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## **From Subalternated to Dislocated Time - *Messianic Properties of Time and the Possibility of Novelty***

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### **Abstract**

The aim of this essay is to elaborate two distinctive but interconnected modes of temporalization through common points in the work of Jaques Derrida and Jaques Lacan, namely the Subalternated and the Dislocated time. The explication of the different form of time structure reveals time as relational phenomena, which is constituted by the non-relation between the subject and the Other. The process of subjectivization as the formalization of the Real, or as the work of mourning, excludes traumatic present and opens the space for free flow of the Subalternated time, which is marked by linearity, identitarian thought, subordination, causality ect. The present is, therefore, marked by ontologization of the posthumous remains, canonized, excluded and deprived of any subversive potential. But despite this eternal requiem, something remains between the future and the past, non-present in its spectral subsistence which disrupts smooth stream of the Subalternated narrativity, announcing arrival, return and temporarily inexhaustible artificiality of novelty in the form of the Dislocated time.

**Keywords:** the Subalternated time, the Dislocated time, the work of mourning, spectres.

“The time is out of joint“, Derrida repeats exaltedly an exclamation of Shakespeare’s Hamlet on the pages of his *Spectres of Marx*, stressing a radical cut within the order of temporalization. The father is dead, and his ghost has returned demanding revenge in order to fulfill justice by the adjustment of time, which is out of itself, decentralized by the crime. The father’s spectra is here again, even if it has never been present before; but something of the father is here, an irreducible reminder that “finds its voice“ (Zizek, 2006: 179) and subjectivize the son. This theatrical structure goes beyond the tragedy and theatre, and exemplifies the constitution of time as such. Tragedy and comedy are two exemplifications of what we will call the Subalternated time and the time of Dislocated present, and the role of the spectres in them - especially considering the relation of the subject towards them - are crucial for the process of temporalization/subjectivization. Said in the manner of Heidegger, the being of theater has nothing theatrical in itself; it is precisely defined by a mode of relation of the subject to the Other, the son toward the father. The crime has been committed; but committed by whom, and to whom? Who is the victim, or what has been killed in order to put the time into the motion? The victim that Derrida has chosen is the King, the master, a symbolic function that guarantees the stability of the symbolic order. But at the same time it is the father, biological father and father as a symbolic/social function. After a murder, what part of this being of intersection remains and returns, even if it was not present ever before in this impossible form, the form of spectra. And is it my spectra, a feeling of incoming disaster that I will perform? Why this ghost is haunting me and what should I do with its demand? How is this demand correlative with my own life, and what it is trying to teach me about existence? Derrida said that if we want to learn how to live, we can do that only by knowing a space between life and death, space of phantoms and endless circulation of the absent, timeless beings. Learning requires repetition or apprehension of totality, and we cannot repeat life nor grasp it as entirety; also, we cannot learn about life from death as an absolute negation of it. To learn how to live means to acquire knowledge about spectres, and to be able to live with them.

So it would be necessary to learn spirits. Even and especially if this, the spectral, is not. Even and especially if this, which is neither substance, nor essence, nor existence, is never present as such. The time of the "learning to live“, a time without tutelary present,

would amount to this, to which the exordium is leading us: to learn to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts: To live otherwise, and better; or rather more justly. But living with them. No being-with the other, no socius without this with that makes being-with in general more enigmatic than ever for us. And this being-with specters would also be, not only but also, a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations“ (Derrida, 2006: 17). We inherit this time of “learning to live“, this never present contemporaneity, and we do not know what to do with it. The burden of heritage is too heavy, and heritage that we speak about is not generally the accepted content of history, a dominant historical narrative that inhibits the inherent potential of otherness inscribed in civilization’s memory of the past. How do we live today regarding our past, what role does the established academic corpus of canonized knowledge play that we call history? One must have in mind two conjugated meanings of the term canon; firstly, a general set of laws, rules and principles, and secondly a cluster of written, homogeneous material that makes recognized and accepted discourse which regulates and constructs a particular segment of our reality and practice.

