

DE/SYN/CHRONO/BIOPOLITICS PRECARIOUS PRESENT, (UN)CERTAIN FUTURE(S)

The infinite virtuality of the future is subordinated
to the production and representation of futures
that are repetitions of the same commodity form.
McKenzie Wark, *A Hacker Manifesto*

Abstract: This essay argues that current neoliberal regime is primarily characterized by synchronicity as its main mode of temporality. My claim is that despite the apparent impression that the imperative of synchronicity enhances the subject's capacity to act in time and therefore shape her future, it instead hinders it. This observation leads to a critical re-examination of the dominant mode of temporality and necessitates the development of a new conceptual apparatus that accounts for both synchronical production of subjectivity and intrinsic to it (bio)political implications. I offer the synthetic notion of *synchronobiopolitics* as a means to look closely at how contemporary biopower synchronizes with subject's productive affects and, *vice versa*, makes her synchronize with it. The essay starts with the analysis of precarious socioeconomic conditions of production and then moves to the exploration of epistemontological premises of synchronobiopolitics, so as to provide a detailed account of the affective mechanics of the latter. Particular attention is paid to the problem of the future, its construction under synchronobiopolitical conditions, and possible ways to resist synchronization and thus participate in the production of alternative future(s).

Keywords: Affect, Biopolitics, Future, Synchronicity, Synchronobiopolitics.

1. To be (or not to be) in sync

The shift from rigid mass production to more flexible modes of manufacturing in Western societies (commonly known as the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism) has also marked a conclusive break from diachronicity to synchronicity. The serial and homogeneous model of temporality, expressed in such socioeconomic scenarios, as “birth–school–work–death” or “9 to 5”, has been supplemented (and, we might expect, will potentially be superseded) with the one that favors spontaneity over linearity and dynamic situationality over universality. Proactivity, swift reaction, and proper time management, besides many other *productive* skills, constitute the backbone of a contemporary successful individual; procrastination and tardiness *qua* “being out of sync” are, figuratively speaking, the deadly sins.

And yet, being (made) so time-conscious, time-sensitive, even time-obsessed, can we truly say that we are in charge of our time? Of our present? Most importantly, of our future? This paper offers a negative (or at least critical) answer to these apparently rhetorical questions. In this essay, I insist that the imperative of synchronicity both hinders our capacity to perceive, think of, and act in time, and also troubles our openness of/to the future. As a number of theorists I am to engage with in this paper (namely, Michel Foucault, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Kiarina Kordela, Gilles Deleuze, and Brian Massumi) argue and as I will show further, the subject’s relation to time (and therefore to the future(s)) is of affective nature and is therefore exploited by the contemporary neoliberal regime, which subjugates affects — bodily actions and responses — to its needs. To explore the complex interrelation among the subject, the body, its affects, production and reproduction (of time), I combine them under the synthetic term of *synchronobiopolitics*, which I define as an onto-temporal regime of biopolitical administration that exploits affective potentials by synchronizing with the subject and making her synchronize with itself so as to shape a certain future outcome. In other words, the (bio)politics of time performed in neoliberal societies is reliant upon synchronicity as a means to exercise control — as Gilles Deleuze described it, “a universal system of deformation [...] that runs through each, dividing each within.” (Deleuze 1992: 5).

To illustrate, in a professional context, the desire for synchronicity manifests itself in the forms of thoroughly planned schedules and never-ending deadlines, bonus systems (to motivate those performing well to do even better) and pep talks (to help those falling behind keep up); the professional, in her turn, is

expected to respond in a timely manner, both acquire and distribute new information and be ready to make necessary corrections, attend meetings and appointments, happily accept new challenges and alter her workplan should any changes occur, to mention just a few examples.

Not only did the imperative of synchronicity start to dominate the professional sphere, but that of personal life, too. Perhaps the most prominent discursive construct of productivity-driven capitalism is the idea of work/life balance, which presupposes the individual's capacity to be able to both clearly separate these two domains and switch between them when needed, as well as allegedly enjoy "the best of both worlds". This is expected to be achieved through a rigorous routine of "self-care" that involves such crucial components as mindfulness techniques (being *here* and *now*), a result-driven approach, and learning to make reasonable (or not so much) sacrifices, temptingly called "setting priorities".

