# JF Vattimo AC

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#### There is no truth only interpretation--the subject is thrown into a particular place at a particular time and cannot be stabilized to the external world beyond itself. Thus every viewpoint is simply a particular interpretation of being from a different phenomenological position.

Gianni Vattimo, Italian Philosopher and Politician, A Farewell to Truth, published 2009 ///AHS PB

Heidegger’s objection to metaphysics also begins here, with the observation that even in deciding to be objective, we always assume a definite, defined position, a vantage point or viewpoint that delimits but that is also indispensable for our encounter with the world. Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics as a claim to defi ne the truth as an objective datum starts from that observation and then goes on to focus on the ethicopolitical aspects of metaphysics: the “rationalized” society of the early twentieth century against which the historical avant-gardes of the time struggled. Heidegger realized that even the pretended objectivity of the sciences is inspired by a determinate interest, such as to describe the movement of gases in such a way that others will be able to discuss it too and advance knowledge of the behavior of gases; Lukács says the same from a Marxist perspective. Scientists are not driven by an impulse of truth, and it is not possible to imagine the relation between the world and knowledge as the world and the mirror of the world. Rather, we imagine it as the world and someone who stands in the world and takes his bearings in it utilizing his cognoscitive capacities, in other words choosing, reorganizing, substituting, and so on. The whole concept of interpretation lies right there. There is no experience of truth that is not interpretive; I know nothing unless it interests me, but if it interests me, evidently I don’t gaze upon it in a disinterested fashion. In Heidegger, this concept enters into his thinking about the historical sciences, as one sees in the early sections of Being and Time and in many other texts from the same period. Hence I am an interpreter inasmuch as I do not gaze upon the world from outside; I gaze on the world outside me precisely because I am inside it. If I am inside it, however, my interest is far from straightforward. I cannot state exactly how matters stand, only how they look from where I stand, how they appear to me, and how I believe them to be. If I have an idea that leads to a successful experiment, that doesn’t mean that I gained exhaustive, objective knowledge of that aspect of reality. What I did—and the philosophy of science backs this up—was to make the experiment work, on the basis of certain expectations and premises. When I do an experiment, I already dispose of a set of criteria and instruments that make it possible for me, and for anyone whose ideas differ from mine, to tell whether the experiment worked or not. The criteria and the instruments are already in place and undisputed when I start. No scientist studies all of physics from scratch; they all learn from textbooks and build on that. This is universally accepted. So I don’t want to hear any more of this talk about how scientists describe the world objectively. They describe it with rigorous instruments, which are nonetheless determined and historically qualified. I would even hazard, knowing full well that this proposition will not command universal assent, that the possibility of verifying a scientific proposition, or falsifying it (as Popper would say, but in this case it comes to the same thing), depends on the fact that we use the same language, use analogous instruments, take the same measurements, etc. Otherwise we could not communicate at all. We didn’t invent this ensemble of premises and paradigms from scratch; we inherited it. All this is interpretation: being within a situation and confronting it like someone who didn’t arrive from Mars five minutes ago but who has a history, belongs to a community. Some maintain that to study physics is not to study the truth of physics; that it’s more like being trained to become a member of a secret, or public, society. That’s not so far fetched: to get someone to understand a scientific demonstration, you first have to teach her the rudiments. Are these rudiments natural knowledge, or are they knowledge of a particular science that could also be diff erent? All this is mixed up with cultural anthropology and structuralism. Heidegger was not yet acquainted with the structuralism of Levi-Strauss, but what was going on in the interval between Kant and Heidegger? The whole nineteenth century, with the discovery that cultures vary widely, and the beginnings of the scientific study of them. Cultural anthropology goes back to the second half of the nineteenth century. According to Kant, to know the world humans require certain a priori, as he calls them, structures that we cannot derive from experience and through which we organize experience. To use a down-to-earth simile, I learn to see by discovering a pair of eyes, but I already need a set of eyes to discover them. Space, time, and the linked categories of judgment are part of me; like my eyes, they are structures of reason. Overall, though, Kant and many neo-Kantian philosophers have always taken it for granted that reason was unvarying. Cultural anthropology brings about a more mature discourse about the diff erences among the structures with which cultures, societies, and diff erent individuals confront the world. At bottom, Heidegger’s twentieth-century existentialism may be viewed as Kantianism that has undergone cultural anthropology. As a finite being, I am born and die at certain points in history. How can I possibly be the bearer of the sort of absoluteness that would allow me to assert that two plus two indubitably make four? There are peoples who consume human flesh, and European thought exhibits an array of differences. Early cultural anthropology accepted the existence of other cultures but classified them as cultures “preceding” our own. In short, the primitives don’t yet know mathematics, but we arrive in their countries, teach them science, and install our governments. Where are the “primitives” now? Who is there still willing to heed that narrative?

#### Metaphysical truths are always violently imposed as a singular conception of reality. Politics are framed through meta-narratives that legitimize particular western conceptions of democracy while condemning any other modes of operation. This enforcement of truth is incoherent insofar as metaphysics deny the ability to make a normative claim to a universal truth.

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In a discussion with the distinguished French analytical philosopher Pascal Engel on the uses of truth, Rorty showed how contemporary philosophy is divided not only between realist and antirealist conceptions of truth but most of all between those who argue over truth’s realism or antirealism and those who try to avoid this metaphysical quarrel altogether.” While Engel was only interested in justifying his ‘minimal realism” theory of truth at all costs, Rorty tried to indicate that while both realist and antirealist theorists belong to the politics of descriptions (because even the antirealist imposes his description of truth’s nonexistence), those who overcome such dualism belong to a postmetaphysical culture, that is, to a politics of interpretation (which we will study in chapter 3). But Rorty’s most significant implications concern not the democratic opportunities that philosophy might gain from leaving aside the realist-versus-antirealist quarrel but rather the violent political consequences of the politics of descriptions. It must be for these reasons that Rorty in a famous essay of 1985 entitled “Solidarity or Objectivity?” emphasized the centrality of truth in our philosophical tradition: 'The tradition in Western culture which centers around the notion of the search for Truth, a tradition which runs from the Greek philosophers through the Enlightenment, is the clearest example of the attempt to find a sense in one's existence by turning away from solidarity to objectivity The idea of Truth as something to be pursued for its own sake, not because it will be good for oneself, or for ones real or imaginary community is the central theme of this tradition." While most philosophers would agree with Rorty that truth is the central theme of our tradition, not all of them will believe it is responsible for a turn away from solidarity. The origin of this dispute lies in the essence of truth, that is, in its pragmatic nature, without which it also loses its meaning. Truth is not only "violent," in that it tums away from solidarity but it is “violence,” because it can easily become an imposition on our own existence. Being “violent” might imply that it can also be peaceful, but truth instead often implies an imposed description whose acceptance is assumed. Violence is the political meaning of truth, because truth always implies a concluding constriction that varies from its definition in the Gospels (“The truth will make you free"), in Hegel (“Truth is the whole”), or more recently in Baudrillard (“'l`he simulacrum is true”). Although these definitions of truth probably have our wel]-b eing at heart, they also pretend to impose themselves regardless of our different religious, existential, or social Being. Like the metaphysical philosophies mentioned earlier, these definitions of truth want to maintain the social order that they find themselves comfortable in, and they also claim to justify it. Although truth, as the reflection of a given objective order, has always inspired ethical and moral ideals of life, these same ideals depended on truth’s unity that is, the unity of opinions in the true. While this unity has effectively become reality today because of the establishment of a global political system (which we call framed democracy), truth does not therefore cease being violent, because claims of truth are also claims of political power. But how does this violence take place in our global political culture? Principally through the use of dialogue as the “moralization of politics,” that is, as the apparently peaceful exchange of opinions-but, as we all know even Plato’s exemplary dialogues aimed to conduct one of the two interlocutors (often the slave) to recognize the truth that the other already knew from the beginning. If truth claims are also always claims of political power, that is, violence, and if this same violence is nothing else than the “silencing” of other interlocutor through an apparent dialogue, truth and violence become interchangeable. Only the recognition of truth’s violence will allow one to consider the implicit danger of those politics that claim to have an ultimate foundation, that is, politics founded on truth. As we will see, the foundation of truth through dialogue fixes thought within framed democracy: a conservative moralized order where the democratic is only what legally enters the order established by metaphysics. The most successful dehnitions of truth within contemporary analytic and continental philosophy continue to belong to Husserl’s phenomenological theory and Alfred Tarskis philosophy of language (in 1933, Tarski developed Aristotle’s “correspondence theory of truth,” expressed in medieval philosophy as veritas est ada equatio rei et intellectus). While many historians will have us believe that there is a substantial diH`erence between the two theories f1'om a semantic point of view few have discussed the metaphysical implication that both theories share. Contrary to the majority of Tarski’s interpreters, we believe that the quotation marks in his principle (“ 'p' is True if and only if p”)" are essential, because they indicate its pragmatic essence, in other words, for “whom” truth is significant. In sum: the position of P outside the quotation marks is always expressed, affirmed, and sustained by someone who needs it to be outside, hence, who is interested in imposing P Metaphysical philosophers would respond that this imposition, and therefore the exclusion of the quotation marks from the second P, is necessary in order for our “afHrmations, actions, and thoughts” to distinguish themselves from other aflirmations, actions, and thoughts. Without this opposition (between “P” and P), our opinions would be useless, they say; and therefore we need Tarski’s principle to share our common experiences. But do we really need the opposition between “P” and P to share our common experiences? Can’t there be a group satisfied with “P” without any interest in the apparent real P? This opposition or difference has become evident thanks to Heidegger's analysis of truth, starting with Being and Time, where he distinguished Husserl’s metaphysical approach from a different hermeneutic one. Truth for Husserl depends on the diiference between the mere “intention” of the phenomenological Being and the matter “itself”-in other words, between the manner in which something appears and the manner in which it is “itself” 'This difference, just like Tars1<i’s opposition between “P” and P, consists in identifying an entity or order precisely as it is in itselt} that is, a proposition would be true only if it “refers” to things in a way that permits them to be seen as they are in themselves. But this “reference” is not very different from the pragmatic “imposition” we mention above, because its purpose is still to explain how something reveals itself (truth) in opposition to its concealing (false). Against this metaphysical interpretation, Heidegger noticed how every statement, whether true or false, valid or invalid, good or evil, is always a derivative one, since the “apophantic as” is only possible within the “hermeneutic as.” In other words, there is no “presuppositionless" apprehension of something presented to us that could be “objectilied” by means of subjective predicative modalities. Prior to the predicative knowledge, which can also be expressed in Tarski sentences, humans beings already have a “preontological” or “pretheoretical” understanding of the Being of things that does not require a derivative one, as proposed by Husserl's or Tarski’s theories. This is why in Being and Time Heidegger explained: The statement is not the primary “locus” of truth but the other way around: the statement as a mode of appropriation of discoveredness and as a way of being-in-the-world is based in discovering, or in the disclosedness of Dasein. The most primordial “truth” is the “locus” of the statement and the ontological condition of the possibility that statements can be true or false (discovering or covering over) .‘3 While we will analyze Heidegger’s specific ontological structure of human Being (Dasein) in chapter 3,"\* it is important to understand here how the truth of statements is not derivative because erroneous but rather because its roots refer back to the disclosedness of understanding that determines every linguistic or prelinguistic adequacy. It is a question not only of thematizing prelinguistic phenomena but of emphasizing the priority of thought over lmowledge, Being over beings, and the “hermeneutic as” over the “apophantic as.” While the “apophantic as” allows both truth and erron at the level of the “hermeneutic as” there is neither, since the “proposition is not the place of truth; truth is the place ofthe prop osition.”" As we can see, Heidegger did not expose this metaphysical understanding of truth because it is wrong; he exposed it for its superiicialityg that is, against the metaphysical attempt to reduce the philosopher’s task to attesting “how we experience truth” or that “there is actually truth” when in fact we find ourselves inevitably presupposing it. Puzzling over the correspondence between subject and object, we lose sight both of the world within which all things are given and of our own engagement as beings. Truth, whether in Aristotle’s, Tarski’s, or Husserl’s terms, shares the metaphysical structure that is at the origin of all Western logic, where Being is interpreted only as the presence of something present, that is, objectively In this distinction, the subject and predicate-in other words, the relation between two terms where one refers to the othernot only represent the logical and verbal structure but also the imposition of this same structure. Heidegger named the difference between our relation to beings (truth) and our understanding of Being (disclosure) the “ontological difference,” which allows us to recognize how within our metaphysical tradition “Being and truth 'are' equiprimordially”“ As we can see, Heidegger’s analysis of truth (like Popper’s, Arendt’s, and Adomo’s alarms against scientific objective realism that we mentioned earlier) was meant to emphasize its violence, because truth is nothing other than the justification of Being, which, as we said, has always been understood as objective presence. It is also for this reason that Heidegger later declared that “to raise the question of aletheia, of unconcealment as such, is not the same as raising the question of truth,”"’ where distinctions can be imposed (presence of Being) and justified (truth as correspondence). '1'his is why Emst 'I`ugendhat (and other distinguished interpreters of Heidegger such as Habermas and Apel) pointed out that Heidegger’s conception of truth as aletheia, that is, the “event of unconcealment," renounces the distinction not only between true and false assertions “but also between good and evil actions.” What they pointed out is correct and also a coniirmation of Heidegger's opposition to truth as violent imposition, which, as we said, justifies its descriptions. This is why within our “scientific global organization,” “neutral world,” or, which is the same, framed democracy, any proposition, interpretation, or ethics that is not framed within the realm of truth (or its opposite, falsehood) is wrong, an alteration and disruption of the established order that must therefore be silenced. The philosophical disruption of the established order’s philosophical hermeneutics (as we will see in chapter 3) is continually accused of relativism, nihilism, and even political anarchism, because instead of relying on truth descriptions, it is involved in interpretative “events of unconcealment.” Only such a nontheoretical way of thinking as hermeneutics (the modem version of which began as a defense of the extramethodical truth of the human sciences against the natural sciences)" can do justice to these events that resist those claims of absolute truth able to guarantee “peaceful” coexistence, that is, framed democracies.

#### These constructed meta-narratives cyclically sustains themselves through a political maintenance of a world order consistent with dominant framed democratic conceptions through violent symbolic and material military action against those with different conceptions of being.

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As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the desire for dominion often results in metaphysical thought, not the other way around. Metaphysical democracy is a system sustained by those who find themselves at ease within its order of facts, norms, and institutions. These are the winners, those who believe Beings presence is worthy not only of description but also of contemplation and conservation, since it guarantees their own condition. But such a condition inevitably also includes the defeated history that is, the oblivion of “Being” and the “weak.” While Being refers to Heidegger's oppressed history of metaphysics, the weak, that is, those who are not part of framed democracy's neoliberal capitalism, are a consequence of this same oblivion. In sum, just as Being was discarded in favor of beings, so are the weak oppressed in favor of the winners, that is, in favor of those who dominate within framed democracy’s conservative moralized order.‘5 While we will comment on Kagan and Fulkuyama’s conservative analysis of our current political world in the next chapter, it is important to emphasize now how and why both authors situate politics outside history 'The reason is straightforward: they represent the winner’s version of history that is, those who believe that history can be viewed from the standpoint of what Lyotard named “metanarratives.”°° But in order to stand in this view history must have already become “all it can become,” that is, accomplished its continuous rational unification with truth. Framed democracy has now become a metanarrative not only for these two prominent analysts but also for politics of descriptions in general, which must conserve the dominion achieved through science’s global control. The desire to declare the end or return of history is bound up with framed democracy that is, with an order that can legitimize or delegitimize not only history but also other political systems. This is why framed democracy is to Kagan and Fukuyama what basic facts are to Searle: the possibility to “proceed from a prior political ontology”°’ But as we have seen, this “prior political” ontology is just another way to demand that science not only guide philosophy but also dictate all the other domains of culture. While Kagan does not even bother to recognize the subordination of politics, history or democracy to science, Fulcuyama instead openly states how science also dictates history: '1`he first way in which modern natural science produces historical change that is both directional and universal is through military competition. The universality of science provides the basis for the global unification of mankind in the first instance because of the prevalence of war and conflict in the international system. Modern natural science confers a decisive military advantage on those societies that can develop, produce, and deploy technology the most effective 5 and the relative advantage conferred by teclmology increases as the rate of technological change accelerates .... The possibility of war is a great force for the rationalization of societies, and for the creation of uniform social structures across cultures.” It] as Fulcuyama explains, liberal democracy is “the most rational form of government, that is, the state that realizes most fully either rational desire or rational recognition,”" and if modern natural science manages to dictate history’s directions through military dominion, it should not be a surprise that democracy and science have become indissoluble. And it is this indissolubility that situates framed democracy outside history; where its ideal of objectivity can finally be fulfilled. But now that science has e&'ectively fulfilled in framed democracy its “liberal essence and its ideal of objectivity”’° Fulcuyama is convinced that “there are no serious ideological competitors left to liberal democracy”" In other words, liberal democracy has triumphed over history. As we can see, history has become a synonym for "progress," that is, for improvements not only of different political systems but also of philosophies. Framed democracy is the completion of historyk development, realization, and improvement. But one might now ask: what is the political goal of declaring the end of retum of history? Although framed democracy is not the first order to declare the return or end of history; as “heirs of prior conquerors”7’ it must continue to impose its victory over the defeated in such a way as to neutralize other possible disruptions of its achieved order. 'This is why within framed democracy whatever and whoever refuse to submit to truth, dialogue, or the predictable structure of causes and effects constitute not only an “alteration of history" but also a potential danger, and they must be identified as such. These identifications will become necessary to control the defeated and also to continue to guide the rulers to achieve authority maintain independence, and most of all, induce indifference toward the defeated. But how is it possible to overcome this winner’s history? Is a different history required or just framed democracys “other history”?

#### Thus I defend that states ought to eliminate their nuclear arsenals.

#### Nuclear weapons are fundamental to the enforcement of western metaphysics as they are central to the supremacy of the western democratic order. Nuclear testing and the “maintenance” of arsenals has been the guise for countless bombings across the global south to exterminate any opposition to the metaphysical order. At the same the possession of nukes is used to create a constant threat of extinction which allows framed democracy to take its opposition hostage while creating a benchmark for what counts as violence that excuses material devastation of the lives of poor communities of color across the globe.

Masahide Kato, Born in Hiroshima and professor of political science at Windward Community College, Nuclear Globalism: Traversing Rockets, Satellites, and Nuclear War via the Strategic Gaze, Alternatives: Global, Local, Political Vol. 18, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 339-360 ///AHS PB

The vigorous invasion of the logic of capitalist accumulation into the last vestige of relatively autonomous space in the periphery under late capitalism is propelled not only by the desire for incorporating every fabric of the society into the division of labor but also by the desire for "pure" destruction/extermination of the periphery.26 The penetration of capital into the social fabric and the destruction of nature and preexisting social organizations by capital are not separable. However, what we have witnessed in the phase of late capitalism is a rapid intensification of the destruction and extermination of the periphery. In this context, capital is no longer interested in incorporating some parts of the periphery into the international division of labor. The emergence of such "pure" destruction/extermination of the periphery can be explained, at least partially, by another problematic of late capitalism formulated by Ernest Mandel: the mass production of the means of destruction.27 Particularly, the latest phase of capitalism distinguishes itself from the earlier phases in its production of the "ultimate" means of destruction/extermination, i.e., nuclear weapons. Let us recall our earlier discussion about the critical historical conjuncture where the notion of "strategy" changed its nature and became deregulated/dispersed beyond the boundaries set by the interimperial rivalry. Herein, the perception of the ultimate means of destruction can be historically contextualized. The only instances of real nuclear catastrophe perceived and thus given due recognition by the First World community are the explosions at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which occurred at this conjuncture. Beyond this historical threshold, whose meaning is relevant only to the interimperial rivalry, the nuclear catastrophe is confined to the realm of fantasy, for instance, apocalyptic imagery. And yet how can one deny the crude fact that nuclear war has been taking place on this earth in the name of "nuclear testing" since the first nuclear explosion at Alamogordo in 1945? As of 1991, 1,924 nuclear explosions have occurred on earth.28 The major perpetrators of nuclear warfare are the United States (936 times), the former Soviet Union (715 times), France (192 times), the United Kingdom (44 times), and China (36 times).29 The primary targets of warfare ("test site" to use Nuke Speak terminology) have been invariably the sovereign nations of Fourth World and Indigenous Peoples. Thus history has already witnessed the nuclear wars against the Marshall Islands (66 times), French Polynesia (175 times), Australian Aborigines (9 times), Newe Sogobia (the Western Shoshone Nation) (814 times), the Christmas Islands (24 times), Hawaii (Kalama Island, also known as Johnston Island) (12 times), the Republic of Kazakhstan (467 times), and Uighur (Xinjian Province, China) (36 times).30 Moreover, although I focus primarily on "nuclear tests" in this article, if we are to expand the notion of nuclear warfare to include any kind of violence accrued from the nuclear fuel cycle (particularly uranium mining and disposition of nuclear wastes), we must enlist Japan and the European nations as perpetrators and add the Navaho, Havasupai and other Indigenous Nations to the list of targets. Viewed as a whole, nuclear war, albeit undeclared, has been waged against the Fourth World, and Indigenous Nations. The dismal consequences of "intensive exploitation," "low intensity intervention," or the "nullification of the sovereignty" in the Third World produced by the First World have taken a form of nuclear extermination in the Fourth World and Indigenous Nations. Thus, from the perspectives of the Fourth World and Indigenous Nations, the nuclear catastrophe has never been the "unthinkable" single catastrophe but the real catastrophe of repetitive and ongoing nuclear explosions and exposure to radioactivity. Nevertheless, ongoing nuclear wars have been subordinated to the imaginary grand catastrophe by rendering them as mere preludes to the apocalypse. As a consequence, the history and ongoing processes of nuclear explosions as war have been totally wiped out from the history and consciousness of the World community. Such a discursive strategy that aims to mask the "real" of nuclear warfare in the domain of imagery of nuclear catastrophe can be observed even in Stewart Firth's Nuclear Playground, which extensively covers the history of "nuclear testing" in the Pacific: Nuclear explosions in the atmosphere . . . were global in effect. The winds and seas carried radioactive contamination over vast areas of the fragile ecosphere on which we all depend for our survival and which we call the earth. In preparing for war, we were poisoning our planet and going into batde against nature itself.31 Although Firth's book is definitely a remarkable study of the history of "nuclear testing" in the Pacific, the problematic division/distinction between the "nuclear explosions" and the nuclear war is kept intact. The imagery of final nuclear war narrated with the problematic use of the subject ("we") is located higher than the "real" of nuclear warfare in terms of discursive value. This ideological division/hierarchization is the very vehicle through which the history and the ongoing processes of the destruction of the Fourth World and Indigenous Nations by means of nuclear violence are obliterated and hence legitimatized. The discursive containment/obliteration of the "real" of nuclear warfare has been accomplished, ironic as it may sound, by nuclear criticism. Nuclear criticism, with its firm commitment to global discourse, has established the unshakable authority of the imagery of nuclear catastrophe over the real nuclear catastrophe happening in the Fourth World and Indigenous Nations almost on a daily basis. Nuclear Criticism and Globalist Discourse Nuclear criticism flourished particularly during the early 1980s in reaction to the imminent "threat of limited nuclear warfare," which swept the entire European continent as well as other countries in the First World bloc. Nuclear criticism has variants depending on the perspectives and targeted audiences. The most notable critics belong to what I call "popular nuclear criticism," which includes such authors as Jonathan Schell, Robert Lifton, and Freeman Dyson. The leftists, most notably E. P Thompson, on the other hand, made a less popularized and yet very serious critique of superpower nuclear imperialism. Those earlier versions of nuclear criticism have offered a good text for deconstructionists such as Jacques Derrida et al. in Diacritics. Reflecting the historical context mentioned above, in which nuclear critique gained unprecedented popularity, one can say that nuclear criticism has been shaped and structured by the logic of superpower rivalry.32 The superpower rivalry has distracted our attention from the ongoing process of oppression/violence along the North-South axis. After all, the superpowers have functioned complementarity in solidifying the power of the North over the South.33 Therefore, nuclear criticism has successfully mystified the North-South axis as much as the superpower rivalry. Just as the facade of superpower rivalry (or interimperial rivalry in general for that matter) gave legitimation to the strategy of global domination of capital, nuclear criticism has successfully legitimated the destruction of periphery through nuclear violence. What is significant here is to locate the discourse in a proper context, that is, the late capitalist problematic. To do so, we need to shift our focus back to the questions of strategy and technology discussed earlier. Let us recall our discussion on the genealogy of global discourse. The formation of global discourse has been a discursive expression of the formation of technological interfaces among rockets, cameras, and media furnished by the strategy of late capitalism. In a similar vein, nuclear criticism, whose epistemological basis lies in the exchange of nuclear ballistic missiles between superpowers, emerged from yet another technostrategic interface. Significantly, the camera on the rocket was replaced by the nuclear warhead, which gave birth to the first Inter Continental Ballistic Missile in the late 1950s both in the United States and the former Soviet Union.34 Thus, the discourse of nuclear criticism is a product of technostrategic interfaces among rocket, satellite, camera, photo image, and nuclear warhead. I next decipher the discourse of global capitalism (globalism) interwoven throughout nuclear criticism by linking the technostrategic interface to the formation of discourse. The Configuration of Extinction Nuclear criticism finds the likelihood of "extinction" as the most fundamental aspect of nuclear catastrophe. The complex problematics involved in nuclear catastrophe are thus reduced to the single possible instant of extinction. The task of nuclear critics is clearly designated by Schell as coming to grips with the one and only final instant: "human extinction - whose likelihood we are chiefly interested in finding out about."35 Deconstructionists, on the other hand, take a detour in their efforts to theologize extinction. Jacques Derrida, for example, solidified the prevailing mode of representation by constituting extinction as a fatal absence: Unlike the other wars, which have all been preceded by wars of more or less the same type in human memory (and gunpowder did not mark a radical break in this respect), nuclear war has no precedent. It has never occurred, itself; it is a non-event. The explosion of American bombs in 1945 ended a "classical," conventional war; it did not set off a nuclear war. The terrifying reality of the nuclear conflict can only be the signified referent, never the real referent (present or past) of a discourse or text. At least today apparently.36 By representing the possible extinction as the single most important problematic of nuclear catastrophe (posing it as either a threat or a symbolic void), nuclear criticism disqualifies the entire history of nuclear violence, the "real" of nuclear catastrophe as a continuous and repetitive process. The "real" of nuclear war is designated by nuclear critics as a "rehearsal" (Derrik De Kerkhove) or "preparation" (Firth) for what they reserve as the authentic catastrophe.37 The history of nuclear violence offers, at best, a reality effect to the imagery of "extinction." Schell summarized the discursive position of nuclear critics very succinctly, by stating that nuclear catastrophe should not be conceptualized "in the context of direct slaughter of hundreds of millions people by the local effects."38 Thus the elimination of the history of nuclear violence by nuclear critics stems from the process of discursive "delocalization" of nuclear violence. Their primary focus is not local catastrophe, but delocalized, unlocatable, "global" catastrophe. The elevation of the discursive vantage point deployed in nuclear criticism through which extinction is conceptualized parallels that of the point of the strategic gaze: nuclear criticism raises the notion of nuclear catastrophe to the "absolute" point from which the fiction of "extinction" is configured. Herein, the configuration of the globe and the conceptualization of "extinction" reveal their interconnection via the "absolutization" of the strategic gaze. In the same way as the fiction of the totality of the earth is constructed, the fiction of extinction is derived from the figure perceived through the strategic gaze. In other words, the image of the globe, in the final instance, is nothing more than a figure on which the notion of extinction is being constructed. Schell, for instance, repeatedly encountered difficulty in locating the subject involved in the conceptualization of extinction, which in turn testifies to its figurai origin: "who will suffer this loss, which we somehow regard as supreme? We, the living, will not suffer it; we will be dead. Nor will the unborn shed any tears over their lost chance to exist; to do so they would have to exist already."39 Robert Lifton attributed such difficulty in locating the subject to the "numbing effect" of nuclear psychology. In other words, Lifton tied the difficulty involved here not to the question of subjectivity per se but to psychological defenses against the overwhelming possibility of extinction. The hollowness of extinction can be unraveled better if we locate it in the mode of perception rather than in nebulous nuclear psychology: the hollowness of extinction is a result of "confusing figure with the object."40 This phenomenon, called "the delirium of interpretation" by Virilio, is a mechanical process in which incorporeal existence is given a meaning via the figure.41 It is no doubt a manifestation of technosubjectivity symptomatic of late capitalism. Hence, the obscurity of the subject in the configuration of extinction results from the dislocation of the subject by the technosubject functioning as a meaning-generating machine.