This standards and conventions are naturalized and embedded in our everyday experience, maintained by the performativity of laws, customs and repetition in general. To be canonical means to be localized, fixed, chased, expatriated from present, but this present is the contemporaneity of the ego, a space of actualization of phantasmatic continuity and linearity. Reification of the traumatic potentials of the past, putting them into the graves of archives represents a never-ending procedure of the work of mourning, an “ontologization of posthumous remains“ in order to be exiled and petrified in the Subalternated time and its narratively identitarian assimilation. Narrativity is the basic structure of the Subalternated time; a consistent system of representation whose ideologem is a sign. Generally, there is no time without representation, without a mediated relation to the world. Incidentally, there is no relation as such without separation from immediate immersion into our environment; therefore, time is an immanently relational phenomenon. Time is a relational phenomenon that is structured through language which regulates relationship between the subject and the Other. The way in which we relate with the Other define our modus of temporalization, and every relation is ultimately a relation toward the Other, because we cannot be in relation with ourselves, can we? But then what is self-consciousness if not a relation of the subject with itself, and how this tautology is possible to be considered as a form of knowledge when we know that in tautological statements we do not learn anything new? And if we learn something new from the relation with itself, about what, and about who do we learn exactly? The main trait of relation, moreover, its

defining attribute, is exchange; an exchange of information, matter or energy. Without exchange - in which something that has not been property of a subject now becomes a part of his or her identity, assets etc. – there is not a relation. Therefore, tautology is not a relation; but pure tautology as such does not exist. When some noun is converted into a predicate, a noun changes its function from passive, inert existence into an act of confirmation, and performatively reaffirms a noun, retroactively postulating it. But contained in this act of reaffirmation there is more than there has been in an initial term, namely a constitutive power of a relation, which is always a dialectical negativity. An act of confirmation is itself a surplus or excess that introduces disbalance into its very existence. Only a concept, a term can be self-referential, and in the process of self-confirmation a new, comprehensive concept is created, in which the initial term now takes a place of the un-noun, traumatic Other, a course of being, a kernel that has not been transformed by reaffirmation. The medium of relation is crucial here, as an agent that introduces displacement and duplication, as well as reification of an initial concept into the thing, a spectra that haunts constituted identity. The identity is always a system, and as a system it always “organizes its persecution and haunting“ by not realized, misplaced, dislocated reality and present. In Lacan’s concept of mirror stages we can see a role of mirror/medium in the constitution of the identitarian ego; a sense of wholeness of the subject, as well as continuity of reality, is formed by referential/relational properties of a medium in which one (miss)recognizes itself. Therefore, reality as we know is mediated to and by different modes of screen, in which the subject is inscribed and sees how he sees himself. In the next passage from *Écrits* Lacan elaborates what is the role of medium of language in the formation of a subject and the world as we know it:

Psychoanalytic experience has rediscovered in man the imperative of the Word as the law that has shaped him in its image. It exploits the poetic function of language to give his desire its symbolic mediation. May this experience finally enable you to understand that the whole reality of its effects lies in the gift of speech; for it is through this gift that all reality has come to man and through its ongoing action that he sustains reality (Lacan, 1998: 322).

The desire that emerges through mediation leads the subject away from the thing and toward its dialectization and ontologization. The thing that is repressed, but never overcome, the ex-time ground of subjectivity and the time remaining a not assimilable

kernel that undermines the totality of symbolic order through the never ending exorcism of a reified concept, a former being which was never fully present and which has become a remainder, a ghost that inhabits some kind of impossible, dislocated time. Here we are facing with the terrifying power of a dialectical movement; a negation of negation brings the concept – which has represented the first, rudimentary form of knowledge – to the place of a thing. Hence, in that moment, the concept itself becomes an object of incomprehension, reified, fixed and buried under the layers of deposited significations. Even when we establish a relation to ourselves through dialectical mediation, it is precisely a relation with objectified meanings, the kernel of the master signifiers that form our identity. The power of negation is terrifying for its immanent capability of alienation of a content which has been a part of the positive order of things and which, from the moment of negation, has become a hypostasis, an obscure, never actualized, timeless remainder of sublation. But this remainder that escapes symbolization was part of the positive order only as the potentiality of a moment, its inner possibility that has failed neither to actualize itself nor to be recognized as a part of formalization. Therefore, the thing loafing beyond continual, chronological, Subalternated time is deprived from its ex-istence, reduced to residual, spectral, dislocated time that accompany and haunts subalterned effectiveness which we conventionally call present.