Ultimately, a wide spectrum of technological solutions — to a large extent contributing to and enabling the culture of synchronicity — make us "live in the moment". There are numerous apps and devices to efficiently exploit the present (wearables providing one with real-life data, such as heart rate, or habit-developing apps that remind one to practice a certain thing every day), to make use of the past (apps that analyze one's sleeping patterns or track one's steps throughout the day) and to project and therefore take actions to create a better future (for instance, apps that forecast one's weight based on the number of calories consumed). In sum, what the contemporary neoliberal regime does is it makes the world appear as universally synchronizable — one simply needs to tune in.

Again, as Paul Virilio, continuing the outlined above Deleuze's line of thought, argues, these imposed on the subject deformations and divisions are not merely the effect of the contemporary apparatus, but are rather a particular regime of temporality, which he calls "picnolepsy". Describing the latter, he writes: "our vision is that of a montage, a montage of temporalities which are the product not only of powers that be, but of the technologies that organize time." (Virilio 2008: 48) In other words, picnolepsy is a (sub)conscious subject's temporal attunement that helps her bring heterogeneous, heterotopic and heterochronic elements together to constitute the present moment — in short, to *synchronize*.

Even though Virilio speaks of picnolepsy as an inevitable reaction to the acceleration and intensification of both social and individual paces and rhythms, he seems to suggest that the picnoleptic adjustment inescapably

results in the loss of time. This observation begs the question that I will be paying close attention to throughout the essay: whether and how the present, as given to us through shifts, breaks, and interruptions, joined together in their seeming coherence, synchronizes with the future — the future which, as outlined in the epigraph, is characterized by “infinite virtuality”?

Furthermore, can we, as allegedly *homo tempus sapiens*, synchronize with our future — future that, obviously, remains *open* yet seems to repeat itself as the projection of the present? In the sections below, I am to examine the synchronization with (syn/chrono)biopolitics by conceptually reconstructing its socio-economic conditions, *modus vivendi* and *modus operandi*, which will help me illustrate how both the *affectivity* of the *present* and the *presence* of the *affective* are exploited under synchronobiopolitical conditions. This will allow me to explore in the next section how control over the present makes synchronobiopolitical governing efficient in the domain of the future too, mostly due to habituation. Ultimately, in the final section, I am to attempt to answer the question of whether and how it would be possible to *desynchronize*.

2. Synchronobiopolitics (I): precarity and the present

What is the relation between biopolitics and time — more precisely, the momenticity of the present? If we were to recall the fact that for Foucault biopolitics is a new modality of power whose aim is to govern populations (Foucault 1978: 138–139), the question becomes even more problematic. Eugene Thacker is right to point out that the dilemma lying at the heart of biopolitical governing of populations is whether and how *living* multiplicities can be subjugated to the needs of the neoliberal regime, organically integrated into it and therefore controlled (Thacker 2011: 152). How are then populations, multiplicities, whole nations and particular individuals synchronized? How can these heterogeneous agents, elements and assemblages of elements, living in heterochronic presents (as well as pasts and, presumably, futures), function as a whole — in other words, how can *multiplicities* become a *single* target for biopower? Ultimately, in such a peculiar configuration of time, space, and subjectivity, how is control possible?

To make these questions even more intricate, the idea of uncertainty — the issue Foucault is well aware of — should be brought up. Uncertainty is, indeed, the characteristic of populations, which are indeterminate multiplicities that therefore cannot be represented. When writing about governmentality — the

operational logic of a particular form of power, Foucault tends to link it to a certain model of subjectivity it produces. However, what is the subjectivity of populations? Applying a Foucauldian triangle of analytics of power (Dean 2010: 122), populations do not fall under the category of slaves, criminals or deviants (so repressive sovereign power cannot be applied to them), they cannot be construed within the framework of normality (and thus resist the disciplinary logic) and have not one but multiple (oftentimes contradicting each other) sexual identities (consequently, cannot be fully incorporated into a dispositive of sexuality). Optimistically (especially taking into consideration the nexus between subjectivity and power Foucault is so keen on), it could be stated that the absence of a fixed identity is tantamount to populations' "immunity" to power mechanisms. Realistically, though, the emergence of the figure of populations in the political discourse calls for a thoughtful reconsideration of how power functions — and, in Foucault's terms — marks a significant shift from *governmentality* to *environmentality* (Foucault 2008: 260), or, in other words, from the *effective* government to the *affective* environment.

