practices. I think and feel that pity is the worst venom. Ah, pity, compassion! Our age-old formula of dressing up hate under the guise of love, to better disguise our desire for power. Pity and compassion, constitutive of our humanity, so rarely perceived as the real poisons! Why don't we dare, why don't we have the courage to face up to them and recognize them as venomous poisons? What does life effectively gain from this? Is this manner of feeling not in itself rendition – a desire to desist...to give up...? Is compassion not the worst form of cruelty? Wouldn't it then be ever more urgent to deconstruct our compassionate way of being? Shouldn't this be the greatest concern for constituent forces of another form of humanity in us?

The forces that singularize man make up a human manner of being, but this manner is further crossed by other forces - animal, vegetable and mineral forces, and further by molecular forces that both enrich and open life up. If we fail to cultivate them, given that they become less cultivated the weaker society becomes, irremediable damage in the depths of the unconscious mind will be inevitable. Nevertheless, and it is curious to note –from the point of view of the relationship of sociability that such forces put into variation– that men simply cannot support them. Very often

zones of experiences populated by inaudible elements are diagnosed as illnesses, thereby disqualifying them. If these cause estrangement to the ordinary man, it is because they place his current form into variation, the unpredictable effects of which allow him neither to catalog nor monitor them, placing in check his human standard.

We often suffer from these forces simply because we fear them! And being so, we do not learn to deal with them, neither do we invent new ways to control their source to thus turn them into true allies that would fill our capacity to exist. Only thus could they make sense as potentializers of our intensive difference in the process of singularization that installs itself within us from the very encounters we make with such forces. Only thus could they become the creative material for new manners of feeling, acting and thinking. Within the same limitation measure of our capacity to exist, we rush into piously exercising a kind of damage limitation in relation to the “perturbations” that cross the unknown human zones and [further] rush into promoting an excessively hurried healthcare, in other words, we mistreat them! Because, here, there would be a [manner of] mistreatment, a dis-humanism in relation to the non-human forces of man.

Another thing –complementary and parallel to this derogatory way of relating to what is strange– would be to serve ourselves up with a humanist vision and flavor by saying: all life deserves (health) care, every life deserves good treatment. Once again we fall into a trap: the trap of the universality of values. It is as if care was a verb that participates unconditionally in universal goodness, that basks in the universality of the values dearest to man. We have yet other values that are not so dearly held, expressed in verbs such as integralize, attend, access, humanize. A verb expresses an action, but the action does not have just a sense, it also has an engine! This engine qualifies the value of this sense. So what drives us when we want to provide care?

Providing healthcare for everyone, Providing access for everyone? Democratizing access to healthcare? Universal values – everyone has a right to this and that. We are accustomed to finding that the universal values of man are unquestionable, and thus we see them as the solution. However, investing in universal values is symptomatic. The universal value is a means of falsifying reality. And in the name of universal values, the worst atrocities have been committed. Bush would never say that he acted in the name of malignant partialities, not even Hitler said that. We know that there is a universalizing appeal – justification of the dumbest practices and thoughts – *in the name of* the likes of God, of what is right, of the law, as well as the likes of: life, differences, multiplication, democracy, humanism, or, somewhat more cynically, in defense of the “ideas” such as those of Nietzsche, Espinosa, Deleuze, Guattari, Foucault... Therefore, we do nothing either good, noble, affirmative, real or necessary when we do or think of something “in the name of”. The language is neither neutral, let alone thought being made up of universal values.

What drives us in the desire to produce care? No power –rare are the members of the left that pay attention to this– want to exclude it absolutely; only exclude [it] when there is no other option. Power operates [by] including , by inclusion. Only the clumsiest and most ridiculous powers [would] want to exclude it. All power oscillates. Some dress themselves up more, make themselves more refined, and thus intelligently create policies of inclusion; this practice is certainly something which is extremely interesting for a power that wants to grow. - And is there any power that wouldn't want to? As for us, do we also wish to include? But include what in what – and for what? Which of us wants to be included and included in what? What would then happen to the perspective of autonomy in this life on [our] being included?

Every policy that is aimed at healthcare, at providing healthcare, at attending a [certain]way of life of a patient but nevertheless, does not invest in conditions that make the said patient doctor of him/herself, neither invest nor sustain as part of its future vision a desire, at best to disappear, to become unnecessary, - will never break the mold of pity, or break from the old forms of power. According to Foucault, pastoral power constantly seeks to look after each and every sheep in the flock so that it may remain in a state of demand; of an instance that does not belong to it. The sheep needs the shepherd; it needs a reference. Could it be that such a human flock exists? And would that be what we refer to as a “people” (or nation)? Is it that such a nation needs a Public Health Service¹ , needs healthcare, needs the ministry, needs the government?

Yes, it is both very important and very necessary. Life is a quite complicated thing. Evidently, whenever there is the possibility, the opportunity, the desire to invest in a qualification of life, this can prove to be beneficial for life in general, for society... However, exactly what we are questioning is the existence itself of a life in general. Thus, the question becomes a more subtle one: what [kind of] life do we cultivate when investing in such a qualification? [Is it] the qualified life that is already active in us? If not, [and furthermore] if we do not do our homework, research [in a sense – get our act together], how can we provide healthcare for others? What is health ? There is no health in a dependent life! All dependent life is essentially sick.