The work of dialectical movement is the work of mourning, an inherent property of every system of representation by which the traumatic potential of the spectral present is drained. Likewise, the work of mourning is, above all, work in itself, a relation toward the Other in which the subject and his time are constituted:

...the work of mourning is not one kind of work among others. It is work itself, work in general, the trait by means of which one ought perhaps to reconsider the very concept of production-in what links it to trauma, to mourning, to the idealizing iterability of exappropriation, thus to the spectral spiritualization that is at work in any tekhnē (Derrida, 2006: 121).

The relational/temporal fixture of work is directed toward trauma, a cut or a rupture between levels of beings introduced by duplication of relational interaction. The work as such, as an every modus of relational interaction, produces both a trauma within a system in which is performed, and duplication of its effectiveness. Trauma is not something imposed outside to the subject, a special case of an event that undermines subject's world

of meaning, but a fracture, failure, collapse of relational/libidinal economy, or, to put it in another way, an inherent impossibility of relation, or relation which exist as impossible for symbolic representation, relation which creates duplication within the order of beings. There is more in relation than it aims at first to achieve, and that surplus produces a parallel order of organization. The work of mourning is at the same time an agency of creating and healing trauma, for the space in which a trauma emerges is opened by relational economy. The Other that have to be overcome and sub-lated through dialectic of mourning is imposed by relation/work/mourning/ as such, it functions as inability of totalization of representation, as lack in every medium in which relation is realized. The duplication of the system and its function of exchange by the line of instrumentality – or instrumental relationally - and in-formational relationality is the rupture of the emerging subject. His medium of establishing relations is a symbolic order, the chain of signifiers as a network of social body. But we need to be careful here, because relationality does not mean rationality, just the opposite. Rationality, logical thinking, linear causality etc. are properties of the Sublaternated time in which instrumentality exerts its potentials. This does not implied that relationality is irrational, for we do not have here a binary oppositions; it only means that dominant principle of organization of the field of instrumentality is a rational, equivalent distribution and management. Relationality is, on the other hand, dominantly established on the principles of an ethical perform of a duties. The principles of instrumentality and relationality are not restricted to them; they traverse over the borders of these conceptual fields. It is possible to found ethic on the utilitarian values, but that would be an abolishment of ethics, like it is abolishment of an instrumentality a foundation of economy on the principles of free market, govern by individual desire of increase in profit. This short circuit is fundamental characteristic of our contemporary society, whose paradoxes continue to produce inequality, poverty and unequal distribution of the power. The Blocked and interrupted work of mourning is manifested by this overlapping the levels, and by impossibility to effectively confine them. Collective demands for justice are expelled from the register of instrumentality to the register of relationality and spectres are perverted to personal egoistic partial drives, pursuit for pleasures and obsessive-compulsive care for health. Our inheritance, as well as our debt to previous generations, which was created through the work of mourning, are deprived from its subversive potential, reduced to bad iterability of the law by the subjects of drives. As Žižek pointed out, what we need today is hysterization of the subjects (Žižek, 2008), respectively deliberation of the work of mourning explicated in the questions what the Other want from us, what we should do with its demand as our legacy, what is our legacy in the end. The

story of our past should be re-told, repeated in context that would enable it to construct a preferred discourse of disclosure of repressed memory. In order to achieve that, the subject must abandon its phantasmatic register of satisfaction that is hypertrophied throughout the entire social field, which we called consumerism. The purpose of the paranoid-schizophrenic position of today's subjects, which are supplied with various partial and transitional objects, obsessed with theories of conspiracy, is to deny loss at the first place; this represents the first phase of the work of mourning, anti-cathexis that aims to protect the subject from loss.

The loss is always a spectral "category", a necessary outcome of a process of symbolization/formalization of the subjectivity and its world. Interestingly, Žižek says, in the beginning of his book "The Ticklish Subject", that the specter is still here somewhere, but now the subjects of haunting are not the old forces of Europe, but Western academia:

A specter is haunting Western academia, the specter of the Cartesian subject. All academic power has entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this specter (Žižek, 2009: 3).