Again, as Thacker suggests, as soon as biopower encountered populations *qua* living multiplicities, it faced the problem of operating under the conditions of indeterminacy and uncertainty. The old configurations of power that heavily relied on sovereign, disciplinary, and sexuality *dispositifs*, despite efficiently employing the principles of exploiting affective capacities of individuals and their bodies, did not account for the affective remainder that at any time could reverse the effects of constant and thorough control. Therefore, transcendental modalities of power that attempted to regulate subjects "from the outside" were gradually superseded with an immanent, self-constituting, spontaneous — synchronic — biopolitical environmental mode. Consequently, to understand this new taxonomy of power, we must think of uncertainty not as something that troubles synchronicity, but, instead, as a prerequisite of it — its condition of emergence. In this regard, synchronicity serves as a highly efficient chronotopological configuration that minimizes and takes advantage of uncertainty by operating from within it.

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri offer a comprehensive sociological account of how biopower functions under conditions of indeterminacy and uncertainty. By locating uncertainty at the very core of the social, they argue that contemporary biopolitical neoliberalism is, unlike its predecessors, characterized not by striving for stability, but by permanent precariousness. The latter is, indeed, uncertainty translated into socioeconomic terms: since material labor has been

partially replaced by immaterial labor, ‘capitalism of products’ has transformed into what might be termed as ‘capitalism of affects’. The notions of immaterial labor and affects require more elaboration. In “Empire”, the theorists present a fairly broad continuum of affects: from subjective passions to community relationships, from ‘the somatic’ (that is, bodies’ capacities to produce and reproduce) to knowledge, information, and communication (Hardt, Negri 2000: 30; 366; 407). To recapitulate, affects are cognitive–somatic forces that render bodies more or less productive by causing their certain responses (which might be called emotions, moods, or states). As already argued, affects are the target of the biopolitical environmental governmentality.

Obviously, immaterial labor (in biopolitical capitalism) is affective *per se*: in their second volume, “Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire”, Hardt and Negri establish a correlation between biopolitical control and affective work. According to them, “immaterial labor tends to move out of the limited realm of the strictly economic domain and engage in the general production and reproduction of society as a whole” (Hardt and Negri 2004: 66). What implications for social life does this socioeconomic reconfiguration hold? First and foremost, it results in the formation of social relations that are no longer trumped by the principle of identity, identification, or social hierarchy, but are rather multiple affective networks (personal, professional, leisure, etc.), which are not stable yet are not devoid of biopolitical governance. As Lawrence Grossberg aptly notes, “everyday life becomes the site for and the mode of a new apparatus of power [...] [that functions] by erasing the lines that connect everyday life to the political and economic realities that are its condition of possibility.” (Grossberg 1992: 294)

The vanishing borderline between personal and professional, between work and pastime leads to the already outlined, second outcome: precariousness of social life. When analyzing a new form of labor, Hardt and Negri use such adjectives as flexible, mobile, and precarious to describe it. “Flexible because workers have to adapt to different tasks, mobile because workers have to move frequently between jobs, and precarious because no contracts guarantee stable, long–term employment.” (Hardt, Negri, 2004: 112) On a more personal level, the worker has to make sure she does her work impeccably: not only in terms of the quality of tasks performed, but also in a timely manner, meeting the expectations of all the parties involved and producing positive (and, in her turn, overcoming negative) affects. The condition of precarity forces one to be maximally productive, for, otherwise, she could easily be replaced by someone (or something, say, a machine) that

fits the affective network of the workplace better, manages worktime more productively or simply delivers better results.

Ultimately, the last implication is directly concerned with synchronicity: the subject placed in precarious conditions needs to efficiently orientate herself in time. This (re)orientation requires striking a (oftentimes impossible) balance between reactivity (*reactions*) and proactivity (*acting* in advance). As the latter implies the anticipation of a certain outcome, and is therefore concerned with the future, it would be incorrect to state that precariousness is a model of thinking and acting *in the present moment* (since the future is apparently uncertain, indeterminable, and unforecastable); in fact, the most optimal spatiotemporal orientation under the conditions of synchronobiopolitics is *thinking and acting in the present moment so as to guarantee a more or less stable future*. In the regime, where even a small degree of certainty is a luxury, thinking what the best action would be *now* is simply not sufficient for a professional; she would need to react, to act, to take chances, to anticipate, to prevent and preempt in order to stay afloat, to live or simply survive.