There is no essence of evil, nor essence of illness, rather a weakening manner than can be cultivated, which boosts the impotence – allowing power to grow, including the power of the humanists and their rights, of the moralists and their law[s], of the rationalists and their 'truth', of the idealists and their good, of the judges and their compensatory justice. There are several different forms of power. [However,] is there any good power? And do we not need to previously distinguish between [the different aspects of power – the ability to control (power) and the might or strength

1 [Translators Note: In the original text – reference to SUS Brazilian Sistema Única de Saúde]

(potency)?] Do not all types of power pre-suppose impotence²? Does not biopolitics, a species of life command, imply a necessary difference from those that really concern themselves about the ethical dimension [of things]? An ethic beyond the code, such as the power or rather potency/strength to exist? Wouldn't there be a bio-power that is radically different from a "bio-potency". Should we not grasp what is commanding in life? And, in which life? Do we cultivate a reactive life in ourselves? Do we wish to provide healthcare for reactive life? Do we wish to provide healthcare and longevity to a will that refuses to give up, that drags itself on, proliferating sad forms of existence? Do we wish this man, this essential product of reactive behavior, to be conserved? Is it not in name of this that one speaks of investing in the universal values of man? Man[kind] has the rights, but who amongst men have the right? Who amongst us has/have rights? Is it our cowardly life, [at once both] weak and sick that has the right to healthcare? Shouldn't the priority of healthcare be to make life powerful, strong, creative, inventive, active, one that is truly joyful, one that produces pure joy – an open intense consuming – without which there would be no transmutation of desire, nor healthcare in action. Has man reached the condition whereby he no longer believes in this? Does he believe that existence is essentially full of faults, synonymous of imperfection, or that pain and suffering does not have any happy sense of being? Has he given up on himself? Were we pitifully modern with our modern way of life in the 20th Century? Will we continue to be pitifully post-modern in this 21st century, which has been designated as the century of inclusion, of belonging, of empowerment, of pro-activeness? - Or do we already sense the necessary urgency to once and for all overcome this pity that disguises itself in a myriad of colors? Behind all this pity, is there not a hidden love for weakness and fragility? And in such love of fragility, is there not an underlying hate and secret envy of a really potent and autonomous life? Behind the love of fragility, is there not a hidden desire for power? Who among us loves either what is in or who is (in) another? Who among us shows solidarity with the what or who that exists in others? It is these that are the essential questions, as universal values and commonly banded words are merely the ways and means of falsifying reality.

It is not [just] about saying 'live the differences!' That wouldn't be enough. Neither should one content oneself with merely tolerating difference. [For] what would this serve us? In the movie *Dog Ville*, a utilitarian philosopher teaches his mean-minded community to tolerate the presence of a foreign woman, for bringing a difference which, instead of ruining them, could [indeed] be of use to them. The thus tolerated difference is turned into something useful, a means of power. But was the foreigner really different? Different, in her pity for the invalid - unprotected from the tyrannical arrogance of her father or from the more explicit behavior of power? When we speak of difference, do we really understand what the nature of the difference itself is? Oh, how we love to confuse it

2 [Translators Note:lack of strength/power of action or voice]

with the identity of an individual, of a group, of a movement, of a minority, of even a race! But difference and identity never coincide! Do we tolerate the difference, or do we really like the difference? Does something in us enjoy the difference, actively invest in it – take it on, or is happy to perceive the differences in life? Do we make this a way of life? It is not enough to say - live the differences, live the multiplicity. One needs to live them, create a way of living by inter-mediation of even the most simple and banal things. If we do not have the horizon (perspective) of autonomy, not the moral one, but an ethical one, a real potent autonomy, in which life becomes capable once more of creating its own conditions of existence – if we do not take care of life like this – we become the instrument of expansion of a new type of bio-power, one perhaps more sordid, hypocritical and inconfessable in its reasons than that which we are fighting against; a regulatory power whose justice squares up to the real difference between need and excess, between the violence and the deficiency, to submit it to the standard mean. But wouldn't the dominion over a standard measure be the dominion of that which is the most mediocre in human life? This is the disastrous alliance for the future of humanity: that of a power whose judicial system feeds upon this debilitated lifestyle, without such power, it would succumb – power and fragile lives united in a saintly alliance, in a single contagious power of sad passions and the continuity of death in life or of the micro-fascist ways of being. [And] they call this pact, to fight against the supposed excesses of difference, justice!

The foremost institution of violence is that of justice itself. [With] the current judicial system founded, of all things, upon humanism - upon the universal values of man, how could it subtract itself from its very own constitutional lie, from its most venomous nutrient – vengeance? Shouldn't justice be a machine to guarantee the most reactive ways of living? Wouldn't it then be at the service of the lowest degree of passion, promoting the most servile of life styles ever reached by man? This is what we are seeing when it systematically projects limits and introduces rules. Constrained by the continual demand for survival of the most humble human levels tempered by the impotence of fragile life, it throws them arrogantly against the active and intense styles of living. Playing life off against life, that is its game. Inoculating discord and mistrust! Injecting contradiction deep into the very heart of desire!