As a spectral reminder Žižek identifies Cartesian subjectivity, but this is a Lacanian interpretation of it, the subject of the unconscious, different from the self-transparent cogito. This is the subject of the real, an impossible traumatic kernel that always escapes symbolization and around which the subjectivity is formed, or performed. Its presence is the ground on which Žižek has founded his dialectical materialism; but where is that presence exactly, where does it show itself? Not in the chronological, linear time, that is doubtless. Could we recognize in this remainder the same spectral non-being that is at work in Derrida's conceptualization of the actuality of Marxism, or the Marxisms. In his late work, Derrida had returned to something which has been an object of his critique of Lacan, namely the transcendental signifier, but we can recognize some kind of convergence in their late work. Both of them introduces a certain lack in the field of the Big Other, in which is located a point of radical contingency available to the subject who is not – due to the lack – fully assimilated by the symbolic order, therefore it is not merely a by-product of discursive/textual mechanisms but their impossibility of totalization of the social field. Derrida does not speak about the spectres in the terms of discursive practices, mechanisms of differance, traces etc.; he introduces a non-present of spectres as the modus of temporalization which is excluded from the narrativity of chronological, identifying time. Likewise, speaking about Freud's unconscious and about the cause, Lacan says;

”Observe the point from which he sets out – *The Aetiology of the Neuroses* – and what he find in the hole, in the split, in the gap so characteristic of cause? Something of the order of the *non-realized*“ (Lacan, 2006: 22).

In the both cases we have something that is not realized, a never actualized possibility that haunts Subalternated time of subject of the ego. The time of dislocated present is the time of spectres, and also of the unconscious:

Discontinuity, then, is the essential form in which the unconscious appears to us as a phenomenon – discontinuity, in which something is manifested as a vacillation (Lacan, 2006: 25).

Inability, hesitation, or impossibility to take a stand, a firm structural shape within the Subalternated time is the spectral non-existence as such. Discontinuity of the Dislocated present, its anachronic nature is habited by possibilities, which have never been actualized, so it is not a part of a positive order, a part of formalized presence. Although this dislocated present is not a part of continuity of linear narrativity of Subalternated time, it is non-present in the form of haunting, returning of the lost. That which has never been present paradoxically returns to prosecute actuality of our existence, bringing with itself demands, imposing on our shoulders a burden of inheritance and introduces a possibility of a present, in form of a gift, something that we do not have but what we can give to the others. Haunting always has something with our past, but not with history as homogenic dominant discourse, on which haunting is the power that is expelled and banish from appearance. However, the apparitions are always there, no matter how strong concrete system of representation endeavors to negate them. Hauntology deals with never present, never actual and impossible entities, which time has never come, but which has power of returning and subsist on minimal level, between parts of the Subalternated time. Even being lost, these spectral non-forms have a crucial role in symbolic and discursive practices, for its non-existence is fundamental basis for possibility of relational exchange, work, production etc. Therefore, every system, conceptualization or formalization has to learn to live with its spectres, has to learn from them and has to speak with them. This non-relation is based on retroactive act of establishing relation with the entities whose ideality has never been explicated, whose actuality has never been accomplished, and whose potentiality and possibility has passed.

When Lacan speaks about Lamela, the organ without body, he describe it as „pure life“ (Lacan), something that has been lost by difference, by the work of difference, the work of mourning, and that continues to be lost in every stages of the work of difference.



Every particular whole, the one, in order to present itself, must to sacrifice the part of its subsistence that cannot be inscribed neither in the order of ideality nor within positive register of actuality, something that haunts system of representation in its traces, and whose voice is always the signifier of an absence. If we have in mind that, according to Lacan, "signifier represents a subject for another signifier" (Lacan), and every signifier is a concept within the symbolic order, then signification, formalization, or differentiation in general has such impact on reality, which creates the organs without bodies. These organs, these traces of presence, are products of dialectical movement that at the same time sublates, preserves, negates and repress different parts of previously undifferentiated whole or a void. In this way every system arranges its own haunting, its own persecution. The force that we are talking about, the power of signifier - which Derrida calls *differance* - is already at work in speech, before writing:

Now we must think that writing is at the same time more exterior to speech, not being its "image" or its "symbol," and more interior to speech, which is already in itself a writing. Even before it is linked to incision, engraving, drawing, or the letter, to a signifier referring in general to a signifier signified by it, the concept of the *graphie* [unit of a possible graphic system] implies the framework of the instituted trace, as the possibility common to all systems of signification (Derrida, 1997: 46).