#### Thus the Role Of The Ballot is to embrace Hermeneutical thought – no viewpoint is an objective truth, but simply an interpretation of the world that has a procedural right to be respected. By engaging in “weak thought” which refuses to engage in totalizing metanarratives about existence, only hermeneutics can account for the violence of framed democracy and allow the phenomenological being to establish itself as independent from dominant political and moral orders.

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Hermeneutics did not begin because of a theoretical discovery; it is an interpretative response to the end of metaphysics. Interpretation, following Nietzsche and Heidegger, means an interested involvement. But the end of metaphysics is not something we must inevitably accept as a fact; it is the meaning we attribute, for our interest, to the vicissitudes that Nietzsche and Heidegger narrate. We read such vicissitudes as the dissolution of objective metaphysics because we are against objectivity which makes impossible the history and freedom of existence. Recent Italian philosophy calls this way of tying hermeneutics to nihilism and to the end of metaphysics “weak thought."\*3 Initially “weak” primarily denoted the abandonment of pretensions to absolutes that had characterized the metaphysical traditions. But the weakness of thought could not halt this critical-negative characteristic, just as Nietzsche’s nihilism could not be only negative and reactive. Together with Heidegger we consider the vicissitudes of metaphysics as the history of Being, which has to be interpreted as a process of weakening absolutes, truths, and foundations. In sum, weak thought becomes a (strong) theory of weakening as an interpretive sense of history a sense that reveals itself as emancipative because of the enemies it has attracted. Weak thought can only be the thought of the weak, certainly not ofthe dominating classes, who have always worked to conserve and leave unquestioned the established order ofthe world. Contrary to weak thinkers, when defenders of metaphysical realism face the postmodern condition (where principles, absolutes, and dogmas are critically questioned),"4 they tend to dismiss the political difference this condition implies in favor of a second-rate cultural difference. But for weak thinkers, philosophical debate can here become political struggle. Instead of yet another system of thought, such a struggle must rely on “weak thought,” that is, the idea of the impossibility of overcoming” metaphysics while at the same time establishing the capacity to live without legitimizations or grounding values. This is why Charles Taylor recently adirmed that “once we see this, we can break the spell of the narrow moral rationalism whose supposed strength and rigour merely hides a fundamental weakness. Thinking straight requires that we admit the full ‘debolezzaf weakness, of our thought.”‘° Weak thought allows philosophy to correspond to the dissolution of metaphysics (through hermeneutics) and to search for new goals and ambitions within the possibilities of the “thrown” condition of the human being: instead of an understanding ofthe eternal, philosophy redirects humanity toward an interpretation of its own history It is important to emphasize that the negative connotation of the term “weak” does not allude to a failure of thinking as such but rather to the consequences of the transformation of thought brought about by the end of metaphysics, hence, as a possibility of emancipation. Weak thought is a very strong theory of weakness, where the philosophers achievements do not derive from enforcing the objective world but rather from weakening its structures. Weak thought does not become strong once it weakens the structures of metaphysics, since there will always be more structures to weaken, just as there will always be subjects to psychoanalyze, beliefs to secularize, or govemments to democratize. In sum, the weakness of “weak thought” should not be interpreted in contrast to “strong thought" or as the result of a discovery (that there is no objective description of truth) but rather as an awareness of our postmodern condition. Although Schiirmann, Lyotard, and Rorty exposed postmodern antifoundationalism in very different ways, they all belong to the hermeneutic koiné, where the legitimization of foundations is substituted by an antifoundational hermeneutics. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that they all can be considered as inspirers of weak thought in the late 19808, because their intuitions also helped create this postmetaphysical attitude of thought. Schumann individuated the “absence of foundations” for practical action after metaphysics, Lyotard defined the “postmodern” condition, and Rortyexposed “conversation” as its ethical guiding thread instead of truth. These three philosophical intuitions have become essential points of reference not only for hermeneutic weak thought but also for the weak in general, to whom this thought belongs. If existence is interpretation, human beings must leam to live without legitimizations and grounding values, that is, within antifoundationalism. But how is it possible to think, that is, proceed philosophically without facts, objects, and truth? Is politics without truth possible? Among the first to try to answer this question was Schiirmann, who in the i98os published Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy and Broken Hegemonies. According to Schiirmann, until nowwe have lived by following foundations and paradigms, because each epoch was guided by legitimate (and legitimating) principles that would never change. But as he analyzed inthese studies, epochs (“G reece," “Latinity” “Modemity”) did create different principles (“one,” "nature," “conscience”) that at the same time legitirnated new practices (“religions,” 98 "science," “psychology”) that would have been inappropriate in the past. For Schiirmann, Westem metaphysics becomes a succession of epochal principles that determined hegemonically the different periods of the history of thought. When an epoch changes, a new principle installs itself hegemonically in order to legitimate new practices. Here is a clear example of different epochs dominating through their principles and practices the same sacred space: The Parthenon: within the network of actions, things, and words, the way an entity like the Acropolis is present epochally assumed a well-defmed, although complex character-when rhapsodes prepared for the Panathenean festival, when the Parthenon served as a Byzantine church, when the Turks used it as a powder magazine. Today; when it has become a commodity for tourist consumption and when UNESCO plans to protect it from pollution with a plastic dome, it is present in an epochal economy in yet another fashion-a mo de of presence certainly inconceivable for its architect, Ichtynos. At each moment of this history; the edifice was present according to Hnite, unforeseeable, uncontrollable traits. And each entailed the irremediable disappearance of such an epochal physiognomy” Why are we now aware of this altemation of epochs? Schiirmann does not consider the end of metaphysics outlined by Nietzsche and Heidegger as the theoretical awareness of another, previously unknown structure of Being (which would just legitimate another principle) but rather as the existential assumption of the absence of foundations. 'Ihis is the meaning of “anarchy” referred to in his book’s titles” the “economies of Being” (the substitution of old principles in favor of new ones) do not follow a rational course in history but rather, on their turn, an “anarchic” one. The problem that emerges from this analysis of the end of metaphysics is what to do once we have individuated not only the mechanism of grounding principles but also its absence. But, as we argued at the beginning of this chapter, for Schiirmann the anarchic vein of hermeneutics does not involve the absence of all rules but of a unique rule that could guide all practices. 'This is why in the absence of ultimate metaphysical principles, we can only live through the acquisition of a particular anarchic existential disposition: only by becoming “unaccustomed” to living according to legitimizations and grounding values can thought be practiced in a postmetaphysical or, as Lyotard calls it, a “postmodem” world. This is why for Schiirmann to ask today; “What ought I to do? is to speak in the vacuum of the space deserted by the successive representations of an unshakable ground.”" As we will see, both Lyotard and Rorty indicate how it is possible to live without legitimizations and grounding values and point out the opportunities that come from it. In the 197os, the government of Q\_uebec commissioned Lyotard to write a report on knowledge, but instead of a simple report, the French master came up with one of the most discussed philosophical texts of the past half century: The Postmodern Condition. While this condition was outlined for the first time by Ihab Hassan in 1976 to refer to the social condition of Westem civilization, it is Lyotard who a few years later managed to expose the philosophical innovations that this terminology implied. In this text, Lyotard indirectly outlines the condition of weak thought, that is, how its epoch differs from that of modernism (metaphysics), but, contrary to Schiirrnann, who limited himself to delineating why we entered this “shakable ground,” Lyotard went further, describing the condition for thought that this new ground implies for us. Although Lyotard agreed with Schiirmann that modernity was characterized by “legitimating” norms, he saw this process take place not through principles but rather “metanarratives,” that is, as founding myths that present themselves as global narratives such as positivism, Marxism, and Hegelianism. In sum, while modernity was the age where norms were legitimized through metanarratives, in postmodemity these same metanarratives have been bankrupted. Communication technology in our societies-both as the exchange of news and the possibility for entire masses of people to transfer-has vertiginous, multiplicated perspectives. But such bankruptcy does not mean that these metanarratives do not exist anymore but rather that we began to lose interest in them after the technological advances since World War II. Among the various eifects produced by these technological transformations, the most important concem the end of the ideas of history as a development toward social emancipation and of knowledge as a progression toward accomplishment and truth. Instead of legitimating history and knowledge through metanarratives, we tend today to follow a plurality of interpretations, a practice that has reached its peak through the Intemet. But what happens once we can no longer legitimate our thoughts in terms of progress toward truth? The same concept of truth is weakened into its various interpretations, making it impossible to regard human events as proceeding toward an end, hence, making it impossible to realize a rational program of improvement. In order to explain this new postmodern condition of truth, Lyotard used Wittgensteinian language games, where the antifoundational nature of hermeneutics becomes evident. In the second period of his thought, Wittgenstein developed his notion that reality is not described 01 by an overarching theory but rather by a number of language games. Lyotard comments on the implications of these games: The first is that their rules do not carry within themselves their own legitimation, but are subject to a contract, explicit or not, between players (which is not to say that the players invent the rules). The second is that if there are no rules, there is no game, that even an infinitesimal modification of the one rule alters the nature of the game, that a “move” or utterance that does not satisfy the rules does not belong to the game they define. The third remark is suggested by what has just been said: every utterance should be thought of as a “move” in a game.” Unlike some interpreters, we believe there is a political motivation behind Lyotard’s use of these language games, because they are used to represent the status of knowledge in postmodemity and also the plurality of truth this society presupposes. If we substitute the word “rule” in the passage above with “trutli,” then truth must respect the contingency within the processes with which it deals; in other words, each game implies a different truth that cannot delegitimize other games. '1`his has a deep political import, for now politics cannot be based on accurate representations of reality but rather on singular different events that cannot be represented by rational theory The revolutionary political project of hermeneutics here becomes evident, making Lyotard one of the pioneers of interpretations call for emancipation. Lyotards deprecation of grand narratives has been welcomed by political, cultural, and intellectual minorities because it demands that difference is a principle to follow rather than to reject and also is an indication of civilization. These minorities have always been marginalized by rational politics on the basis of their difference; that is, their difference has been used as a factor of discrimination. Lyotard believes that the difference of each linguistic game (truth) should not only be incorporated into but also become a goal of social organization. But once we recognize how diiference becomes a condition we must pursue instead of reject, conversation substitutes for truth in order to cope with the plurality of linguistic games that surround us. The concept of conversation allows us to dismiss the modern grand narratives that tried to explain the totality of social practices in terms of their conformity to a universal pattern even when they encountered cultures different from their own. While many believed that the concept of conversation undermined our intellectual and moral hierarchies in favor of relativism, Rorty saw it as enforcing the possibilities of freedom from such hierarchies, because there is no position outside our historically situated language games from which to distinguish mind from world. Before indicating some possibilities that will come from conversation as the guiding ethical thread, it is important to remember that Rorty is the philosopher who demonstrated how Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy is really one of the last gasps of descriptive philosophies. Analytic and continental realist philosophies are theoretically responsible for limiting the democratic ambitions of freedom, through their epistemological imposition of truth and state liberalism. This is probably why Rorty in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (1979), after indicating how analytic philosophy was conditioned by a desire to imitate not only the natural sciences but also their technical agenda, saw in hermeneutic philosophy “an expression of hope that the cultural space left by the demise of epistemology will not be filled?" For this reason, Rorty is among the first supporters of hermeneutic weak thought, because it does not pretend to fill any cultural space but rather advocates the discovery of different interpretations, descriptions, and understandings of the world. Rorty specified this, alluding to Nietzsche: What Nietzsche-and, more generally “hermeneutics”-has to tell us is not that we need a new method, but rather that we should look askance at the idea of method. He and his followers should not be viewed as offering us a new set of concepts, but rather as offering a certain skepticism about all possible concepts, including the ones they themselves use . . . they should be seen as urging us to think of concepts as tools rather than pictures-problemsolving instruments rather than firm foundations from which to criticize those who use different concepts.” Knowledge, explains Rorty after Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida’s deconstruction of metaphysics, cannot be acquired by deciding which propositions are true and which are false but only through “conversation,” which has become the “ultimate context within which knowledge is to be understood.”” The American philosopher demands that the paradigm change from truth to conversation for the same ethical reasons that Nietzsche and Heidegger had to overcome metaphysics: because to “see the aim of philosophy as truth-namely the truth about the terms which provide ultimate commensuration for all human inquiries and activities-is to see human beings as objects rather than subjects.”"\* Rorty’s main philosophical operation has been to develop all the consequences of leaving the idea of truth as a matter of mental or linguistic representation of reality He invites all philosophers to substi­tute for “philosophy as the mirror of nature” an “edifying hermeneutic philosophy” that guides, projects, and maintains the conversation of mankind. Like Schiirmann and Lyotard, Rorty also believes that nothing legitimizes or grounds our practices, since there is nothing that shows how they are in touch with the way things are. He believes it is much more productive to accept as justified practices those agreed upon by our epistemic community; in other words, it’s better to make practical decisions on the basis of our history education, and experiences instead of on the basis of truth or principles. Traditional principles have always been beyond the realm of human justification; they are metaphysical matrixes that presuppose that at a certain point in the process we will reach a goal (which could take various forms, such as eternal life, justice, or wealth). But Rortjg following Nietzsche's intuitions, reminds us that these goals do not exist; they are only projections of an insecure humanity in search of extreme reassurances. While these principles are not relative to anything we can experience, human finite justifications are always relative to a “language game community” It is in these individual and free communities that Rorty sees the potentiality for us to become historical contingencies, that is, determined for the cause of freedom instead ofthe signihcance of truth. As we can see, the guiding ethical thread behind Rorty’s philosophy does not depend on a strong conception of morality but rather on a weak one: In a “weak” conception, morality is not a matter of unconditional obligations imposed by a divine or quasi divine authority but rather is something cobbled together by a group of people trying to adjust to their circumstances and achieve their goals by cooperative eH`orts .... This humility will encourage tolerance for other intuitions and a willingness to experiment with ways of refashioning or replacing intuitions.” Rortyg together with Schiirmann and Lyotard, has found in hermeneutic weak thought an ethics without principles and a politics without truth. For all three, genuine liberalism is only possible if human beings are given inhnite freedom for their own re-creation. This is the reason that a tolerant society is one in which achievements will be determined by the plurality of conversations with different linguistic communities instead ofthe imposition of a liberal state, as with the invasion of Iraq. But this is only possible once we leave aside those legitirnatizing norms, foundational beliefs, and traditional principles that assured the links between our rational certainty and Truth, Nature, or God. 'The main accusation leveled against hermeneutic weak thought is that it supports a politics without truth, that is, relativism. But contrary to what many think, the relativism of interpretation favored by postmodemity does not imply a progressive accumulation of points of views but rather the impossibility of declaring once and for all the primacy of one interpretation over others. Although a given interpretation could be preferable to others, this preference will not depend on anything external and capable of guaranteeing its objectivity but only on a positive recollection of its premises, that is, the history that produced it. The relativism of hermeneutic weak thought cannot be absolute, since in its essence this is a thought against every claim to absoluteness, including “absolute relativism,” which would inevitably translate into political oppression. This is also why the “real” still exists for henneneutics, but only within certain paradigms, as Kuhn explained: it is always possible to establish whether an interpretation or a proposition is true or false, but only within a historical condition, a certain scientific discipline, or a political epoch. For all these reasons, hermeneutic weak thought is the thought of the weak, of those who are not satisfied with the established principles imposed on them and who demand different rights, that is, other interpretations. I\_n this politics of interpretation, conversation becomes the realm where the powerful describers of the world can listen to the requests of the weak and perhaps change their selfish priorities. But if they do not listen, today the weak can finally come together. Perhaps Rorty foresaw this when he stated that what is “important about representative democratic government is that it gives the poor and weak a tool they can use against the rich and powerful, especially against the unconscious cruelty of the institutions the powerful have imposed upon the weak.”3°

#### Status-quo models of debate which view dialogue as a rational search for one real truth cause disengagement, epistemological violence, and reinforce dominant systems of power. You should endorse a model of debate allows a plurality of viewpoints absent any necessary enforcement of one particular model or truth, as each model is indexed to a particular phenomenology.

Gianni Vattimo, Italian Philosopher and Politician, A Farewell to Truth, published 2009 ///AHS PB

Philosophy is always ahead of its time. Nietzsche felt himself eminently untimely, but the same holds good for other philosophers too, ones whom we still regard with good reason as our contemporaries. Take the example of the philosophers of poststructuralism. Their goal of “upending Platonism” has never seemed as topical to me as it does today, but at the time, forty years ago, it looked like rhetorical exaggeration. The reason why the anti-Platonism of Deleuze, Derrida (with his defense of writing against the myth of Thoth), Lyotard, and Foucault is topical is this: the authoritarian reaction of metaphysics as it struggles against its own dissolution has become increasingly plain for all to see and, on that account, intolerable. Take for example the notions of dialogue, or democracy, that in the 1960s and 1970s were still utilized and respected; today they are ideological avatars, objects of suspicion on sight—and not just at the academic or high-culture level. In a culture that talks all the time about dialogue, no one really believes that dialogue oﬀers a way to solve the problems we face of relations among diﬀ erent individuals, groups, and cultures. Those who still subscribe to this rhetoric are late-blooming Platonists, metaphysicians who have deep faith in the objectivity of (their) truth and who live in hope of seeing it triumph in the wake of an exchange of views untainted by interests, passions, and ignorance; an exchange that in the end is perspicuous rather than opaque. Platonism doesn’t just happen to be a dialogic philosophy by chance: faith in a truth that those who strive with good will and under expert guidance will always come to intuit is the precondition that makes dialogue productive. That is why the individual who steers things along in many Platonic dialogues, the helmsman if you like, is Socrates: the philosopher whom Nietzsche portrayed as having killed oﬀ tragedy by imposing the conviction that the world is a rational order and that the (morally and theoretically) just have nothing to fear. In Platonic dialogue, with its grounding in faith in a rational order of the world, you can even discern the same schema that undergirds Aristotle’s Poetics , which Bertolt Brecht criticized as the optimism of winners: all the suﬀ erings of Oedipus turn out to be justiﬁ ed in the end, and the spectator’s task comes down to pathei mathos , learning the lessons that suﬀering teaches. It’s only an analogy, but it does cast some light on the sovereignist spirit that drives both Plato in his dialogic practice and Aristotle in his analysis of tragedy. The question is the one already posed by Nietzsche in his critique of Socratism: is the order of the world that guarantees a correct outcome of the dialogue and that justiﬁ es tragedy (even against the criticism of Plato in The Republic , book 10) truly a just, rational, universally valid order? In any case, it is the postulate guaranteeing the value of the Platonic method. Here Nietzsche is not objecting against Socrates that the rationality of his vision of the world is false, as though it were a theory that, properly modiﬁ ed, would yield a diﬀ erent truth. Nietzsche is not addressing the theoretical verity or falsity of the Socratic creed. He is registering, or “constatating” in philosophical parlance, that this creed kills tragedy, meaning that its practical upshot is “quietive” (a word that Schopenhauer employed to highlight the contrast with “motive”). A bit like the injunction pathei mathos , the Socratic theory creates a consciousness half content and half wearily resigned: the world goes how it goes, so (in demotic American English) suck it up. O ne oughtn’t exaggerate the practical implications either of Platonic dialogue or the Aristotelian doctrine of tragedy. But it isn’t far-fetched to observe that the latter especially has a component of resigned acceptance that is halfway to submission. Is the eureka of the slave who discovers a geometrical theorem for himself really a cry of joy, 2 or is it the expression of a more ambivalent state of mind? Do I perhaps show excessive sensitivity to the elements of domination entailed by the structure of dialogue, which have never aroused similar suspicions over all the centuries during which the Platonic dialogue has been taken as the model of rational argumentation par excellence ? What accounts for this new sensitivity and the spirit of suspicion it seems to betray? As I said, the anti-Platonism of authors like Deleuze and Lyotard has become topical again in our culture, because the end of metaphysics, of which they too speak in a manner more or less explicitly derived from Heidegger and Nietzsche, has reached an acute phase characterized by ever more explicit and violent defensive postures. So it is worth repeating that, in referring to metaphysics, we are not talking only about a discipline but also about an epoch in the history of Being in the Heideggerian sense of the expression. In Heideggerian language, metaphysics equals the identiﬁ cation of Being with the existent being, the entity. In Parmenides and Plato, true Being was the attribute of the eternal ideas, given to the intellect as pure forms. The course of Western philosophy and culture (and that includes material culture) has made this order ever more real. It is instantiated in the society of total organization made possible by science and its technological applications. Metaphysics, the rational order in which every entity is ﬁ tted securely into the chain of cause and eﬀ ect, reaches its end at the moment at which it reveals itself to be intolerable—precisely because fully realized. European colonialism and imperialism were the modalities through which metaphysics became the order of the world. And an example of refusal to tolerate this world was the revolt of the colonialized peoples, who were no longer prepared to stand for being exploited as though they were subhuman primitives needing to be introduced into the world by us, their masters. It’s a well-known story. But what is happening is that the masters, now no longer colonial states but the new conglomerations of global economic power that have taken their place, are refusing to abandon their dominant position. The ideological screen isn’t concealing the struggle so well; it’s becoming more explicit: the cold war of the 1950s has become hot war in many of the world’s regions, with the values at stake ever more self-evidently material, for example, energy resources. Nietzsche called the increasingly brazen, violent, and elementary capitalist competition of his time sauvagerie indienne (a reference to what was then the stereotype of the American Indian or rather the Wild West in general). Thus it is that in the world of the end of metaphysics, it becomes impossible to speak of truth. “There do not exist facts, only interpretations; and if this too is an interpretation, so be it.” This Nietzschean aphorism is evidently not a description of some reality “out there.” But it was made possible exactly because the unity of truth (and of the order of the world) has become unpronounceable: it is just not sayable any longer. Those whom it excludes would revolt, and it’s a ﬁ ght they would win. In the new condition of the world at the end of metaphysics, what is occurring with respect to dialogue is turning Platonism upside down in this sense: what counts is no longer the hope of ﬁnding truth at the conclusion of the debate but rather the very fact that debate is possible and that it should continue, as Rorty says. Take the example of interreligious dialogue. Are we supposed to expect the result of this dialogue to be conclusions about God, man, and morality formulated in terms acceptable to all? The theologians and Church leaders who attend may decide to issue a concluding statement to the press, but it will only deal in generalities and common, human (all-too-human?) sense, nothing speciﬁ cally religious. The fact is that the goal of interreligious dialogue (or a dialogue on values, ethics, the meaning of existence) is just the dialogue itself. It is not a process that lets us derive values because it allows us to discover a truth on which we agree. All it does is allow us to realize ourselves through discussion and conversation, excluding violent struggle. ome may ask: Is there nothing more to it than that? I might answer, in the words of Hölderlin, that man has nominated many gods from the moment that we are a dialogue. If we take the poet at his word, mankind has not nominated a truth or a G od but various truths and various gods. I don’t know whether this c orresponds to the poet’s intention; he always uses the plural “gods,” and Jesus was only the last of them, but it is safe to say that to his mind dialogue does not give rise to convergence on a single unifying truth. Upending Platonism means, among other things, assigning a diﬀerent (and even, I daresay, dif-ferent) function to dialogue. Where dialogue is the search for a unique truth, it always generates the conﬂictual drive, the struggle for domination. But let us concede as well that dialogue does promote conﬂ ict avoidance, in the sense that to probe for opportunities for dialogue inevitably generates, or evokes, the need to be done for good with violent struggle and domination. So a complex dialectic arises between conﬂ ict and dialogue, which at least explains why all the talk about the need for dialogue that we hear these days sounds so empty and hypocritical. It’s because the phase of struggle and conﬂict has to precede the onset of dialogue. Who could imagine a constitution being founded simply by citizens voting on a referendum? Without rules in place, in other words a constitution, there is no such thing as a referendum. The question of dialogue and conﬂict always brings us back to face the question of violence. There is no escape from the struggle between master and servant, wonderfully described in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit. It is an illusion, dangerous because entirely aimed at preserving the current balance of power, to imagine replacing conﬂict with dialogue. Conﬂict is needed to establish the conditions for dialogue. Knowing that is a barrier against falling for the ideological illusions that power always employs to preserve itself. But knowing that conﬂict is necessary in order for dialogue to commence also constitutes the normative limit of every liberation struggle. The essential motivation of the struggle for liberation is the eﬀ ort to give a voice to those who didn’t have one before, as Walter Benjamin wrote. For Benjamin too, the meaning of dialogue is primarily the very fact of beginning it. And this confers a somewhat ironic meaning on philosophical theories of nonopaque communication, the only kind seen as capable of guaranteeing the foundations of human society. The question may also be discerned, in more radical but starker terms, in Giambattista Vico’s opposition to Thomas Hobbes and his theory of the social contract. Vico objected against Hobbes that the original social contract could only be stipulated if there were already a language and a code of communication in place: precisely the things that make the contract itself possible. This observation does not necessarily mean that philosophy must give way before the necessity of violence. Rather, it is a matter of not ignoring, in any theory, this foundational phase that entails an initiative of emancipation that can only be called revolutionary. Hobbes’s defense is that his idea of the contract concerns only the remote origins of any society. We never experience an absolute origin of society, because we always ﬁnd ourselves in conditions established prior to us. Does this allow us to forget all about the problem of original violence? It is a violence that is revived every time that dialogue turns into a pure and simple pedagogical expedient of the Platonic kind. The struggle against metaphysics, says Heidegger, is never conclusively won. Any evocation of dialogue as a human approach to the solution of social conﬂicts must also contain an explicit theory of the conﬂict that always accompanies the instauration or restoration of dialogic conditions. There never exists a normal constitutional situation. Those who invite us to behave as though it were already in place are doing no more than expressing the ideology of the groups currently in power. Theory can, at least, refrain from upholding this equivocation and help to render it less burdensome.

