

Žižek and Heidegger - IJŽS Vol 1.4

The Life of the Universal: Response to Slavoj Žižek

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HISTORICITY AND EVENT

The question of historicity ultimately determines Heidegger's understanding of the temporality of human being (Dasein) and the structure of its happening, or 'eventuation.' In *Being and Time*, not only is Dasein defined as *Mitsein*, or being-with-others, rather than as "individual" or "subject," but *Mitsein* is always communal, and in this sense Dasein is a historical way of being by virtue of its very structure.¹ There is not, therefore, a "short circuit between individual and collective level," in the analytic of Dasein, nor is the account of the historicity of Dasein "artificially added," as Žižek claims.² The authenticity of Dasein, moreover, is not "an exceptional state of the subject, a state detached from the they, *but it is an existentiell modification of the they as an essential existential*" (SZ 130/ 122). For this reason, because the transcendental constitution of Dasein is defined as *Mitsein*, and by the predominantly inauthentic ways of being-with of the they-self, there can be no question of opposing the authenticity of Dasein to the structure of society: authenticity (or ownness) has to be wrested from these structures by a more primordial grasp of their 'conditions of possibility,' and these are ultimately to be sought in the historicity of Dasein as a communal being. Therefore the attempt to disassociate the "Being" of the situation from a

moment of ahistorical inception, which escapes “Being” as the Now of the ethical or of an inceptual “Event” is doomed, for in separating “Being” from historicity it repeats the founding gesture of metaphysics. An “Event” in this sense cannot be a founding moment of inception, for it confirms the temporality of metaphysics as a sequence of Nows. The Now as Now can never be an inception—the inceptual arrives as the becoming-future of the already-sent as possibility.³ Žižek acknowledges that the New can only “emerge through repetition.”⁴ But to think “repetition” we have to think in terms of the historicity of Dasein, and *of being*, not merely in terms of the virtuality of the universal as Event.

In the resoluteness of being-toward-death, Dasein in its authenticity “can become the ‘conscience’ of others” (SZ 298/ 274) in the historical situation of decision, which offers a moment of possibility to Dasein in its historicity: “The resoluteness in which Da-sein comes back to itself discloses the factual possibilities of authentic existing *in terms of the heritage* which resoluteness *takes over as thrown*” (SZ 383/ 351). We recall that in terms of the existential analytic, the historicity of Dasein is a more concrete explication of its temporality as constituted by the structure of Care (SZ 382/ 350). The unfolding of Dasein’s historicity, as the community of a people, implicates an agonistic structure of dialogue and struggle, of concealment and unconcealment, which is integral to Dasein as the history-*founding* site of truth as *a-letheia*. History as objectified, and the discipline of history, are derivative of the historicity of Dasein as the realm of the enactment of the possibilities of a heritage (SZ, section 76). The “identity” of Dasein will always be contended, and far removed from the self-identity of an organic collectivity with which it has sometimes been associated: “in communication and in strife (*Kampf*) the power of destiny first becomes free. The fateful destiny of Da-sein in and with its ‘generation’ constitutes the complete authentic occurrence of Da-sein (SZ 384-5/ 352, modified). Being as *polemos*—as the differentiating and constitutive differentiation of being-in-beings—is the the site of the political, and the ontological ground of social-historical conflicts in all their ontic manifestations.⁵ The form of this strife suffers epochal shifts consistent with the history of truth. In Heidegger’s terms *class conflict*, as opposed to differentiating social *antagonism*, is only possible for a modernity founded in the truth of *collective self-representation* and self-certitude.⁶

RESOLUTENESS AND LIMIT

According to Badiou, politics “summons or exhibits the infinity of the situation. Every politics of emancipation rejects finitude, rejects ‘being toward death.’”⁷ I suggest that this thesis implicates the death of the political and the triumph of a biopolitics founded in the universality of the metaphysical abstraction of Being. The temporality of the event of decision, in Heidegger’s sense, is explicitly grasped in *Being and Time* as the “moment of vision,” or *Augenblick*: “Resolute (*entschlossen*), Da-sein has brought itself back out of falling prey (*Verfallen*)[to things at hand and merely actual] in order to be all the more authentically ‘there’ for the disclosed situation in the ‘Moment’(Augenblick)” (SZ 328/ 301-2). In Heidegger’s *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*, the resoluteness of *Being and Time* is anticipated by Heidegger’s interpretation of *arete* as a way of being.⁸ As such, the comportment and engagement proper to it does not consist in the inculcation of a habit, the application of a norm, or a *techne* of self-construction, such as intimated by Foucault’s late work.⁹ *Arete* is resoluteness for the event of decision opened by the *Augenblick*. Resoluteness is understood as the *staying-open of Dasein for its historicity and the concretely determined possibilities for action a heritage offers* (SZ 326/ 300). A way-of-being is an attuned comportment (*Haltung* or *hexis*) to the world and to the unfolding of time into the right time, and it is such comportment which gives Dasein its stability, not a quality of the “subject” as possessed of particular virtues (GA18, 176). *Arete*, the resoluteness of being-open and its modes of comportment take communal, historical form. The root of the political, hence of the “civic virtues” of courage, justice, and moderation, is *phronesis* as founded in the being-open of *arete*.¹⁰ *Phronesis* is not a *techne* (GA19, 48-57). *Arete* brings the threefold temporality of Dasein to the point of decision in the moment of vision. *Phronesis* in this sense, as founded in the being-open of Dasein to being is radically distinct from a procedure of sociotechnical objectification and constitution of the polity.¹¹ For such would imply the re-presentational integration of the subject into the order of objectivity, and with it, the occlusion of Dasein’s authentic temporality.

It is clear that the question of the “Event” in Badiou and Žižek arises in response to this order of sociotechnical causality. But it is not evident that the condition of an *inceptual* event can be understood in terms of an ontology of the objectivity of Being in its relation to the fidelity of a collective subject to the universal. What is the structure of temporality of the being that thinks the relation of being and time and engages itself to enact the Event? If we are to postulate the possibility of an “Event” which initiates a new order of time, which genuinely begins, as distinct from the repetition of the Already-Said of discursive truths, it would have to belong to the structure of Dasein’s historicity, for it is there that temporality is most fully revealed as the

transcendental structure of the constitution of a world as a structure of significance. It is also in terms of this openness that Dasein wins its stability, as opposed to a stability founded in the questionable fidelity of a collective to the postulated truth of the universal.

The temporality of *arete*, hence of resoluteness, brings Dasein into the limit (*peras* and *telos*) of its own concretely given possibilities, which it takes up in a retrieval of a heritage (GA18, 72, 79, 93, 96). *Telos* signifies the internal limit of Dasein through which it comes to be in the unfolding of its historicity as its ownmost potentiality (GA18, 86). The inner constituting limit of Dasein is being-toward-death, not conceived, clearly, as mere demise, but as the limit which allows Dasein to grasp its ownmost potential for being (SZ, 385/ 352). The community of a heritage, in turn, takes its limit from the finitude of its historical earth and world, from the way in which its possibilities for being are concretely appropriated and enacted. This excludes sociotechnical experiments with a subject population, whether conceived as the particularity of race, or the universality of a class as representative of humanity. The criterion of the “authenticity” of the polity is not some notion of organic unity, but its holding-itself in the limit of its own historicity. “Inauthenticity” means the non-limitation of the ahistorical, the “universality” of planetary mankind as human resource. The ahistorical universal is integral to the self-concealment of Dasein, its dispersal in the discursivity of the They and in the production and consumption of beings.