We always look after ourselves better when we deal with real forces head on, without mediation; when we seek neither subterfuge or intermediaries. The presence of authorized mediation testifies to the disqualification of our capacity to make choices and state differences. The appeal to judges that take upon themselves the function of attributing or destituting value to or from something or someone, delivers the non-comparability of life to the comparison of the mean – statistical mediocrity– mutilating, disqualifying and labeling what is unique in essence under the

auspices of an artificial model, universalizing merely for contingency's sake³

To recover an active posture that makes us dignant of what happens to us and further freer and stronger as a result of what happens to us, without needing to judge the occurrence for what was lacking in it, it is fundamental and necessary to observe, on the frontiers of relationships, that which opens up to and accepts those still inaudible forces. Unexpected and ready forces, which we both have and were always there, waiting for us with their dangerous yeses⁴ making signals and invitations, but which also always end up silenced by our famous principles of identity and reality, which fearfully protect us from them; unknown forces of the consciousness of common sense. And we have many [of them]. We do not need to act pitifully contemplating the weakness, neither demand care from that which cannot be conserved without risk of degrading life. What sort of sacrifice is needed in order to preserve everything that requires sadness in order to live? Nietzsche, in the most noble interpretation of the decadence of existence, provokes us all by saying that whatever can be destroyed, deserves to be. Can we relate to that which cannot be destroyed? Can we conquer this capacity, this great health? This is a concern with the production of externity within existence! Are we capable of this? Perhaps. And in the meantime, it becomes ever more necessary and urgent that we are!

As we allow the forces of conservation to dominate us, it is inevitable that our manner of thinking becomes dialectic and pitying. Nietzsche diagnoses, at the heart of modern dialectics, the falsifying of all affirmative thought, of the differential movement of the body, of the creating activity of desire, of the intensive material of the forces and consequently the crushing of differences. He sees in dialectics the very ideology of resentment. Dialectics value equally both affirmation and negation, which is a big enough mistake in itself, without cowardly making the negation dominant in order to oppose the immediate occurrence of the creative differentiation of life. It transforms everything different into opposition. And without this disqualifying distortion, no mediating system of judgment would be able to withstand. [But] there is no opposition between active forces and reactive ones, between the forces of creation and the forces of conservation, except under the dominion of the reactive way of living. [Rather] there is a dominance! What should be dominant in us? This is a question of the first order, condition of nobility and the state of health of the ways of existing. We allow the forces of conservation to be dominant. And it is at this point that we invest in dialectics, like a great pathos, which shipwrecks thought in a sea of contradiction and conciliation. It becomes hostage to a legitimizing and restorative moral. And

3 A model [which has been]secreted by an engine, [a] vile motive made significant by a fashion of desire dominant in a certain age, that is expressed within this significant horizon, supposedly neutral as a value for that reason, [being]separated and equidistant from that which is in play.

4 Plural of YES! (also spelled as YESSSES)

when the limit – a mere reactive function – is turned into the principle of desire, that is to say, when desire is reduced to a force of conservation, thought ends up projecting the limit of **that** over the force of creation, making it into a virtual opposition, introducing the condition of dichotomizing life. Thus, thought elects exclusion as the privileged operator of practical selection. However, in reality, what exist are simply co-existences, never oppositions. There is, at best, always a valuation, taken from the point of view of what life can stand or become, through the conditions it creates or which are imposed upon it, but which must always fill it.

The idea that existence is necessarily needy becomes concealed, hidden where the forces of conservation are dominant. There is no life separated from that which can, in the existence of which it is capable, and while it lasts, apprehend the perfection of its very own existence; even and principally when reduced to a substitute or filling of reactive or passionate feelings, whether these be sad passions and their sufferings which become ill, or pain suffered from need; or whether these be joyful passions, for the pleasure that swells us, pleasure for fulfillment. These are the sentiments that simultaneously fill and separate the desire or the power of the active capacity of existing. It becomes capable of extracting a necessary reason from the immediacy of each occurrence of existence, an act whose perspective essentially potentializes the apprentice life in continuous variation, it is to conquer the view about which, as Spinoza has already shown, the reality of existence is identical to perfection. In not only in best but also in the worst relationships, there is a point of view about which reality is necessarily perfect. This viewpoint is that which is generated in the breast of a common being. A common plane of immanence – the cause of itself and reason for every encounter, immanent cause and necessary condition of everything which we can call real. For Spinoza the common being is necessary in any relationship, including in those that bring evil [or harm], illness, tyranny, colonialism, death. Even in a relationship which makes me worse; even there, there is something necessarily common. An extreme common means, the occurrence of all occurrences, without which, there would be neither relationships nor encounters. [It is] not the common in all that which can do me harm or make me ill; however, it is by means of a common being that I touch and am touched, that I feel and am felt, for good or for bad – in short, that which can turn me into an accomplice.