And this is exactly why precarity translates into biopolitical terms. As Foucault reasonably notes, the emergence of biopolitics accompanied the formation of the neoliberal regime, which means that biopolitics functions in accordance with neoliberal mentality, more precisely the mentality of *laissez-faire*. Even though the *laissez-faire* principle is commonly construed as “not governing too much”, perceived as an environmental form of power, it appears as an apparatus of control that governs multiplicities by establishing conditions (the environment) to which they have to adapt in order to survive. In other words, (synchrono)biopower employs uncertainty (homologically connected with precarious life — thus higher social, economic, physical vulnerability and lower chances of survival), which allows it not to intervene, but, indeed, to govern by (almost) not governing.

Needless to say, synchronization with/adaptation to socioeconomic conditions of the synchronobiopolitical regime results in a very peculiar subject's affective position. Individual's affects — both *active*, her bodily capacities, and *passive*, moods, emotions, feelings — are incorporated within the biopolitical framework of re/production, which, correspondingly, means that the subject undergoes a two-fold affective modulation. Passively, the subject is molded, borrowing a Maurizio Lazzarato's term (Lazzarato 2006: 176–177), as a totality of her affective responses are reduced to a broad yet limited repertoire of expected responses; in this regard, synchronicity is tantamount to the subject's ability to react in a “productive” manner

(“productive” meaning beneficial for the biopolitical regime) and take “productive” actions. Obviously, this is a radical form of affective inscription (immanent affective control), as the subject adopts fostered by the regime structures of thinking, feeling, acting, reacting, and, ultimately, being.

Actively, subject’s synchronization with biopolitically–driven needs of the neoliberal system entails affective exploitation. Following Hardt and Negri’s remark that the affective commonality of populations is not only passively produced but is also productive (active) (Hardt, Negri, 2004: 197), individuals’ production under outlined socioeconomic conditions is synonymous with the (re)production of the *status quo* in the present and its continuation in the future. In biopolitical terms, having created the environment to which living multiplicities have to adapt, biopower manages to control these multiplicities from within: however, not by regulating them directly, but by stimulating certain (favorable) actions and responses. In so doing, biopower forms a complex composition of heterogeneous forces, in which its own need to synchronize is minimized, as synchronization is largely performed by agents operating in the environment.

3. Synchronobiopolitics (II): eternity and the future (as the affective fact)

Delving into the mechanics of synchronobiopolitics, it is hard to leave aside the question of the future. As already briefly discussed in the previous section, in the synchronobiopolitical regime the future — as infinite virtuality and radical potentiality — is rendered (at least partially) calculable, measurable, and forecastable. Again, as suggested, the prerequisite for it is the formation of the precarious socioeconomic environment, in which subjects are preoccupied with synchronical adaptation to ever–changing conditions so as to survive. Not only does such “survival of the fittest” divide one individual from another, thus hindering common resistance, but, even more so, it divides every individual within, as it imposes a favorable for the regime affective orientation. Even though these highly toxic environments do adapt to even slightest changes, they generally reproduce by *making* the components of the environment *adapt*, which provides the conditions for the preservation of the *status quo* — both synchronically, here and now, and in the future. And yet, the attempt to answer the question how the future is shaped — or how the future is synchronized with the present and *vice versa* — requires a broader (chrono)ontological approach. Since the central argument of this paper is that the neoliberal mode of governance is not merely biopolitical (as observed by

Foucault), but synchronobiopolitical, that is, its crucial element is time, I will further explore the intersection of a specific neoliberal form of temporality, biopolitical capitalism and affective life.