VOLK AND WORK

Heidegger’s initial response to the crisis of 1933 was to affirm National Socialism as the political condition of the preservation and coming-to-be of the historicity of the “people.”¹² The concept of *Volk* in Heidegger’s understanding is distinct from that of a collective subject, be it in the tradition of philosophical liberalism deriving from Locke, be it in the tradition of Rousseau, or that of Herder, which Heidegger also consigns to the basic position of Cartesian subjectivity (GA54, 204 /137).¹³ During the early years of National Socialist Germany, Heidegger’s position regarding *Volk* and State comes to word most clearly in the lectures *Logik als die Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache* of 1934.¹⁴ Being-a-people signifies a people’s entrance into the limit of its own to take up its task (*Auftrag*) and its mission:

Our de-termination (*Bestimmung*) is not to be understood as a definite provision of our nature, understood corporally or in some other way, nor as a process of self-discipline directed toward whatever ends. Rather, we understand our de-termination as that to which we dedicate ourselves, that with which we engage ourselves as our task. (GA38, 127)

Entrance into one's own is intimated by the refusal of sociotechnical objectification and ideological formation. The thesis of the objectification of a human population as a resource-on-call implicates the limitlessness of the ahistorical universality of the global. The concept of *Volk* is a concept of limit: the implicit criterion of Heidegger's evaluation of political regimes, which underlies his response to the dual threat of liberalism and communism, is historicity as a category of limit opposed to the metaphysics of ahistorical universalism. The Wilsonian crusade to "make the world safe for democracy" and the proletarian revolution propagated by Leninism belong to the Same at least in respect to their global aspirations for "regime change." I noted that being-toward-death, as the internal limit of Dasein, finds its communal articulation in the finitude and historicity of a people's relation to its heritage and its historical earth. Identity arises out of a people's attunement to its finitude and to its native soil, and out of the ways this attunement is enacted in forms of labor, art, thought, and belief. One way becoming-a-people enters into the specific limit of its own being is through the modes of its encounter with beings in the transformation of beings. One such mode of encounter takes place through work:

In work as the present understood as enpresenting [*Gegenwärtigung*] the making-present of beings happens. Work signifies the present in the primordial sense that we are moved toward an encounter with beings in the historicity of their arrival for us, submitting to their power and transforming them in primordial moods of struggle, astonishment, and reverence, thus to enhance the greatness of beings. (GA38, 154)

Through work, as the making-present of beings, a *Volk* brings itself into the own limit. Each historically founded, epochal way of making-present implicates a specific political economy.¹⁵ Labor in this sense is not founded in the self-production of humanity conceived in its subjectivity (Marx), nor in the liberal concept of self-ownership as the ground of all production and self-identity (Locke). These concepts of labor are derived from "productionist metaphysics" which posit nature as raw material.¹⁶ Heidegger understands work as an essential form of man's historicity and temporality, hence as the ecstatic exposure of man to the presencing of beings. Heidegger's concept of socialism, therefore, goes beyond the transformation of the economy and a more egalitarian distribution of wealth. Socialism expresses:

concern for the measure and essential structure of our historical being, and therefore it affirms an order of rank according to vocation and work, it affirms the unquestioned worth of every kind of work, it affirms unconditional service as the fundamental form of relation to the inescapable [presencing] of being [in beings]. (GA38, 165)

Conceived in its historicity, and therefore in terms of the mission and the task which gives a

people its inherent limit, socialism is integral to the constitution of a people in its engagement with beings and its rootedness in its historical earth or homeland. This claim implies that a people's socialism is a more authentic making-present of beings in labor than capitalism or bolshevism, precisely because being-a-people is founded in the specific limits of its relation to the earth and the possibilities of its heritage. Historicity is concretely articulated in a political economy. Work as making-present is founded in the letting-be and thus *differentiation* of the being of beings. Work therefore implies a response to the rank order and differentiation of beings and their ecological specificity, as is opposed to both capitalist and communist concepts of production based on the indifference of all entities as resources-on-call. The people-as-limit only comes to be in response to the limit of beings in their historical ecology.¹⁷ *Volk* is a concept of earth-rooted socialism and as such implies an ethos of dwelling with beings in the bringing-to-light and transformation of beings. Articulated by different technologies, the encounter with beings in work has the potential of bringing them into the shelter of an unconcealment which lets them be.¹⁸ Because global technology under the regime of capitalism is a functional order of in-differentiation, it may be that a strong state is necessary to preserve the autonomy of the *national ecology* from neo-imperialist resource exploitation.¹⁹ This implies a *fundamental shift* in our understanding of the "situation" and therefore also of the Event to which we give our fidelity.

Heidegger's concept of work affirms an ecological and anti-imperialist order of the political—a political order, incompatible, one may safely venture, with the choices imposed upon Germany in the Weimar period—slavery to capitalism under the terms of the Versailles *Diktat* of 1919, or surrender to the Leninist-Stalinist international and its program of collectivization and mass murder.²⁰ The people, in its attunement to its earth and world, and in its refusal of representational objectification, calls for its state as the constitutional form of its stability as a people (GA38, 86). At least in 1933-1934, Heidegger espoused the alliance of people and state as principles of limit opposed to the universal claims of sociotechnical imperialism of every tendency. His support for the National Socialism *state*, in this period, has to be read in light of the question of work, and work in the light of a political economy of resistance to imperialism. If, in 1933, Heidegger perceived National Socialism as a national liberation movement and as such the condition of the restoration of the dignity of work, this may be because he, like many others on the Left as well as the Right, experienced Weimar as a colonial entity incapable of defending legitimate German interests:

Yet the will to take responsibility for itself is not only the fundamental law of our being as a *Volk*, but at the same time the fundamental event of the realization of our National Socialist state. Out of this will to self-responsibility every work of every class in things small and great are moved into the position and rank of their equal necessity. The work of the classes carries and secures the living structure of the state; work allows the *Volk* to recover its rootedness; work moves the state as the actuality of the *Volk* into the field of influence of all essential powers of human being.²¹

The self-responsibility of a people constituted as one in its state, Heidegger avers in the same speech of the 11th November, 1933, is the condition of a genuine community of peoples. Germany's exit from the League of Nations, therefore, does not mean the rejection of the "community of nations" (*Gemeinschaft der Völker*) (GA16, 191). Self-responsibility presupposes autonomy and self-respect, and not only Heidegger, and not only the conservative Right, was of the opinion that this was not possible as long as Versailles continued to determine Germany's relations to the League. The wider context of these remarks on people and state, therefore, is the degradation of work, the worker, and the nation, to the struggle for mere survival in the capitalist economy of the Weimar client state of the bankers. The National Socialist state, in its repudiation of the Weimar tradition, is conceived as the actualization of the "will to take responsibility" for itself of the people, and as such it is the necessary counter-weight to the limitlessness of the global economy of finance capitalism. The people in this sense is evidently distinct from a population of producers and consumers exposed to the vicissitudes of globalization and ideological manipulation proper to it. Today, it might be noted, the "Third World" is, and has long been "Weimar," subject to the interventions and imperial "discipline" of the World Bank, the WTO, and the IMF.²²

THE METAPHYSICS OF GLOBALIZATION: TOTAL MOBILIZATION

The possibility of the inauguration of an event of political transformation through the National Socialist revolution became increasingly questionable for Heidegger after 1935, with the result that the premises of the new regime are also subjected to a fundamental critique. According to Heidegger, the political of modernity is founded in subjectivity (*Subjektivität*), understood as the making-present and securing of beings for representational thinking.²³ Subjectivity in this sense encompasses both the realm of objectivity, the causal order of beings, and subjective self-reflection, self-enhancement and self-intensification. The being of subjectivity is the condition of the "total mobilization" of all beings as functions of the self-overpowering empowerment of metaphysically conceived being.²⁴ As we know, the concept of total mobilization, which had a

considerable influence on Heidegger in the 1930s, derives from the work of Ernst Jünger.²⁵ Total mobilization by no means implies a totalitarian political order; it is in fact compatible with the totalization of society effected by liberalism, as Jünger recognized, as well as with Soviet Communism and National Socialism.²⁶ The empowerment of power, understood as the representational production and self-construction of a human population as founded in subjectivity, belongs to all three forms, despite their differences in other respects. The mutual implication of re-presentational objectification, and self-enhancement of subject positions, is integral to the unfolding of total mobilization. Total mobilization encompasses all “political options” available to Heidegger in the 1930s, and all are determined by the history of being as the metaphysics of re-presentational production of the real and its conditions of possibility.²⁷