The real problem of man is in a manner of living that makes him an accomplice to the very thing he supposedly struggles against, or from which he wishes to free himself – an accomplice to the power which captures him. Deconstructing the complicity in us is essential. Psychoanalysis has long confused guilt of existence with complicity in the ways of existence. The day will come when the sad psychoanalytic liturgy will sound like some kind of a joke. And, instead of our dying of guilt or depression, will will die of [or kill ourselves] laughing! How important will all those egos be –

thirsty for pleasure and liberty and with their daily frustrations – when they are unmasked of the complicity that flows out of them! Perhaps only then will the guilt factor and need factor be finally understood not so much as constitutive human factors, but of belonging to an essentially reactive human and reactive humanism. No real desire, or that which one takes as such, can really, without crutches or protectors, be made up of need or guilt. Psychoanalysis, and the other 'pys' that do not get further than the dichotomy of “culture versus nature”, the metaphysics of structure that do not get past the old dichotomy of “intelligence versus instinct”, disguising its misunderstanding about the nature of the memory and of the difference in symbolic exchanges that operate in the heart of another dear and popular mania of dichotomy, one that is ever more human and modern: "pulses versus law"; those philosophies that confuse memories with origin or identity, linking the processes of differentiation with the forgetting of origin and taking the outcome as an escape; a fall or corruption of the Being through time and movement, and many other human practices and knowledge that end up inflating the belief in the common postulation that desire is only what it is because it is intrinsically in need of an object whose extrinsic rule of fulfillment or pleasure is doomed to failure and frustration, making enjoyment impossible. And thus they wallow in an obscene and pornographic puritanism that prays: long live castration that both condemns and sanctifies!

And when one consciously and voluntarily wishes to fight modes of dependence, a subtle arrogance frequently manifest itself beneath the mask of pity. The following counterpoint is practiced, without any shame whatsoever: one needs to give autonomy to this and that, to this person or that person, to this and that sector of a community. One must give people autonomy! But autonomy is never given, nor is it tutored, one conquers it! Who of us wants to give autonomy to one another, and what does this person really want us to want? The problem of autonomy, quite to the contrary, first and foremost is one of creating a climate of affirmation and with them active modes of relationship which end up exorcising and turning superfluous any guaranteeing instance of rights, or provider of compensation, or legal damages. To become autonomous is to invest in ways of distancing oneself not only from the State, be it a tyrant or father, but also from ones own self, from ones own mirror [self], from demands of belonging and “self-esteem” promoted in us by another. To conquer autonomy is to find the direct source and not the sponsorship, serving ourselves to that which occurs to us as the material and fuel of creation and achievement –never of judgment– operating a catalyst of composite outcomes of encounters whose conditions become confused with those of the affirmation of the differences, of plurifocal occurrences of multidimensional movements. The affirmation is the only common thing which is neither confused with the public nor the universal; much less with a universal father, a generic being or a Happy ending and more like a species of cosmic placenta without a womb, with a piece of which every one of us constructs

his line of outcomes or singularization, as a complementary counterpoint and not as opposition to the common being, as ordinarily occurs with our lives contradicting themselves in society. It comes before the extreme means of encounter of each impersonal singularity, of each differential force, of each difference in potential, of each intense outcome that always brings to the heart of the common being a necessary and unique act, which constitutes the essence as a potential to vary, and simultaneously as an absolute horizon and fuel of all living modality. The affirmative yes is a conquest of difference – not a perennial “yes” (a false gift of solidarity) of a superior model of protection that implies a “no” to the active immanent ways of living and which would pityingly rescue and save, from disorder and illness, people, groups or societies, in proportion to its elevation to the pure elements of the order of an Ideal without blemishes, free of interests and passions.

This point refers us directly to the problem of caring and its modalities. There is some virtue in saying that caring is a value to be cultivated and involves essential knowledge and practice from the viewpoint of the quality of relationships in society. It is true, at least, that we do not fall into the trivialization of neo-liberal politics with its tedious ditty about the unnecessary, costly and superfluous spending of many institutions dedicated to caring or treatment of life that have, in some way [or another], become dependent. The real problem is not in the dilemma of caring or not caring, of minimum care or maximum care, of maximum of state protection for public and general caring - minimum of State in favor of private and individual care. The real problem is to do with the nature and quality of caring. Concerning its critical aspect, this question does not refer to a universal form of caring, to be delivered to public forces of the state or private market ones, but rather to the quality of the forces that make up this form and that repeat themselves and, as an effect of this replication of the quality of the relationship of the forces, turn themselves into a sham of a universal form. A universal form, however, only in the measure that it is [an] effect, a result of a composition of wishful elements that constitute a multiple and heterogeneous reality. The universality that arises from the repetition is an effect that induces or deceives, or that people invest in for some or other type of interest.