But this power of differentiation is prior to every speech, for signifier is something that is functioning already on the level of primary borders between and within systems. What differentiation has left repressed and ex-timate to the Sub-alternated time is the time of Dislocated present, the time of spectres; but these spectres are the inheritance of a subject, a legacy which enables him for an ambivalent rather than equivalent economy (Baudriard, 1981), for possibility of the gift which transcend world of trading, exchange based on equality, fetishism and reified projection:

What the one does not have, what the one therefore does not have to give away, but what the one gives to the other, over and above the market, above market, bargaining, thanking, commerce, and commodity, is to leave to the other this accord with himself that is proper to him (*ihm eignet*) and gives him presence (Derrida, 2006: 31).

To give means to let it go, to give up in order to enable others to be itself and with itself, to de-construct and reconstruct as well as chose itself, and, we would add, to be with

its spectres. This spectral unconscious and its anachronistic, non-linear, subversive time are suspended and dislocated from the Subalternated time, and its reality is, according to Lacan, a sexual reality. Consequently, the sexual reality is the reality of the difference, for all becoming is differential and discontinuous. Minimal, first difference is beginning of the battle with the real, as well as creation of the real, and as such, difference is the source of reality as we know it. Having in mind that unconscious is - according to Lacan - structured as a language, we can see how its contents may interrupt smooth slide of signifiers and obstruct, disrupt a closure of meaning.

As I mentioned it before, every modus of temporalization is determined by the relation between the subject and the Other. Now, we can approach to this relationship and shed some light on it. The Other that we have in mind is difference, pure minimal difference that introduce a being from undifferentiated non-existence. As Alain Badiou have said it, the void is something that have been named from undifferentiated multiplicity, and by whose repetition sets are created (See Alain Badiou (2006). Difference and its repetition are he source of all later phenomenal richness of the world. The novelty that has been produced by the interplay of difference and repetition is, paradoxically, accomplished by the immanent impossibility of both; we repeat something that cannot be repeated (Deleuze). Equally, what we consider as different is the same, but repetition of that particular element is the medium that produces difference or impossibility of repetition. Therefore, we can say that pure nominal, signifying difference, naming, and tautology contain – as we have mentioned before – the power of producing dialectical incongruity and impossibility of identity. Time is also the direct consequence of the symbolic order and formalization of undifferentiated "reality", and modus of relation between the subject and the Other define dominant modus of temporalization. We can also describe this modes of temporalization through Derrida`s concepts of exorcism and mourning. The Subalterned time is marked by tendency for exclusion, ejection, relegation of otherness; while mourning is characterized with return and non-present presence of the Other, which brings discontinuity into homogeneous identitarian time. The time of Dislocated present is inhabited with the endowment of the spectres and its reality that has never been realized, its possibility is lost by closure of the Sub-alternated time that creates fixed, impotent identities. This ontologization of posthumous remains is, for Derrida, present in Marx`s` notion of surplus value, and it is necessary to bring it together with the ethical dimension of the time of Dislocated present, or with the Lacan`s register of the real. The monetary system - in which surplus value manifested itself - is the system of representation of everything that exist projected on the surface of value, as Badiou defined it in one of his

lectures. Money is a system of signification that is not referred to any objective characteristic of reality, but to pure value of things, which manifest itself only within the relation of exchange. Therefore, money is the signifier of pure value, and this implies that everything that exists is translatable on the language of the market, that everything can be estimated in the term of exchange; consequently, everything is replicable with something else. That conclusion suggests that the symbolic order, or power of signification is absolute and that nothing can resist to its assimilation. We will return to this later. Derrida does not agree with Marx when he stresses that products of labour enter the scene as commodities only in the process of exchange; he asserts that status of commodities, as something in the thing, which is more than itself, is possible to locate in the register of use value. Derrida doubts this purified understanding of use-value, and claims that the commodity form cannot be arbitrarily limited on a system of exchange:

A culture began before culture-and humanity. Capitalization also. Which is as much as to say that, for this very reason, it is destined to survive them. (One could say as much, moreover, if we were venturing into another context, for exchange-value: it is likewise inscribed and exceeded by a promise of gift beyond exchange. In a certain way, market equivalence arrests or mechanises the dance that it seemed to initiate. Only beyond value itself, use-value and exchange-value, the value of techniques and of the market, is grace promised, if not given, but never rendered or given back to the dance.) (Derrida, 2006: 121).