To say that being is self-overpowering signifies that the true is posited as a function of power, as a momentary stabilization of beings in a construction which serves the dynamism of being experienced as will-to-power. The guiding interpretation of being as power, and power as being-effective in the making-operational of beings as functions of power, consummates the inception of Western thought as *energeia*, its translation as *actus*, and its full unfolding as the actuality of the actual (GA66, 187-89, 195/ 165-7, 172). Being is experienced as being-operational, hence as a functional order of the real which systematically dis-integrates all limits and all that is own to beings—including the being of the rational animal—to integrate them into the making-secure of power (GA66, 17-8/ 13). This epoch of being marks the era of globalization and of global imperialism. In *Mindfulness*, Heidegger lists the following five manifestation of self-overpowering power as constituting the consummation of modernity (GA66, section 9): the dynamic, totalization, the imperial, the rational as the representational securing of beings, and the planetary. These phenomenological manifestations of the metaphysical history of being constitute our hermeneutic situation: to grasp them as such, in their provenance in the first beginning of Occidental thought, is the pre-requisite of understanding the ontic realities of globalization in the age of imperial competition, world wars, and the technological transformation of mankind and nature. As manifestations of being as self-overpowering power, they implicate the dis-empowerment of all traditional, stable forms, their re-construction and integration into a functional, dynamic totality in accordance with the technological rationality of science, and the positing of the planet as one coherent panoptic system ordered by the imperial dictates of positing and securing the true as the functional. The planetary as the totalized realm of imperial command and oversight cannot acknowledge the inherent limits of beings, of peoples, and of the earth itself, as a bar to the dynamic transformation of total mobilization. Planetary imperialism is thought as the “projecting-open of re-presentation in the sense of a *grasping* that reaches ahead, plans and

arranges" (GA65, 135-6/ 94-5). Mobilization pertains not only to nature and human being in its being-present as a resource base on call, but also to the historical being of mankind, which is reduced to an ideological product made-available to a perspective of power posited in the service of power in order to secure the future (GA66, 183/ 161). In essential questions of power, the interpretation of the past as it impinges on the making-secure of the existing political system increasingly becomes less a matter of archival research and evaluation of the sources in the spirit of the Enlightenment than a question of political *fiat* laid down and secured by law.

THE METAPHYSICS OF LIFE

The casual allusion Žižek makes to Leni Riefenstahl and the dynamics of life, as well as his reflection on the aesthetics of embodiment (Z/ MH 29-31), perhaps inadvertently intimates his own affinity with the *metaphysics of Life*: this is revealed in his attempt to interpret Heidegger's understanding of the will as primordial being, and the will in this sense as a drive in the Freudian sense (Z/MH, 33-37). There is no "world, no disclosure of being," Žižek writes, prior to the repetition compulsion of Freudian drive. Žižek draws three conclusions from his discussion of drive in relation to the will and to the question of evil as founded in primordial will: (i) the rejection of the thesis of human finitude: finitude "strictly equals infinity," for the immortality or infinity of the drive "insists 'beyond Life and death,'" (ii) the "name of this diabolical excess of willing which 'perverts' the order of Being [giving rise to evil] is subject"; and (iii) the "subject thus cannot be reduced to an epoch of Being, to the modern subjectivity bent on technological domination—there is, underlying it, a 'non-historical' subject" (Z/ MH, 37). What kind of social ontology can be founded in a theory of drives? This theory implicates a metaphysics of Life which Žižek shares with post-structuralism, and in particular, with Derrida, Foucault, and Badiou. In the first instance, the theory of drive as a theory of the subject, based on Freud's anthropology, implicates a concept of the rational *animal* as *organism*, and therefore the thesis of the technical-metaphysical concept of the self-production of the organism. Life conceived as a self-producing product confirms the metaphysics of technicity which Žižek's ontology of the Event is designed to escape. The affirmation of the *ahistoricity* of the subject of Life follows from the premises that the Life of the human is to be understood as that of a self-making animal, and that being is to be understood ahistorically as production. In this way, the historicity of human being is concealed, *phronesis* as the ground of the political is concealed, and *techné* comes to define what the human is.

Reference to Derrida's concept of writing (*écriture*) as code or program offers us a

fundamental insight into Žižek's understanding of "Life." In *Of Grammatology*, Derrida explicates "inscription in general" as follows:

It is also in this sense that the contemporary biologist speaks of writing and *pro-gram* in relation to the most elementary processes of information within the living cell....If the theory of cybernetics is by itself to oust all metaphysical concepts—including the concepts of soul, of life, of value, of choice, of memory—which until recently served to separate the machine from man, it must conserve the notion of writing...until its own historico-metaphysical character is also exposed. Even before being determined as human...or nonhuman, the *gramme*—or the *grapheme*—would thus name the element.²⁸

The element Derrida refers to, which determines Life in its technicity and hence in its non-distinction from non-life, is *différance* as the synthesis of temporalization and deferral. Life is contaminated by technicity, that is, it is defined by being as self-producing self-empowering replication. Life is transcendental Life, Life is universal being. Writing "in general" is the scene of human life, the stage on which it appears to re-present itself. According to Derrida, the time has come for "re-thinking the limits between the human and the animal, the human and the machine, the human and the technical" in the affirmation of a universal bond capable of founding the cosmopolitan democracy to be.²⁹ The metaphysical condition of this socio-political utopia is conceived of as inscription in general: "any living being undoes the opposition between *phusis* and *techne*. As self-reaction, as activity and reactivity, as differential force, and repetition, life is always already inhabited by technicization" conceived as "originary technicity."³⁰ Derrida refuses the limit of bonds of nation and tradition. The possibility of the political is the universal, the universal is the Life of technicity. With this thesis, the political as a realm of decision, historicity and limit, is dissolved into a democratic utopia beyond life and death. Were it ever to be realized it is liable to be a dystopia beyond our worst nightmares.

In his characterization of Life as repetition, as differential force and reactivity, Derrida anticipates Žižek's position. Nor is this surprising, for both presuppose a Freudo-Marxist interpretation of Nietzsche, a Nietzsche purged of his implication in the history of being to liberate the will to power as an ahistorical *factum* which underlies all subject-positions and every form of encoding. The thesis of the self-production of techno-animality would seem to obviate every appeal to the possibility of the political as the realm of freedom, decision, and action. Yet this is no more the case for Derrida, whose late philosophy avidly propagates the utopia of a "democracy to come," than it is for Žižek. The political, in fact, is posited as the Event of fidelity to the universal (Z/MH, 40). Being-as-Life, Life as code, is universality in its purest, most naked avatar as the self-affirmation of metaphysical Being as self-production. The "political" is re-conceived as the

affirmation of Being as the universal, and as such it is understood as revolutionary Event. But if the universal is the Being of technicity, then the political Event, in its fidelity to Being, must affirm technicity as the sociotechnical self-production of the human animal. This is, of course, the implication that revolutionary proponents of utopian democracy wish to avoid, just as they may wish to make a distinction between the purity of historical Events—the Event of 1917, for example—and its consequences.

The fundamental question at issue is the *being* of man and the decision which the consummation of metaphysics as technicity imposes on mankind: “Is technicity the historical pathway to the *end*, to the last man’s falling back into a technicized animal—or can technicity be above all taken up as a sheltering and then enjoined into the grounding of *Da-sein*? (GA65, 275/194). In the discourses of post-modernity this question has been taken up, at least implicitly, by Foucault’s conceptualization of biopower as the telos of modernity:

If one can apply the term *bio-history* to the pressures through which the movements of life and the processes of history interfere with one another, one would have to speak of biopower to designate what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life.³¹

It is by no means clear, however, that Foucault, any more than Derrida or Žižek, grasps the provenance of biopower in the metaphysical destiny of the West. On the contrary, Foucault affirms the positivity of the discourses of Life as representations of the ungraspable being of Life without subjecting Life itself to interrogation. The historicity of man is *reduced to bio-history*, which puts Foucault in the perhaps surprising company of Ernst Kriek and other proponents of the National Socialist world view.³² This is not an accident—the consummation of modernity, as technicity, brings Life to power, quite irrespective of political ideology. Life in its actual manifestations, including the life of the human, can only be brought “into the realm of explicit calculation” because the being of life is *posited* in its technicity, and because transcendental Life, in Derrida’s sense, is the condition of our understanding of the being of beings.

As Marc de Kesel, has shown, being *qua* Being in Badiou’s terms is grasped as universal possibility, as pure presentation, “a presence radically different from the temporary differences characterizing the level of *representation*. In this ontological and ‘eternal’ presence, death is always already resurrection...Death, life and death, temporality...belong exclusively to the worldly time of being. Being *qua* Being has only life.”³³ The Event as revolutionary act of the affirmation of the universal is the affirmation of transcendental Life in this sense. It may be said that Badiou’s metaphysics, and thus also Žižek’s insofar as they derive from it, reiterate the post-structuralist

appropriation of Husserl as carried through by Derrida.