Finally, I do not believe in defending values; every value is created. To defend value is to invest in an invented reference as being good, just or true, and, opposing it, to evil, unjust and false (wrong). But why do we believe in opposing values? Would that not hold an essentially false, deceiving, unjust and malevolent form? Whenever we declare our sublime and good intentions, we can better mask our inconfessable desires of baseness and necessary ill will [held] within [both] impotence and dependence. As Nietzsche says, there is no other life so unjust, untruthful and evil as that of just (read as: vindictive), truthful (read as: detractors of free and different lives) and good

men (read as, those that have become impotent and weak). Never say live such and such a value, beat such and such a drum, [uphold] such and such an ideology; it would be enough to put life into an active and autonomous consequence -outcome- in perfectly liberated movement. Life would never, by means of a letter of declaration of intentions, overcome its opposite; that of a belief in values that only generates a depreciation of wanting, for as supposedly noble and liberal that they might seem. It is always more baseness and servitude, in short, more dependency, that will accompany the drum beaters. We could conquer the capacity of producing values and free ourselves from the universal references and from the colonizing political practices, cultivators of dependencies for which these references serve. Otherwise, we shall have to hold faith in the belief in instances that would defend us from all oppression. Someone once said: "I am not comfortable when any dirty trick seems to be normal". But we only need instances of justice and rectification, or certain types of care, when we don't know how to profit from bad encounters, bad ways, or unhappy occurrences; to convert them into the gifts of destiny, treasure for warriors and fighters, to the point whereby we may extract creative material from even the worst and dirtiest of tricks [that life can play on us]. It is not a new declaration of intention that should lead us to each change, but rather new ways of relating oneself with chance, including the worst [...attack] and worst tricks that arise out of the baseness of the impotence of mediocre lives! Lives that only choose, through impotence, what they cannot stand about what there is of the active in the living! Neither do we need to fight power once we have conquered strength. Indeed, it is this [power] that always flees impotently when confronted with vigorous creative life! It is this that dissipates when we do our homework, the lesson that transmutes the body, desire and thought; when we are capable of producing ourselves as a "work", a work of nature, a nature with the strength (potential) to occur and create. The essential care, before anything else, is the care of looking after oneself, ones own practices. One cannot look after another person without [first] looking after oneself. Nietzsche would say that loving 'thy' neighbor is a lack of self love. One can only love ones neighbor [i.e. -others] in an honest, authentic, generous strengthening, and giving way as we ourselves become strong and creative. Otherwise, what do we have to offer our neighbor (our nearest [and dearest])? Our own misery? But even here what is near and dear changes in nature, as the nearest interesting (thing) is exactly that which affirms the distance, an immanent and necessary distance for the affirmation of the very moments and movements of the differences that sustain us and cross what becomes of us [our outcomes]. Love of our neighbor (nearest) is also a distraction from ones very self - [a detour], a desperation towards unknown, feared and unwanted forces that end up producing pain and tears, in a unsupportable weakness. In compassion, one would thus see a love for the weakness of others, a desire to flee from oneself, taking refuge in the power to care, conquering a power to care for others. Could it be, then, that the other person, in recognition of his/her savior, becomes [indeed] the

victim of his/her carer? ...Suffocated from so much love from another person, so merciful and sensitive to his/her weaknesses[?]. Impotence – predisposed of every desire of power. For this reason, we can not [and must not] confuse one sense of power [such as public powers and government] with another sense of strength or potency [we also refer to as power]: they are radically different. We do not have to divide the power, - no! The power must and can be destroyed! One frequently hears excluded movements that wish to be included –such minorities that want to be majorities– shout: the power needs to be more democratic! We shall take the power in turns! Alternate it! Distribute it, give it to women, to gays, to black people, Indians, the youth; in short, give it to those without power in order that justice might be done! But all power is necessarily nocive – following a rigorous concept. Power is everything that captures and determines outside life, needing to bring it down to its own level, to one of a diminished life, in order for the power itself to grow. Potency in action –the updating of which is immanent to the common and extreme means of occurrences in which it is necessarily effected– creates the conditions of its very own existence and of the realization of the differences that pass through its constitutive outcomes. If we may, then, distinguish power and potency (strength), from a conceptual viewpoint...indeed, those of us that share the Portuguese language still enjoy the advantage of having two distinct terms (*poder* and *potência*), derived from Latin, to name them. Latin distinguishes between *potestas* and *potentia*. French follows the same path... *pouvoir* and *pouissance*; German, however, does not distinguish, it only has the word *demacht*, as with English, some languages do not commonly use [different words to distinguish the difference in semantics...]⁵ But whenever a nature is exercised, exerted or effectuated, something within it necessarily commands. There is command the whole time; we must not confuse the command by reducing it to [the sense of] power. One thing is a command of (let's call it) “potency”, another is a command of power. From the viewpoint of Nature itself, the command as absolute strength (potency) of occurring or varying is always differential and immanent to the very naturalizing nature. This concept of command destitutes a universal value, which has been held dear to modern democracy ever since the French Revolution: that in which we are all equal before another universal law; a duty to be a universal leveler of differences. The command, in modern democracies is, above all, founded in law; law equally valid for all. Thus a confusion exists between exercising the potency and exercising the power. Through the old Aristotelian mode, we confuse strength (potency) with possibility. Potency is not a possibility for receiving form. There is no potency (strength) that is not an act, there is always a minimum of act that could be a maximum of potency (power), which opens us up to an intrinsic movement of differentiation, an immanent singularization of desire, which has nothing to do with form, [indeed]