#### So called “Rules of the game” are not natural laws, but simply historical norms relevant to a particular interpretation of the activity. The dissolution of metaphysics requires that we refrain from violently imposing practices and instead embrace pacifism in respecting the others ability to interpret the world.

Gianni Vattimo, Italian Philosopher and Politician, A Farewell to Truth, published 2009 ///AHS PB

The heeding of our heritage does not, therefore, lead only to the devaluation of all values but also to the reprise and continuation of certain inherited contents. Many rules of the game by which we know that our society lives will not simply be suspended or revoked in an ethic of ﬁniteness. Many of them are ones that metaphysics or ecclesiastical authoritarianism have passed oﬀ as natural norms. Seen for what they are, a cultural inheritance rather than natures and essences, they can still hold good for us, but with a diﬀ erent cogency—as rational norms (acknowledged through a dis-cursus , a logos , through reason that reconstructs their self-constitution) liberated from the violence that characterizes ultimate principles and the authorities who see themselves as their keepers. Whether they still hold good or not is something that is decided in the name of whatever, with a responsible interpretation, we assume as characteristic of that which really belongs to the heritage to which we feel a commitment. Let us suppose that we are guided in this by nihilism, by the dissolution of ultimate foundations violently imposed through the silencing of dissent. The choice will then lie between what holds good and what doesn’t in the cultural heritage from which we come. It will be made on the criterion of the reduction of violence and in the name of a rationality understood as discourse-dialogue between ﬁnite positions that acknowledge themselves as such and are therefore not tempted to override others on account of a legitimacy warranted by a ﬁrst principle. The overall meaning of this ethic of ﬁniteness is the exclusion of the violence that sees itself as legitimate and the end of any violent authoritarian silencing of any interlocutor’s questioning in the name of ﬁrst principles. (Is there any other possible deﬁ nition of violence that escapes the coils of essentialism?) As I have noted, this ethic certainly inherits, as for that matter do many philosophical ethics today, some aspects of Kantianism, speciﬁ cally the formulation of the categorical imperative in terms of respect for the other (always consider the humanity in yourself and in others as an end, never simply as a means), but stripped of any dogmatic residues of the kind still detectable in the theory of communicative action of Habermas and the thought of Apel. In the ethic of ﬁ niteness, respect for the other is not even remotely grounded on the premise that he or she is a bearer of human reason equal in all men and women. From that position descends, in the neo-Kantian positions mentioned, the pedagogical-authoritarian implication that one does indeed heed the reasons of the other, but only on the prior stipulation that they have not been manipulated. Respect for the other is above all acknowledgment of the ﬁniteness that characterizes each of us and that excludes any deﬁnitive eﬀacement of the opacity that everyone bears inside himself or herself. It may be added that there are no positive reasons grounding this respect, itself indeﬁnite: not, for example, acceptance that we are essentially equal, that we are all descendants of Adam, that my life depends on others, and so on. As soon as they are explicitly stated, these justiﬁ cations reveal their vagueness and unsustainability. Only a familial prejudice could justify the command to love one’s brothers, or a speciesist egoism the notion that I have to respect the other because he is made like me, or egoism pure and simple in the case where one is commanded to respect the other because one’s own survival depends on him, and so on. If, in assuming the nihilistic destiny of our epoch, we recognize that we have no ultimate foundation at our disposal, any possible legitimation for prevarication and violence toward others vanishes. Violence may always constitute a temptation, no more and no less than in any other ethical perspective, but with the difference that here this temptation is stripped of any semblance of legitimacy—which it isn’t in essentialist ethics, even disguised ones (and that includes communicative ethics à la Habermas).

#### Attempting to violently impose truth fails since interpretations of the world can only be negated on the basis of other interpretations, as what counts as true is contextual to the paradigm we adopt.

Gianni Vattimo, Italian Philosopher and Politician, A Farewell to Truth, published 2009 ///AHS PB

At this point, the meaning of the title Farewell to Truth comes into sharper focus. Leave is taken of truth as the objective mirroring of a datum that, to be adequately described, must be fixed and stable—must literally be “a given” (which is what the word datum means). That is feasible in the sciences that “don’t think,” because they do not query the horizon (the paradigm) that envelops them and because they ignore the totality of the dialectical relations that condition their objects. A problem like the one that I alluded to above, of lying in politics, clearly fi ts into this context. If I say that the lies of Bush and Blair don’t matter to me as long as they were justifi ed by good intentions, meaning ones I share, I accept that the truth about the facts is a matter of interpretation, conditional upon a shared paradigm. That this sounds like Machiavellianism pure and simple I quite realize. But Machiavelli’s mistake (to put it in simple terms, since his thought is a lot more complex than that) perhaps lies merely in having left the faculty of lying, or of violating other moral imperatives, exclusively to the prince. Gramsci, I recall, said that in the modern world, the prince was the political party, and that in itself was a step in the direction of democracy, even if the party was not yet society in toto . It is a perilous step, evidently, analogous to that of Lukács when he imagines that the “empiric” proletariat is not identical to the “transcendental,” authentic proletariat—the party and its leadership. These are all ways of widening the application of Machiavelli’s principle to cover more ground and so fundamentally constitute advances toward greater democracy. But they always retain the limitation of supposing ulterior truth to be the metaphysical object of an intuition available only to a subject—a subject qualifi ed in some manner to receive it, in other words the prince, distinct from the collectivity in general, even when identifi ed as a collective subject. Such a limitation signals to me that these authors have not yet fully acquiesced in a truly laic conception of the State. They are unable to see that the truth that matters in politics—and in every other fi eld—is not objective correspondence but the paradigmatic horizon within which every correspondence is verifiable. What we might call the epistemological precondition of social and intercultural dialogue is precisely this truth of horizon, which politics has the task of grasping and attempting to make explicit and to construct. From this there follow important consequences for how we conceive politics and its truth. One is a radical retreat from all claims to ground politics in some scientific discipline, even economics or technology. One recalls, in passing, that one of the major themes of Marx at his best was the negation of the thesis that political economy is a natural science. The same stricture applies to the claim to know the truth about human rights, and to base policies of just war and humanitarian intervention on this true cognizance of the truth, without taking into account the cultural paradigms of others. These factual, so to speak “objectual,” truths hold good in politics only if they are legitimate within the horizon of the paradigm. Philosophers and intellectuals, following a pattern that basically derives from figures like Socrates— and from the sophists too, however much the divine Plato scorns them—labor on the plane of these “horizontal” truths, in an attempt to render a form of life more comprehensible, more shared, more argued over, and more emotionally participative. So today, much more clearly than in the past, the question of truth is recognized as a question of interpretation, of the application of paradigms that, in turn, are not objective (since no one verifi es or falsifi es them except on the basis of other paradigms) but that are a matter of social sharing. The exception that Machiavelli granted to the prince was basically only a correlate of the power, which also belonged to the prince, to establish the canons of the true and the false, to establish what it was more or less obligatory to accept as true (one thinks of what Nietzsche had to say in “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,” 1873).

#### Using the state to mediate between interpretations is necessary and important to prevent the imposition of truth. Movements which rely on violent struggle against politics simply recreate metaphysical domination and are oppositional to hermeneutical respect.

Ashley Woodward, Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Dundee and is a founding member of the Melbourne School of Continental Philosophy, summarizes Gianni Vattimo, THE VERWINDUNG OF CAPITAL: ON THE PHILOSOPHY AND POLITICS OF GIANNI VATTIMO, Published 2009, <https://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/symposium/files/original/f661d58565222ecfc13ffd515b92b2e8.pdf> ///AHS PB

Vattimo‘s positive revaluation of nihilism can be understood as motivated by a critical opposition to what he sees as the violence of metaphysical thinking, violence directly related to its foundational claims. Vattimo‘s specific definition of violence displays his debt to Gadamer‘s hermeneutics, and his pluralistic view of contemporary society as a complex fabric of disparate voices and competing interpretations. Violence, Vattimo asserts, is ―the peremptory affirmation by an authority which forbids further interrogation, breaks down dialogue, and imposes silence.‖ 16 In this sense, metaphysics may be understood as violent because it manifests a suppressive authority in the form of a foundation: metaphysical thought limits the free play of dialogue and interpretation by silencing those voices that are not appropriately related to the foundation to which metaphysics appeals as an arbiter of legitimacy. The violence of metaphysics is thus a form of suppression, which limits the range of voices that are allowed currency.17 This construal of metaphysics as violent, therefore, allows Vattimo to assert nihilism as something positive insofar as the rejection of any foundation serves the purpose of reducing such violence. Moreover, Vattimo‘s nihilism should not be understood as either simply a historical relativism, or as nihilism in an ethical sense (the denial of ethical values). While he construes Being and truth as events, and thus in an important sense relative to time and historicity, on Vattimo‘s reading such events are neither random nor discontinuous. Rather, history unfolds in a form of continuity that Heidegger calls ―destiny‖ (Geschick) in which interpretations of the world are handed down from one generation to another. On Vattimo‘s interpretation, this means that while history does not unfold predictably according to any predetermined structure, pattern, or set of laws (à la Hegel or Marx), it does unfold in a way that gives continuity to tradition and coherence to culture. In particular, Vattimo argues that the kind of positive nihilism he advocates (metaphysical and epistemological anti-foundationalism) has developed from a line of thinkers and traditions that have been concerned precisely with the ethical problem of reducing violence. (In his latest works on religion, this tradition is linked with Christianity and its central value, charity.18) Vattimo believes it is possible for his anti-foundationalist philosophy to avoid relativism by finding criteria in the historical situation in which it unavoidably exists and the tradition out of which it developed. His nihilistic hermeneutics finds its guiding thread in the historically transmitted impetus to reduce violence, an impetus that forms an essential part of the world in which we live and the dialogical community in which we think and argue. This impetus helps constitute the conditions for dialogical agreement, which Vattimo believes are the only conditions for validity for any argument. Despite his opposition to metaphysics, Vattimo rejects the possibility that it may be definitively overcome. He argues that such an overcoming necessarily implies a new foundation, and thus simply imposes another metaphysics. Vattimo, therefore, resists positing the nihilistic interpretation of Being as a new beginning that leaves metaphysics outside and behind. Rather, he writes that ―[f]or Heidegger, as for Nietzsche, thought has no other ―object‖ (if we may even still use this term) than the errancy of metaphysics, recollected in an attitude which is neither a critical overcoming nor an acceptance that recovers and prolongs it.‖ (EM 173) Vattimo appropriates Heidegger‘s rarely-used term Verwindung to explain the relationship between metaphysics and nihilism. This term suggests an alternative to overcoming (the German for which is Überwindung), an alternative Heidegger himself suggests in a number of places.19 Verwindung is a complex term, difficult to translate: it can mean convalescence, to be cured of an illness while still bearing the traces of it, and it can mean ―distortion,‖ from winden which means ―to twist.‖ The meaning of Verwindung as convalescence also has the connotation of ―resignation‖; one can be verwunden to a loss or pain.20 Taken together, these meanings suggest that when Heidegger speaks of Verwindung in relation to metaphysics, he is suggesting a twisting-free from metaphysics through a resignation to it. While this seems a paradoxical notion, Vattimo interprets the Verwindung of metaphysics as an acceptance of the necessity to think in the metaphysical categories that have been handed down to us, but bereft of their most metaphysical aspect, that is, without reference to Being as secure foundation. Vattimo takes from his interpretation of Heidegger the lesson that we cannot step outside the metaphysical tradition, but must work within it in a verwindend relation to it. Insofar as nihilism dissolves foundational thought, the most violent aspect of metaphysics, it can be seen as opening up a new field of possibility, where thought and life will relinquish the nostalgic desire to hold fast to foundations. Seeking out and taking advantage of these new possibilities, Vattimo believes, is our sole opportunity for social emancipation, where such emancipation is understood as a social pluralism in which multiple voices are allowed to dialogue freely. These lines of argument that emerge from Vattimo‘s reading of Heidegger, thus, give meaning to the title of the book to which I shall shortly turn, Nihilism and Emancipation. Vattimo’s Politics: Democratic Socialism and the Problem of Globalisation Parallel to his academic career, Vattimo has long been actively engaged in politics. In his youth, he was involved with the Christian Democratic Party in Italy. He has since been a member of the Radical Party (Partito Radicale) and the Democratic Left (Democratici di Sinistra), and has been particularly outspoken as a ―gay rights‖ activist, participating for a time in the national directorship of the Democratic Left Homosexual Movement (Coordinamento Omosessuale DS). From 1999–2004, Vattimo served as a Deputy of the European Parliament (Strasbourg), representing the Democratic Left Party of Italy in the Group of the Party of European Socialists. Among other parliamentary duties, he served on the Commission of Freedom and Citizen‘s Rights, Justice, and Home Affairs; the Commission for Culture, Youth, Education, the Media, and Sport, and the delegation for relations with South Africa.21 As is readily evident from his political associations, Vattimo has always aligned himself broadly with the Left. Interestingly, Vattimo‘s political trajectory resembles in broad outline other philosophers whom we might refer to as ―postmodern post-Marxists,‖ such as Jean-François Lyotard and Jean Baudrillard. These thinkers began with a broadly Marxist perspective, and hoped for the overcoming of class exploitation through revolutionary change. In his youth in the 1950s, Vattimo was deeply involved in both Catholic groups and Leftist politics, identifying as a ―catto-communist.‖ This was a position that sought to resist the totalitarian dangers of a communist state (the Soviet Union had invaded Czechoslovakia in 1948, an event which motivated strong anticommunist feelings in the Catholic Church), but nevertheless embraced the communist ideals of social justice and the labour movement. (ZI 5–6) During this period of early political radicalism Vattimo was asked to leave the Catholic Action Group because of his progressive political views, was fired from a teaching job for taking his students to a demonstration against apartheid in South Africa, and was arrested for demonstrating for the right to strike in private industrial zones. (ZI 6–7) In the 1960s, Vattimo was converted to Maoism by his reading of Herbert Marcuse. (ZI 10) In the context of early 1970s Italy, Vattimo‘s political philosophy sought to mobilise Nietzsche‘s and Heidegger‘s critiques of metaphysics and humanism as a corrective to Marxian theory, which was perceived by him and others as remaining too metaphysical. Vattimo‘s 1974 book Il soggetto e la maschera was intended to be ―the politicalphilosophical manifesto for the new democratic left.‖ (ZI 12) In this work, Vattimo posits Nietzsche‘s Übermensch as a figure of revolutionary, non-alienated subjectivity, thus situating his studies of Nietzsche within the purview of a Marxian project. Like others in France and elsewhere, however, for both theoretical and historical reasons, Vattimo turned more decisively away from Marxism in the later 1970s. Il soggetto e la maschera had argued for a change in structures of subjectivity as well as a change in structures of power, but retained a Marxian conception of a subject of history (despite a Nietzschean radicalisation of what this meant). In the late 1970s in Italy radical politics began to embrace terrorism, and Vattimo saw that some of his students were conflating the Nietzschean revolutionary subject he had proposed with a ―Leninist revolutionary subject,‖ which embraced violence in the name of metaphysical absolutes. (ZI 12) Partly in reaction to this development, and the relation he perceived between violence and metaphysics, Vattimo developed the philosophy of weak thought through a radicalisation of his readings of Nietzsche and Heidegger. (ZI 12–3)22 Since the early 1980s, Vattimo has agreed with Jean-François Lyotard that Marxism is a defunct metanarrative. 23 He argues now that while the Left has always taken its inspiration from philosophies of history such as the Enlightenment, positivism, and Marxism, the contemporary political situation for the Left is defined by the dissolution of the Marxist metanarrative as well as the collapse of real socialism with the 1989 revolution in Eastern Europe. (HD 3 and 5; NE 81) Vattimo‘s political allegiance is not merely a historically contingent one, however; he opposes revolutionary politics, and political programs grounded in metanarratives, because of the violent potential he believes they both share. In answer to an interviewer‘s question, "Is it right to introduce a better order through force?‖, Vattimo alludes to ―the horrors produced by the grand revolutionary movements, by armed and unarmed prophets,‖ and asserts that ―a respect for what lives and has lived is the only ―better‖ we recognise, and this excludes the use of force.‖ 24 While revolutionary politics threatens the violence of physical force, metanarratives such as Marxism arguably threaten the violence of silencing dissenting voices, that specific form of violence Vattimo associates with metaphysical thought. Marxism may be understood as metaphysical insofar as it posits ―natural‖ values and rights that act as a foundation for the critique of capitalism and the basis for a preferable political economy.25 Such natural categories describe a supposedly objective and permanent structure of Being, and act as a foundation or ground that may serve a suppressive authority in silencing those voices which do not legitimise themselves with respect to this ground. Such a suppressive authority has, of course, manifested itself in the communist regimes of the U.S.S.R, China, and elsewhere. Given this analysis, Vattimo can view the collapse of Marxism as a dominant political philosophy and the widespread failure of communist states as an opportunity for the Left to reconstruct itself in non-metaphysical, and hence less violent, terms. For Vattimo, such a reconstruction should centre around democracy and socialism, interpreted in a way which links these two forms of political organisation with the nihilistic interpretation of Being. Vattimo explains his allegiance to the democratic ideal in the essay ―Hermeneutics and Democracy‖ (in Nihilism and Emancipation), where he associates the two ideas announced in the title on the grounds that they share a common conception of the world as a conflict of interpretations. He writes that ―hermeneutics most faithfully reflects the pluralism of modern society that is best expressed, in the political realm, through democracy.‖ (HD 1) For Vattimo, democracy is the form of po-litical representation most consistent with his nihilistic ontology, since it does not base government on foundational values or a single perspective assumed to access absolute truth. In democracy—at least in its ideal form—government is the outcome of, and must take into account, the social fabric of multiple, competing interpretations. Vattimo‘s defence of socialism is best approached via a consideration of the principal features of the current political landscape he believes must be negotiated by the contemporary Left: the rise of new fundamentalisms and the pervasiveness of capitalist ―supermarket culture.‖ (HD passim ) Fundamentalism of all kinds (and we might note in passing that the Catholic Church has often been one of Vattimo‘s targets, despite his own Catholic orientation) is an obvious target for a nihilisticallyoriented politics because of its unambiguously foundational aspirations. The issue of capitalism is more complex: Vattimo concedes that contemporary capitalism has the same anti-foundational traits as a nihilistic society of the free play of interpretations, but argues that it lacks the goal of the reduction of violence, a goal central to the positive form of nihilism he champions. Instead, contemporary capitalism glorifies competition and an ideology of development at any cost. Competition and development inspire and justify forms of violence and, according to Vattimo, the rules of the marketplace reduce life to a game of survival.26 The direction in which Vattimo believes a political resistance to capitalism should advance is most clearly developed in another of the essays in Nihilism and Emancipation, ―Globalization and the Relevance of Socialism.‖27 Here, Vattimo invokes Habermas‘ notion of the colonisation of the lifeworld by pure strategic rationality to describe the pervasive reduction of the social and the political spheres to the economic.28 The process of globalisation, on Vattimo‘s analysis, is just such a reduction. He argues that ―the realm of economics, of survival, is no more than a violent battlefield, unless there is mediation at a different level, the level of the political.‖ (GRS 121) The form of political organisation he believes can accomplish this mediation, beyond a minimal democracy, is socialism. Vattimo develops a particular understanding of socialism by beginning with Hannah Arendt‘s affirmation of an ―ethical‖ separation of politics from the sphere of private interests29 , and then arguing for the further need to restore the independence of the political sphere from the economic. Restored to independent functioning, the relations between these three spheres may be mediated in such a way as to ameliorate the violent imposition of the economic sphere on the other two. The function of the political sphere, for Vattimo, once it is set free from encroachment by the economic, should be to uphold social interests and protect the sphere of the social from the economic. He argues that this is the central meaning of socialism, writing that today we are able to perceive the ―truth‖ of socialism, above all as a program for setting politics free of the laws of economics, especially the laws of the globalised economy, which, as we now see on every side, bring with them growing limits to freedom, to recognition, to the conditions for a ―good life.‖ (GRS 129) Translating this into the Habermasian terms on which Vattimo draws, the sphere of politics is given the role of protecting the lifeworld (the sphere of social interests) from colonisation by the strategic rationality of the economic sphere. On Vattimo‘s account, the State is the minimal form of political organisation necessary to fill this protective role. For Vattimo, the State ought not have a homogenising function with respect to its citizens, but it should function to protect individuals and communities from the potentially homogenising effects of economics: ――socialism‖ in the sense in which I have used the term here has to mean a conception of the state as guarantor of the multiplicity of the communities that compose it…‖ (GRS 129) In addition to the anti-foundational and pluralist orientation of democracy, then, Vattimo advocates socialism, in this specific sense, as providing the ―guiding thread of the reduction of violence‖ that is essential to his nihilistic philosophy. Together, democracy and socialism are seen by Vattimo as forms of political organisation that combat the violent tendencies of both fundamentalism and capitalism.

#### Objective scientific reasoning sustains framed democracy through a slavish devotion to calculable metaphysics that destroys individual subject and idea formation absent the western façade of truth.