MACHINATION AND ERLEBNIS: THE EVENT AS PSEUDO-EVENT

To more fully grasp the metaphysics of Life propagated by Žižek's concept of Event we have to gain an insight into the consummation of the metaphysical history of being in the mutual implication and intensification of *machination* and *lived-experience*. Machination (*Machenschaft*) signifies the determination of the being of beings by the will to power thought in its planetary consummation as self-surpassing and self-affirming (GA65, 132/ 92). It implicates the oblivion of being (*Seinsvergessenheit*), and as such the pre-eminence of the re-presentation of beings as operational functions of production and consumption. Beings are abandoned to their being-present as beings-made, produced (GA67, 150; GA66, 26). Machination is the self-affirmation and self-overpowering of power in the representation of beings—their being-posed, constructed, and transformed, their authorization and their legitimation as functions of power. Power is its own end and self-enabling of itself: it discloses beings as functions of power and constructs them as subjects of power to integrate them into the standing-reserve and constancy of the functional totality of being. They are defined by their being-on-call and availability, their operational readiness (GA69, 79, 184-6). Beings take the seductive form of being-available for being-produced, they show themselves in the light of the making and ordering of power (GA69, 186-7). With this entanglement in the economy of beings, and the self-production of the subject, being as the event of unconcealment is forgotten and shows itself only in the guise of the universal condition of making-operational and effective as a function of power.

Within this functional-causal system of what is, "lived-experience" (*Erlebnis*) unfolds as the affirmation of self-construction, self-enhancement, and self-empowerment. As Foucault has also argued on his own premises in terms of his genealogy of the modern subject, power is nothing "outside" the subject, but integral to its very being:

Relations of power are not in position of exteriority to other types of relationships (economic process, knowledge relationships, sexual relations), but are immanent in the latter; they are the immediate effects of the divisions, inequalities, and disequilibriums which occur in the latter, and conversely they are the internal conditions of these differentiations; relations of power are not in superstructural positions, with merely a role of prohibition or accompaniment; they have a directly productive role, wherever they come into play.³⁴

We construct ourselves as subjects, and as such affirm the empowerment of power as

machination. Power is constructive of subject-positions (GA69, 64). In Heidegger's history of being, *Erlebnis* is the subject-position of re-presentation which affirms its own objectification as being-operational in the act of positing objectivity as the transcendental condition of the being of beings. Lived-experience as the experience of the intensification of being-alive permeates the self as subject. It is integral to the positing of being in its objectivity; it is the self-reflection in the act of holding-for-true which posits; and it is the pure sensation of the integration of the posited and the senses, the experience of the integration of the body into technicity. The ultimate *telos* of the mutual intensification of machination and lived-experience is the integrated interface of mankind and machine, mankind and its own biochemical modification and genetic reconstruction (GA65, 126-8/ 88-9). As I noted above, Derrida, among others, is the prophet of this utopia. The ideological and sociotechnical manipulation of a human population, its management, mobilization, indoctrination and re-education are integral to lived-experience as the representation of the socio-political sciences in the production of a functional and fully operational humanity. The production of the social in this sense, understood in terms of the consummation of metaphysics, is the object of Heidegger's critique of the cultural policies of National Socialism after 1936, when it became evident to him that the coming-to-be of the *Volk* as the movement of the refusal of technicity could not be reconciled with the policies of the regime.

"The coming together," Heidegger writes, "of machination and lived-experience encloses itself within a singular event of appropriation (*Ereignis*) within the sheltered and concealed history of be-ing (*Seyn*)" (GA65, 134/ 93; modified).³⁵ This is the event of the consummation of metaphysics: the event of global mankind's entrance into the Janus-faced passage-way of the total mobilization and expropriation of all beings, their reduction to being-operational, *and* the first intimations of the sheltering-withdrawal of beings from representational being-produced as the sole determination of their being. The passage from expropriation to appropriation must be founded, Heidegger insists, in the being-historical of a people (GA65, 319-22/ 324-26). Yet machination and lived-experience *conceal the passage* which they are: machination disguises itself in the objectivity of being and the being-present of beings, and lived-experience shows itself as the self-empowerment of the individual or collective subject, as founded in the classical position of Cartesian subjectivity (GA65, 127-8/ 88-9). A "psychologically-natural-scientific" anthropology—such as Freud espouses and Žižek's theory of drive appropriates—"indicates, more impressively than any historical demonstration of dependencies, that once again one is preparing oneself to return totally to the Cartesian ground" of modernity (GA65, 134/ 93-4). As we know, Žižek affirms the necessity of this return (Z/TS, 10-11) . While fully consistent with his own position, Žižek's affirmation of the subject of the Event fails to interrogate its provenance in the

history of being and its implication in the metaphysics of Life. Perhaps fidelity to an “authentic” Event, the intensity of engagement and enthusiasm of the collective subject which Žižek insist upon (Z/MH, 15) is ultimately the affirmation of the lived-experience which belongs to the objective order of the “situation,” to self-empowering being as machination:

Insofar as man also conceives himself, in the epoch of the unlimited power (*Macht*) of self-empowering machination, as the [rational] animal (as *living* being), and equally whether he understand himself as “I” or as “We,” there remains for him merely lived-experience as the sole means of the organization of his comportment and his ethos (*Haltung*) which can give him an appearance of self-autonomy in respect to beings within the circuit of machination (GA66, 17/ 13)

Does the concept of Event signify a mere form of the appearance of the inceptual within the order of self-empowering being as machination and lived-experience? Does it, as a political theory, serve to justify a personal and collective comportment, an ethos of revolutionary fervor and a sense of “self-autonomy in respect to beings within the circuit of machination” which merely confirms metaphysical being in its dynamic self-overpowering empowerment? Does the doctrine of the Event, as a theory of history, confirm history as a causal order founded in subjectivity? Is the Event in Žižek’s terms even possible, or must it necessarily, in the light of the history of being, be a pseudo-event?³⁶

ONTIC CONSIDERATIONS RELATIVE TO EVENT AND PSEUDO-EVENT

In the name of Lacan, Žižek rejects the Stalinist retroactive justification of revolutionary terror even as he rejects the “biopolitical administration of life” understood as the “true content of global democracy.”³⁷ Where does this leave us? “What if we take the risk of resuscitating the good old ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ as the only way to break biopolitics?” (Z/VT, xxvii). The proletariat, according to Žižek, “stands for universality,” and the ‘dictatorship of the proletariat’ means “the direct empowerment of universality” in the name of those who lack all determining features “that would legitimate their place within the social body.” As such, as the ‘part of no-part,’ they embody “true Universality” in the purely formal, empty sense as the “equality of all men *qua* speaking beings” (Z/VT, xxviii, xxix). But the affirmation of the universal in this sense affirms a *specific understanding of being* as the most universal, empty category, as distinct from the differentiation of being in beings. The political concept of universality propagated here signifies the political as the ahistorical, deracinated, without content or specificity of human embodiment in tradition and culture. The concept of equality is purely functional, just as the underlying concept of

being is an abstraction of the postulated in-difference of distinctions, limits, and orders of rank as inherent in beings. The universal as the planetary, Heidegger argues, actualizes itself as the commune (*koinon*) of the equality, normalization, and being-operational of mankind as collective subject.³⁸ This concept of the proletariat, moreover, is a construct, not a substantial historical class, as Žižek acknowledges; this means that it is posited, and in fact, it posits itself as a collective subject (Z/VT, xxxviii). In Badiou's words, "a politics is a hazardous, militant and always partially undivided fidelity to eventual singularity under a solely self-authorizing prescription."³⁹ The collective subject authorizes, that is, posits itself. Žižek believes that this collective subject, which in the act of its pure self-positing is outside history, has "the capacity to somehow limit impersonal and anonymous socio-historical development, to steer it in a desired direction" (Z/VT, xxxviii). On what grounds should this be possible? The positing of a self-empowering collective is itself the confirmation of the will to power as self-positing self-overpowering, and as such it can only confirm the "impersonal" order of being as power. This universal order is indeed without any limit—it is the actualization of a purely functional order of total mobilization. There is *no possibility whatsoever* of "steering" being as universal self-empowerment, for the collective subject is simply a function of this universality. In reference to Foucault and the Iranian revolt, Žižek turns, as he does in his Heidegger essay (Z/MH, 9-16), to a notion of a "magic event of the revolt which somehow suspends the web of historical causality" (Z/VT, xxxiii). The "magic" resides entirely in Žižek's conceptualization of it, not in the event itself. The attempt to enlist Kant in the service of a moment of freedom understood as the inception of a causal series ascribes to the moment of inception a universal, ahistorical power of beginning: speaking of Foucault, Žižek writes

what interests him are not the Iranian events at the level of actual social reality and its causal interactions, but the eventual surface, the pure virtuality of the 'spark of life' which only accounts for the uniqueness of the Event....The point is thus not the shift in relations of power and domination between actual socio-political agents, the redistribution of social control...[but] the emergence of a totally different domain of the 'collective will' as pure Sense-Event in which all differences are obliterated, rendered irrelevant. (Z/VT, xxxv)

We have seen what the 'spark of life' implicates—the ahistorical universality of being as the functional order of transcendental life. The "Sense-Event" is the lived-experience of this order, in no way does it or can it break from relations of domination, but only confirm and intensify them. For power, as Foucault has also insisted, is nothing external to subjective experience, or to the collective will, but constructs, authorizes and legitimates it. The Sense-Event is the self-affirmation of the causal order of being as re-presentational production of the real, just as the collective subject, which posits itself, conforms to the being of power as the positing of the truth of beings.