Here, we would like to add that the surplus value as well is not limited to the social character of the work and the system of exchange, but it is rather a product of the work as such, the work of mourning, and we have said before that the work as such is a modus of relation toward the beings, a special kind of dialectical mediation between subject and object. Spectralization, phantomization is consequence of the relational, dialectical mediation. Hence, there is no semiotic system that can fully assimilate excess/lack inherently produced by relational mediation. Moreover, this effect of destabilization of a homeostasis is precisely where the dimension of the ethic is located; excess/lack production is an interruption of sequential Sub-alternated time whose smooth flow is aborted, parted by immanent work of signifier that destabilize every fixed meaning and referentiality of a sign. The register of a language is the field of the Other, and the time of Dislocated present, as the time of the unconscious, represents a space of a freedom that is linked with the lack within the Other, a remainder of the Real, and this relation is

something that is not transmissible, untranslatable into any semiotic order; this relation is relation of a excessive exchange which cannot be projected on the surface of the value. In this light we should interpret Freuds famous; „Wo es war, soll ich werden“; Lacan have realized this when he stated:

The status of the unconscious, which, as I have shown, is so fragile on the ontic plane, is ethical. In his thirst for truth, Frojd says, Whatever it is, I must go there, because, somewhere, this unconscious reveals itself (Lacan, 2006: 33).

For the subject establishes a relation with something the value of which cannot be limited, quantified, paid or represented, it cannot be fully drained by the work of the signifier. Mathematically speaking, something like this is representable only by infinity, but it is not a part of a mathematical system because it does not have determinable value – it cannot be an element of mathematics. This value - which is impossible to be evaluated – is an ethical demand as such, a place where bargain, price, market and economy in the narrow sense, limited on equality and restitution, are not of any use. This is also the time/place of a radical freedom wherein subject is able to chose its “pathological attachment“ with some element that is not a part of a positive order of dominant discourse, set of accepted social rules, roles and goals, and this object can only be a spectral residue of reality that has never been realized, the Dislocated present which can be summoned by the work of mourning. The establishment of this ethical relation toward the Other as difference, in which all consequence of differentiation are present; effectivity, ideality and the spectrality. Effectivity is part of concept, which is realized (social institutions); ideality is that what effectivity trying to achieve (order of law), and spectrality is an inherent failure of any conceptualization as such, present only within the Dislocated present of a missed encounter. If we have in mind this, then it becomes impossible for thatwe consider as a future in an ordinary way to produce novelty, for it belongs to the register of an established institutional and symbolic order, respectively to the framework of a possible. What we need is the future founded on a different basis, if we strive toward novelty which is not part of a dominant Subalternated reality. That foundation is precisely a non-realized, non-present, never actualized reality, an encounter whose potential can never be fully projected on the surface of value, or any other representational system. We must be open for unexpected, and unexpected has no time, because its appearance is always spectral, contingent and subversive in relation to everyday reproduction of the law. The elliptic short circuit between the past and the future, whose focal points determinate emergence of the subject, is that

what Derrida calls "messianism without religion", a formalized, perhaps genuine version of a messianism, purified from all religious or secular appropriation and assimilation. Ellipse with its focal points is a spatial conceptualization, which represent in the best way the relation between subject and the time. It shows us how are Lacanian unconscious and Derridian notion of time "to come", a messianic promise of the Other which is always with us, are connected. The subject, regarding its movement, appears only when two focal points are related by a failure of the symbolic order to ensure metaphorically / metonymically the drain of *jouissance*, or, to put it in another way, its consumption through symbolic representation and projection. The birth of a subject means the death of a father, or, to be more precise, the death within the father, within the symbolic order which has been masked by a figure of authority, and whose rupture is active again. Nevertheless, do not forget that movement of the subject - determined by focal points of the past and future which are not constructs of Subalternated identitarian equation, and which makes integral parts of the Dislocated present - is elliptical, repeatable, but differential also, and that relationality will produce another positive, symbolic order which will, eventually, have to be overcome.

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