5 [Translators Note:Some words possess several vectors in speech that intone semantic differences of the same word – but for clarity (on paper) expressed and defined terms will aid comprehension, thus avoiding a merging of sense and meaning – christunwell@gmail.com]

it has to do with line. What is necessary is to re-encounter the plane that necessarily commands in nature, or in any relationship. Having the courage to assume a noble liking for command – resentment against any type of command needs to be taken apart, unmasked, only then will life be submitted to the worst of them! The command that states: everything is equal. It is one thing to not want to attribute or destitute place to a command, otherwise that gives total authority over a duty being universal; but it is quite another to understand that the command is always eccentric, like an engine of intrinsic composition to the very occurrence. [What] ultimately commands, is simply and always an occurrence that creates growth Foucault demystified, in his “Discipline and Punish”, many of the misunderstanding in relation to the idea that we make of power. The command of any nature does not have a central place in its exercising, but rather an always precarious place of passage. The power is also exercised between and over, and further by those that suffer it. Over and through bodies, moments and movements. Over the movement that passes through the bodies, over the moment that passes through thought, over the affections that make desire vary. There the power is exercised; and it also there that the potency is exercised. But the use we make of the corporal movements, of the semiotic moments and of the affections that they select are radically distinct; which in certain cases express modes of power, in others modes of potency. There is always, even in the most resentful anarchism, a necessary command. There is always, even though it may on many occasions be inaccessible, something in the entire occurrence of existence that makes the potency grow and affirm life, from the point of view of its very nature. This is what is dominant, even when neither us nor anyone reap the benefits or feel ourselves (themselves) to be poor victims. Something we do, when we conquer it, is that we do not ask for permission nor demand the authority. Authority bases itself first and foremost on violence. The foremost institution of violence is that of the very justice itself and lives in the heart of modern juridical institutions (judicial system), the form of which betrays its own blindness. Form, law and justice are essentially violent and ignore the singularities. They are necessarily micro-fascist, despite claiming to be its antidote, for the very reasons that they are taken for being universal and foremost. However, what this inverted hierarchy, with its authorized defenders and further its reformist enemies – that is to say, those that only want in the end a true justice [system]– , do not apprehend is that the true (real) command is not in the I, neither the you, nor in the group, nor collective, and neither in the State or in any place [whatsoever]. The command is always one of passage between halves, it inhabits it or becomes confused with it, blending with the frontier or with that which on the edges of the frontier makes the potencies (*potências*) grow and differentiate. An engine of occurrences – something inexhaustible in that which occurs and which necessarily differentiates the potencies of the body, thoughts and desire. The command is [simply and] always that of a unit of composition between singular relationships, which relate and make the differences of potency overflow, which makes an

outcome of the very command of the forces that populate the entire encounter; an occurrence which is always dislocated. The affirmative command of the differences is always eccentric. If it were not, it would become the co-action of power and determine outside life. There is necessarily a command, which makes life both affirm itself and grow, that which makes the difference differentiate. There is no weakness here, rather the contrary, it is, indeed, the only real firmness; there is necessarily an affirmation without asking permission, an immanent affirmation.

What made Estamira (the protagonist of a documentary of the same name), - who is black, poor and living on a rubbish tip – say what she said without asking permission? There is a command. The nature within her, which makes her what she is, that invades her –that passes through her– is this command; as in Spinoza, that of a given nature (*naturam naturantem*) commanding a general nature (*natura naturata*). It is this command that must be cultivated, never the power! This difference is fundamental; the idea of the command and not the idea of power. Power should never be divided, it should be destroyed. We have the need to exercise the potency and it is there, indeed, that there is a difference. It has nothing to do with law, which is always gregarious or of the flock. These are processes of nomad singularization.

Spinoza, in part II of The Ethics, says that we –men reduced to the mode of knowing through imagination– generalize, invent fiction or build abstractions, confuse sign, thought and image. Now, one thing is an image, another is a sign, while thought is again quite a different thing. If words are signs, they cannot – without mutilating them – be substituted for thought. This is a matter of the first order. Thinking is neither to say nor speak. A lacanean⁶ psychoanalyst stated that Estamira would not exist without Marcos Prado (director of the documentary)... What an abysmal thing to say! Happily, though, it serves to make us laugh!...pretension of a speech, of a language... maltreatment in relation to potency; the petulance of law, of structure putting itself in the place of difference[!] Thought is primarily silent; language could be its material of expression, but the expression should never be confused with the (expressed) idea which is expressed within it. A tree thinks, a worm thinks, the sun thinks... it is an illusion that we cultivate, a mystification to consider that one only accesses thought through language. Our thought is above all occurrence; it is time in a pure state that on differentiating itself from itself, it is registered, accumulated and changes direction as and when it differentiates and accumulates. When we really think, we do not fight with words, nor dispute true meanings (senses). There would be no problem or discord between men, no dispute if, instead of debating [the meaning of] words, they learned the sense as a vector of desire that necessarily expresses, within that, what is being said, being neither good nor bad, neither true