This leads me to the distinction between Events and pseudo-events, to which Žižek, in the wake of Badiou, devotes considerable attention.

Based on what has been said, I have to conclude that this distinction, as Žižek conceives it, is impossible in principle, for what he nominates an Event is itself a pseudo-event, and every self-willing of collective subjectivity is a pseudo-event. Nonetheless, it is useful to go into this question in brief detail, for it underlies Žižek's project of radical revolutionary politics. Žižek insists that the National Socialist 'revolution' of 1933, to which Heidegger briefly gave his allegiance, was not an Event, but rather a pseudo-event (Z/MH, 14, 33) By what criteria are we to decide this? By reference to the "situation": the failure of the National Socialists to continue the class struggle defining the situation constitutes 1933 as pseudo-event, unlike the authentic Event of 1917 (Z/ MH,14). Who decides that the situation is defined by "class struggle"? Self-evidently, this is determined by Marxist analysis. In effect, since Marxist analysis is presupposed, an authentic Event can only be an event in accordance with the Marxist concept of history and social analysis. However, what if the situation is defined by something other than class struggle as its definitive element? Žižek himself raises this question.⁴⁰ The National Socialists themselves, as well as Heidegger and many Germans in the National Bolshevik camp, defined the situation of 1933 in terms of a national liberation struggle against international finance capitalism, which had reduced Weimar Germany, under the terms of the Versailles *Diktat*, to a tribute-paying colony. Let us only recall the twenty-five points of Gottfried Feder's program of the N.S.D.A.P., and in particular, the demands for the abolition of the provisions of Versailles, for equal treatment of Germany among the nations, and for the breaking of the "slavery of interest," that is, the dictatorship of international finance.⁴¹ It can, and has in fact been argued that the Second World War was conceived and organized by international finance to restore the hegemony of finance, which Hitler had come to threaten.⁴² Whatever the cogency of these arguments, my point is that the "situation" can be defined in terms of the resistance of a people to imperialism, and that to define it in terms of class conflict within a state begs the question of how the universal will be posited, and hence how the Event as an inceptual moment of freedom will be experienced.

Žižek refers to Heidegger's critical references to Versailles as ominous (Z/ MH, 24). I think this is a mistake; what is ominous is not Heidegger's refusal of Versailles, which he shared with the vast majority of his countrymen of all political persuasions, but the attempt to cast rejection of Versailles in an ominous light. In his *Imperialism the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin had also castigated Versailles in the harshest terms. This is not simply a "historical" question of the proper appreciation of the impact of Versailles: it bears directly upon the question of the Event, and in

particular, on the question of the universality of the Event. For what constitutes the universal? How is the universal related to the ontic realities of empirical history? Žižek claims that Heidegger's understanding of the history of being conceals ontic, historical truth. (Z/ MH, 19-20, 22). The question can be posed in reference to the position of Žižek (and Badiou): does the concept of the Event as the affirmation of the universal conceal the ontic realities of the history of modernity?

In the *Parmenides* lectures Heidegger describes the revolution of Lenin as the fusion of the Party—the collective subject—and “electricity,” which is to say, technology (GA54, 127/ 86). The discourse of collective subjectivity is embodied in the Party as the party of universality, as well as in the sciences of the technological transformation of nature. Together they embody the truth of technicity as the consummation of metaphysics. This truth, in its imperial over-seeing commanding, brings the historical being of man to a fall, determines it not only as false, but as collectively guilty. This is how the truth of metaphysical being ontically manifests itself, and this is what is concealed by the ahistoricity of an Event which *legitimizes* itself by fidelity to the universal. This truth, as the making-secure of power, ontically unfolds as the deportation of entire peoples, of the destruction of religion, the genocidal uprooting of the peasantry, in effect, as the deracination of our historical being on a global scale. The truth of the Party, as the *self-positing collective subject of the universal* is the untruth of the *chorismos*, or separation, of being and historicity. The appeal to the universality of being means that the being of peoples, in their fallenness from the ideal of a truth posited a priori, must be historically uprooted and made-secure, made to function in and for the universal. The universal is ultimately thought as the planetary realm of total mobilization.

Heidegger's understanding of becoming-a-people cannot be assimilated to the ethnic concept of National Socialism, for the historicity of becoming a people is incompatible with the metaphysics of life and identity which the traditional concept of the ethnic implies. In the early years of the National Socialist regime, Heidegger had evidently hoped that National Socialism would be able to overcome the *chorismos*, the gulf between being as thought, and being as lived, a gulf which the discourse of the time called “intellectualism.”⁴³ The subsequent history of the regime would show that this was a false hope, and that the ethnic concept of *Volk* was itself merely the inverse of the concept of universalism propagated by communism and liberalism. This can be briefly shown as follows.

The recovery of national independence, in the National Socialist view, was only possible by overcoming the abstractions of universalism, in both its liberal and Soviet-communist forms. Historicity was affirmed in the name of the “people” (*Volk*) as the embodied consciousness of the

land and a tradition. In principle, this affirmation of German ethnicity implicates the affirmation of the ethnic as the concrete, historically founded universal which gives to *each and every* people its possibility of authentic being. No-one would wish to minimize the egregious human rights violations inherent in the exclusion of German Jews from the new National Socialist state. Yet the situation of 1933-1934 was far more fluid and its final direction more uncertain than often assumed today.⁴⁴ It should also be remembered that while National Socialism opposed “the Jews” as the supposed party of a false universality, in both its avatars, it supported Zionism as the party of Jewish ethnic-national renewal throughout the 1930s.⁴⁵ In this sense, ethnic autonomy and nationhood is affirmed as a universal principle. If the condition of being an Event is the affirmation of the universal, then 1933 was an Event, for the National Socialists affirmed *ethnic nationhood as the universal form of man qua man as a living-speaking being*. Moreover, the triumph of an ethnic politics in Germany was a direct consequence of the claims of Wilsonian universalism, which declared the principle of ethnic-national liberation to be the deciding criterion of the political. This principle was betrayed at Versailles: the treaties concluding the War subjected large German minorities to foreign rule; and against the express will of the Austrian people in the immediate wake of the War, Austria was expressly forbidden to unite with Germany by the Entente powers. It could be argued that Hitler sought to implement President Wilson’s program of ethnic emancipation from foreign domination, and in doing so he affirmed universality—a strange thought, perhaps, but one which found resonance in the anti-colonialist struggle during and after 1945 in the form of the struggle for independence of self-conceived ethnic-cultural nations.⁴⁶

Yet the *universal of the ethnic-national state* is already a deformation of the authentic idea of *Volk*, as Heidegger conceived it. This authentic idea is never realized. The fact that the National Socialist leadership also betrayed the ethnic-national principle that it espoused by founding the nation in the *collective subjectivism of the universal* is an additional reason which is liable to have caused Heidegger to turn away from real existing National Socialism even before it became overtly imperialistic.