Gianni Vattimo, Italian Philosopher and Politician, and Santiago Zabala, ICREA Research Professor of Philosophy at the Pompeu Fabra University, Hermeneutic Communism, published 2011, ///AHS PB

Among the various causes of this retum, the completion of metaphysics seems to us as the most plausible explanation, because it indicates how the dissolution of philosophy into the objective sciences has further submitted it to the service of the dominant political powers." But if realism is simply the conservation of objective data that philosophy must recognize, politics submit to, and faith cherish, it can only triumph within a framed democracy that is, where transformation and change are almost impossible. Dialogues exclude the very possibility of transformation, because they impose truth on any form of dissent from the prevailing scientific order; that is, the metaphysical foundation of democracy This foundation, which leads philosophy to dissolve into scientific objectivism, has created contemporary framed democracy where, as Heidegger explained, the “only emergency is the lack of emergency”: The lack of emergency [Not] is the greatest where self-certainty has become unsurpassable, where everything is held to be calculable and, above all, where it is decided, without a preceding question, who we are and what we are to do-where knowing awareness has been lost without its ever actually having been established that the actual self-being happens by way of a grounding-beyondoneself, which requires the grounding of the grounding-space and its time.” In this condition of lacking of emergency (which we can also call “neutral.ization”), where Being has been inally replaced by beings, that is, by its technological global organization, philosophy seems forced both to impose its unification and to conserve the established dialogue. This is why Heidegger, in the passage above, linds emergency not only in metaphysics' domination of the world but also in “who we are and what we are to do,” that is, in our freedom. 'Dae emergency today is the completion ofa condition of neutralization where ffreedom” is only possible within the established dialogue. While the goal of the metaphysical philosophers was to spread Enlightenment scientific objectivism to all the disciplines to assure a more ellicient manipulation of extemal reality their main task now has become to assure the conservation of established “dialogic realism” against any outsider, parasite, or foreign event. In this condition, only philosophy that can ensure the ontological structure of framed democracy (and all the factors that constitute it: truth, dialogue, institutions) will be rewarded both academically and Socially.” Among the many analytic and continental philosophers who directly or indirectly preserve such realism (and therefore also contrast freedom), ]ohn Searle has a particular place not only for his original position but also for his debate with Derrida’s deconstructive thought.” While this debate expressed the fear, insecurity and danger that realists like Searle see in anyone who questions the scientific dissolution of philosophy the “social ontology”’° that the American philosopher outlined exposes (indirectly) the “lack of emergency” emphasized by Heidegger, because it seeks total control through science’s objectivistic impositions: Searle, as Barry Smith aflirmed, “has defended all along a basic realism?" A possible origin of Searles realism, and therefore of his debate with Derrida, could be found in the dispute between Husserl and Heidegger when they collaborated on the article “Phenomenology” for the fourteenth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (192.9).3° Contrary to many politically conditioned interpreters of Heidegger, the only reason why he put an end to his collaboration with Husserl was the metaphysical meaning that phenomenology had acquired for Husserl: the opportunity to dissolve philosophy in a series of regional ontologies. Heidegger could not accept such a dissolution, because it represented the attempt to develop the metaphysical dream that he was trying to overcome and that Husserl also abandoned a few years later." In sum, while Searle radicalized Husserl’s early phenomenological project of regional ontologies, Derrida developed Heidegger’s fundamental ontology through deconstruction. Having said this, it should not come as a surprise if in one of his latest books Searle aiiirms how “several of the standard phenomenological authors seem to me not too phenomenological, but rather not nearly phenomenological enough.”’“ Searle is here referring to those philosophers (Heidegger, Hans Blumenberg, and many others) who aborted Husserl’s early phenomenological project (to resolve philosophy in a series of regional ontologies) in order to emphasize its fundamental ontology. Among the followers of Husserl’s early phenomenological project,” Adolf Reinach has a particular place in Searle’s realism both because he anticipated john Austins theory of speech acts and for his regional ontology of “social interactions.”3\* Although Husserl and Reinach provided Searle with the appropriate phenomenological approach, the American philosopher managed to submit the realm of human freedom to a scientiic political control where, as he says, the “extension of freedom and the extension of rationality are the same?" The political project behind Searle’s realism is to emphasize, conserve, and control the “Western Rationalistic Tradition” (which is just another name for metaphysics), that is, those standards of objectivity truth, and rationality that “are essential presuppositions of any sane philosophy”" But what is a sane philosophy? For the American master, in order for a philosophy to be “sane,” it must cooperate with empirical science and actually have a general wissenschaftliche approach. Such an approach can be achieved by submitting itself to such irrefutable facts as those “stated by the atomic theory of matter and the evolutionary theory of biology""" But why must philosophy submit itself exclusively to the latest discoveries of science? The response is simple: because “we live in a world of basic facts, as described by atomic physics, evolutionary biologja and neurobiology” Contrary to what many might expect, Searle openly recognizes that our descriptions of facts change as we learn more through these same sciences; in other words, he recognizes the significance of Thomas Kuhn’s theory of scientific-paradigm revolutions.” Nevertheless, he does not consider this to be an argument in favor of hermeneutics or relativism: quite the contrary That our interpretations change is an argument against relativism, because the basic facts’ “absolute existence does not by itself guarantee that at any point in our history we have accurately stated them. Facts don’t change, but the extent of our knowledge does.”‘\*° This is whySearle gives great significance to our dependence on fads: All of our lives, including all of our mental lives, are dependent on the basic facts. Given that, we have an interesting set of questions about how human beings are able to create a meaningful set of semantic, institutional, social, etc., facts out of the basic facts using their consciousness and intentionality. The institutional, social, and other similar facts, etc., have a relative existence. They exist only relative to human beings. But the basic facts do not in that way have a relative existence. They have an absolute existence. They are regardless of what we think.” The most important feature of this passage is not Searle’s insistence on the existence of basic facts but rather these other semantic, institutional, and social facts that, just like the basic facts, must be analyzed, systemized, and developed philosophically in order “to get at the basic structure that underlines all institutional reality”"’ But why is it so important to know this basic structure? Searle believes that this basic structure will allow political philosophy in the future to achieve better results because it will linally enable it to “proceed from a prior political ontolog)5”” that is, from science's basic facts. External realism is the precondition for having theories. In sum, institutional reality is a matter of collective impositions of what Searle calls “status functions,” which are imposed on objects that cannot perform such functions because of their physical nature but demand a collective acknowledgment. But it is not only because of the “collective intentionality” and “assignment of the function” that the object has a certain status (e.g., being a policeman) and, with that, a function (protecting the public). In order for something to have a certain status and, with this status, a certain function, it must also have a “constitutive rule,” that is, the possibility “to follow a set of rules, procedures or practices whereby we count certain things as having a certain status.”\*‘

## 1ar

### Extension

### Indexicals

### A2 Theory

### A2 Afropess

### A2 Set Col

### A2 Kant

### A2 Util

### A2 Asteroids PIC

#### [1] Circumvention—countries just claim all of their nukes are now for asteroids, or they missed the asteroid and woops killed 2 billion people.

#### [2] PIC is non unique—Nuking Asteroids has been illegal since the cold war.

University of Reading, Publication by the University of Reading science department, How to destroy an asteroid without nuking each other first, 2019,<https://phys.org/news/2019-04-asteroid-nuking.html> ///AHS PB

"I was somewhat surprised when I began looking into the hypothetical situation in Michael Bay's Armageddon. In particular, not only are there serious scientific discussions about the merits or not of a nuclear approach to asteroids, but legal restrictions that currently would mean that the heroic actions of a group of ragtag oil drillers likely would be in breach of a number of international treaties.

#### [3] Zero risk of asteroids

Everitt 8[James “If an asteroid hit the earth?” published 12/20/2008; http://push.pickensplan.com/video/2187034:Video:1691581]

A computer video circulating the internet has rekindled fears that an asteroid will hit Earth and send mankind the way of the brontosaurus. Based on NASA projections, there is indeed a chance that such an asteroid will impact Earth in the next year. **It is 1 in 2,518,072** This number is derived from NASA calculations of the likelihood of a strike by any one of the six substantial Near-Earth Objects (NEOs) whose current course could intersect our planet's in 2009. The most likely of the bunch, an NEO named 2008 AO112, alone has a 1 in 4,000,000 chance of impacting Earth. In other words, there's a 99.999975% chance the thing will miss us. By comparison, in the new year, based on recent National Safety Council data, chances are less that you will be killed by an asteroid than by the following: Motor vehicle accident: 1 in 6,539 Exposure to noxious substances: 1 in 12,554 Assault by firearm: 1 in 24,005 Accidental drowning: 1 in 82,777 Exposure to smoke, fire or flames: 1 in 92,745 Exposure to forces of nature (lightning, flood, storms, etc.): 1 in 136,075 **Falling out of bed** or off other furniture: 1 in 329,819 Choking on food: 1 in 343,179 Air and space transport accidents: 1 in 502,554 Exposure to electric current, radiation, temperature, and pressure: 1 in 705,969 Being bitten, stung or crushed by another person or animal: 1 in 1,841,659 Chances You'll Be Killed by an Asteroid in 2009! Conclusion: It would be statistically unwise to sell your home (your chances of selling it aside) and use the proceeds for a pre-asteroid splurge in the tropics. Alternatively, if you are considering fleeing Earth, you are more likely to die by spacecraft accident than by asteroid. And if you do so anyway, given the chance of being bitten, stung or crushed by another person or animal, your chances are even worse if you bring company.

#### [4] Does nothing—Asteroids reconstruct.

Andrew Masterson, Science reporter citing physics Profs from John Hopkins, Think we can nuke away an incoming asteroid? Think again, 2019, <https://cosmosmagazine.com/space/think-we-can-nuke-away-an-incoming-asteroid-think-again> ///AHS PB

The research, [published](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.icarus.2018.12.032) in the journal Icarus, shows that an asteroid damaged in a collision – by another asteroid, for instance, or a nuclear missile fired at it in the blind hope that doing so will prevent it from smacking into the planet with catastrophic consequences – will substantially reconstruct itself because of the strong gravitational pull of its still-intact core.

### A2 Terror DA

#### We impact turn threat of terror--

#### 1] states have no incentive to give nuclear material or weapons since the groups would just use it to flip power in the government – means that the squo checks.

#### 2] terrorists don’t want nukes – they’re a) complicated to use b) hard to transport and detonate easily and c) require much more expertise than they have at hand – means that there’s no impact.

#### 3] T – the aff decreases terror since a) it improves relations between countries to allow for better alliances b) creates a sphere of peace in IR and c) eliminates the weapon that terrorists could use.

#### 4] Nukes aren’t useful or necessary.

**Evans et al. 09** [Gareth Evans and Yoriko Kawaguchi, () "Eliminating Nuclear Threats: A Practical Agenda for Global Policymakers" Report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, November 2009, http://www.icnnd.org/reference/reports/ent/pdf/ICNND\_Report-EliminatingNuclearThreats.pdf, DOA:12-8-2019 // WHSRS]

6.19 “nuclear weapons will deter terrorist attacks”. **Whether or not terrorism can be deterred**, or only prevented and defeated, and whether or not terrorist actors are themselves threatening or using nuclear weapons or explosive devices, **nuclear weapons are manifestly neither strategically, tactically nor politically necessary or useful for this purpose. Terrorists do not usually have traditional or convenient sites that could be targeted for the use**, or threat of use, **of nuclear weapons**: territory, industry, a population, or a regular army, which could be targets in a strike of retribution. **The military challenge** in such cases **would be to locate the terrorist threat with enough precision and certainty to justify attacks on it.** **if intelligence were not perfect and a nuclear strike conducted on a wrong target, the backlash would be enormous; and even if high-confidence intelligence did exist, then it is difficult to imagine that non-nuclear means could not be utilized for the target in question**. To conduct nuclear strikes on another state, even one demonstrably complicit in a terrorist attack, would raise exceptionally difficult political, strategic and moral issues.

### A2 Process CPs

#### 1] Perm do the counterplan

#### ---A] conditions aren’t competitive because the plan text is never negated.

Kerpen 2 [Phil Kerpen (Phil Kerpen is a policy debate theorist, frequent judge, and operator of cross-x.com and hsdebate.com.) “The Problem of Plan-Contingent Counterplans”; NDCA Newsletter, June 2002 //BWSWJ]

Textual plan-inclusivity is the most immediate and glaring problem with PCCs. A PCC includes the affirmative plan, verbatim, adding to it only conditions on which it is made contingent. In essence then, a PCC is itself a permutation; it contains the entire plan. The only escape from this argument for negatives is the claim that text should not be used as the benchmark for competition, but that view is highly problematic. Mechanical competition, which is the view that the actions advocated in the counterplan must compete with the actions of the plan, is the popular alternative to textual competition. But the mechanics of plans and counterplans are open widely to interpretation, and ultimately nearly wholly arbitrary. Most plans (although perhaps this is an error by affirmatives) contain broad catch-all language about implementation, intent, and guarantees that bracket the specifics of implementation. In fact, the purpose of fiat is to bracket the specific mechanics of the plan and focus instead on the text and its desirability. If we think of the plan text as a bill being proposed, the debate focuses exclusively on whether it should be approved. If it should be approved in the context of larger bill including other language, the affirmative has still proven that it should be approved. Textual competition guarantees that a permutation is always possible--even seemingly contradictory laws could be written on the books at the same time, the question is what would result. Mechanical competition reduces all competition to antiquated questions of exclusivity, since actions always compete for scarce resources and desirability arguments interact with implementation. As the most evocative example, it seems impossible to demonstrate that steal the funding is not a legitimate argument form under a mechanical standard of competition.

**---B] Resolved isn’t certain.**

**Merriam Webster 9** (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/resolved)

# Main Entry: 1re·solve # Pronunciation: \ri-ˈzälv, -ˈzȯlv also -ˈzäv or -ˈzȯv\ # Function: verb # Inflected Form(s): **resolved**; re·solv·ing 1 : to become separated into component parts; also : to become reduced by dissolving or analysis 2 : **to** form a resolution : determine 3 : **consult, deliberate**

**---C] Or immediate.**

**Dictionary 9** Online Plain Text English (http://www.onelook.com/?other=web1913&w=Resolve)

**Resolve: “To** form a purpose; to **make a decision**; especially, to determine **after reflection**; as, to resolve on a better course of life.”

### A2 Deterrence

### A2 Bioweapons

### A2 Waste Dumping

### 1AR – First Strike CP

#### 1] T – first strike guarantees extinction because other states would see it as a threat and strike back – that spills over and escalates to guarantee conflict in a shorter period.

#### 2] T – first strike incentivizes the states to mobilize its other weapons to retaliate – even if the first strike SOMEHOW takes out ALL of the nuclear silos they’d still want to retaliate in any way they can because of the implicit declaration of war.

#### 3] first strike ensures that states will lash out – causes a) more instability in regions for miscalc to strike each other and b) an increased chance of nuclear war with misinterpretation.

#### 4] Can’t solve the aff – even a first strike would cause extinction

Ramanathan & Mehta 19 – \* a research analyst with the Takshashila Institution AND \*\* Programme Associate with the Strategic Studies Programme (Aditya and Shibani, “Nuclear First Use: A Critique,” *Takshashila Institution*, 06/21/2019, Accessed Online at: https://takshashila.org.in/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/TDD-Global-Nuclear-First-Use-GPM-AR-KK-2019-03.pdf, Accessed Online on 07/25/19, lasa-SI)

Climate Devastation: Even if a disarming strike was to somehow completely achieve its objectives, success could be as deadly as deadly failure. The extreme temperatures of nuclear explosions cause long-lasting and widespread fires around the blast areas. In the early 1980s, some scientists pointed out that once the black soot from these fires rises into the upper atmosphere, it blocks solar radiation, causing a “nuclear winter” resulting in catastrophic crop failures and mass starvation.14 Recent studies have estimated that even a “limited” nuclear war between India and Pakistan involving fission bombs could deplete the ozone layer and have a devastating impact on global climate.15 Indeed, the irony is that the climatic impact of limited nuclear use could far exceed the damage caused by the initial blasts and pose an existential threat to states and societies. While some of these estimates of climatic impact are still being debated16 , it is clear that any attempt at a large-scale disarming strikes using nuclear weapons risks plunging the planet into a climate disaster. A smaller-scale nuclear war between India and Pakistan would pose an existential threat to both countries. A larger nuclear war would threaten humanity itself. These realities make bolt-from-blue strikes much less likely and in turn, reduce the imperative for pre-emptive strikes.

### 1AR – Phase Out CP

1. Perm do the CP – it’s the plan. “Ought” isn’t immediate.

English Grammar 10 [“Must and Ought to”; English Grammar; August 16, 2010; <https://www.englishgrammar.org/must-and-ought-to/> //BWSWJ]

Ought expresses ideas such as duty, necessity and moral obligation. It is not as forceful as must, but it is stronger than should. You ought to be punctual. We ought to help the poor. You ought to visit your friends once in a while. Ought generally points to present and future time. It can point to past time when it is followed by the perfect infinitive (have + past participle).

1. Circumvention DA – states will still feel threats from other states during reduction phases and still have incentive to proliferate – doesn’t check arms races.
2. T – phase out causes more instability because it’s a) impossible to ensure that states are reducing at regulated levels and b) that they’re not stockpiling them for future usage.
3. Durable fiat solves – we fiat that states get rid of their nukes and a) they’re incentivized to since it prevents MAD and b) solves all their offense on the CP since it means there’s literally no DA to the aff.

### 1AR – Hurricanes PIC

#### CP can’t solve – a nuke intended to hit hurricanes can still be used to strike people too since it takes a shit ton of power to stop one – countries can still circumvent the PIC.

#### Perm: do the aff and give control of anti-hurricane nukes to the UN – even if anti-hurricane nukes are good, no reason why states need to have them.

#### Perm do the plan all the CP planks – limited intrinsicness is key to preventing artificial competition – proves the net benefit isn't a cost since it doesn’t disprove the advantage.

#### Circumvention DA – leaders will say that they’re proliferating for defense but can use them for whatever because of floppy rules which causes another arms race.

#### Nukes are probably still worse because we can predict hurricanes and prep + evacuate but can’t stop a nuke as easily.

### 1AR – NFU CP

#### Perm do the CP – it’s literally the aff – that’s Van Der Meer 16.

#### Perm do both – no mutual exclusivity and net benefit is the advantage.

#### CP can’t solve – no states trust each other – that’s why things like MAD and arms races still exist in the status quo.

#### It’s just a meaningless symbolic gesture that does nothing – for example, India has an NFU yet they still threaten Pakistan – that’s the advantage.

#### NFU fails – India’s recent statements either reinterpret or just circumvent NFU – the lack of proper wording and actual regulations make it useless. Also means that the ambiguity of NFU doesn’t do anything means it’s functionally the s’quo.

#### Still links to the net benefit since states can a] still do whatever they want with proliferation and b] threaten other countries as long as it ‘promises’ not to strike.

#### NFU has no assurances and would symbolically weaken a country

**Harvey 19** [John R. Harvey, Dr. John R. Harvey is a physicist who has spent his career working to advance U.S. nuclear weapons programs and policies including in senior posts in the Departments of Energy and Defense. He retired from government service in 2013 as principal deputy assistant secretary of defense for nuclear, chemical, and biological defense programs.(July 5, 2019) Assessing the Risks of a Nuclear ‘No First Use’ Policy. Retrieved December 06, 2019, from <https://warontherocks.com/2019/07/assessing-the-risks-of-a-nuclear-no-first-use-policy/> MM Recut WHSRS]

Over the past few decades, the United States has weighed the risks and benefits to both its nuclear deterrence posture and its non-proliferation policy goals of renouncing first-use of nuclear weapons in a conflict. In President Barack Obama’s 2010 Nuclear Posture Review and, later, near the end of Obama’s second term as part of a mini-nuclear review, the adoption of a so-called “no-first-use” pledge was considered. Both times, Obama rejected adopting such a policy. The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review carried out by the Trump administration reviewed the policy and reaffirmed Obama’s decision. Recently, Rep. Adam Smith, the new chair of the House Armed Services Committee, and Sen. Elizabeth Warren have called for a U.S. no-first-use policy. Well-meaning supporters of no-first-use are taken with the simplicity of the idea and its potential for bolstering U.S. “moral leadership” in the world. After all, they argue, the United States has no intention of starting a nuclear war so why not just say so? Given the recent revival of this topic, it is appropriate to review some of the considerations that caused both Obama and Trump, as well as Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bus, to reject adopting a policy of no-first-use. There are three major risks in adopting a nuclear declaratory policy of no-first-use. The first risk is to deterrence: Adversaries, absent a fear of reprisal, could be emboldened to act against U.S. interests. The second risk is to U.S. assurances to its allies: If America adopts no-first-use, then allies could lose confidence in America’s extended deterrence commitments. The third risk is to the goal of non-proliferation: Such lost confidence among America’s allies could spur them to develop and field their own nuclear weapons. The purported benefits of adopting a no-first-use policy, which I discuss below, are insufficient to offset these inherent risks. Every president since Dwight Eisenhower has viewed nuclear weapons not just as another weapon of war augmenting conventional arms, but as a special kind of weapon to be used only in the direst circumstances when vital U.S. security interests are at stake. The main concern in adopting a policy of no-first-use is that it could lead an enemy to believe that it could launch a catastrophic, non-nuclear strike against the United States, its allies, or U.S. overseas forces without fear of nuclear reprisal. Consider, for example, a North Korean biological attack on an American city that kills hundreds of thousands, or an artillery bombardment of Seoul with chemical weapons, resulting in the deaths of tens of thousands of Korean and U.S. forces and citizens. Would North Korea be more willing to contemplate such attacks if it thought it was immune to a U.S. nuclear response? Recent presidents have been unwilling to accept the risk to deterrence that would accompany a pledge of no-first-use. Two factors might mitigate such risks to deterrence were a no-first-use policy adopted. First, a no-first-use pledge is unlikely to appear credible to an adversary contemplating major aggression. For example, North Korea is unlikely to base any military planning to reunify the Korean Peninsula by force or plans for its regime survival after an unsuccessful effort to achieve that objective, on a U.S. promise of no-first-use. Consider China’s existing no-first-use pledge, which has not caused the United States to moderate its own nuclear posture one iota. Few states will risk their national security based on a declaratory policy that can be reversed overnight. Dominic Tierney, an academic who supports a no-first-use policy, eloquently addresses this point: Viewed through a strategic — and perhaps more cynical — lens, the no-first-use doctrine also has a huge credibility problem. For the U.S. pledge to truly matter, a president who otherwise favors a nuclear first strike would have to decide not to press the button because of this policy. But in an extreme national crisis — one involving, say, North Korean nuclear missiles — a president is unlikely to feel bound by America’s former assurance. After all, if a country is willing to use nuclear weapons, it’s also willing to break a promise. Second, it’s not at all clear that an adversary could count on U.S. public opinion to act as a “brake” on an American president contemplating first use in response to a catastrophic non-nuclear attack. Several surveys conducted by Scott Sagan and Ben Valentino look at the American public’s willingness to support first-use under such circumstances. The results reveal a surprising level of support. Sagan and Valentino thus argue: Would we drop the bomb again? Our surveys can’t say how future presidents and their top advisers would weigh their options. But they do reveal something unsettling about the instincts of the U.S. public: When provoked, we don’t seem to consider the use of nuclear weapons a taboo, and our commitment to the immunity of civilians from deliberate attack in wartime, even with vast casualties, is shallow. Today, as in 1945, the U.S. public is unlikely to hold back a president who might consider using nuclear weapons in the crucible of war. In other words, the American public might well demand, rather than oppose or simply tolerate, a nuclear response to a catastrophic non-nuclear attack — no-first-use pledge or not. Thus, an adversary’s doubts about a no-first-use pledge and its belief that the U.S. public may well support breaking such a pledge in response to a horrific attack could mitigate some of the deterrence risks of adopting a no-first-use policy. However, the degree to which those risks would be mitigated remains uncertain and, so far, no president has been willing to find out. Building and maintaining strong alliances has been a centerpiece of America’s effort to produce and sustain a more peaceful world. Critical to this is assuring U.S. allies of America’s commitment to their defense by extending to them the full range of U.S. military power. Many countries, including those that share a border with an adversary that presents a threat to their very existence, see no-first-use as a weakening, symbolic or otherwise, of U.S. extended deterrence.

# Random Files

## The Works

Democracy is true because it is the only system consisnet with the moral theories we have chosen to adopt, and those moral theories are true because they are the only theories consisnet with democracy.

Truth is incoherent. Our understanding of the world occurs from our position in being