6 Follower of Jaques Lacan

nor false but being, instead, a direction of force that is worthy for that which it makes of life. The sense (meaning) is a direction of force, but [more specifically] of the force as an affection that makes desire's or potency's capacity of existing vary and never makes them the result of a separated, structural or significant relationship of signs. It is something that comes from the force and, at the same time, it is what can happen to the force. What is the value of the sense I have created? Does it lead life to an affirmation, to a hole, to an ascendance or to decadence? The value of sense is problematic. It can be creative and of either a reactive or conservative composition. There is also a noble sense of conservation, and the essential question is whether one apprehends the meaning, or whether one fights over words; there is nothing to dispute. For example, it is noble to conserve and invest in the conditions of creation and continuous variation in life. However, it is lowly to want to conserve the product of creation, of becoming tied to the values created therein. Each thing is a singularity – if we made the effort and were less weak of spirit and were both much stronger and more willing to apprehend thought and create thought, we would not fight over it.

Nevertheless, the choice of word has its importance. The difference between *poder* and *potência* in Portuguese has already been highlighted. Words are expression and express an expressed idea. If we do not use the right expression the idea (which we wish to express) does not manifest itself. There is something in language that conditions or may condition thought. This is essential. Care with words is important, but it does not reduce itself to a form, neither to a substance; it is a vehicle of sense (meaning). It is a material sculpted by thought, by the power(potential) to think of that which is not from an I (oneself), from a conscience, from a subject, nor from a collective. There is a myth held by those from the left that the collective is made up of a multiplicity of individuals, which is foolish, generates prejudice, and make it so that life... loses its potency. The collective is always a collective of singularities, a composition of forces, of potency, but it is further that of multiplicities of multiplicities, multiplicities of intrinsically multiple individuals and of their individualizing processes. The individual is already a collective. There is no individual that is not. In the small-bourgeois individualist view, to the contrary, the individual is not essentially relational... Really?...is he not? But an individual that does not relate to others does not exist; it is [pure] fiction, a chimera. It relates in one manner or another, like it or not. We imagine that we are free because we ignore that which determines us or the medium within and to which we are necessarily linked, associated. We are conscious of what we desire, believe and think, but ignore that which determines us to thus want, believe and think. We are necessarily in relationship. But the man that puts imagination in the place of thought translates the necessary relationship as one of dependence. Nevertheless, what occurs is exactly the contrary. As you apprehend the relational within the relationship, you also discover the condition for conquering autonomy and open yourself up fully to such a combination which makes life the potential for the composition and stylization of

existence itself. This is what is essential. The name is material of expression, vehicle of thought. However, language is also a transmitter, depending on what we do with it – of life sentences or life commands, implicit non-discursive acts that can only be made through discourse, that can only be made through language. Desire invents names all the time. Language is not set in stone closed off by structural, elementary or relational constants; it is sculpted by buzzing, roars, moans, by multiple voices. The most direct and immediate commander within language is the free indirect speech. There are many forms of speech within a speech, many passions within a passion, many voices within a voice, as Deleuze says. We should not be subjected to grammar, to syntax, to phonology, [and further that] there is never language which is outside of a use or immanent pragmatic, one that is constitutive of our semiotic territorialities, a channeling of flows. For example, grammar states that the singular and plural oppose each other. Nevertheless, the plural is necessarily singular and the singular necessarily plural – there is a co-existence between the two. But if we reduce this to language, we fall into these universal [concepts] and we [would, then,] believe in structural invariables, human standardizers, of linguistic humanism. When we invest in constants, we wish to centralize, create resonant speakers and continuity as part of transmitting current (flow) and commands. The “universal” is not necessary, it is [simply and] always an effect; if we want a continuity of this or that effect, such as to conserve a certain path, conserve public policies that are life supporting, that make life grow, that affirm life, then the problem there is one of the production of the memory; and not the memory that represents the past; rather a future memory, a memory that becomes the future, just as the past is contemporary to the present. It is fundamental to know how to create memory as a condition of production of intensive continuities, memory as future memory. It is this which is the continuity condition of movements or of active self-sustaining outcomes. There is no self-sustainability without creation of these lines; this continuity is provided by considerable qualities and not by representative forms. The considerable qualities are more [like] lines than closed forms.