From Heidegger’s perspective after 1936, the tragedy of National Socialism is that it failed to realize its anti-imperialist potential, and thereby ceased to offer a genuinely third way beyond the global imperialism of East and West. The universality affirmed by National Socialist ideology is also, like the universality of its political opponents, founded in a concept of collective subjectivity. The collective, moreover, is founded in the *life of the people*, hence in an anthropology of the rational animal. It is instructive that in the wake of Althusser, however unbeknownst and certainly unwelcome to themselves, Žižek, as well as Derrida and Badiou, have sought to found subjectivity in a concept of transcendental Life, and therefore, in a modification of the biopolitical metaphysics

of National Socialism. What this reveals is that ethnic biopolitical concepts and class-based biopolitical concepts have one common root in the metaphysical understanding of being as the representational production of beings.

In short, the concept of the Event, as propagated by Žižek, is a dogmatic statement of Marxist ideology. On historical-ontic grounds, it is not possible to distinguish between an Event and a pseudo-event, for the deciding criteria will necessarily be posited a priori. Ontologically, as I have tried to show, every act of *positing* an Event, every form of *subjective fidelity* to the universal founded in a conception of being as abstract, transcendental universality, is a pseudo-event in the sense that it confirms being as self-empowerment. For this reason the Event cannot be a beginning, for it affirms technicity as the essence of being.

THE HISTORY OF TRUTH : VIRTUE IS TERROR, TERROR IS VIRTUE

In his introduction to an anthology of Robespierre's political tracts, Žižek asks: "does the (often deplorable) actuality of revolutionary terror compel us to reject the very idea of Terror, or is there a way to repeat it in today's different historical constellation, to redeem its virtual content from its actualization?" (Z/VT, xii-xiii). The form of repetition Žižek conceives as "our only hope" is to affirm terror as the positive term in the relation of humanism and terror; for humanism, in the wake of the critique of metaphysics (as exemplified by Heidegger and Foucault), reveals itself as a program of instrumental, sociotechnical rationality. Terror as "positive term" signifies the re-invention of "emancipatory terror" as a force for universal, egalitarian justice (Z/VT, xiii, xxi). In Robespierre's words, as cited by Žižek:

Terror is nothing but prompt, severe, inflexible justice; it is therefore an emanation of virtue; it is not so much a specific principle as a consequence of the general principle of democracy applied to our homeland's most pressing needs. (Z/VT, viii)

How is the subject-position of the affirmation of terror conceived by Žižek? As the universal, "inhuman' dimension" of a "subject subtracted from all form of human individuality or personality," in effect, as the "pure transcendental subject" in the tradition of Kant, as the "transcendental cogito" of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*. The transcendental ego constitutes the "virtual point of reference" of every "authentic revolutionary position" in its abstraction from concrete human existence (VT, xv, xviii). This pure subject is "non-human," and most purely exemplified, Žižek writes in reference to the popular cinema, in the "alien, cyborg—who displays more fidelity to its

task, and to dignity and freedom than its human counterparts” (VT, xv). With these statements, Žižek’s concept of subject reveals its fundamental metaphysical position, one consistent with Derrida’s meta-technical thinking. *Fidelity* to the Event of the transcendental subject *is* terror, *the terror-system of ahistorical universality* imposed on historical humanity.⁴⁷

What is the provenance of virtue as terror, terror as virtue, in the history of truth? The concealment of the truth of *aletheia* as the sheltering withdrawal (*lethe*) of the unconcealed in the manifestation of beings, takes place, Heidegger avers, in two decisive steps. In the first of these, which happens with the transposition of the Greek experience of being into the Roman, and into the Roman language of *verum* and *falsum*, the relation between unconcealment (*a-letheia*) and sheltering concealment (*lethe*) is translated into the imperial relation of the true as the stable and the false as the fallen:

Ver- means to be steady, to keep steady, i.e., not to fall (no *falsum*), to remain above, to maintain oneself, to keep one’s head up, to be the head, to command. Maintaining oneself, standing upright—the upright. Thus it is from the essential domain of the imperial that *verum*, as counter-word to *falsum*, received the sense of established right. (GA54, 69-70/ 47)

In standing and in securing, in its over-seeing commanding, *verum* is *rectum*, it commands the right and lays down the law. The *lethe* of *aletheia* is degraded to the false as the fallen, and it becomes subject to the truth of imperial command (GA54, 70, 74/ 47, 50). The imperial is the commanding holding-for-true which posits the true in *bringing* to a fall, that is, in the act of overthrowing or ‘tripping up’ the enemy and making it serviceable for the imperium (GA54, 59-60/ 40-1). With the inception of modernity, the essence of truth is transformed again: anticipated by Christian mankind’s desire for certainty of salvation, for assurance of being a *true* Christian, one *justified* in the eyes of God, *veritas* is transformed into *certitudo* with the ground-laying metaphysics of Descartes. Now the “question of truth becomes the question of the secure, assured, and self-assuring use of *ratio*” (GA54, 76/ 51-2). Our own hermeneutic situation, understood as the epoch of the planetary, brings the truth of modernity fully to power as the *will to secure the empowering of power*, and this alone determines what shall count as “true” (GA69, 79-80). It is within the horizon of this epochal truth that the resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) of modern man takes the stage as the self-affirmation of the will in the making-secure of a circuit of power. The transposition of the Greek experience of *arete*, understood as the being-open (*Entschlossenheit*) to being, into Roman *virtus* and Christian virtue, is consummated in the resoluteness of modern man, which is *the virtue commensurate with the truth of modernity*:

Resoluteness in the modern sense is metaphysically not grounded on *aletheia* but on the self-assurance of man as subject, i.e., on subjectivity. Resoluteness, as conceived in the modern way, is the willing of what is willed in its own will; this will drives it to willing. 'Being-driven' is in Latin *fanatice*. The distinguishing characteristic of modern resoluteness is 'the fanatical.' (GA54, 111-12/ 75-6).

Enthusiasm for humanity, for the universal as the Life of the transcendental subject is perhaps the most dangerous form of fanaticism, one easily harnessed to the most horrendous crimes, which can be always "justified" by the utopian imagination of a democracy to come. The to-come is already grasped by the utopian imagination in the Now of the Event, the Now of the day of judgement on a fallen humanity that is, in its historical imperfection, in dire need of being purged and re-educated. In the positing of the universal justice of the true, in the name of the justified, terror is virtue, and virtue is terror.

In Foucault's genealogies of the subject, which in many ways are consistent with Heidegger's history of modernity, the true is conceived as what is posited as a function of being-operational in and for the totality:

'Truth' is to be understood as a system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. 'Truth' is linked in a circular relation with systems of power which produce and sustain it, and to effects of power which it induces and which extends it. A 'regime' of truth.⁴⁸

With this characterization of truth as a procedure of power and knowledge, the imperial truth of modernity comes to word in such a way as to render questionable any possibility of an Event which begins anew, which breaks with the system of statements, the ideology and causality it inscribes in the body politic. It is clearly within this context that Badiou and Žižek raise the necessity of thinking the Event. The problem is, however, that the Event is thought as being-effective, as *bringing about effects* which retrospectively *justify* the initial decision to wager one's being in fidelity to an Event, thus to affirm freedom as the *initiation of a causal series* not yet inscribed in the "situation" of what-is.⁴⁹ Yet in subscribing to a notion of Event as being-effective, to freedom as a disruption of causality in order to affirm causality, and in seeking to justify the subject's engagement in an history-founding decision, the entire structure of the specifically modern understanding of being and truth is reiterated. Positing the truth of the Event already affirms the being of self-overpowering power as the positing of the true in the unrelenting dynamism of becoming; the justification of the Event already assumes the essence of truth as making-secure. The thesis of the universal as the criterion of an authentic Event affirms being in its abstract universality as the all-pervasiveness of self-empowering power in all that is posited as

subject and object. As de Kesel notes, the truth of the Event, for Badiou, is founded in being *qua* Being as universal, eternal truth.⁵⁰ The being of the universal is the ground of planetary total mobilization. In the epoch of technicity, the sole criterion which governs the “truth” of a political system is the efficiency of its dynamic transformation of resources into energy, that is, into operational functions of the being of power.

Badiou writes that the “universality of political truth that results from such a fidelity [to the Event] is itself legible, like all truth, only retroactively, in the form of knowledge.”⁵¹ The “fidelity” of Badiou and Žižek confirms being as universality, and an act of fidelity finds itself being-confirmed retroactively by the *knowledge of the effects of the Event* to which we give our fidelity. The universality of being is understood *as being-effective*. As Ingram notes in reference to Badiou, only the effect allows us to recognize the Event; and only the Event, conversely, allows the production of new effects breaking with the causal series of the situation.⁵² In *Mindfulness*, Heidegger offers a critical evaluation of the following statement of Adolf Hitler: “There is no attitude (*Haltung*), which cannot be ultimately justified by the ensuing usefulness for the totality” (GA66, 122/ 102). The fundamental metaphysical position enunciated by this statement is compatible with the neo-Marxist position of Žižek and Badiou. Fidelity is the attitude of positing-for-true of a totality (universal); the positing is itself the Event which finds its subsequent justification in usefulness (being-effective) for the totality which it produces.