#### gTruth Link

Vattimo

In a discussion with the distinguished French analytical philosopher Pascal Engel on the uses of truth, Rorty showed how contemporary philosophy is divided not only between realist and antirealist conceptions of truth but most of all between those who argue over truth’s realism or antirealism and those who try to avoid this metaphysical quarrel altogether.” While Engel was only interested in justifying his ‘minimal realism” theory of truth at all costs, Rorty tried to indicate that while both realist and antirealist theorists belong to the politics of descriptions (because even the antirealist imposes his description of truth’s nonexistence), those who overcome such dualism belong to a postmetaphysical culture, that is, to a politics of interpretation (which we will study in chapter 3). But Rorty’s most significant implications concern not the democratic opportunities that philosophy might gain from leaving aside the realist-versus-antirealist quarrel but rather the violent political consequences of the politics of descriptions. It must be for these reasons that Rorty in a famous essay of 1985 entitled “Solidarity or Objectivity?” emphasized the centrality of truth in our philosophical tradition: 'The tradition in Western culture which centers around the notion of the search for Truth, a tradition which runs from the Greek philosophers through the Enlightenment, is the clearest example of the attempt to find a sense in one's existence by turning away from solidarity to objectivity The idea of Truth as something to be pursued for its own sake, not because it will be good for oneself, or for ones real or imaginary community is the central theme of this tradition." While most philosophers would agree with Rorty that truth is the central theme of our tradition, not all of them will believe it is responsible for a turn away from solidarity. The origin of this dispute lies in the essence of truth, that is, in its pragmatic nature, without which it also loses its meaning. Truth is not only "violent," in that it tums away from solidarity but it is “violence,” because it can easily become an imposition on our own existence. Being “violent” might imply that it can also be peaceful, but truth instead often implies an imposed description whose acceptance is assumed. Violence is the political meaning of truth, because truth always implies a concluding constriction that varies from its definition in the Gospels (“The truth will make you free"), in Hegel (“Truth is the whole”), or more recently in Baudrillard (“'l`he simulacrum is true”). Although these definitions of truth probably have our wel]-b eing at heart, they also pretend to impose themselves regardless of our different religious, existential, or social Being. Like the metaphysical philosophies mentioned earlier, these definitions of truth want to maintain the social order that they find themselves comfortable in, and they also claim to justify it. Although truth, as the reflection of a given objective order, has always inspired ethical and moral ideals of life, these same ideals depended on truth’s unity that is, the unity of opinions in the true. While this unity has effectively become reality today because of the establishment of a global political system (which we call framed democracy), truth does not therefore cease being violent, because claims of truth are also claims of political power. But how does this violence take place in our global political culture? Principally through the use of dialogue as the “moralization of politics,” that is, as the apparently peaceful exchange of opinions-but, as we all know even Plato’s exemplary dialogues aimed to conduct one of the two interlocutors (often the slave) to recognize the truth that the other already knew from the beginning. If truth claims are also always claims of political power, that is, violence, and if this same violence is nothing else than the “silencing” of other interlocutor through an apparent dialogue, truth and violence become interchangeable. Only the recognition of truth’s violence will allow one to consider the implicit danger of those politics that claim to have an ultimate foundation, that is, politics founded on truth. As we will see, the foundation of truth through dialogue fixes thought within framed democracy: a conservative moralized order where the democratic is only what legally enters the order established by metaphysics. The most successful dehnitions of truth within contemporary analytic and continental philosophy continue to belong to Husserl’s phenomenological theory and Alfred Tarskis philosophy of language (in 1933, Tarski developed Aristotle’s “correspondence theory of truth,” expressed in medieval philosophy as veritas est ada equatio rei et intellectus). While many historians will have us believe that there is a substantial diH`erence between the two theories f1'om a semantic point of view few have discussed the metaphysical implication that both theories share. Contrary to the majority of Tarski’s interpreters, we believe that the quotation marks in his principle (“ 'p' is True if and only if p”)" are essential, because they indicate its pragmatic essence, in other words, for “whom” truth is significant. In sum: the position of P outside the quotation marks is always expressed, affirmed, and sustained by someone who needs it to be outside, hence, who is interested in imposing P Metaphysical philosophers would respond that this imposition, and therefore the exclusion of the quotation marks from the second P, is necessary in order for our “afHrmations, actions, and thoughts” to distinguish themselves from other aflirmations, actions, and thoughts. Without this opposition (between “P” and P), our opinions would be useless, they say; and therefore we need Tarski’s principle to share our common experiences. But do we really need the opposition between “P” and P to share our common experiences? Can’t there be a group satisfied with “P” without any interest in the apparent real P? This opposition or difference has become evident thanks to Heidegger's analysis of truth, starting with Being and Time, where he distinguished Husserl’s metaphysical approach from a different hermeneutic one. Truth for Husserl depends on the diiference between the mere “intention” of the phenomenological Being and the matter “itself”-in other words, between the manner in which something appears and the manner in which it is “itself” 'This difference, just like Tars1<i’s opposition between “P” and P, consists in identifying an entity or order precisely as it is in itselt} that is, a proposition would be true only if it “refers” to things in a way that permits them to be seen as they are in themselves. But this “reference” is not very different from the pragmatic “imposition” we mention above, because its purpose is still to explain how something reveals itself (truth) in opposition to its concealing (false). Against this metaphysical interpretation, Heidegger noticed how every statement, whether true or false, valid or invalid, good or evil, is always a derivative one, since the “apophantic as” is only possible within the “hermeneutic as.” In other words, there is no “presuppositionless" apprehension of something presented to us that could be “objectilied” by means of subjective predicative modalities. Prior to the predicative knowledge, which can also be expressed in Tarski sentences, humans beings already have a “preontological” or “pretheoretical” understanding of the Being of things that does not require a derivative one, as proposed by Husserl's or Tarski’s theories. This is why in Being and Time Heidegger explained: The statement is not the primary “locus” of truth but the other way around: the statement as a mode of appropriation of discoveredness and as a way of being-in-the-world is based in discovering, or in the disclosedness of Dasein. The most primordial “truth” is the “locus” of the statement and the ontological condition of the possibility that statements can be true or false (discovering or covering over) .‘3 While we will analyze Heidegger’s specific ontological structure of human Being (Dasein) in chapter 3,"\* it is important to understand here how the truth of statements is not derivative because erroneous but rather because its roots refer back to the disclosedness of understanding that determines every linguistic or prelinguistic adequacy. It is a question not only of thematizing prelinguistic phenomena but of emphasizing the priority of thought over lmowledge, Being over beings, and the “hermeneutic as” over the “apophantic as.” While the “apophantic as” allows both truth and erron at the level of the “hermeneutic as” there is neither, since the “proposition is not the place of truth; truth is the place ofthe prop osition.”" As we can see, Heidegger did not expose this metaphysical understanding of truth because it is wrong; he exposed it for its superiicialityg that is, against the metaphysical attempt to reduce the philosopher’s task to attesting “how we experience truth” or that “there is actually truth” when in fact we find ourselves inevitably presupposing it. Puzzling over the correspondence between subject and object, we lose sight both of the world within which all things are given and of our own engagement as beings. Truth, whether in Aristotle’s, Tarski’s, or Husserl’s terms, shares the metaphysical structure that is at the origin of all Western logic, where Being is interpreted only as the presence of something present, that is, objectively In this distinction, the subject and predicate-in other words, the relation between two terms where one refers to the othernot only represent the logical and verbal structure but also the imposition of this same structure. Heidegger named the difference between our relation to beings (truth) and our understanding of Being (disclosure) the “ontological difference,” which allows us to recognize how within our metaphysical tradition “Being and truth 'are' equiprimordially”“ As we can see, Heidegger’s analysis of truth (like Popper’s, Arendt’s, and Adomo’s alarms against scientific objective realism that we mentioned earlier) was meant to emphasize its violence, because truth is nothing other than the justification of Being, which, as we said, has always been understood as objective presence. It is also for this reason that Heidegger later declared that “to raise the question of aletheia, of unconcealment as such, is not the same as raising the question of truth,”"’ where distinctions can be imposed (presence of Being) and justified (truth as correspondence). '1'his is why Emst 'I`ugendhat (and other distinguished interpreters of Heidegger such as Habermas and Apel) pointed out that Heidegger’s conception of truth as aletheia, that is, the “event of unconcealment," renounces the distinction not only between true and false assertions “but also between good and evil actions.” What they pointed out is correct and also a coniirmation of Heidegger's opposition to truth as violent imposition, which, as we said, justifies its descriptions. This is why within our “scientific global organization,” “neutral world,” or, which is the same, framed democracy, any proposition, interpretation, or ethics that is not framed within the realm of truth (or its opposite, falsehood) is wrong, an alteration and disruption of the established order that must therefore be silenced. The philosophical disruption of the established order’s philosophical hermeneutics (as we will see in chapter 3) is continually accused of relativism, nihilism, and even political anarchism, because instead of relying on truth descriptions, it is involved in interpretative “events of unconcealment.” Only such a nontheoretical way of thinking as hermeneutics (the modem version of which began as a defense of the extramethodical truth of the human sciences against the natural sciences)" can do justice to these events that resist those claims of absolute truth able to guarantee “peaceful” coexistence, that is, framed democracies.

#### More truth stuff from farewell

Nietzsche proposed an assessment of Western culture under the sign of nihilism. The result was schematically summarized in a famous section of Twilight of the Idols (1888) entitled “How the Real World at Last Became a Myth.” At the outset, with Plato, the truth of things is located in the ideas, in those transcendental essences that serve as immutable models of the various realities and that guarantee the very possibility of speaking reasonably. Then, with Christianity, the truth of things is located in the world that awaits us after death, and we will only know it when we contemplate God there. Kant subsequently locates the seat of truth in the mind, in the stable structures that reason employs to organize the world of phenomena, while remaining ignorant of how it is “in itself.” As the whole process draws to a close, Comte’s scientifi c positivism comes on the scene to declare that only the fact positively ascertained through the experimental method is truth, but this fact is, as the word “fact” literally says, “made,” produced by the human subject endlessly modifying and manipulating things. So truth comes to be identifi ed, in Nietzsche’s telling, with that which mankind accomplishes in the world through technology; pure subjectivism triumphs, and there no longer exists any independent objectivity, no “real world.” Nietzsche, for his own part, thinks that what exists is the pure confl ictual interplay of force and power, a confl ict among interpretations with no mooring in any objective norm that could decide truth. From 1927 on, the year in which Being and Time appeared, Heidegger concurs in many respects with this Nietzschean point of view. But he takes Nietzsche to task for himself having remained a prisoner of the idea of truth as objectivity. When this truth turns out to be unattainable, Nietzsche is forced to fall back on a theory of the mere ebb and fl ow of power. We all know how such emphasis on the play of force was exploited by Nazism and fascism in the twentieth century, going far beyond Nietzsche’s original intention. What Heidegger thinks is that we have the nihilistic outcome of Western philosophy right before our eyes, in the disappearance of the “real world” and the onset in its place of the world of technological organization and industrial rationalization, in which man too becomes a pure object of manipulation. This outcome follows directly from the metaphysical error of having imagined truth as correspondence and Being as object. In other words, if one’s point of departure is the Platonic doctrine of the ideas, in which truth is stable, given order, to which the subject must make his or her own representations conform, the necessary point of arrival will be positivism and the world of untrammeled technological domination. If the nightmare of “total organization” to which Adorno later alluded is to be avoided, Heidegger says, awareness must dawn that true Being is not an object. To use an image, we could say that true Being is instead the luminous medium within which objects appear to us, or to put it another way, the ensemble of presuppositions that make experience possible for us. In order to prove that a proposition really does correspond to a state of things, we require methods, criteria, models, which we need to have in place prior to any assay. In that regard, Heidegger speaks of a circle of comprehension-interpretation. The truth of single descriptive propositions depends on a more primordial truth, for which he chooses the term “opening” or “aperture” and by which he means that ensemble of presuppositions (and prejudices, of course) upon which depends any possibility of establishing correspondences between statements and things. I have already mentioned that the reason Heidegger, and with him a large part of existentialist thought in the twentieth century, especially the philosophical current today labeled hermeneutics, rejected and rejects the idea of truth as objectivity is ethicopolitical: 2 if true Being were only that which is objective, quantifi able, and given once and for all like the Platonic Ideas (to simplify Platonism drastically), our existence as free subjects would have no meaning; we could not say of ourselves that “we are,” and on top of that, we would be exposed to the risk of totalitarianism. To really “be,” we would have to abandon all our uncertainties, hopes, aff ects, and projects and match in every respect what social rationality demands of us, be perfect cogs in the evenly humming machinery of production, consumption, and reproduction. One thinks of Comte actually discussing industrial ethics and fancying that moral behavior ought to be modeled on the assembly line, where each one performs exactly what the others expect of him and doesn’t hold up the production process. So then, if there is no more real doubt that truth-as-object isn’t good for us, the question arises: how exactly does this Heideggerian notion of truth as aperture represent something better, strictly from the point of view of the concrete existence of each of us as a free being with a project? To begin with: the view that truth is a matter of interpretation largely coincides with the overall modern critique of the social lie that has always propped up the power of the strong over the weak. Nietzsche (yes, him again) used to say that the voice of conscience that we feel inside us is only the voice of the herd, the pressure of a social discipline that each of us assimilates and turns into a personal daimon . Precisely of that which appears most evident, he adds, we ought to be most mistrustful—for the same reason. Marx’s critique of ideology is likewise grounded, in the last analysis, on the same constatation of the interpretive character of truth: ideology is an instance of interpretation (on the part not just of individuals but of social classes) unaware of itself, and for just that reason convinced that it is absolute truth. In general, the whole area covered by the term “school of suspicion” (another Nietzschean expression, taken up by Paul Ricoeur), which obviously includes Freudian psychoanalysis, is an array of variations on the theme of the interpretive character of every experience of truth. That’s not all. Clearly the hermeneutic stance has links to deconstructionist thought inspired by Derrida and also to a great deal of postanalytic philosophy infl uenced by the so-called second Wittgenstein. When the latter talks about “linguistic games,” within the bounds of which truth can arise only out of the observance of shared rules, never out of evidence of some correspondence with things, he is practicing hermeneutics without knowing it. As for Derridean deconstruction, it too is entirely inspired by the (highly Freudian) notion that the representation of the world in the mind is already a “second” scene springing from an earlier, more original one, and an even earlier one before that, and so on. I take the liberty of bringing in these various currents of contemporary thought in order to situate my own discourse more fi rmly and to show that it is not as irrational as it might appear to be at fi rst glance. For upon fi rst being urged to accept that “there are no facts, only interpretations,” one may feel a sudden bewilderment, a sensation of vertigo, and react in a neurotic manner, as though struck with agoraphobia, fearful of the open and indeterminate space that suddenly yawns on every side. This fearfulness may grow still more acute if one leaves the fi eld of pure philosophy (after all, philosophers have said everything and the opposite of everything without changing the world all that much) and ventures onto the terrain of politics. Many variants of authoritarianism are revealed for what they are—claims to impose behaviors on us whether we like it or not in the name of some law of nature, human essence, sacrosanct tradition, or divine revelation—once one comes round to the view that there are no absolute truths, only interpretations. Those who tell you to “be a man” generally want to make you do something you wouldn’t do willingly, like go to war or sacrifi ce your own interests and your legitimate (for the most part) hopes of happiness. As Wittgenstein said, philosophy frees us from idols; indeed, he was inclined to think that that was all it could do. But liberation from metaphysically justifi ed authoritarianism apart, dawning awareness of the interpretive character of all our experience may seem to leave one dangling in a void. Doesn’t it lead down a short road to the struggle of all against all, to the pure confl ict of competing interests? Or again: how would we justify, from a hermeneutic perspective, our sincere disgust at (the surfeit of ) lying politicians? If we pose these questions and try to answer them honestly (the adverb itself is not unproblematic), we will have to recognize the validity of the discourse of truth as aperture as opposed to the discourse of truth as correspondence. The latter is really only important if it serves a diff erent truth of a higher rank. We cannot swallow the lies of Bush and Blair because they were uttered for the purpose of waging a war that we feel unable to support, that has nothing to do with us, and that violates too many of the moral principles to which we adhere. Naturally these moral principles appear “true” to us, but not in the “metaphysical” sense of the term “true,” not because they correspond descriptively to some objective datum. What does it mean, for example, to oppose war because all men are brothers? Is human brotherhood really a datum to which we ought to conform because it is a fact? If you refl ect on how much authority people assign, or claim to assign, to those in public life today who profess to follow scientifi c principles and rules, like the law of the marketplace in economics, you start to see how problematic it is to believe in an absolute duty to truth. The whole set of relations needs to be rethought, and Machiavelli is as good a place as any to start. His error, from the vantage point of a nonmetaphysical and nonideological conception of truth at any rate, is not that he justifi es lying but that he entrusts the prince alone with the right to decide when lying is justified. I daresay I would have no objection to a “democratic Machiavelli,” although the expression is a contradiction in terms. Let me elaborate. Since truth is always an interpretive fact, the supreme criterion that I propose is not the close correspondence of the statement to the thing but consensus on the presuppositions that dictate how we evaluate this correspondence. No one ever tells the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Every statement entails a choice of that which we take to be relevant, and this choice is never disinterested. Even scientists who aim in the lab to set aside private preferences, inclinations, and interests are striving for objectivity because that is the way to obtain results that can stand the test of replication and so be utilized in the future. Who knows: maybe they are only hoping to win the Nobel Prize, which is certainly a private interest. The conclusion I wish to draw is that truth as absolute objective correspondence, as the ultimate instance and the fundamental value, is more of a danger than a blessing. It paves the way to the republic of the philosophers, the experts, the technicians, and at the limit the ethical State, which claims to be able to decide what the true good of the citizens is even in defi ance of their own opinions and preferences. Wherever politics purports to seek truth, there cannot be democracy. But if truth is conceived in the hermeneutic terms proposed by many twentieth-century philosophers, truth in politics will be sought above all in the construction of consensus and civic friendship; it is these that make truth, in the descriptive sense of the term, possible. The ages when it was thought possible to ground politics in truth were ages of strong social cohesion and shared traditions but also quite often of authoritarian discipline imposed from above. An example, impressive in many respects, is the baroque age: on one hand, widespread conformism enforced by the divine right of monarchy, on the other the explicit theorization of Machiavellian reason of state. “Modern” politics, the kind handed down to us from the Europe of the Westphalian treaties, is fundamentally still like that. Even politicians involved in the swelling number of cases of offi cial corruption, like the ones caught up in Italy’s Mani pulite investigations, have asserted before the courts their right to lie (and steal and bribe) in the name of the public interest. They didn’t steal for themselves: they did it for the party; they were making democracy work by fi nding innovative ways to fund it. For a variety of reasons linked to the development of communications, the press, and the overall market for information, modern politics of that kind is no longer sustainable. The contradiction between the value of objective truth and the awareness that what we call reality is the play of interpretations in confl ict has become impossible to ignore. It is impossible to win such a confl ict by claiming to have found out how matters truly stand, because how they stand looks diff erent to every player as long as there is no common horizon, no consensus about the implicit criteria on which the verifi cation of individual propositions depends. I quite realize that this is not a solution to the problem, just a statement of it. Saint Paul uses the forceful Greek word aletheuontes (“truth-speaking”) in his Letter to the Ephesians (4:15– 16), which is paraphrased in the Latin Vulgate as veritatem facientes in caritate , literally “making truth in lovingness.” At a single bound these words take us beyond the question of objectivity: what would it mean to “make truth” if truth were the correspondence of the statement to the datum? The allusion to lovingness or a loving attitude (which is what the word caritas , “charity,” really means) is not just tacked on here. Democracy cannot dispense with the confl ict of interpretations unless it is prepared to mutate into something else—the authoritarian dictatorship of experts, philosophers, savants, and central committees. But this confl ict is not resolvable simply by making explicit the interests that drive the various interpretations, as though it were possible to locate a deeper truth (primal scene, infantile trauma, true Being prior to disguise) on which all could agree. The explicitation of the confl ict of interpretations, the pars destruens of the critique of claims to absolute truth, which is the fi nest legacy of the school of suspicion, requires a broad horizon of civic friendliness and communitarian sharing that does not depend on the truth or falsehood of statements. That the adjective “communitarian” is bound to raise hackles is something of which I am quite well aware.

#### Util Link:

Among the various causes of this retum, the completion of metaphysics seems to us as the most plausible explanation, because it indicates how the dissolution of philosophy into the objective sciences has further submitted it to the service of the dominant political powers." But if realism is simply the conservation of objective data that philosophy must recognize, politics submit to, and faith cherish, it can only triumph within a framed democracy that is, where transformation and change are almost impossible. Dialogues exclude the very possibility of transformation, because they impose truth on any form of dissent from the prevailing scientific order; that is, the metaphysical foundation of democracy This foundation, which leads philosophy to dissolve into scientific objectivism, has created contemporary framed democracy where, as Heidegger explained, the “only emergency is the lack of emergency”: The lack of emergency [Not] is the greatest where self-certainty has become unsurpassable, where everything is held to be calculable and, above all, where it is decided, without a preceding question, who we are and what we are to do-where knowing awareness has been lost without its ever actually having been established that the actual self-being happens by way of a grounding-beyondoneself, which requires the grounding of the grounding-space and its time.” In this condition of lacking of emergency (which we can also call “neutral.ization”), where Being has been inally replaced by beings, that is, by its technological global organization, philosophy seems forced both to impose its unification and to conserve the established dialogue. This is why Heidegger, in the passage above, linds emergency not only in metaphysics' domination of the world but also in “who we are and what we are to do,” that is, in our freedom. 'Dae emergency today is the completion ofa condition of neutralization where ffreedom” is only possible within the established dialogue. While the goal of the metaphysical philosophers was to spread Enlightenment scientific objectivism to all the disciplines to assure a more ellicient manipulation of extemal reality their main task now has become to assure the conservation of established “dialogic realism” against any outsider, parasite, or foreign event. In this condition, only philosophy that can ensure the ontological structure of framed democracy (and all the factors that constitute it: truth, dialogue, institutions) will be rewarded both academically and Socially.” Among the many analytic and continental philosophers who directly or indirectly preserve such realism (and therefore also contrast freedom), ]ohn Searle has a particular place not only for his original position but also for his debate with Derrida’s deconstructive thought.” While this debate expressed the fear, insecurity and danger that realists like Searle see in anyone who questions the scientific dissolution of philosophy the “social ontology”’° that the American philosopher outlined exposes (indirectly) the “lack of emergency” emphasized by Heidegger, because it seeks total control through science’s objectivistic impositions: Searle, as Barry Smith aflirmed, “has defended all along a basic realism?" A possible origin of Searles realism, and therefore of his debate with Derrida, could be found in the dispute between Husserl and Heidegger when they collaborated on the article “Phenomenology” for the fourteenth edition of the Encyclopaedia Britannica (192.9).3° Contrary to many politically conditioned interpreters of Heidegger, the only reason why he put an end to his collaboration with Husserl was the metaphysical meaning that phenomenology had acquired for Husserl: the opportunity to dissolve philosophy in a series of regional ontologies. Heidegger could not accept such a dissolution, because it represented the attempt to develop the metaphysical dream that he was trying to overcome and that Husserl also abandoned a few years later." In sum, while Searle radicalized Husserl’s early phenomenological project of regional ontologies, Derrida developed Heidegger’s fundamental ontology through deconstruction. Having said this, it should not come as a surprise if in one of his latest books Searle aiiirms how “several of the standard phenomenological authors seem to me not too phenomenological, but rather not nearly phenomenological enough.”’“ Searle is here referring to those philosophers (Heidegger, Hans Blumenberg, and many others) who aborted Husserl’s early phenomenological project (to resolve philosophy in a series of regional ontologies) in order to emphasize its fundamental ontology. Among the followers of Husserl’s early phenomenological project,” Adolf Reinach has a particular place in Searle’s realism both because he anticipated john Austins theory of speech acts and for his regional ontology of “social interactions.”3\* Although Husserl and Reinach provided Searle with the appropriate phenomenological approach, the American philosopher managed to submit the realm of human freedom to a scientiic political control where, as he says, the “extension of freedom and the extension of rationality are the same?" The political project behind Searle’s realism is to emphasize, conserve, and control the “Western Rationalistic Tradition” (which is just another name for metaphysics), that is, those standards of objectivity truth, and rationality that “are essential presuppositions of any sane philosophy”" But what is a sane philosophy? For the American master, in order for a philosophy to be “sane,” it must cooperate with empirical science and actually have a general wissenschaftliche approach. Such an approach can be achieved by submitting itself to such irrefutable facts as those “stated by the atomic theory of matter and the evolutionary theory of biology""" But why must philosophy submit itself exclusively to the latest discoveries of science? The response is simple: because “we live in a world of basic facts, as described by atomic physics, evolutionary biologja and neurobiology” Contrary to what many might expect, Searle openly recognizes that our descriptions of facts change as we learn more through these same sciences; in other words, he recognizes the significance of Thomas Kuhn’s theory of scientific-paradigm revolutions.” Nevertheless, he does not consider this to be an argument in favor of hermeneutics or relativism: quite the contrary That our interpretations change is an argument against relativism, because the basic facts’ “absolute existence does not by itself guarantee that at any point in our history we have accurately stated them. Facts don’t change, but the extent of our knowledge does.”‘\*° This is whySearle gives great significance to our dependence on fads: All of our lives, including all of our mental lives, are dependent on the basic facts. Given that, we have an interesting set of questions about how human beings are able to create a meaningful set of semantic, institutional, social, etc., facts out of the basic facts using their consciousness and intentionality. The institutional, social, and other similar facts, etc., have a relative existence. They exist only relative to human beings. But the basic facts do not in that way have a relative existence. They have an absolute existence. They are regardless of what we think.” The most important feature of this passage is not Searle’s insistence on the existence of basic facts but rather these other semantic, institutional, and social facts that, just like the basic facts, must be analyzed, systemized, and developed philosophically in order “to get at the basic structure that underlines all institutional reality”"’ But why is it so important to know this basic structure? Searle believes that this basic structure will allow political philosophy in the future to achieve better results because it will linally enable it to “proceed from a prior political ontolog)5”” that is, from science's basic facts. External realism is the precondition for having theories. In sum, institutional reality is a matter of collective impositions of what Searle calls “status functions,” which are imposed on objects that cannot perform such functions because of their physical nature but demand a collective acknowledgment. But it is not only because of the “collective intentionality” and “assignment of the function” that the object has a certain status (e.g., being a policeman) and, with that, a function (protecting the public). In order for something to have a certain status and, with this status, a certain function, it must also have a “constitutive rule,” that is, the possibility “to follow a set of rules, procedures or practices whereby we count certain things as having a certain status.”\*‘

#### History/Framed Democracy Link Better framing for Nukes

As we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the desire for dominion often results in metaphysical thought, not the other way around. Metaphysical democracy is a system sustained by those who find themselves at ease within its order of facts, norms, and institutions. These are the winners, those who believe Beings presence is worthy not only of description but also of contemplation and conservation, since it guarantees their own condition. But such a condition inevitably also includes the defeated history that is, the oblivion of “Being” and the “weak.” While Being refers to Heidegger's oppressed history of metaphysics, the weak, that is, those who are not part of framed democracy's neoliberal capitalism, are a consequence of this same oblivion. In sum, just as Being was discarded in favor of beings, so are the weak oppressed in favor of the winners, that is, in favor of those who dominate within framed democracy’s conservative moralized order.‘5 While we will comment on Kagan and Fulkuyama’s conservative analysis of our current political world in the next chapter, it is important to emphasize now how and why both authors situate politics outside history 'The reason is straightforward: they represent the winner’s version of history that is, those who believe that history can be viewed from the standpoint of what Lyotard named “metanarratives.”°° But in order to stand in this view history must have already become “all it can become,” that is, accomplished its continuous rational unification with truth. Framed democracy has now become a metanarrative not only for these two prominent analysts but also for politics of descriptions in general, which must conserve the dominion achieved through science’s global control. The desire to declare the end or return of history is bound up with framed democracy that is, with an order that can legitimize or delegitimize not only history but also other political systems. This is why framed democracy is to Kagan and Fukuyama what basic facts are to Searle: the possibility to “proceed from a prior political ontology”°’ But as we have seen, this “prior political” ontology is just another way to demand that science not only guide philosophy but also dictate all the other domains of culture. While Kagan does not even bother to recognize the subordination of politics, history or democracy to science, Fulcuyama instead openly states how science also dictates history: '1`he first way in which modern natural science produces historical change that is both directional and universal is through military competition. The universality of science provides the basis for the global unification of mankind in the first instance because of the prevalence of war and conflict in the international system. Modern natural science confers a decisive military advantage on those societies that can develop, produce, and deploy technology the most effective 5 and the relative advantage conferred by teclmology increases as the rate of technological change accelerates .... The possibility of war is a great force for the rationalization of societies, and for the creation of uniform social structures across cultures.” It] as Fulcuyama explains, liberal democracy is “the most rational form of government, that is, the state that realizes most fully either rational desire or rational recognition,”" and if modern natural science manages to dictate history’s directions through military dominion, it should not be a surprise that democracy and science have become indissoluble. And it is this indissolubility that situates framed democracy outside history; where its ideal of objectivity can finally be fulfilled. But now that science has e&'ectively fulfilled in framed democracy its “liberal essence and its ideal of objectivity”’° Fulcuyama is convinced that “there are no serious ideological competitors left to liberal democracy”" In other words, liberal democracy has triumphed over history. As we can see, history has become a synonym for "progress," that is, for improvements not only of different political systems but also of philosophies. Framed democracy is the completion of historyk development, realization, and improvement. But one might now ask: what is the political goal of declaring the end of retum of history? Although framed democracy is not the first order to declare the return or end of history; as “heirs of prior conquerors”7’ it must continue to impose its victory over the defeated in such a way as to neutralize other possible disruptions of its achieved order. 'This is why within framed democracy whatever and whoever refuse to submit to truth, dialogue, or the predictable structure of causes and effects constitute not only an “alteration of history" but also a potential danger, and they must be identified as such. These identifications will become necessary to control the defeated and also to continue to guide the rulers to achieve authority maintain independence, and most of all, induce indifference toward the defeated. But how is it possible to overcome this winner’s history? Is a different history required or just framed democracys “other history”?