What is form? It is [simply and] always the effect of a line of variation, and the illusion that the form is not the line coming from the loss of the generating element of this form, which is further that which both maintains and sustains it. Once the form develops an effect of semblance and a sham of identity in the process of the repetition of modes of the effecting of forces, we believe that it has an existence in itself, but in reality it is sustained by a force field, by a diagram of forces. This is essential. It is necessarily individualizing, but not subjectivating. Foucault employs subjectivation, Negri refers to biopower, I prefer to employ the term bio-potency, to make a contrast with bio-power, to use the process of singularization and not that of the production of subjectivity, as the production of subjectivity generally coincides with the production of the anti-personification of desire. The production of singularity is important, it is an essential nuance because the act that

updates its potency is not a form, [nether] a reference, [nor] a purpose or end to which it will reach. The act that updates its power-potential (potency) is a condition of occurrence, of creation of the very conditions of the real experience that necessarily runs through both the body and thought. A production of the conditions that remain linked to the immediate movement which sustains life, the body, to the immediate rhythm and moment that sustain desire and thought. In such conditions, we keep ourselves constantly connected, linked. To invest this maintenance, that is the interesting sense (direction), one that can reproduce itself by means of the forces of conservation. [But] conserve what? The conditions of creative capacity. This is [what is] interesting and essential. If the Health Service (*SUS -Sistema Única de Saúde*) has this horizon [or objective] then long live the health service (*SUS*). Even with the objective of self-destructing in the shortest possible time. Once again Nietzsche: all good things... come to an end through self-destruction. [But] what is self-destruction? It is that which is only a passage, that serves to allow passage. The 'universal' can also self-destruct... it is merely a means of passage.. The law is not a nature in itself, [rather] the law is a rule of passage. If the law is interesting, let it be a function of life. But Nietzsche asks; Of what life? Is it an active life? Is it a creative life? Or is it of a life that needs an exterior demand; one that makes a power grow, without which it cannot survive?

To conclude, we come to the question of the network and the production of healthcare. I [often] hear in the classes I give, and in other expositions etc, criticism about the idea of a network, a relationship of Family Health Program⁷, Psycho-Social Centers of Medical Attention⁸, health centers, co-habitation centers. Meetings about the matter are the emptiest. The idea of a network is totally caught up in a kind of neo-liberalism. It operates an alternation between apparatus and micro-apparatus of power when, from the rizomatic or affective viewpoint, it should be a zone of passage and intensive continuities in which hand-overs (relays) operate, but relays of differentiation and the increase of power-potency instead of simply saying: “ look, take this wooden spoon here, because I am off to the beach”. Could it be that one really feels the effect of the hand-over, through the difference in the alternation of healthcare? The idea of a network is essential, what is being questioned is its being established and segmented, a network of segmentation; we need to create a plan of continuity of singularities, not of segmentation.

I do not give classes to gain students or disciples, but rather to produce allies, given that I am an absolutely interested party. I don't give classes from memory, but rather by creating together, developing myself alongside others, I create myself by crossing another; not demanding anything

7 In the original text, reference to PSF - Programa Saúde de Família

8 In the original – reference to Caps-Centros de Atenção Psicossocial

from the other; nevertheless, I feel that there is a production of alliance and, as the other becomes stronger, so I become stronger, and, for this reason, I have a vested interest. In [respect to] the practice of healthcare, if I were a clinic or something of the sort, I would operate in the same way. I would invest in a clinical practice so that the patient would become my ally or allied to life; to an intense life. The production of allies is what matters. There is a means, a vehicle of expression, of potentialization and expansion of a movement, and a produced means, created towards [achieving] a common being, as a zone, not of the public sector as mediation of the means (medium), not of the universal opposing itself to the private sector (or area), but of the common that affirms the singular - singularizing ever more, the more it encounters and creates the common. The words are important – if you invest in the production of an alliance or of a strengthening of life, life responds with the creation of more reality. Investing in life is to invest in active manners of existing – simply in modes, manners that dynamize, liberate, gain velocity. Liberty and healthcare are questions of speed. Life flows in the briefest and most urgent of things, it drives out the mediations, and continues liberating itself from the all-embracing advantages. It is going to free itself even from the need of the Health System (SUS), from a caring institution, from a dimension of life that saves and links and groups life to/with another dimension where it would be deprived of itself. Life linked to that which can, in short, liberate it from that which submits it to a power from outside forces.

Essentially, the idea of the production of healthcare, detached from an integration from the viewpoint of power, should act directly upon the ways or modes of life. Therefore, it would also be necessary for healthcare practices to abandon the wider provision of attending the all and sundry, that embrace everything, that open up general access with that opium effect for the people, a kind of shock absorber for the lack of social responsibility (social abandonment). Deleuze talks, in relation to desire(wanting), of the use of the pleasures: use pleasure to discharge desire. Could it be that healthcare is used to depressurize the social 'pressure cooker' and suppress [even cover up] the political movements? Healthcare could be a practice of political shock absorbing, just like schools and the such. The medicalization of life, the judicialization of the daily routine knock at our door like terrifying powers (*potencias*)! Is it that through producing healthcare, we are not just anesthetizing life, producing a shock-absorbing cushion to life? “See how the State loves you, how the Health Service (SUS) loves you, see how we take care of you! Feel included! Or is it that we are capable of producing a horizon [a future perspective] in which life frees itself, becoming ever more brilliant, affirming itself better, being more capable, and in which we no longer dispute power (*potências*), but instead become joyful in the strengthening of others? Man is still learning to be happy with the strengthening of others, of trying it for himself. In the words of Nietzsche, we are investing in a great health care.