Heidegger holds that freedom does not inhere in the initiation of a causal series, nor yet in the intensity of a subjective engagement or “revolutionary” passion, but in being-open to the non-metaphysical being of beings, thus to let beings be: “Every mode of comportment (*Verhalten*) flourishes in letting beings be (*Seinlassen*) and in each case is a comportment to this or that being. As engagement in the disclosure (*Entbergung*) of beings as a whole, freedom has already attuned all comportment to being as a whole.”⁵³ The comportment Heidegger speaks of here is grounded in the resoluteness (*arete*) of staying-open to the Open of being: this staying-open grants the freedom of letting-beings-be as the fundamental constitution of our relation to beings as a whole. While this does not exclude the self-insistence of human existence, which Žižek emphasizes, it does anticipate a fundamental shift in the history of truth, that is, in the unconcealment of being, and hence in the possibilities of our relation to beings, including our own. This shift is the event (*Ereignis*) of the opening of the *realm of the power-free* (*das Machtlose*) as the site of the founding of being in beings.⁵⁴ The most tenacious resistance to the event of being as the power-free is mounted by subjectivity in the affirmation of subject and object, for subjectivity itself founds the untruth of being as planetary mobilization.

1 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1972), pp. 127-28; trans. Joan Stambaugh, *Being and Time* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY, 1996), pp. 119-20. Cited in the text as SZ. In this and all other citations, reference to translations, where applicable, follows the reference to the original text. Unless otherwise noted all emphasis is in the original.

2 Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject* (London: Verso, 1999), pp. 17, 23. Cited as ZI/TS.

3 See Thomas Brockelman, "The Failure of the Radical Democratic Imaginary. Žižek versus Laclau and Mouffe on Vestigial Utopia," *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol. 29 no.2 (2004): 202. As Brockelman notes, Žižek relies on Freud's theory of *Nachträglichkeit* to retroactively substantiate an event as an opening of freedom within a causal series.

4 Slavoj Žižek, "Why Heidegger Made the Right Step in 1933," *International Journal of Žižek Studies*. Vol. 1.4: 31. Cited in the text as Z/MH.

5 Žižek's discussion of *polemos* (ZI/MH, 37-9), fails to think the differentiation of *being* in beings as the site of the "political." I have tried to unfold this question elsewhere in terms of Heidegger's relation to Carl Schmitt: see *Heidegger and the Question of National Socialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), pp. 265-91.

6 Brockelman, op. cit., p.188, notes Chantal Mouffe's reliance on Carl Schmitt's concept of antagonism—the friend/ enemy distinction in the constitution of the political. Žižek is correct to distance himself from this concept of antagonism (Brockelman, p. 189), founded as it is in subjectivity, but he reconstitutes subjectivity as a functional, operational order.

7 Alain Badiou, "Politics as Truth Procedure," in *Metapolitics*, trans. Jason Barker (London: Verso, 2006), pp.142-43.

8 Martin Heidegger, *Grundbegriffe der Aristotelischen Philosophie*. Vol. 18 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2002), p. 181. Cited in the text as GA18.

9 See Bernhard Radloff, "Foucault's Genealogy of Modernity and the Logic of *Erlebnis*," *Existentialia* XV (2005): 291-92.

10 Martin Heidegger, *Platon: Sophistes*. Vol. 19 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1992), pp. 55-6. Cited in the text as GA19.

11 Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*. Vol. 54 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1982), p. 190; trans. *Parmenides* by André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1992), p. 128. Cited in the text as GA54.

12 I have dealt with Heidegger's understanding of *Volk* in relation to the Conservative Revolution and National Socialism at length elsewhere. See *Heidegger and the Question of National Socialism*, op. cit., esp. chapters 3 through 6.

13 Regarding Heidegger's critique of metaphysical liberalism see Richard Polt, "Metaphysical Liberalism in Heidegger's *Beiträge zur Philosophie*," *Political Theory* 25, no.5 (1997): 620-49.

14 Martin Heidegger, *Logik als die Frage nach dem Wesen der Sprache*. Vol. 38 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998). Cited in the text as GA38.

15 See Herbert Marcuse, "On the Philosophical Foundations of the Concept of Labor in Economics," in *Heideggerian Marxism*, ed. Richard Wolin and John Abromeit (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), esp. 133-36, on the relation of work and historicity as explicated, in these early essays of Marcuse, in the light of Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology.

16 On the concept of productionist metaphysics in Heidegger see Michael E. Zimmerman, *Heidegger's Confrontation with Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990), pp. 166-90.

17 The ecological commitment of National Socialism is well documented: see Anna Bramwell, *Ecology in the 20th Century* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1989), pp. 200-08; and Luc Ferry, *Le Nouvel Ordre écologique* (Paris: Grasset, 1992), pp. 147-67.

18 See Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)*. Vol. 65 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1989), p. 275; *Contributions to Philosophy (From Enowning)*, trans. Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, p. 194. Cited in the text as GA65. It is evident from this passage, among others, that Heidegger considers the future impact of technology as open—not as determined by a dark mysticism of "Being," as sometimes assumed. The question of what the political constitution of *Volk* and state shall be in order to be commensurate to technology as a *form of the revealing of beings* is the key political issue which motivates his engagement with National Socialism. This question still determines our own "situation."

19 Once life is understood as "code" on the model of the information sciences, the possibilities of the imperial mobilization of global resources enter a qualitatively different dimension. See, for example, William Boyd, "Wonderful Potencies? Deep Structure and the Problem of Monopoly in Agricultural Biotechnology," in *Engineering Trouble. Biotechnology and Its Discontents*, ed. Rachel A. Schurman and Dennis Doyle Takahashi Kelso (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), pp. 24-62.

20 Critical accounts of "Heidegger and Nazism" often seem to forget that Hitler came to power in 1933 in the shadow of the genocide of the Ukrainian peasantry. See Stéphane Courtois, et al., *The Black Book of*

Communism, trans. Jonathan Murphy and Mark Kramer (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1999), pp. 146-68. The attempt to disassociate the rise of Hitler from events in the Soviet Union as well as the refusal of comparative studies of these two forms of totalitarianism reflect an ideological position incommensurate with the realities of the past and the methods of historical research. Despite Žižek's objections (Z/ MH, 16-7), Ernst Nolte's *Heidegger* is entirely justified in its contextual focus. The discipline of empirical (ontic) history is comparative, or it is nothing at all.

21 Martin Heidegger, "Ansprache am 11. November 1933 in Leipzig," in *Reden und Andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges*. Vol. 16 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2000), p. 190.

22 See the recent works of Michael Hudson, *Super Imperialism* (London: Pluto Press, 2003); and Richard Peet, *Unholy Trinity: The IMF, World Bank, and the WTO* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

23 Martin Heidegger, *Besinnung*. Vol. 66 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997), p. 117; trans. *Mindfulness* by Parvis Emad and Thomas Kalary (London: Continuum, 2006), p. 99. Cited in the text as GA66.

24 Martin Heidegger, *Zu Ernst Jünger*. Vol.90 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1997), pp. 6, 98; total mobilization as the actualization of the will-to-power, that is, of being, is not conditional upon any particular political form, but encompasses all (231). Cited as GA90.

25 Ernst Jünger, "Die totale Mobilmachung" (1931), in *Blätter und Steine* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1942), pp. 122-52. Heidegger's GA90 offers an extensive commentary on Jünger in the context of the history of metaphysics.

26 Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter. Herrschaft und Gestalt*, in *Essays II, Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 8 (Stuttgart: Klett, 1981), p. 255. In *The Parallax View* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2006), p. 284, Žižek refers to "the Nazi total mobilization": but total mobilization is the *being of beings* in the era of the consummation of metaphysics—it is not a quality of any particular political system. Genetic engineering, for example, is a phenomenological manifestation of the total mobilization of beings.

27 Martin Heidegger, *Die Geschichte des Seyns*. Vol. 69 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1998), pp. 210-11. Cited in the text as GA69.