Kiarina Kordela presents an intriguing observation of how biopolitics manifest itself in three different temporalities and thus shapes the subject's relation to them. She discusses diachrony of linear time, which is finite, synchrony, which is momentous, and, finally, eternity. The latter, however, should not be perceived as a transcendental plane, situated outside or beyond the field of social–affective life; Kordela insists that eternity is immanent, which should be read more like Spinozian *sub species aeternitatis*, that is, “without any relation to time” (Kordela 2018: 177; 182) (Spinoza Ethics V, P29). However, is infinity actually an atemporal regime, or is it still a form of temporality? When discussing *sub species aeternitatis*, Spinoza emphasizes that its significance is not only ontological, but ethical too, as living *sub species aeternitatis* presupposes a definite ethical position of perceiving things “not as contingent, but as necessary” (Spinoza: V, P22). Viewed from this perspective, eternity is *meta-temporal*, in a sense that it encompasses all three times: past, present, and future. The future aspect of eternity appears as the most important one, as it entails infinite or eternal virtuality and therefore possibilities that are to be or not to be actualized in/as the future (which, after Deleuze, we might conceptualize as temporality of potentiality (Voss 2017: 168)). In other words, eternity and future are homologically related with potentiality, the affective (productive) dimension of life: through multiple affective encounters, occurring on the plane of immanence and resulting in the manifestation of the actual, the future *qua potentiality* is also actualized. Eternity thus is another word for denoting an infinite number of possibilities of future's actualization.

We could thus conclude that there is no form of actualized power (*potestas*) that would be able to take control over eternity. Nevertheless, as Kordela reasonably argues, biopolitics can govern and administer the subject's relation to eternity. And this is, indeed, as Kordela maintains, the true object of biopolitics (Kordela 2011: 15). In her works, she operationalizes the concept of *bios* not as abstract life (life as such), but in a manner that echoes Foucault's, Agamben's, and Esposito's accounts of the status of life — as pure potentiality, immanent to the body and multiplicities of bodies. In the previous section, I have outlined how biopolitics control affective multiplicities by becoming and placing them into environments to which they have to adapt. Chrono–ontologically, this is achieved by a partial erasure of the finite diachronic time, which, Kordela explains, contributes to the

illusion of immortality (thus eternity), as it erases death from the horizon (Kordela 2018: 10; 187). This point should be elaborated: death does not completely vanish from the horizon of our self-perception (we are well aware that we are mortal, finite beings); rather, it re-merges as something highly undesirable, as a highly negative affective entity and therefore something to be avoided. Viewed from this perspective, the regime offers subjects a form of salvation from death: salvation, achieved by identification with the regime, with the environment and its needs. Unlike the old forms of governmentality, for instance, the disciplinary *dispositif*, distinguished by what Deleuze terms “spaces of enclosure” (Deleuze 1992: 4), which created the linear perception of time (home-work-home, nine-to-five, etc.), the *nouveau régime* seems reminiscent of capital circulation (M-C-M and M-M), and is, consequently, characterized by circulation time and circular temporality.

Circular temporality combines and exploits two seemingly opposed to each other temporal modes — diachrony (linearity) and eternity. Borrowing a beautifully worded Kordela’s explanation, biopower infests “the metastasis of infinity onto linear time” (Kordela 2011: 18). What makes this “infinity” metastatic is its illusory nature: again, Kordela outlines that “the biopolitical machinery resolutely shuns eternity and aims instead at proxies that provide only controlled and safe illusion of eternity (Ibid: 15). Appropriating and identifying with this illusion (since it helps avoid precarity and survive), subjects adopt a form of life, in which they live not as immortal, but as “undead”, which is tantamount to already dead. Recapitulating, *bios qua* pure potentiality is circulated by being placed in the time frame, where the precarity and finitude of *bios* are exploited for the needs of the regime that both appears as eternal and provides subjects with safe substitutes for eternity. Such an ontological biopolitical machinery allows biopower to control manifestations and actualizations of potentialities and circulate bodies and affects *ad infinitum* thus preserve the illusion of eternity.

Finally, since the biopolitical regime makes bodies and subjects synchronize with itself, the third — synchronical temporality — is a crucial component of circulation that has to be scrutinized. Building upon the Marx’s distinction between circulation-time (infinity) and production time (diachronicity), Kordela insists that synchronicity is, indeed, “a mode of time in which the instant and infinity coincide” (Kordela 2011: 16). It is, in other words, a form of temporality — more precisely, a plurality of moments, *instances* — where biopower enters the body, gets access to its propensities and “metastasizes” across it. This instant affective “hijacking” renders biopower capable of

manifesting not only present actualizations by producing affects it needs, but, more importantly, of shaping the future by altering affective potential. Thus the (temporal) logic of circulation — the very logic of capital — re-inscribes itself into the immanent field of production and, in so doing, transcends beyond mere *economic* production and becomes the logic of *social, affective, and chrono-ontological* production. In Hardt and Negri's words, "money tends to represent not only the present but also the future value of the common [...] our future productive capacities." (Hardt, Negri, 2014: 151)