#### Farewll to truth Kant/a2 perf con

But neither is it a case of taking everything into account, as though it might ever be possible to construct a complete inventory of what goes to make up the provenance toward which we are responsible. Characterizing our provenance as the dissolution of principles, as nihilism, can never lead to the deﬁ nition of a new, more valid, principle. What we have at our disposal here is just the basis for a critical stance vis-à-vis all that claims to present itself as an ultimate and universal principle. Note that not even this stance can think of itself as universally valid, as a precept applicable to everyone always. It recognizes itself as appropriate to a certain condition—the one that Heidegger calls the epoch in which metaphysics ends but won’t go away, the one that Nietzsche calls the epoch in which the news of God’s demise hasn’t yet reached the ears of a great many people and its consequences will require centuries to unfold. The modern philosophical tradition supplies signiﬁ cant elements of support for this thesis, above and beyond Hume’s Law. Foremost among them is Kantian ethical formalism, with its imperative to adopt only maxims of action that may hold good as universal norms (doing what we would want anyone else to do in the same situation). Here, of course, universality is not attributed positively to certain set contents but functions only as an admonition not to assume any speciﬁ c contents that may appear cogent under particular circumstances (inclinations, interests, etc.) as ultimate principles.

#### Possible Framing for Nukes

My point of view is that today it is very diﬃcult to talk about conversion in the “catastrophic” sense that my subtitle suggests. For one thing, there is the growing spiritualization of religiosity, which brings it about that even priests and oﬃ cial representatives of the faiths no longer attribute great importance to the external signs of membership in a Church (which for Catholics raises the question of the signiﬁ cance of the sacraments). For another, there is the generally paciﬁ st attitude of contemporary society, which tends to conﬁ ne warfare to the periphery of the developed world. Or to the war on terrorism, which expands the deﬁ nition of crime to include any form of practical dissent that perturbs the established legal order. To adapt an expression from Nietzsche, we are no longer “material for conversion.” Or, to borrow a term from another no less suspect author, Carl Schmitt, we (the citizens of the developed First World) are living in a general atmosphere of Neutralisierung , neutralization. This may be because of the unchallenged dominance of the American empire, which no longer has a rival in the Soviet Union and doesn’t yet have one in India or China, or because of the fact that our general problems only have a narrow range of possible solutions, with ecology and survival imposing a sort of technical constraint on all our options. Terrorism and local crime only serve to camouﬂ age these basic problems. They are, if you like, a stratagem for consoling us, in the face of that which threatens the very possibility of life on the planet. The question is: is there not a consolatory signiﬁ cance in our talking about conversion and catastrophe? We feign belief that something might really happen, something that would amount to a transformation or even a transﬁ guration. But nothing does happen, and maybe nothing like that can happen, because if it did there would probably be no continuation, there would be no new world in which we would be able to enjoy a new life. We are not summoned to follow our Messiah to Mount Tabor, and even if we were, we would be unable to take up residence there. I don’t know if this situation corresponds to the end of history in Fukuyama’s sense, especially since things continue to go along, and what seems to be excluded is only and precisely what we most desire: conversion, catastrophe, revolution. S o what the heading above suggests is that the experience of conclusion that we are living through in our time, both at the level of political action and that of theoretical projects (for example the decline of utopian thought), is a symptom of the end of metaphysics. Metaphysics, as we have seen, ends with the universal domination of technology, realizing the metaphysical dream of the universal organization of all beings within an ever more predictable structure of cause and eﬀect. We haven’t yet come to the point where the dream is totally realized, of course; you could say that the long goodbye of the God who died in Nietzsche is still going on. But broadly speaking, the scientiﬁc-technological order is already reality, especially in social and political terms. What does seem ever more impossible in our world is a radical change, even one of local dimensions like the French Revolution, never mind the Russian Revolution of 1917. Heidegger calls the technological order in which we live the Gestell. His English translator, Joan Stambaugh, once translated it with “framework,” and that reminds me of an expression familiar from crime thrillers that also conveys the philosophical point neatly: “we’ve been framed.” We have been caught, trapped, enmeshed in a nexus from which there is no exit. 3 I am well aware that not everyone may have been framed yet, that I am leaving out of consideration peoples and individuals who haven’t been ﬁ tted into the framework, especially in the socalled Third World. (The Second World, Russia and China and so on, is by now totally absorbed into the Western economic system.) Herbert Marcuse’s old idea that the revolutionary proletariat of our time is to be sought in the masses of the Third World ﬁ nds an echo here. Indeed, virtually the only place where political innovation is occurring at present is in parts of the Third World that have found the strength to resist American imperialism: Cuba, Venezuela, and Bolivia. But not even these alternative realities appear to be the heralds of an authentic revolution of the kind imagined by Marx. We cannot expect a radical mutation in class relations, if we ever could. Paradoxically, the more the masses are involved in political processes, the less it is possible to envision radical change. The interests of the large masses are clearly comprehensible if we consider the policies of trade unions. The unions can ﬁ ght hard against the dominant economic power, but at the end of every strike there still has to be an improvement in the circumstances of the working classes. The unions can never be revolutionary agents; they are compelled to act within the political and economic system, protecting it against a general collapse. Has there ever been a popular revolution? The French Revolution doesn’t ﬁ t that bill, nor the Soviet one. We must face up to the mythological character of the very idea of radical change. It expresses the need for change in terms of conversion and catastrophe, which are indeed kinds of radical change. But the need is more ideological than realistic. Can we posit that conversion, like revolution, is always, within certain limits, a myth? Naturally we take for granted that on the road to Damascus, Paul had a conversion experience. But any account we have of it is far from ﬁ rst hand, transmitted to us in mythological texts. One thinks of the lines from Hölderlin: “Nur zu Zeiten ertraegt goettliche Fuelle der Mensch / Traum von Ihnen is drauf das Leben” (only at intervals does man bear divine fullness. Dream of them is, after, life).

#### Farewell to truth, non realism night

What is at stake, however one proceeds down this path of reasoning, is the assumption of the dissolution of principles as the point of departure toward a nonmetaphysical ethics advancing no claim, even surreptitiously, to construct itself as the practical application of a theoretical certainty concerning ultimate foundations. Even the sort of relativism that would make the step backward into a straightforward suspension of assent, a justiﬁ cation of blasé intellectual disengagement (there are numerous examples in today’s philosophy, often of phenomenological origin and sounding much like the epoché theorized by Husserl), is just another way of tumbling back into the metaphysics of principles. Why? For the reason I have stated: it pretends to locate itself in a universal and completely stable point of view.

#### Farewell to truth, prescriptive rules of the game bad, respect key

The heeding of our heritage does not, therefore, lead only to the devaluation of all values but also to the reprise and continuation of certain inherited contents. Many rules of the game by which we know that our society lives will not simply be suspended or revoked in an ethic of ﬁniteness. Many of them are ones that metaphysics or ecclesiastical authoritarianism have passed oﬀ as natural norms. Seen for what they are, a cultural inheritance rather than natures and essences, they can still hold good for us, but with a diﬀ erent cogency—as rational norms (acknowledged through a dis-cursus , a logos , through reason that reconstructs their self-constitution) liberated from the violence that characterizes ultimate principles and the authorities who see themselves as their keepers. Whether they still hold good or not is something that is decided in the name of whatever, with a responsible interpretation, we assume as characteristic of that which really belongs to the heritage to which we feel a commitment. Let us suppose that we are guided in this by nihilism, by the dissolution of ultimate foundations violently imposed through the silencing of dissent. The choice will then lie between what holds good and what doesn’t in the cultural heritage from which we come. It will be made on the criterion of the reduction of violence and in the name of a rationality understood as discourse-dialogue between ﬁnite positions that acknowledge themselves as such and are therefore not tempted to override others on account of a legitimacy warranted by a ﬁrst principle. The overall meaning of this ethic of ﬁniteness is the exclusion of the violence that sees itself as legitimate and the end of any violent authoritarian silencing of any interlocutor’s questioning in the name of ﬁrst principles. (Is there any other possible deﬁ nition of violence that escapes the coils of essentialism?) As I have noted, this ethic certainly inherits, as for that matter do many philosophical ethics today, some aspects of Kantianism, speciﬁ cally the formulation of the categorical imperative in terms of respect for the other (always consider the humanity in yourself and in others as an end, never simply as a means), but stripped of any dogmatic residues of the kind still detectable in the theory of communicative action of Habermas and the thought of Apel. In the ethic of ﬁ niteness, respect for the other is not even remotely grounded on the premise that he or she is a bearer of human reason equal in all men and women. From that position descends, in the neo-Kantian positions mentioned, the pedagogical-authoritarian implication that one does indeed heed the reasons of the other, but only on the prior stipulation that they have not been manipulated. Respect for the other is above all acknowledgment of the ﬁniteness that characterizes each of us and that excludes any deﬁnitive eﬀacement of the opacity that everyone bears inside himself or herself. It may be added that there are no positive reasons grounding this respect, itself indeﬁnite: not, for example, acceptance that we are essentially equal, that we are all descendants of Adam, that my life depends on others, and so on. As soon as they are explicitly stated, these justiﬁ cations reveal their vagueness and unsustainability. Only a familial prejudice could justify the command to love one’s brothers, or a speciesist egoism the notion that I have to respect the other because he is made like me, or egoism pure and simple in the case where one is commanded to respect the other because one’s own survival depends on him, and so on. If, in assuming the nihilistic destiny of our epoch, we recognize that we have no ultimate foundation at our disposal, any possible legitimation for prevarication and violence toward others vanishes. Violence may always constitute a temptation, no more and no less than in any other ethical perspective, but with the difference that here this temptation is stripped of any semblance of legitimacy—which it isn’t in essentialist ethics, even disguised ones (and that includes communicative ethics à la Habermas).

#### Farewell to truth dialogue/ Debate bad

Philosophy is always ahead of its time. Nietzsche felt himself eminently untimely, but the same holds good for other philosophers too, ones whom we still regard with good reason as our contemporaries. Take the example of the philosophers of poststructuralism. Their goal of “upending Platonism” has never seemed as topical to me as it does today, but at the time, forty years ago, it looked like rhetorical exaggeration. The reason why the anti-Platonism of Deleuze, Derrida (with his defense of writing against the myth of Thoth), Lyotard, and Foucault is topical is this: the authoritarian reaction of metaphysics as it struggles against its own dissolution has become increasingly plain for all to see and, on that account, intolerable. Take for example the notions of dialogue, or democracy, that in the 1960s and 1970s were still utilized and respected; today they are ideological avatars, objects of suspicion on sight—and not just at the academic or high-culture level. In a culture that talks all the time about dialogue, no one really believes that dialogue oﬀ ers a way to solve the problems we face of relations among diﬀ erent individuals, groups, and cultures. Those who still subscribe to this rhetoric are late-blooming Platonists, metaphysicians who have deep faith in the objectivity of (their) truth and who live in hope of seeing it triumph in the wake of an exchange of views untainted by interests, passions, and ignorance; an exchange that in the end is perspicuous rather than opaque. Platonism doesn’t just happen to be a dialogic philosophy by chance: faith in a truth that those who strive with good will and under expert guidance will always come to intuit is the precondition that makes dialogue productive. That is why the individual who steers things along in many Platonic dialogues, the helmsman if you like, is Socrates: the philosopher whom Nietzsche portrayed as having killed oﬀ tragedy by imposing the conviction that the world is a rational order and that the (morally and theoretically) just have nothing to fear. In Platonic dialogue, with its grounding in faith in a rational order of the world, you can even discern the same schema that undergirds Aristotle’s Poetics , which Bertolt Brecht criticized as the optimism of winners: all the suﬀ erings of Oedipus turn out to be justiﬁ ed in the end, and the spectator’s task comes down to pathei mathos , learning the lessons that suﬀering teaches. It’s only an analogy, but it does cast some light on the sovereignist spirit that drives both Plato in his dialogic practice and Aristotle in his analysis of tragedy. The question is the one already posed by Nietzsche in his critique of Socratism: is the order of the world that guarantees a correct outcome of the dialogue and that justiﬁ es tragedy (even against the criticism of Plato in The Republic , book 10) truly a just, rational, universally valid order? In any case, it is the postulate guaranteeing the value of the Platonic method. Here Nietzsche is not objecting against Socrates that the rationality of his vision of the world is false, as though it were a theory that, properly modiﬁ ed, would yield a diﬀ erent truth. Nietzsche is not addressing the theoretical verity or falsity of the Socratic creed. He is registering, or “constatating” in philosophical parlance, that this creed kills tragedy, meaning that its practical upshot is “quietive” (a word that Schopenhauer employed to highlight the contrast with “motive”). A bit like the injunction pathei mathos , the Socratic theory creates a consciousness half content and half wearily resigned: the world goes how it goes, so (in demotic American English) suck it up. O ne oughtn’t exaggerate the practical implications either of Platonic dialogue or the Aristotelian doctrine of tragedy. But it isn’t far-fetched to observe that the latter especially has a component of resigned acceptance that is halfway to submission. Is the eureka of the slave who discovers a geometrical theorem for himself really a cry of joy, 2 or is it the expression of a more ambivalent state of mind? Do I perhaps show excessive sensitivity to the elements of domination entailed by the structure of dialogue, which have never aroused similar suspicions over all the centuries during which the Platonic dialogue has been taken as the model of rational argumentation par excellence ? What accounts for this new sensitivity and the spirit of suspicion it seems to betray? As I said, the anti-Platonism of authors like Deleuze and Lyotard has become topical again in our culture, because the end of metaphysics, of which they too speak in a manner more or less explicitly derived from Heidegger and Nietzsche, has reached an acute phase characterized by ever more explicit and violent defensive postures. So it is worth repeating that, in referring to metaphysics, we are not talking only about a discipline but also about an epoch in the history of Being in the Heideggerian sense of the expression. In Heideggerian language, metaphysics equals the identiﬁ cation of Being with the existent being, the entity. In Parmenides and Plato, true Being was the attribute of the eternal ideas, given to the intellect as pure forms. The course of Western philosophy and culture (and that includes material culture) has made this order ever more real. It is instantiated in the society of total organization made possible by science and its technological applications. Metaphysics, the rational order in which every entity is ﬁ tted securely into the chain of cause and eﬀ ect, reaches its end at the moment at which it reveals itself to be intolerable—precisely because fully realized. European colonialism and imperialism were the modalities through which metaphysics became the order of the world. And an example of refusal to tolerate this world was the revolt of the colonialized peoples, who were no longer prepared to stand for being exploited as though they were subhuman primitives needing to be introduced into the world by us, their masters. It’s a well-known story. But what is happening is that the masters, now no longer colonial states but the new conglomerations of global economic power that have taken their place, are refusing to abandon their dominant position. The ideological screen isn’t concealing the struggle so well; it’s becoming more explicit: the cold war of the 1950s has become hot war in many of the world’s regions, with the values at stake ever more self-evidently material, for example, energy resources. Nietzsche called the increasingly brazen, violent, and elementary capitalist competition of his time sauvagerie indienne (a reference to what was then the stereotype of the American Indian or rather the Wild West in general). Thus it is that in the world of the end of metaphysics, it becomes impossible to speak of truth. “There do not exist facts, only interpretations; and if this too is an interpretation, so be it.” This Nietzschean aphorism is evidently not a description of some reality “out there.” But it was made possible exactly because the unity of truth (and of the order of the world) has become unpronounceable: it is just not sayable any longer. Those whom it excludes would revolt, and it’s a ﬁ ght they would win. In the new condition of the world at the end of metaphysics, what is occurring with respect to dialogue is turning Platonism upside down in this sense: what counts is no longer the hope of ﬁnding truth at the conclusion of the debate but rather the very fact that debate is possible and that it should continue, as Rorty says. Take the example of interreligious dialogue. Are we supposed to expect the result of this dialogue to be conclusions about God, man, and morality formulated in terms acceptable to all? The theologians and Church leaders who attend may decide to issue a concluding statement to the press, but it will only deal in generalities and common, human (all-too-human?) sense, nothing speciﬁ cally religious. The fact is that the goal of interreligious dialogue (or a dialogue on values, ethics, the meaning of existence) is just the dialogue itself. It is not a process that lets us derive values because it allows us to discover a truth on which we agree. All it does is allow us to realize ourselves through discussion and conversation, excluding violent struggle. ome may ask: Is there nothing more to it than that? I might answer, in the words of Hölderlin, that man has nominated many gods from the moment that we are a dialogue. If we take the poet at his word, mankind has not nominated a truth or a G od but various truths and various gods. I don’t know whether this c orresponds to the poet’s intention; he always uses the plural “gods,” and Jesus was only the last of them, but it is safe to say that to his mind dialogue does not give rise to convergence on a single unifying truth. Upending Platonism means, among other things, assigning a diﬀerent (and even, I daresay, dif-ferent) function to dialogue. Where dialogue is the search for a unique truth, it always generates the conﬂictual drive, the struggle for domination. But let us concede as well that dialogue does promote conﬂ ict avoidance, in the sense that to probe for opportunities for dialogue inevitably generates, or evokes, the need to be done for good with violent struggle and domination. So a complex dialectic arises between conﬂ ict and dialogue, which at least explains why all the talk about the need for dialogue that we hear these days sounds so empty and hypocritical. It’s because the phase of struggle and conﬂ ict has to precede the onset of dialogue. Who could imagine a constitution being founded simply by citizens voting on a referendum? Without rules in place, in other words a constitution, there is no such thing as a referendum. The question of dialogue and conﬂ ict always brings us back to face the question of violence. There is no escape from the struggle between master and servant, wonderfully described in Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit. It is an illusion, dangerous because entirely aimed at preserving the current balance of power, to imagine replacing conﬂict with dialogue. Conﬂict is needed to establish the conditions for dialogue. Knowing that is a barrier against falling for the ideological illusions that power always employs to preserve itself. But knowing that conﬂ ict is necessary in order for dialogue to commence also constitutes the normative limit of every liberation struggle. The essential motivation of the struggle for liberation is the eﬀ ort to give a voice to those who didn’t have one before, as Walter Benjamin wrote. For Benjamin too, the meaning of dialogue is primarily the very fact of beginning it. And this confers a somewhat ironic meaning on philosophical theories of nonopaque communication, the only kind seen as capable of guaranteeing the foundations of human society. The question may also be discerned, in more radical but starker terms, in Giambattista Vico’s opposition to Thomas Hobbes and his theory of the social contract. Vico objected against Hobbes that the original social contract could only be stipulated if there were already a language and a code of communication in place: precisely the things that make the contract itself possible. This observation does not necessarily mean that philosophy must give way before the necessity of violence. Rather, it is a matter of not ignoring, in any theory, this foundational phase that entails an initiative of emancipation that can only be called revolutionary. Hobbes’s defense is that his idea of the contract concerns only the remote origins of any society. We never experience an absolute origin of society, because we always ﬁ nd ourselves in conditions established prior to us. Does this allow us to forget all about the problem of original violence? It is a violence that is revived every time that dialogue turns into a pure and simple pedagogical expedient of the Platonic kind. The struggle against metaphysics, says Heidegger, is never conclusively won. Any evocation of dialogue as a human approach to the solution of social conﬂ icts must also contain an explicit theory of the conﬂ ict that always accompanies the instauration or restoration of dialogic conditions. There never exists a normal constitutional situation. Those who invite us to behave as though it were already in place are doing no more than expressing the ideology of the groups currently in power. Theory can, at least, refrain from upholding this equivocation and help to render it less burdensome.

#### Farewell to truth interpretation

Heidegger’s objection to metaphysics also begins here, with the observation that even in deciding to be objective, we always assume a definite, defined position, a vantage point or viewpoint that delimits but that is also indispensable for our encounter with the world. Heidegger’s critique of metaphysics as a claim to defi ne the truth as an objective datum starts from that observation and then goes on to focus on the ethicopolitical aspects of metaphysics: the “rationalized” society of the early twentieth century against which the historical avant-gardes of the time struggled. Heidegger realized that even the pretended objectivity of the sciences is inspired by a determinate interest, such as to describe the movement of gases in such a way that others will be able to discuss it too and advance knowledge of the behavior of gases; Lukács says the same from a Marxist perspective. Scientists are not driven by an impulse of truth, and it is not possible to imagine the relation between the world and knowledge as the world and the mirror of the world. Rather, we imagine it as the world and someone who stands in the world and takes his bearings in it utilizing his cognoscitive capacities, in other words choosing, reorganizing, substituting, and so on. The whole concept of interpretation lies right there. There is no experience of truth that is not interpretive; I know nothing unless it interests me, but if it interests me, evidently I don’t gaze upon it in a disinterested fashion. In Heidegger, this concept enters into his thinking about the historical sciences, as one sees in the early sections of Being and Time and in many other texts from the same period. Hence I am an interpreter inasmuch as I do not gaze upon the world from outside; I gaze on the world outside me precisely because I am inside it. If I am inside it, however, my interest is far from straightforward. I cannot state exactly how matters stand, only how they look from where I stand, how they appear to me, and how I believe them to be. If I have an idea that leads to a successful experiment, that doesn’t mean that I gained exhaustive, objective knowledge of that aspect of reality. What I did—and the philosophy of science backs this up—was to make the experiment work, on the basis of certain expectations and premises. When I do an experiment, I already dispose of a set of criteria and instruments that make it possible for me, and for anyone whose ideas differ from mine, to tell whether the experiment worked or not. The criteria and the instruments are already in place and undisputed when I start. No scientist studies all of physics from scratch; they all learn from textbooks and build on that. This is universally accepted. So I don’t want to hear any more of this talk about how scientists describe the world objectively. They describe it with rigorous instruments, which are nonetheless determined and historically qualified. I would even hazard, knowing full well that this proposition will not command universal assent, that the possibility of verifying a scientific proposition, or falsifying it (as Popper would say, but in this case it comes to the same thing), depends on the fact that we use the same language, use analogous instruments, take the same measurements, etc. Otherwise we could not communicate at all. We didn’t invent this ensemble of premises and paradigms from scratch; we inherited it. All this is interpretation: being within a situation and confronting it like someone who didn’t arrive from Mars fi ve minutes ago but who has a history, belongs to a community. Some maintain that to study physics is not to study the truth of physics; that it’s more like being trained to become a member of a secret, or public, society. That’s not so far fetched: to get someone to understand a scientific demonstration, you first have to teach her the rudiments. Are these rudiments natural knowledge, or are they knowledge of a particular science that could also be diff erent? All this is mixed up with cultural anthropology and structuralism. Heidegger was not yet acquainted with the structuralism of Levi-Strauss, but what was going on in the interval between Kant and Heidegger? The whole nineteenth century, with the discovery that cultures vary widely, and the beginnings of the scientific study of them. Cultural anthropology goes back to the second half of the nineteenth century. According to Kant, to know the world humans require certain a priori, as he calls them, structures that we cannot derive from experience and through which we organize experience. To use a down-to-earth simile, I learn to see by discovering a pair of eyes, but I already need a set of eyes to discover them. Space, time, and the linked categories of judgment are part of me; like my eyes, they are structures of reason. Overall, though, Kant and many neo-Kantian philosophers have always taken it for granted that reason was unvarying. Cultural anthropology brings about a more mature discourse about the diff erences among the structures with which cultures, societies, and diff erent individuals confront the world. At bottom, Heidegger’s twentieth-century existentialism may be viewed as Kantianism that has undergone cultural anthropology. As a fi nite being, I am born and die at certain points in history. How can I possibly be the bearer of the sort of absoluteness that would allow me to assert that two plus two indubitably make four? There are peoples who consume human flesh, and European thought exhibits an array of differences. Early cultural anthropology accepted the existence of other cultures but classifi ed them as cultures “preceding” our own. In short, the primitives don’t yet know mathematics, but we arrive in their countries, teach them science, and install our governments. Where are the “primitives” now? Who is there still willing to heed that narrative?