28 Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris: Minuit, 1967), p. 19; *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1976), p. 9.

29 Jacques Derrida, "Nietzsche and the Machine," interview with Jacques Derrida by Richard Beardsworth (1993), trans. Richard Beardsworth, in *Negotiations, Interventions and Interviews, 1971-2001*, ed. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002), p. 241.

30 Jacques Derrida, "Nietzsche and the Machine, op. cit., p. 244.

31 Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), p. 188; *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. I, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 143.

32 The "philosophy of life" (*Lebensphilosophie*), which derives most immediately from a misinterpretation of Nietzsche's understanding of being as will-to-power, found heirs not only in works of Klages, but also in National Socialist ideology as represented, for example, by Ernst Krieck. Krieck's *Wissenschaft Weltanschauung Hochschulreform* (Leipzig: Armanen, 1934), pp. 34-42, is a typical example of the attempt to derive the principles of the political from a philosophy of life. It is remarkable that post-structuralist thought falls back on Life as its fundamental metaphysical ground, apparently without awareness thereof, and without inkling of the provenance of the metaphysics of Life, or its intimate relation to a superficially antagonistic political ideology.

33 Marc de Kesel, "Truth as Formal Catholicism—On Alain Badiou, Saint Paul: La fondation de l'universalisme," *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, Vol. 1, no. 2: 21.

34 Michel Foucault, *La Volonté de savoir*, op. cit., pp. 123-4/ 94.

35 Heidegger uses the archaic rendering of *Sein* as *Seyn* to distinguish between the metaphysical understanding of being as the *being of beings*, and being as *Ereignis*, or the event of the "enownment" (becoming-ownmost) of being in beings as founded in the site of Da-sein. See Radloff, *Heidegger and The Question of National Socialism*, op. cit., chapter 7.

36 The "very experience of subjective freedom is the form of appearance of subjection to disciplinary mechanisms" within the administered world of liberal consumer capitalism, Žižek writes in *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (London: Verso, 2002), p. 96. Cited in Jodi Dean, "Why Žižek for Political Theory?," *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, Vol. 1: 31 n.3. But an alternative to the mutual implication of the experience of self-affirmation and the realm of objectivity is not possible as long as subjectivity (the ground of subject and object) is affirmed.

37 Slavoj Žižek, Introduction, *Virtue and Terror*. Maximilien Robespierre (London: Verso, 2007), pp. xxiv, xxvii. Cited in the text as VT.

38 In *Die Geschichte des Seyns* (GA69), Heidegger theorizes the emerging planetary order as the universal, the commune (*koinon*), of the metaphysical animal; it encompasses "communism" and liberalism, for both are founded in subjectivity as the re-presentational production of actuality.

39 Alain Badiou, "Against 'Political Philosophy,'" in *Metapolitics*, op. cit., p. 23.

40 As Brockelman, op. cit., argues in commentary on Žižek's critique of Laclau's theory of hegemony and populism, the "'concrete universal'...suggests that it is precisely through the priority of a particular element that the universal is formed and emerges" (195). For Žižek this concrete universal is the revolutionary party; populism is associated with the logic of fascism. See Žižek's "A Leninist Gesture Today: Against the Populist Temptation," in *Lenin Reloaded: Toward a Politics of Truth*, ed. Sebastian Budgen, Stathis Kouvelakis, and Sivoj Žižek (Durham: Duke UP, 2007), pp. 82-83. Ernesto Laclau's *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005) argues that 'the people' is a construct, or crystallization "in a certain discursive identity" (93). As such, 'the people' represents a formation of collective subjectivity and should not be confused with Heidegger's understanding of *Volk*.

41 Gottfried Feder, *Das Programm der N.S.D.A.P. und seine weltanschaulichen Grundgedanken* (München: Eher, 1933), pp. 19-22.

42 See Guido Gaicomo Preparata, *Conjuring Hitler: How Britain and America Made the Third Reich* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), esp. 229-44, on the role of the Anglo-American financial elites in the coming of World War II; and Ellen Hodgson Brown's *The Web of Debt* (Baton Rouge: Third Millennium Press, 2007), pp. 236-40, concerning Hitler's attempt to break free of the international banking system. The disastrous consequences of Wilson's "idealism," leading to Versailles, are represented in Jim Powell's *Wilson's War. How Woodrow Wilson's Great Blunder Led to Hitler, Lenin, Stalin and World War II* (New York: Crown Forum, 2005).

43 Martin Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik*. Vol. 40 of the *Gesamtausgabe* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1983), p. 130-1; *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale UP, 1959), p. 122.

44 See Radloff, *Heidegger and the Question of National Socialism*, op. cit., chapter 3.

45 See studies by Edwin Black, *The Transfer Agreement: The Untold Story of the Secret Pact between the Third Reich and Jewish Palestine* (New York: Macmillan, 1984); Lenni Brenner, *Zionism in the Age of the Dictators* (London: Croom Helm, 1983); and Francis R. Nicosia, *The Third Reich and the Palestine Question* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985). It is worth noting that while the Nazis were very keen to help German Jews relocate to Palestine in the period up to 1939, about 150,000 Jews and mixed-race Jews would remain in Germany and serve in the German armed forces during World War II; many were officers and some attained high rank. See Bryan Mark Rigg, *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2002).

46 It is too simplistic, for example, to dispose of Subhas Bose, the leader of the Indian resistance movement during World War II, as a fascist because he sought Hitler's aid in the struggle against British imperialism. See Sitanshu Das, *Subhas: A Political Biography* (New Delhi: Rupna, 2001), pp. 431-60, regarding Bose's efforts to win German support. Certainly one of Hitler's gravest errors, founded in his admiration for the British Empire, was that he did not seize the opportunity to promulgate an anti-imperialist war. In the terms of Heidegger's critique of Nazism, Hitler represents the suborning of the historicity of *Volk* by the imperial logic of the truth of modernity. From the perspective of India and the colonized peoples of Africa and Asia, the European struggle of World War I was, in the words of K.M. Panikkar, a "civil war": see *Asia and Western Dominance* (London: George Allen, 1974), p. 197. The same can be said of the Second War. Enrique Dussel puts the question of "subjectivity" in another light entirely by intimating the relation between the metaphysical truth of modernity and the subjection of the non-European Other to the imperial truth of the *cogito* in the wake of 1492. See *The Invention of the Americas. The Eclipse of 'the Other' and the Myth of Modernity*, trans. Michael D. Berber (New York: Continuum, 1995), p. 25.

47 The *fidelity of cyborgs* is certainly a concept worthy of further investigation; and, in fact, post-humanists and trans-humanists have anticipated work in this area. See Chris Hables Gray, ed., *The Cyborg Handbook* (New York: Routledge, 1995), esp. Part 5 ("Cyborg Anthropology") and Part 6 ("The Politics of Cyborgs").

48 Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," interview by Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino, in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), p. 74.

49 The truth of the Event can only prove itself as a universal truth by the effects it brings about. See James D. Ingram, "Can Universalism Still Be Radical? Alain Badiou's Politics of Truth," *Constellations*, Vol. 12, No.4: 565-58.

50 de Kesel, op. cit., p.21.

51 Alain Badiou, "Against 'Political Philosophy,'" in *Metapolitics*, op. cit., p. 23.

52 Ingram, op. cit., p. 656-7.

53 Martin Heidegger, "Vom Wesen der Wahrheit" (1930), *Wegmarken* (Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main, 1978), p. 189; "On the Essence of Truth," trans. John Sallis, in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: Harper, 1977), p. 130. The letting-be of resoluteness as staying-open to being (*Ent-schlossenheit*), which Heidegger subsequently unfolds as the attunement of *Gelassenheit*, does not mean the indifference of letting-things-go, but rather the engaged taking-care of beings as emergent in the event of truth as founded

by a particular historical humanity. For this reason, I think, Žižek's critique of *Gelassenheit* as a kind of political quietism misses the mark. See Z/ MH, 10, 34, 37, and Z/ TS, 278-9.

54 See *Besinnung* (GA69), pp. 103, 135-6/ 86, 116; Krzysztof Ziarek, "Art, Power, and Politics: Heidegger on *Machenschaft* and *Poiêsis*," *Contretemps* 3 (July 2002): 175-186, offers a helpful account of art as a possible experience of the power-free which can be "politically transformative" (184).