Again, as Kordela observes, the biopolitical machinery functions efficiently because it attempts to take control, administer and exploit immanent capacities of bodies (its active/passive affects) to produce and reproduce: that is, it attempts to take control of self-referentiality of the body. In a similar vein, Brian Massumi maintains that the essence of the operative logic of the contemporary (bio)political regime is affective manipulation that alters the future by producing the present. "It converts a future, virtual cause directly into a taking-actual-effect in the present. It does this affectively. It uses affect to effectively trigger virtual causality", Massumi states (Massumi 2015: 15). However, we might reasonably ask how affect is operationalized and exploited to manifest a certain future? For affects are re/productive bodily capacities, they are proto-productive, and, in this sense, are both physical and metaphysical (ontological) forces that participate in both actual and virtual. Following Spinoza, it might be stated that affects are *modes of being* or, alternatively, potentialities of being, as well as their derivatives.

As synchronobiopolitics primarily targets affect, Massumi insists on the importance of the ontological dimension of the contemporary biopolitical regime, which he calls "ontopower". The ontological power of synchronobiopolitics lies, indeed, in its environmental (rather than governmental) nature and its capacity to bring into being (that is, manifest or actualize potentialities). Thus, Massumi believes that ontopower is not merely territorial in a Deleuzian sense, but prototerritorial — both preemptive and productive (Massumi 2015: 234–235), as "rather than empirically manipulate an object (of which it has none), it modulates felt qualities infusing a life-environment" (*Ibid.*: 200), which, in its turn, results in a biopolitically-invested "metaphysics of feeling" (*Ibid.*: 201). The latter term describes the onto-affective orientation biopower imposes on bodies, subjects, and living multiplicities: what is felt and what is therefore lived is actualized by a series of micro-interventions (which Massumi calls "infra-colonization") at the level of immanent to body's self-referentiality, which, according to Massumi, is synonymous with "a will-to-power" (*Ibid.*)

What enables the manifestation of biopolitical metaphysics of feeling is its synchronization with “a will-to-power”, which is, however, problematic, as the potential dimension of the latter inherently resists synchronization. Massumi explains that what I term in this paper as synchronization is achieved through the means of “reflex production” (*Ibid.*: 14), which, in its turn, results in the formation of habits that are described by Massumi as ontopowerful (*Ibid.*: 121). Habits are an expression of the body’s self-reference/self-causality, as they are “a self-effecting force from the past that acts in the present that appears only in a next-effect” (*Ibid.*: 64), which means that habits have “a positive power of repetition” (*Ibid.*: 65). The adjective “positive” denotes productivity of the habit, which might be linked with its affective nature: making subjects acquire and repeat a particular repertoire of actions, models of thinking, and structures of feeling, biopower exploits affective capacities of the bodies and cements its own *status quo*. Furthermore, the synchronization with the field of potentiality does not only pertain to repetition in the present, but it is, indeed, orientated towards the production of the future. We can recall Kordela’s remark on “living as already dead” here, since habitualization *qua* subjugation of bodily affective capacities negates the radical potentiality of the future and, instead, produces a broad yet limited repertoire of “next-effects”, which are mere projections of the past and present.

Viewed from this perspective, habitualization as a means of synchronization with biopower seems reminiscent of discipline — drilling of the body, which inscribes into the body reflexes, reactions, and habits. Yet, such an anatomopolitical, borrowing Foucault’s term, interpretation of the body does not account for the central problem pertaining to biopower — the problem of multiplicities. The logic of discipline is identitary: and, as aptly noted by Jeffrey Nealon, can potentially be escaped (by simply resisting an imposed identity of a worker, a soldier, or a wife) (Nealon 2014: 84). However, the subject can hardly escape precarious conditions of the market and social life, subjugation of *bios* to the circular temporality, as well as habitualization, since all of these techniques are rooted not in the formation of identity, but, instead, in re/production of affect. Even more so, synchronobiopolitics appears not to need identity as such to function; As Patricia Clough puts it, biopolitical control “aims at never-ending modulation of moods, capacities, affects, and potentialities” and it thus works “at the molecular level of bodies, at the informational substrate of matter” (Clough 2007: 19). “There is “bodily vectors” or “perspectives of flesh” (Clough 2007: 209), she writes, which are then extrapolated to

the scale of living multiplicities, using a wide spectrum of means — from statistical representation to recent technological advances.