#### Michigan Hermenutoics alt

Hermeneutics did not begin because of a theoretical discovery; it is an interpretative response to the end of metaphysics. Interpretation, following Nietzsche and Heidegger, means an interested involvement. But the end of metaphysics is not something we must inevitably accept as a fact; it is the meaning we attribute, for our interest, to the vicissitudes that Nietzsche and Heidegger narrate. We read such vicissitudes as the dissolution of objective metaphysics because we are against objectivity which makes impossible the history and freedom of existence. Recent Italian philosophy calls this way of tying hermeneutics to nihilism and to the end of metaphysics “weak thought."\*3 Initially “weak” primarily denoted the abandonment of pretensions to absolutes that had characterized the metaphysical traditions. But the weakness of thought could not halt this critical-negative characteristic, just as Nietzsche’s nihilism could not be only negative and reactive. Together with Heidegger we consider the vicissitudes of metaphysics as the history of Being, which has to be interpreted as a process of weakening absolutes, truths, and foundations. In sum, weak thought becomes a (strong) theory of weakening as an interpretive sense of history a sense that reveals itself as emancipative because of the enemies it has attracted. Weak thought can only be the thought of the weak, certainly not ofthe dominating classes, who have always worked to conserve and leave unquestioned the established order ofthe world. Contrary to weak thinkers, when defenders of metaphysical realism face the postmodern condition (where principles, absolutes, and dogmas are critically questioned),"4 they tend to dismiss the political difference this condition implies in favor of a second-rate cultural difference. But for weak thinkers, philosophical debate can here become political struggle. Instead of yet another system of thought, such a struggle must rely on “weak thought,” that is, the idea of the impossibility of overcoming” metaphysics while at the same time establishing the capacity to live without legitimizations or grounding values. This is why Charles Taylor recently adirmed that “once we see this, we can break the spell of the narrow moral rationalism whose supposed strength and rigour merely hides a fundamental weakness. Thinking straight requires that we admit the full ‘debolezzaf weakness, of our thought.”‘° Weak thought allows philosophy to correspond to the dissolution of metaphysics (through hermeneutics) and to search for new goals and ambitions within the possibilities of the “thrown” condition of the human being: instead of an understanding ofthe eternal, philosophy redirects humanity toward an interpretation of its own history It is important to emphasize that the negative connotation of the term “weak” does not allude to a failure of thinking as such but rather to the consequences of the transformation of thought brought about by the end of metaphysics, hence, as a possibility of emancipation. Weak thought is a very strong theory of weakness, where the philosophers achievements do not derive from enforcing the objective world but rather from weakening its structures. Weak thought does not become strong once it weakens the structures of metaphysics, since there will always be more structures to weaken, just as there will always be subjects to psychoanalyze, beliefs to secularize, or govemments to democratize. In sum, the weakness of “weak thought” should not be interpreted in contrast to “strong thought" or as the result of a discovery (that there is no objective description of truth) but rather as an awareness of our postmodern condition. Although Schiirmann, Lyotard, and Rorty exposed postmodern antifoundationalism in very different ways, they all belong to the hermeneutic koiné, where the legitimization of foundations is substituted by an antifoundational hermeneutics. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that they all can be considered as inspirers of weak thought in the late 19808, because their intuitions also helped create this postmetaphysical attitude of thought. Schumann individuated the “absence of foundations” for practical action after metaphysics, Lyotard defined the “postmodern” condition, and Rortyexposed “conversation” as its ethical guiding thread instead of truth. These three philosophical intuitions have become essential points of reference not only for hermeneutic weak thought but also for the weak in general, to whom this thought belongs. If existence is interpretation, human beings must leam to live without legitimizations and grounding values, that is, within antifoundationalism. But how is it possible to think, that is, proceed philosophicallyq without facts, objects, and truth? Is politics without truth possible? Among the first to try to answer this question was Schiirmann, who in the i98os published Heidegger on Being and Acting: From Principles to Anarchy and Broken Hegemonies. According to Schiirmann, until nowwe have lived by following foundations and paradigms, because each epoch was guided by legitimate (and legitimating) principles that would never change. But as he analyzed inthese studies, epochs (“G reece," “Latinity” “Modemity”) did create different principles (“one,” "nature," “conscience”) that at the same time legitirnated new practices (“religions,” 98 "science," “psychology”) that would have been inappropriate in the past. For Schiirmann, Westem metaphysics becomes a succession of epochal principles that determined hegemonically the different periods of the history of thought. When an epoch changes, a new principle installs itself hegemonically in order to legitimate new practices. Here is a clear example of different epochs dominating through their principles and practices the same sacred space: The Parthenon: within the network of actions, things, and words, the way an entity like the Acropolis is present epochally assumed a well-defmed, although complex character-when rhapsodes prepared for the Panathenean festival, when the Parthenon served as a Byzantine church, when the Turks used it as a powder magazine. Today; when it has become a commodity for tourist consumption and when UNESCO plans to protect it from pollution with a plastic dome, it is present in an epochal economy in yet another fashion-a mo de of presence certainly inconceivable for its architect, Ichtynos. At each moment of this history; the edifice was present according to Hnite, unforeseeable, uncontrollable traits. And each entailed the irremediable disappearance of such an epochal physiognomy” Why are we now aware of this altemation of epochs? Schiirmann does not consider the end of metaphysics outlined by Nietzsche and Heidegger as the theoretical awareness of another, previously unknown structure of Being (which would just legitimate another principle) but rather as the existential assumption of the absence of foundations. 'Ihis is the meaning of “anarchy” referred to in his book’s titles” the “economies of Being” (the substitution of old principles in favor of new ones) do not follow a rational course in history but rather, on their turn, an “anarchic” one. The problem that emerges from this analysis of the end of metaphysics is what to do once we have individuated not only the mechanism of grounding principles but also its absence. But, as we argued at the beginning of this chapter, for Schiirmann the anarchic vein of hermeneutics does not involve the absence of all rules but of a unique rule that could guide all practices. 'This is why in the absence of ultimate metaphysical principles, we can only live through the acquisition of a particular anarchic existential disposition: only by becoming “unaccustomed” to living according to legitimizations and grounding values can thought be practiced in a postmetaphysical or, as Lyotard calls it, a “postmodem” world. This is why for Schiirmann to ask today; “What ought I to do? is to speak in the vacuum of the space deserted by the successive representations of an unshakable ground.”" As we will see, both Lyotard and Rorty indicate how it is possible to live without legitimizations and grounding values and point out the opportunities that come from it. In the 197os, the government of Q\_uebec commissioned Lyotard to write a report on knowledge, but instead of a simple report, the French master came up with one of the most discussed philosophical texts of the past half century: The Postmodern Condition. While this condition was outlined for the first time by Ihab Hassan in 1976 to refer to the social condition of Westem civilization, it is Lyotard who a few years later managed to expose the philosophical innovations that this terminology implied. In this text, Lyotard indirectly outlines the condition of weak thought, that is, how its epoch differs from that of modernism (metaphysics), but, contrary to Schiirrnann, who limited himself to delineating why we entered this “shakable ground,” Lyotard went further, describing the condition for thought that this new ground implies for us. Although Lyotard agreed with Schiirmann that modernity was characterized by “legitimating” norms, he saw this process take place not through principles but rather “metanarratives,” that is, as founding myths that present themselves as global narratives such as positivism, Marxism, and Hegelianism. In sum, while modernity was the age where norms were legitimized through metanarratives, in postmodemity these same metanarratives have been bankrupted. Communication technology in our societies-both as the exchange of news and the possibility for entire masses of people to transfer-has vertiginous, multiplicated perspectives. But such bankruptcy does not mean that these metanarratives do not exist anymore but rather that we began to lose interest in them after the technological advances since World War II. Among the various eifects produced by these technological transformations, the most important concem the end of the ideas of history as a development toward social emancipation and of knowledge as a progression toward accomplishment and truth. Instead of legitimating history and knowledge through metanarratives, we tend today to follow a plurality of interpretations, a practice that has reached its peak through the Intemet. But what happens once we can no longer legitimate our thoughts in terms of progress toward truth? The same concept of truth is weakened into its various interpretations, making it impossible to regard human events as proceeding toward an end, hence, making it impossible to realize a rational program of improvement. In order to explain this new postmodern condition of truth, Lyotard used Wittgensteinian language games, where the antifoundational nature of hermeneutics becomes evident. In the second period of his thought, Wittgenstein developed his notion that reality is not described 01 by an overarching theory but rather by a number of language games. Lyotard comments on the implications of these games: The first is that their rules do not carry within themselves their own legitimation, but are subject to a contract, explicit or not, between players (which is not to say that the players invent the rules). The second is that if there are no rules, there is no game, that even an infinitesimal modification of the one rule alters the nature of the game, that a “move” or utterance that does not satisfy the rules does not belong to the game they define. The third remark is suggested by what has just been said: every utterance should be thought of as a “move” in a game.” Unlike some interpreters, we believe there is a political motivation behind Lyotard’s use of these language games, because they are used to represent the status of knowledge in postmodemity and also the plurality of truth this society presupposes. If we substitute the word “rule” in the passage above with “trutli,” then truth must respect the contingency within the processes with which it deals; in other words, each game implies a diiferent truth that cannot delegitimize other games. '1`his has a deep political import, for now politics cannot be based on accurate representations of reality but rather on singular different events that cannot be represented by rational theory The revolutionary political project of hermeneutics here becomes evident, making Lyotard one of the pioneers of interpretations call for emancipation. Lyotards deprecation of grand narratives has been welcomed by political, cultural, and intellectual minorities because it demands that difference is a principle to follow rather than to reject and also is an indication of civilization. These minorities have always been marginalized by rational politics on the basis of their di&`erence; that is, their di&`erence has been used as a factor of discrimination. Lyotard believes that the difference of each linguistic game (truth) should not only be incorporated into but also become a goal of social organization. But once we recognize how diiference becomes a condition we must pursue instead of reject, conversation substitutes for truth in order to cope with the plurality of linguistic games that surround us. The concept of conversation allows us to dismiss the modern grand narratives that tried to explain the totality of social practices in terms of their conformity to a universal pattern even when they encountered cultures different from their own. While many believed that the concept of conversation undermined our intellectual and moral hierarchies in favor of relativism, Rorty saw it as enforcing the possibilities of freedom from such hierarchies, because there is no position outside our historically situated language games from which to distinguish mind from world. Before indicating some possibilities that will come from conversation as the guiding ethical thread, it is important to remember that Rorty is the philosopher who demonstrated how Anglo-Saxon analytic philosophy is really one of the last gasps of descriptive philosophies. Analytic and continental realist philosophies are theoretically responsible for limiting the democratic ambitions of freedom, through their epistemological imposition of truth and state liberalism. This is probably why Rorty in Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature (1979), after indicating how analytic philosophy was conditioned by a desire to imitate not only the natural sciences but also their technical agenda, saw in hermeneutic philosophy “an expression of hope that the cultural space left by the demise of epistemology will not be filled?" For this reason, Rorty is among the first supporters of hermeneutic weak thought, because it does not pretend to fill any cultural space but rather advocates the discovery of different interpretations, descriptions, and understandings ofthe world. Rorty specified this, alluding to Nietzsche: What Nietzsche-and, more generally “hermeneutics”-has to tell us is not that we need a new method, but rather that we should look askance at the idea of method. He and his followers should not be viewed as offering us a new set of concepts, but rather as offering a certain skepticism about all possible concepts, including the ones they themselves use . . . they should be seen as urging us to think of concepts as tools rather than pictures-problemsolving instruments rather than firm foundations from which to criticize those who use different concepts.” Knowledge, explains Rorty after Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida’s deconstruction of metaphysics, cannot be acquired by deciding which propositions are true and which are false but only through “conversation,” which has become the “ultimate context within which knowledge is to be understood.”” The American philosopher demands that the paradigm change from truth to conversation for the same ethical reasons that Nietzsche and Heidegger had to overcome metaphysics: because to “see the aim of philosophy as truth-namely the truth about the terms which provide ultimate commensuration for all human inquiries and activities-is to see human beings as objects rather than subjects.”"\* Rorty’s main philosophical operation has been to develop all the consequences of leaving the idea of truth as a matter of mental or linguistic representation of reality He invites all philosophers to substi­ |04 HERMEHEUIIC COMMIHUISM tute for “philosophy as the mirror of nature” an “edifying hermeneutic philosophy” that guides, projects, and maintains the conversation of mankind. Like Schiirmann and Lyotard, Rorty also believes that nothing legitimizes or grounds our practices, since there is nothing that shows how they are in touch with the way things are. He believes it is much more productive to accept as justified practices those agreed upon by our epistemic community; in other words, it’s better to make practical decisions on the basis of our history education, and experiences instead of on the basis of truth or principles. Traditional principles have always been beyond the realm of human justification; they are metaphysical matrixes that presuppose that at a certain point in the process we will reach a goal (which could take various forms, such as eternal life, justice, or wealth). But Rortjg following Nietzsche's intuitions, reminds us that these goals do not exist; they are only projections of an insecure humanity in search of extreme reassurances. While these principles are not relative to anything we can experience, human finite justifications are always relative to a “language game community” It is in these individual and free communities that Rorty sees the potentiality for us to become historical contingencies, that is, determined for the cause of freedom instead ofthe signihcance of truth. As we can see, the guiding ethical thread behind Rorty’s philosophy does not depend on a strong conception of morality but rather on a weak one: In a “weak” conception, morality is not a matter of unconditional obligations imposed by a divine or quasi divine authority but rather is something cobbled together by a group of people trying to adjust to their circumstances and achieve their goals by cooperative eH`orts .... This humility will encourage tolerance for other intuitions and a willingness to experiment with ways of refashioning or replacing intuitions.” Rortyg together with Schiirmann and Lyotard, has found in hermeneutic weak thought an ethics without principles and a politics without truth. For all three, genuine liberalism is only possible if human beings are given inhnite freedom for their own re-creation. This is the reason that a tolerant society is one in which achievements will be determined by the plurality of conversations with different linguistic communities instead ofthe imposition of a liberal state, as with the invasion of Iraq. But this is only possible once we leave aside those legitirnatizing norms, foundational beliefs, and traditional principles that assured the links between our rational certainty and Truth, Nature, or God. 'The main accusation leveled against hermeneutic weak thought is that it supports a politics without truth, that is, relativism. But contrary to what many think, the relativism of interpretation favored by postmodemity does not imply a progressive accumulation of points of views but rather the impossibility of declaring once and for all the primacy of one interpretation over others. Although a given interpretation could be preferable to others, this preference will not depend on anything external and capable of guaranteeing its objectivity but only on a positive recollection of its premises, that is, the history that produced it. The relativism of hermeneutic weak thought cannot be absolute, since in its essence this is a thought against every claim to absoluteness, including “absolute relativism,” which would inevitably translate into political oppression. This is also why the “real” still exists for henneneutics, but only within certain paradigms, as Kuhn explained: it is always possible to establish whether an interpretation or a proposition is true or false, but only within a historical condition, a certain scientific discipline, or a political epoch. For all these reasons, hermeneutic weak thought is the thought of the weak, of those who are not satisfied with the established principles imposed on them and who demand different rights, that is, other interpretations. I\_n this politics of interpretation, conversation becomes the realm where the powerful describers of the world can listen to the requests of the weak and perhaps change their selfish priorities. But if they do not listen, today the weak can finally come together. Perhaps Rorty foresaw this when he stated that what is “important about representative democratic government is that it gives the poor and weak a tool they can use against the rich and powerful, especially against the unconscious cruelty of the institutions the powerful have imposed upon the weak.”3°

#### Materialism link of omission/State link

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, the politics of descriptions, in order to impose and justify framed democracy; must eliminate everything that does not submit to its ordering of facts, norms, and institutions. Having said this, it should not be a surprise that Fulcuyama and Kagan, together with other establishment intellectuals, forget, neglect, or ignore the oppression caused by neoliberal capitalism. And if they ignore such economic oppression, it is because they themselves sustain it: their condition is also an effect of such oppression. just as Searle was indi&°erent to Derrida’s arguments, so are Fukuyama and Kagan indiiferent to the history of the oppressed, because the priority; in both cases, is always to submit to the scientific or democratic realm of metaphysics. It must be for this reason that when Derrida commented on Pukuyama’s thesis in Specters of Marx (1993), a great deal of space was given to what he left out of his analysis: For it must be cried out, at a time when some have the audacity to neo-evangelize in the name of the ideal of a liberal democracy that has finally realized itself as the ideal of human history: never have violence, inequality exclusion, famine, and thus economic oppression aEected as many human beings in the history of the earth and of humanity. Instead of singing the advent of the ideal of liberal democracy and of the capitalist market in the euphoria of the end of history; instead of celebrating the “end of ideologies” and the end of the great emancipatory discourses, let us never neglect this obvious macroscopic fact, made up of innumerable singular sites of suffering: no degree of progress allows one to ignore that never before, in absolute figures, have so many men, women and children been subjugated, starved or exterminated on the earth." The “inequalityg exclusion, famine, and economic oppression” that Fulcuyama and Kagan leave out of their analysis represent framed democracy’s effects and also its greatest threat. Although, since the fall of the Soviet Union, democracies have expanded to the point of achieving a condition of “lack of emergencies”-that is, of political, financial, and social emergencies-it does not mean they are not ready for such events. As we have seen in the past decades, the establishment of democratic free-market capitalist states was not only violent” but also ineEective, considering the dissatisfaction that most Western citizens declare today" These dissatisfactions have reached such levels that the institutions designed to detect social discontent are no longer limited to the United Nations (lntemational Labour Organization, World Trade Organization, or the Food and Agriculture Organization) but have expanded to states’ ministries of defense. These ministries have been producing reports that not only confirm this situation but also prepare to confront it. As Mike Davis explained in Planet of Slums, the Pentagon war-lighting doctrine “is being reshaped accordingly to support a lowintensity world war of unlimited duration against criminalized segments of the urban poor.”" And Rear Admiral C.]. Parry (the director general of a recent UK Ministry of Defense report) has indirectly explained why: Differentials in material well-being will be more explicit through globalization and increased access to more readily and cheaply available telecommunications. Disparities in wealth and advantage will therefore become more obvious, with their associated grievances and resentments, even among the growing numbers of people who are likely to be materially more prosperous than their parents and grandparents. Absolute poverty and comparative disadvantage will fuel perceptions of injustice among those whose expectations are not met, increasing tension and instability both within and between societies and resulting in expressions of violence such as disorder, criminality terrorism and insurgency They may also lead to the resurgence of not only anti-capitalist ideologies, possibly linked to religious, anarchist or nihilist movements, but also to populism and the revival of Marxism.” Although reports from many other states also wam of a future rife with wars (over water, immigration, and infectious diseases)," the fact that “absolute poverty” and “comparative disadvantage” are now also considered threats for the security of framed democracies inevitably poses “other” alarms than the ones indicated by Fukuyama and Kagan. As we can see, the coming threats are not limited to Russia, China, and India, which, as Kagan explains, have become “responsible shareholders,” but rather come from everyone who is not part of framed democracys neoliberal capitalism. This is why we do not believe the next wars will primarily be against other states” but rather against those “useless shareholders,” who, for the most part, are the weak, poor, and oppressed citizens, as highlighted in the defense reports. As we argue, the weak do not possess a different history but rather exist at historys margins; that is, they represent the discharge of capitalism and are present not only in the 'Third World but also in the slums of Western metropolises. 'Ihese slums are not only becoming larger as we write but also are where the majority ofthe population is forced to live because ofthe concentration of capital. While in the West the slums are becoming battlegrounds, in some South American states, as we will see in chapter 4, they have become territories for social improvement through communist initiatives. In sum, the conflicts of the twenty-first century will not be caused by the return of history as Fukuyama and Kagan predict, but rather by its own ends: liberal states. The fact that framed democracy is already preparing to iight and win such urban wars indicates how within our democratic system change is almost impossible and also how the oppressive effects of capitalism are predicted to increase. As Meiksins Wood explained, whether “national or global, [capitalism] is driven by a certain systemic imperatives, the imperatives of competition, profit-maximization and accumulation, which inevitably require putting ‘exchange-value’ before ‘use-value’ and profit before peop1e.”“' These are systemic imperatives of dominion, supremacy and control over others, and they result in such metaphysical systems as liberalism, where the power of the individual becomes the only substance. Our goal in this chapter is to demonstrate how framed democracy’s liberal, financial, and security measures regulate one another in order both to conserve our current “lack of emergencies” and to impose necessary emergencies.

THE IMPOSITHJITS (lf THE LIBERAL STATE If the democracies’ chief priority is to conserve what Heidegger called the “lack of emergencies,” that is, the neutrality achieved through science’s liberal essence, modem states still have an essential function, contrary to the opinion of many contemporary thinkers.” 'This function is not limited to the historical, racial, or linguistic identification of a state’s citizens but extends to other states: “liberal states” are also “liberating states”; that is, they liberate other states from undemocratic regimes. The recent imposed liberalization of Iraq and Afghanistan (also called “state building”) occurred under the orders of other liberal states and as a consequence ofthe essence of liberalism. It is also in the name of this essence that democracy is imposed today as the best system of govemment even when it becomes corrupt. As we mentioned in the previous chapter; the “liberal essence” of science consists in its ideal of objectivity that is, establishing “truth” or “freedom” as only what legally enters within the established, recognized, and framed democratic order. It must be for these reasons that Carl Schmitt viewed “liberalism as a coherent, all-embracing, metaphysical system”” and that Heidegger viewed it as another product, with fascism, capitalism, and communism, of subjectivist metaphysics.” This is why within metaphysically framed democracies liberalism avoids change: while democratic elections are procedures for possible change, liberalism is the realm within which such change presents itself through elections, finance, and institutions. Liberal electoral results represent humanitys unconditional self-legislation, in other words, the focus on “the I”‘5 from which stems liberalism. But this vision from a pure “I,” according to Heidegger, is impossible to achieve, because there are no experiences that ever set man beyond himself into an unentered domain from within which man as he is up to now could become questionable. That is-namely; that self-security that innermost essence of “lib eralism," which precisely for this reason has the appearance of being able to freely unfold and to subscribe to progress for all eternity . . . Thus, it now took only a few years for “science” to realize that its “liberal” essence and its “ideal of objectivity” are not only compatible with the political-national “orientation” but also indispensable to it. And hence “science” as well as “worldview” must now unanimously agree that the talk of a “crisis” of science was actually only a prattle.” As we saw in the previous chapter, such self-security is a consequence ofthe “unconditional relationship” of metaphysics, where “the present that is present to itself becomes the measure for all beingness.”"’ 'Ihis is why as Richard Polt pointed out, “liberalism [for Heidegger] can go on ‘progressing’ forever precisely because its basis is static.”“° Having said this, if the liberal worldview capitalism’s systemic imperatives, and states’ identification measures are unified by static desires of progress, control, and domination, they must also be unified in the fear of possible foreign shocks, disruptions, or emergencies, which Searle, Smith, Fukuyama, and Kagan express in their politics of descriptions. It] in addition to Schmitt and Heidegger, contemporary thinkers such as Edgar Morin, Enrique Dussel, and Richard Sennett have also criticized liberalism, it is not because it defends individual liberties but, on the contrary for its particular view of freedom, which has already decided who we are. It is on this basis that radical defenders of liberalism such as Robert Nozick promote the “minimal state,” that is, a realm within which only “individuals have rights.”"9 Such a minimal state is not very different from our framed democracies, as both are constituted in such a way as to avoid individual alterations and conserve their stability A state “limited to the functions of protection against force, theft, fraud, enforcement of contracts, and so on,” explains Nozick, “is justified; any more extensive state will violate person’s rights."3° It is also within this liberal realm that the political changes that occur in framed democracies such as Italy or the United States are relevant as a measure of liberty only against rubrics established by institutions in the same state that are charged with verifying such measures." In Italjg parties lose their political identity as soon as they join coalitions (which have the only chance to govem); in the United States, the coalitions are the parties. Here “lack of emergency” is translated into a lack of alternatives before elections and a lack of opposition after them. This is not a consequence of the parties’ radical positions but rather of the lack of positions created by liberalism’s all-embracing system. If Nozick, together with most liberal individualists, endorses wide political coalitions or capitalism, it is not only because of their stability and ability to accumulate wealth but because the “logic of liberal individualism,” as Eric Hobsbawm emphasizes, “is perfectly compatible with the free marl indispensable to the objective presence of weapons of mass destruction upon which the war was launched. This is also why it never really mattered whether these weapons existed objectively; much more significant were the liberal states’ self-righteous justifications to invade. As Chomsky reminds us: The United States and United Kingdom proclaimed the right to invade Iraq because it was developing weapons of mass destruction. That was the “single question” that justified invading Iraq, the president declared in a March zoo; press conference, a position stressed repeatedly by Blair, Bush, and their associates. Eliminating the threat of Iraqs WMD was also the sole basis on which Bush received congressional authorization to resort to force. The answer to the “single question” was given shortly after the invasion, as Washington reluctantly conceded. Scarcely missing a beat, the doctrinal system concocted new pretexts and justifications, which quickly became virtual dogma: the war was inspired by President Bush’s noble visions of democracy shared by his British colleague.”