When writing about onto–powerful biopolitical procedures, Massumi signals that they produce self–validating affective facts, which imply the logic of double conditional — “could have/would have” (Massumi 2015: 240). He explicates that it functions as “a runaround through the present back toward its self–causing futurity” (*Ibid.*: 191). The question thus is how to digress from this runaround, how to break the vicious circle of onto–chrono–biopolitical production, how to overcome picnolepsy and manifest “could have” instead of the future as an already given and reproduceable affective fact.

4. Desynchronization: towards affirmative biopolitics of future

The quest for means of desynchronization should start with understanding the importance of untimeliness — the feature Friedrich Nietzsche speak of in his “Untimely Meditations”, where he defines untimeliness as somebody or something “acting counter to our time and thereby acting on our time [...] for the benefit of the time to come” (Nietzsche 2007: 60). Being untimely, thus, requires a different chrono–affective regime of feeling time and being in time, or, more specifically, reorientation from the present as it is given towards what the future *could* be; for Nietzsche, such a reorientation should start with thoughtful meditation and reflection on what was, what is and what will be. More precisely, a vigorous reconsideration of time — including the production of time and the production of subjectivity of a particular chrono–ontological regime — allows one to start to critically re–examine one’s own relation to what Massumi, after Foucault, calls “the history of the present” — the history of what appears (not) to be taking place, history–in–the–making (Massumi 2015: 208); it allows one to actually feel the significance of the present moment, look beyond the horizon of actualities and see potential counter–strategies: both now and arising in the future.

Elaborating on the reasonable Clough’s observation that (synchrono) biopolitics draws bodily vectors and inscribes perspectives onto flesh through habitualization or, as described by Massumi, reflex–acquisition, it seems that a viable scenario would be to de–habitualize or unlearn habitual practices, reflexes, and models of thinking/feeling, acquired from synchronobiopolitical environments. As it has been argued above, following Foucault and Thacker, techniques of synchronization/habitualization are massive and environmental due to a fact that they can never target the affective wholesome of the body

— only its separate affects. Thus, Bernd Bosel insists on desynchronizing from anonymous masses (Bosel 2014: 99), from what makes one a part of the homogeneous whole, and instead foster what might be rather sketchily called *affective reflexivity*. After all, the productivity of affect, as Spinoza explains, is inextricably linked with bodily and emotional awareness: positive affects, such as joy, enhance bodily capacities to act, while negative — fear, sadness, sorrow, weakness — correspondingly diminish them (Spinoza: III, PIX). For Deleuze, this is already an ethical framework, which entails “denouncing all that separates us from life, all these transcendent values that are turned against life”, and allows us to “approach the point of transmutation that will establish our dominion, that will make us worthy of action, of active joys” (Deleuze 1988: 26; 28)

A particular focus, then, should be placed on improving our overall understanding of ourselves, of what and how we feel, as well as how we understand and deal with our feelings, in order to avoid, as Bosel warns, taking active part in the society of control. For this it is crucial we understand the inexhaustible potential of affects to produce new ideas (Bosel 2014: 102) and thereby actualize future potentialities. In a similar manner, Wark McKenzie in “A Hacker Manifesto” promotes the idea of resistance to the all-encompassing regime by turning its “bioweapons” against itself: by undermining its functional principles, reverting, or “hacking” it. The universal, eternal, calculable and forecastable version of future reinforced by synchronobiopolitics should be substituted, at least conceptually, with the future as infinite virtuality. As McKenzie herself puts it, “the free and unlimited hacking of the new produces not just “the” future, but an infinite possible array of futures [...] Every hack is an expression of the inexhaustible multiplicity of the future, of virtuality” (McKenzie 2004: 078). Hacking thus is neither a professional occupation, nor an illegal activity, but a spectrum of techniques of intensification of the actual.

Does hacking signal the necessity of a certain kind of technological intervention? Does it make us responsible for dreaming about, shaping, and creating alternative technological futures, which would desynchronize from exploitative present technological networks? These questions could be approached from two sides. On the one hand, if we dare to imagine, a different counterhegemonic technology of time and space (and, *vice versa*, different space and time of technology), which would enable a coexistence of different individual and social rhythms, speeds and other temporal regimes without the need of synchronization, would consequently lead to constructive social changes, facilitated by greater communication thus commonality. On the other hand, however, we need to be aware of the intrinsic problematic nature of communication, which, too, is mediated by biopower: in

his interview, Deleuze warns about the possibility of communication and speech being corrupted, which lets him conclude that the most viable form of resistance would be the creation of “vacuoles of non-communication” and “circuit breakers” (Deleuze 1990).

My claim is that Deleuze advocates not the strategy of escapist solipsism, but a different critical stance towards *contemporality* and the future it may bring. In the same interview, he contraposes communication and creation, arguing that we have a surplus of the former and therefore need to focus on the latter instead; according to him, “we need both creativity and *a* people” (Ibid.). Not anonymous masses, not precarious populations, not synchronizable affective flows, but *a* people, *a* common as different and different commons. And, having become *a* people, we might then imagine what *a* future — both common and different — might look like.

References

- Bosel, B., 2014, “Affective Synchronization, Rhythmanalysis, and the Polyphonic Qualities of the Present Moment”, in Angerer, M., Bernd B., and Ott, M. (eds). *Timing of Affect: Epistemologies of Affection*, Zurich, diaphanes, pp. 87–102.
- Clough, P., 2007, “Introduction”, in Clough, P., Halley, J. (eds), *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, pp. 1–33.
- Clough, P., 2010, “The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedica”, in Gregg, M., Seigworth, G. (eds), *The Affect Theory Reader*, Durham and London: Duke University Prtess, pp. 206–228.
- Dean, M., 2010, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, London, Sage.
- Deleuze, G., 1990, “Conversation with Antonio Negri” (Interview), *Futur Anterieur*, Spring, No. 1; English translation by Joughin, M.; retrieved from: <<https://www.generation-online.org/p/fpdeleuze3.htm>> [March 27, 2020].
- Deleuze, G., 1992, “Postscript on the Societies of Control”, *October*, Vol. 59 (Winter), pp. 3–7.
- Deleuze, G., 1988, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, San Francisco, City Light Books; English translation by Hurley, R.
- Foucault, M., 1978, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1*, New York, Pantheon Books; English translation by Hurley, R.

- Foucault, M., 2008, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978–1979*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan; English translation by Burchell, G.
- Grossberg, L., 1992, *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Contemporary Culture*, New York and London: Routledge.
- Hardt, M., Negri, A., 2000, *Empire*, Cambridge and London, Harvard University Press.
- Hardt, M., Negri, A., 2004, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, New York: The Penguin Press.
- Kordela, K., 2018, *Epistemology in Spinoza–Marx–Freud–Lacan: The (Bio) Power of Structure*, New York and London: Routledge.
- Kordela, K., 2011, “(Psychoanalytics) Biopolitics & Bioracism”, *Umbr(a): A Journal of the Unconscious*, pp. 11–24.
- Lazzarato, M., 2006, “The Concepts of Life and the Living in the Societies of Control”, in Fuglsang, M., and Sorensen, B. (eds.), *Deleuze and the Social*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press.
- Massumi, B., 2015, *Ontopower: War, Power, and the State of Perception*, Durham and London, Duke University Press.
- Nealon, J., 2014, “Control”, in In Lawlor, L., and Nale, J. (eds), *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp. 83–87.
- Nietzsche, F., 2007, *Untimely Meditations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; English translation by Hollingdale, R.
- Spinoza, B., 2001, *The Ethics*, Blackmask Online; English translation by Elwes R.; Retrieved from: www.blackmask.com [March 2, 2020].
- Thacker, E., 2011, “Necrologies; or, the Death of the Body Politic”, in Clough, P., and Willse, C. (eds.), *Beyond Biopolitics: Essays on the Governance of Life and Death*, Durham and London, Duke University Press, pp. 139–162.
- Virillio, P., 2008, *Pure War*, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e); English translation by Polizzotti, M.
- Voss, D., 2017, Intensity and the Missing Virtual: Deleuze’s Reading of Spinoza, *Deleuze Studies*, Vo. 11, No. 22, pp. 156–173.
- Wark, M., 2004, *A Hacker Manifesto*, Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.

DENIS PETRINA

Lithuanian Culture Research Institute; denisas.duce@gmail.com.