#### Economics Link

In order to understand why the current financial economic system has been preserved, regardless of its responsibility for the zoo8 crisis, it is first necessary to stress how capitalist imperatives (of competition, profit maximization, and accumulation) are bound together with the metaphysical nature of economics. It is in this context that Paul Krugman recently criticized those economists who “mistook beauty clad in impressive-looking mathematics, for truth.” By this Krugman means that most economists are seduced by the vision of a perfect, frictionless market system. If the profession is to redeem itself, it will have to reconcile itself with a less alluring vision-that of a market economy that has many virtues but that is also shot through with flaws and frictions .... When it comes to the all-too-human problem of recessions and depressions, economists need to abandon the neat but wrong solution of assuming that everyone is rational and markets work perfectly” This “seduction” is the result of the need for domination, and this often results in metaphysical thought, which, as we mentioned in chapter 1, worships truth, science, and the global organization of all beings within the predictable structure of causes and effects. Krugman believes that the greatest problem of the professional economists is not that most of them did not predict the zoo8 crisis but rather the “professions blindness to the very possibility of catastrophic failures in a market economy.”“ This blindness comes not only from the seliish interest of each economist in obtaining a powerful job within framed democracies but also from the submission of their discipline to the “secure path of science," where alternatives, changes, or shocks are impossible, given that “modem financial economics [has] everything under control?" As we can see, this insistence on control or self-security is also a characteristic of john Searle's metaphysical realism, which is inclined not only to circumscribe philosophy to science but also to legitimize scientific political enterprises. It should not come as a surprise that among the followers of Searle is the economist Hernando De Soto, who sees in the rationality of free markets the capacity of self-regulation and also the potential to lift developing countries from poverty by bringing them into this same free market.” But what is missing from this rational economy; in which capitalism becomes the motor that allows “sane” individuals to interact in “perfect” markets and where everyone who does not enter this scheme is destined to remain in poverty? First, what is missing is the recognition of limitations of human rationality which ma); among other consequences, lead to economic bubbles; second, the acknowledgment of the “imperfections of all ‘financial markets”; and third, an understanding of the “dangers created when regulators don’t believe in regulation.”59 According to Krugman, it is just this belief in the power and rationality of free financial markets that “blinded many if not most economists to the emergence of the biggest financial bubble in history”‘° But the most disturbing factor is not that this crisis was not predicted-it was-but rather how the measures taken in its wake are actually worsening and prolonging the recession. The current recession was created by the zooi Internet bubble, the cost ofthe U.S.-led coalition invasion of Iraq, the zoo8 housing bubble, and, most of all, by capitalist imperatives of competition, profit maximization, and accumulation, which inevitably guide the logic of liberal individualism that we mentioned earlier." If banks, which grew to be “too big to fail,” began to adopt incentive structures that were designed to induce excessively risky behavior, it is because they believed in the rational self-regulation of the market and also because the “regulatory authorities [mostly the Fed] allowed the financial markets (including the banks) to use the abundance of funds in ways that were not socially productive.”°“ This is why Stiglitz believes the recession is not a crisis of the housing bubble but rather of our whole “economic and political system”: Each of the players was, to a large extent, doing what they thought they should do. 'Ihe bankers were maximizing their incomes, given the rules of the game. The rules of the game said that they should use their political influence to get regulations and regulators that allowed them, and the corporations they headed, to walk away with as much money as they could. The politicians responded to the rules ofthe game: '1'hey had to raise money to get elected, and to do that, they had to please powerful and wealthy constituents. There were economists who provided the politicians, the bankers, and the regulators with a convenient ideology: According to this ideologyg the policies and practices that they were pursuing would supposedly benefit all." This ideology is nothing other than the conservative measures that all of these players (seduced by the financial-market ideology of perfection, rationality; and self-regulation) were already forced to adopt in order to succeed in the capitalist system. According to this system, govemment ought to be blamed not for doing too much but rather “for doing too little,”“ that is, for limiting its encouragement of a deregulatory process that is supposed to “benefit all.” But this deregulatory process contrasts sharply with framed democracies’ effort to sustain an absence of emergencies, disruptions, and shocks

#### IMF link/International Banking link

If we look into the measures taken by both Bush and Obama, we see that the crisis was used as an opportunity to conserve the current linancial system;‘5 their response “has led to a consolidation ofthe big banks increasing the risk of surviving banks becoming 'too big to fail.” ”“ '1`his is counterproductive, both because a bank that becomes “too big to fail” will inevitably affect other institutions (intensifying the interdependency of the global system) and because its survival will have to be guaranteed for the well-being of the whole system, regardless, as we have seen in this crisis, of its inevitable losses. This is why with the “bailout of AIG,” as Stiglitz explains, “we have oilicially annoimced that any institution which is systematically signiiicant will be bailed out?" The fact that the U.S. Treasury Department together with both Bush and Obama decided to spend billions to preserve the financial system indicates that we have become even more dependent on banks than we were before the crisis. Having said this, it should not come as a surprise Together with the World Bank and the U.S. Treasury; the IMF (all located in Washington, D.C.) both represents the so-called Washington Consensus and imposes its economic policies.” In exchange for economic assistance during the past decades, the IMF has forced developing countries to raise interest rates and to “reduce deficits by cutting expenditures and/or raising taxes .... This led to a weakening of national economies, when the point of IMF assistance was to strengthen them?" As Stiglitz points out, these policies significantly increased the recessions in which these countries already found themselves, forcing many to decline any assistance from the IMP. But why has the IMF, which was created to promote global economic stability failed to perform the task for which it was designed? 'The reason lies in the IMF% focus on saving the Western creditors rather than on helping the countries in crisis and their people. 'Ihere was money to bail out Western banks but not for minimal food subsidies for those on the brink of starvation. Countries that had turned to the IMF for guidance failed in sustained growth, while countries like China, which followed its own counsel, had enormous success. Deeper analysis exposed the role that particular IMF policies such as capital market liberalization had played in the failures.” Although the IMF, especially after the Gzo summits in 2009, now allows new economic powers such as China and India to determine its policies," it still functions for the well-being of the conservative ideology Stiglitz mentions: the iinancial market ideology of perfection, rationality and self-regulation. If the Gzo’s response to the zoo8 crisis in developing countries relied principally on the IMF (tripling the resources available to it, to $750 billion), it was not only to maintain recessions in those countries but also to oppose the rising prominence of multinational funding in the developing world, which was becoming an effective alternative to the dominance of the Gao nations. As Baker indicates, the most “explicit alternative to the IMF is the Bank ofthe South that has been established with the support of most of the countries in Latin America. However there is also an East Asian bailout fund . . . and also China’s own efforts to act as an IMF-like source of funds.”” Although these new funds must also operate within the neoliberal global markets, that they have been established at all indicates the need for alternatives, that is, economic representations other than the IMF. While the economic policy of both the framed democracies and the IMP cannot be exclusively responsible for the current crisis and the level of poverty throughout the world, that the framed democracies and the IMF confirmed their neoliberal policies during the crisis indicates their interest in preserving this condition. But in order to maintain the neoliberal global economy which inevitably increases the numbers of the discharge of capitalism (the population ofthe poor, weak, and oppressed), the framed democracies must reshape and expand their security measures.

#### Foreign Emergency link

Framed democracies are interested in the conservation of their liberal impositions and financial system and in protecting this global condition against any change. While an “emergency” for framed democracies represents the possibility of change, “emergency” for the weak is precisely a “lack of emergency” that is, a lack of change, alteration, or modification ofthe current state of a&`airs. As we argued in the first chapter, the weak are the losers of history 'Ihey are those who instead of being framed within the scientific political organization of all beings (realism or, which is the same, the neoliberal system) are left at its margins. In this way they represent Kagan’s fear of the “retum of history” Heidegger’s unpredicted “event of unconcealment,” and Benjamin? discontinuous “tradition of the oppressed.” These marginal peoples occupy both those states (such as Iraq, Afghanistan, or Iran) that do not comply with liberal measures and the slums ofthe cities ofthe framed democracies; that is, they occupy those places where history continues, where events are unpredicted, and where the population is discontinuous. Framed democracies have begun to reshape their security measures not because the weak have started attacking them but, on the contrary because they have not yet begun to attack. In order to understand why and how the Pentagon war-fighting doctrine is preparing for “low-intensity world wars of unlimited duration against criminalized segments of the urban poor,”” it is first necessary to indicate why together with states, the urban poor may also be considered “weal IMF but also useless for the development of liberal science." Although the chances that these states could become effective threats to neoliberal states are minimal, because of their precarious condition and the unequal balance of power, they still constitute emergencies for framed democracies, because they include elements that are not fully recognizable or controllable by those states. These useless, insignificant, weak elements represent both the discharge of framed democracies and the possibility of emancipation from its control. But more importantly this weak condition does exist in both foreign states and also at the margins of framed democracies, in all those slums that have also become useless and insignificant. The weak populations in these slums have also become an emergency and a threat: they are closer than the disenfranchised populations of foreign states and, most of all, because their numbers have drastically increased in the last fifty years because ofthe social inelfectiveness of capitalism. just as Fukuyama and Kagan left the weak out of their debate because they were not “responsible shareholders” in the international political landscape, so do the GDP measurements exclude them because they do not reflect the capital growth of the state. If growth is to be sustainable, then inequality in the distribution of wealth should be an integral factor of GDP as an effective measure of economic growth." But, as Stiglitz explained, market change in most states represents an increase in inequality; that is, as “bankers get much richer, average income can go up, even as most individuals’ incomes are declining. So GDP per capita statistics may not reflect what is happening to most citizens.”” Rising GDP figures ignore wealth inequalities, both creating the illusion of constant economic growth and, most of all, ejecting the weak from economic standards.” If the precarious condition of threequarters of the world’s population is related to the huge differences in income and wealth, which can be seen at intemational, national, and regional levels, then the GDP measures only the winners living in the framed democracies, that is, those who will always increase the GDP because of their established level of income and wealth.” The inequality between the “useful” contributors to the GDP and the weak has increased because of capitalisms systemic imperative of accumulation, and the gap now seems to deny any possibility of bringing the two groups together. The Italian sociologist Luciano Gallino recently estimated that the inequality of income between the most well-oil' quintiles and the poorest quintile in the world’s population is 90 to 1. Ifinstead of the strata of the population we consider the zo richest nations and the ao poorest, the inequality rises to no to 1. 'I`he ao richest men of the world possess wealth equal to that ofthe 1,ooo,ooo,ooo poorest. In those countries where the per capita GPD appears uniformly well ofl§ as in the United States and Italy the inequalities of income and wealth, both real and financial, between the richest io percent of the population and the poorest io percent are evident and increasing. To achieve the same income as the top managers of the big industrial and financial enterprises in twelve months (considering incomes, bonuses, stock options), an Italian, French, British, or American worker with a gross income of z5,ooo euros (equivalent to z3,ooo pounds or 3z,ooo dollars in the zoo8 exchange) would have to work between 4oo and 1,ooo years. In 1960 they would only have needed, more or less, 40 years.” These inequalities demonstrate both the condition in which the majority of the population iinds itself and the essential condition of the weak. The extreme low end of wealth distribution is not restricted to the informal-employment sector or citizens living in extreme poverty but includes “vulnerable employees.” Although the ILO’s Global Employment Trends report distinguished between the “working poor” and “vulnerable employees,” both groups not only exist at the margins of framed democracies but also are at its “service,” considering that the service sector has surpassed the agriculture sector as the world’s most prevalent source of jobs.” This report also speciiies that while the “working poor” numbered up to 1.4 billion in 2.oo9, that is, 45 percent of the world’s employees, when “vulnerable employees” are included, the level of endangered workers 1'ises to 53 percent ofthe employed population.” What effect does this increasing poverty have on the security measures of framed democracies? Among the many consequences of intemational, national, and regional economic impoverishment are overurbanization and the relocation of populations to the margins of framed democracies, that is, into urban slums. If these slums have mushroomed, it is not because the weak have overbred but, on the contrary because of their “inclusion into the global economy."“" Overurbanization, as Josef Gugler and Mike Davis explain, is not driven by the concentration of jobs, as neoliberals would have us believe (for example, in the service sector), but rather by the reproduction of poverty” Considering that “half of humanity now lives in cities, and within two decades, nearly 6o per cent of the world’s people will be urban dwellers,””‘ it should not come as a surprise if slum populations are growing by an overwhelming 25 million per year.” In this new “planet of slums,” vulnerable employees are becoming an integral and essential component, along side of the urban poor.” Although these slums differ signiiicantly across the world’s cities, one common element is that their residents, the weak, are the necessary workforce (civil servants, laborers, and former peasants) for the neoliberal global economy both because of their low-cost services and because resources are not expended on their social security or health coverage. Slums have become containers of indispensable specters for framed democracies. Contrary to the traditional definitions, a slum is not only a run-down area of a city characterized by substandard housing, Hlth, and insecurity. It is also a population; it is a functioning social community beyond the controls of framed democracies. As Davis explains in Planet of Slums: Even within a single city slum populations can support a bewildering variety of responses to structural neglect and deprivation, ranging from charismatic churches and prophetic cults to ethnic militias, street gangs, neoliberal NGOs, and revolutionary social movements. But if there is no monolithic subject or unilateral trend in the global slmn, there are nonetheless myriad acts of resistance. Indeed, the future of human solidarity depends upon the militant refusal of the new urban poor to accept their terminal marginality within global capitalism .... The demonizing rhetorics of the various international “wars” on terrorism, drugs, and crime are so much semantic apartheid: they construct epistemological walls around gecekondus,favelas, and chawls that disable any honest debate about the daily violence of economic exclusion.” These “epistemological walls” have been constructed not only to discourage debate and therefore increase indilference toward the weak but also out of fear of “myriad acts of resistance.”89 just as Searle’s fear of Derrida’s philosophy grew out of the lack of control and information it implied, so do framed democracies fear the weak because they imply elements that are not fully present, recognizable, and, most of all, controllable. This is also why the wars in Iraq and other recent international coniiicts have been preemptive, that is, launched in anticipation of possible alterations caused by this lack of control. Among the many consequences of these invasions, the “urban battles” of Sadr City (which is now one ofthe wor1d’s largest slums) and before that of Mogadishu have forced the Pentagon to venture “where most UN, WB, or departments of States types fear to go: down the road that logically follows from the abdication of urban reform.”9° While this was a real concem forty years ago during the cold war," the only interest today is in developing adequate weapons” with which to tight the slum and its weak. If military powers are now venturing into the urban discharge of capitalism, it is because the future of warfare lies in these city slums. “Our recent military history” declares Major Ralph Peters, “is punctuated with city names-Tuzla, Mogadishu, Los Angeles, Beirut, Panama City Hue, Saigon, Santo Domingo-but these encounters have been but a prologue, with the real drama still to come.”” After all, it should not come as a surprise if the various sophisticated systems of control now used as part of the militarization of many Westem cities correspond to the ones used in occupied nations such as Iraq and Afghanistan.” Fighting the weak is nothing else than confronting and containing any change, emergency and emancipation from the impositions of the \_framed democracies.

#### Hermeneutics

By “political project” we do not mean that hermeneutics actually represents a political position that no one has yet explicated systematicalljg but rather that it is political in itself If politics, as Hannah Arendt explained, is not exclusively conflicting assertions of truth, claims to recognition, and power relations but rather the action necessary to create a public realm in which individuals coexist freely while protecting the private space required for their personal development, then hermeneutics is also political. It relies on a plurality of individual developments, that is, active interpretations. A philosophy that relies on a plurality of interpretations must avoid not only any metaphysical claims to universal values, which would restrict personal developments, but also that passive, conservative nature that characterizes descriptive philosophies in favor of action. While these descriptive philosophies have always been concemed with regulating obj ectifying processes in order to impose them, hermeneutics instead is motivated by an active techne, that is, the opposite of theoria as conservation, neutralization, and violence. More than descriptive philosophies, interpretation often implies a call for emancipation, which is politically revolutionary; in other words, it is opposed to the objective state of affairs. This is why hermeneutics has always been the latent backbone of cultural revolutions against bearers of power, that is, the most productive movements against imposed truth. Although these movements are also always accused of being oppressive in that they try to impose their own agendas, it should be noted that there is an anarchic vein in hermeneutics that, as Reiner Schiirmann explained, does not involve the absence of rules but of the unique universal rule. As the resistance to principles, conventions, and categories, anarchy is not the end of the political project of hermeneutics but its beginning. Perhaps one ofthe main reasons that the political project of hermeneutics has at last become central is that politics is iinally becoming aware of the end of metaphysics, that is, of the impracticality of adhering to, aspiring to, and promoting “objective truth,” “universal values,” and “ideological revolts.” The end of metaphysics means the end of object-originated knowledge as the unique measure for truth. '1`l1.is understanding of truth is common not only to science, where the subject is valid only to the extent that it mirrors whatever is objective, but also for those politics of descriptions that violently impose certain systems. The zoo; invasion of Iraq in order to impose democracy and the zoo8 bank bailout are the most recent paradigmatic examples of this politics of truth and also examples of its failure, that is, the failure of metaphysical politics. The dissolution of the politics of descriptions can also be found in the end of colonialism and in the rise of cultural anthropology: when cultural anthropology took shape as a discipline, it dissolved the myths of humanity’s linear progress guided by the “more civilized” Western countries and allowed other interpretations to come forward. The end of metaphysics goes hand in hand with the end of modernity and the recognition of the interpretative nature of descriptions. In this postmodern condition, politics, instead of relating to truth, must be guided by the interplay of minority and majority that is, by democratic consensus. This procedural democratic consensus is not very di&'erent from the essence of hermeneutics, that is, the contingent, free, and perilous nature of interpretation, which excludes any imposition of truth. This truth knowledge upon which a politics of descriptions stands is transformed in a politics of interpretation by the right of the weak to interpret. In sum, hermeneutics is the only philosophy that reflects the pluralism of postmodem societies, which, on the political level, is expressed in progressive communist democracies (as we will see in the next chapter), where achievements are not measured in relation to truth but rather in relation to others. But in order to systematically delineate its political project, we need to explore the work of the masters of henneneutics (Diltheyg Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Gadamer), the origins of hermeneutics (Luther, Freud, and Kuhn), and its radical political developments (Schiirmann, Lyotard, and Rorty), which together will lead to an understanding of the political emancipation for the “weak” that interpretation embodies.

#### Better Hermeneutics Terrible and useless

Being is not something out there and there is no thing in itself. Instead we are actively participating in the world, and the angle we see it from is a real object

It is not a surprise that the standard bearers of hermeneutics we evoked in the previous section are also revolutionary figures. Each presented a new vision of the world and, most importantly asserted that there could no longer be a single “vision of the world.” This thesis was explicitly developed in Heidegger’s essay “The Age of the World Picture” (1938), which concludes that today it is impossible to obtain a unitary organized, and systematic image of the world because of the multiplication of special sciences, which does not allow any sort of unified vision." 'The world of hermeneutics is not an “object” that can be observed from different points of view and that offers various interpretations; it is a world in continuous revolution. This is also why hermeneutics is an ontology; a theory of Being that thinks of the world only in terms of event, an event that does not reveal itself to the eyes of the human beings as a show because they are engaged as performers. The first thinker to emphasize radically this condition was Nietzsche, in his famous thesis from his notebooks of 1883-1888: Against positivism, which halts at phenomena-“There are only facts”-I would say: No, facts is precisely what there is not, only interpretations. We cannot establish any fact “in itself”: perhaps it is folly to want to do such a thing. “Everything is subjective,” you say; but even this is interpretation. 'Ihe “subject” is not something given, it is something added and invented and projected behind what there is.-Finally; is it necessary to posit an interpreter behind the interpretation? Even this is invention, hypothesis." This passage and its distillation (“there are no facts, only interpretations, and this is also an interpretation”) not only refer to a general problem of knowledge wherein nothing could be considered an objective fact, because even when we talk about facts we actually express interpretations, but they also assert that “facts” “do not exist,” at least as external independent objects as an objectivist, scientific, or positivist mentality would imagine them. Or better, there are facts only if we comprehend them as events or happenings in the constitution of which we, as interpreters, contribute in a determined way As we know Nietzsche, far from organizing his philosophy into a clear and performable theoretical system, developed his hermeneutics essentially as a vitalistic thought. This choice was probably determined by his proximity to positivism and the inheritance ofthe Enlightenment, which induced him to see the world and man in terms of expression and the increase of vital forces. These vital forces conserve life by continuously overcoming the degrees it has achieved. In this world where there are no facts but only interpretations, life conserves itself not only by developing but also by destroying (or putting aside) what it has little by little produced, in order to construct new things. In this way it also overcomes what came before. Nietzsche, who was also a historian of literature and culture, began to elaborate in his first major philosophical work, The Birth of Tragedy (1872),'3 the thesis according to which in order to create, one must also destroy.“‘ Although this model of ontology remains constant throughout almost all of Nietzsche’s work, he did move away from its providentialistic historicism, which considered the will to power as will to “progress” toward a state of perfection (which for him would be equivalent to death), and also from a biological conception ofthe will to power as a demand to empower man ( “der bisherige Mensch,” “the man so far”) in his “constitutive” capacities and faculties.” But the most important feature of Nietzsche’s intuitions is what we wish to call his “ontology of event,” which not only anticipates but also clarifies ante litteram Heidegger’s analysis of Being. In order for interpretation to make sense as the constitutive dimension of Being, it is necessary to understand Being as an event and not an object. This nihilistic meaning that Nietzsche grants to hermeneutics makes him a sort of avant la lettre interpreter of H eidegger’s thought. Although many would object that this is a paradoxical thesis, it indicates the complex relation that Heidegger always had with Nietzsche’s philosophy. Heidegger, overtuming a consolidated tradition that regarded Nietzsche mainly as a political critic (Alfred Biiumler) and a biological thinker (Ludwig Klages), was the first to suggest considering him a metaphysical philosopher of the same dignity of Plato, Aristotle, or Hegel, with the diiference being that he was writing as a metaphysical philosopher at the end of metaphysics. It is in just this way that Dilthey presented Nietzsche as a “Lebens philosoph,” a “philosopher of life,” who practiced philosophy only as existential wisdom, because the great philosophical systems had declined.‘° Although Heidegger-who was always very close to Dilthey from whom he inherited the comprehensive vision of the history of Western philosophy as the triumph and dissolution of metaphysics-considered Nietzsche from this perspective, he never explicitly accepted that the end of metaphysics could be Nietzschean nihilism, which he believed he had overcome. This is why we believe that the relation between Heidegger and Nietzsche is both complex and ambiguous: there is in Heidegger no real overcoming of Nietzsche’s positions but rather a reading that twists and frees him from those positivistic and vitalistic remains so visible in the notion of will to power. In very synthetic terms: Heidegger and his theory of interpretation allow us to tmderstand Nietzsche’s hermeneutics; Nietzsche and his nihilism and ontology of event allow us to read Heidegger in a manner faithful to his theory of the ontological diEerence." in sum, Nietzsche closes all the remaining metaphysical temptations that consider Being as something that is “out there.” Heidegger and Nietzsche, regardless of Heideggers explicit attitude toward Nietzsche, are the guides we choose to outline the meaning of hermeneutics and its political implications. Hermeneutics, in the configuration it obtains through Nietzsche and Heidegger; becomes modemity’s prop er philosophy It would not have been possible for Nietzsche to formulate such a statement as “there are no facts, only interpretations, and this is also an interpretation” without the expansion ofthe world horizon that had taken place as a consequence of geographic discoveries, intensified relations with other cultures through the imperialistic ventures of the West, and the historical-anthropological awareness that prevailed over most of the culture of the late 18oos. All this is expressed in Dilthey who, insisting on knowledge of the human sciences (particularly historiography), also constructed the basis of contemporary hermeneutics. Historiographies have always tried to explore historical epochs with certain rigorous and objective pretensions to the reality of those in the world before us. But historiography became challenging precisely at the end of the 18oos mainly because ofthe expansion and multiplication of modernity’s horizons, to which Dilthey and many other authors of the end of the century dedicated so much attention. It is also true that debates in the late 18oos over the human sciences (history and humanistic disciplines) in contrast to the natural sciences were inspired mainly by the need of historians and humanists to obtain a specific position in the academic world, which was becoming increasingly dominated by techno-scientific disciplines.” But the emphasis on the notion of “understanding” or “comprehension” as characteristic of the human sciences makes also more urgent the problem of the extraneity of objects, which belongs to so many products that these sciences study It is just in this atmosphere that the centrality of interpretation matures as a philosophical problem. Even though human sciences must “understand,” which implies a certain fo rm of involvement, how can such involvement take place in “objects” as distant as those that ethnology and anthropology venture into? The realm of human sciences-which also bear a strong “political” component because ofthe academic corporations they face (that is, the financial power of scientists, obtained through universities and private enterprises)"-becomes an essential aspect of the objectivity crisis. However one explains and characterizes hermeneutics (its historic and cultural components are various: from the dispute over readings of sacred texts with Luther to the Marxist notion of ideology) , it is at the end of modernity that the crisis of (the notion of) objectivity is fully engaged. 'Ihis crisis should not only be understood as the essential feature of the modern discourse but must also be considered the triumph of historicism: the real is not the object but rather history But if the real is history which cannot be thought as a determined extemal object, instead of responding to an act of knowledge it will only offer itself to interpretation. Luigi Pareyson-who, from an aesthetic thought, developed a general theory of interpretation-defined interpretation as the “form of knowing in which receptivity and activity are inseparable, and where the known is a form and the knower a person.”‘° We should read this definition while thinking of Nietzsche’s idea of the will to power (only if the subject does not pretend to disappear, the “object,” the th.ing, reveals itself) and also of Heidegger's notion of interpretation as existence. Although in Being and Time (1927) Heidegger defined human existence as a “thrown project,” already in Kant the human subject was not considered a tabula rasa but rather said to encounter the world perceiving things within a priori frames: categories of space, time, and the intellect. According to Kant, man only knows phenomena, that is, what appears within those a priori schemes that constitute his ovm reason. ln knowledge there is not only the object but also, and most of all, the subject. But Kant never called knowledge “interpretation,” because he still thought that those a priori schemes with which the human being is equipped are iixed and identical at all times and for all men. Against Kant, we must observe that this character of stability belongs to phenomenal objects but cannot be attributed to the structure ofthe human subject. Between Kant and Heidegger there is also Kierkegaard and cultural anthropologjg that is, the awareness of the inevitable iinitude of human existence (which is not pure reason but involved interest, passion, and history) and the knowledge of di&`erent cultures. In sum, “thrown project” means for Heidegger that human existence is in the world not as pure reason but as an individual with interests, expectations, and cognitive instruments that he inherits from a world, culture, and language. He is an interpreter: someone who looks at things with interest. Only in this way will he avoid the appearance of things as an indistinct stack and instead frame them in a comprehensible order, that is, in a world and without falling into subjectivism. But just as his world is not distinct from the subject, neither is he, as a subject, distinct from the world that would be his “object.” This transobjective dimension, which can still seem imperfect and dubious in Being and Time, is devel oped further in Heidegger’s later writings, starting from his Letter on Humanism, Contributions to Philosophy, and other texts. This brief venture into Nietzsche’s and Heidegger’s hermeneutics allows us to confirm the political signincance of hermeneutics as a conception of Being that does not offer itself to descriptions but that rather involves us from the beginning as interpreters. Outside the prejudice of knowledge as the mirror of nature, one can no longer imagine a world given objectively but only one always given through someone’s involvement. There are no facts; there is never anything that presents (by itself) as obvious or evidently in the phenomenological sense. The thrown project looks into the world through a number of instruments that serve or hinder its existential interest. But what is called “world” is an outcome not only of interp retation but also of history: it is the result of the interpretative processes of others. just like the subject is not something primordial or original, neither is the world that is always given as the outcome of other interpretations. Hermeneutics is a way of looking at Being as an inheritance that is never considered as ultimate data. Capitalism has always grown by considering, or forcing another to consider, as a “natural” possession what is inherited. The great dominating families are really the inheritors of the Strongest pirates, thieves, and bandits, and they consider themselves entitled to command through a divine or natural law when they really are only the result of a forgotten “violence.” The divine rights of kings, applicable in many ways also to the logic of class societies and capitalistic growth-although only one example among many others-demonstrates eloquently how and why hermeneutic ontology alone opens the horizon of emancipation, an emancipation from the demand for more original rights for priests, monarchs, and owners. But if the logic of dominion cannot simply be overcome in this way; how is it possible to bring forward such emancipation? Expressed in metaphysical "terms," if Being is only history; then the reciprocal is also valid: all history is Being. But then wouldn’t any hegemony that had successfullyimposed itself also be legitimate? We are here venturing into all the problems that belong to Nietzsche’s and Heidegger’s nihilism: those unsolvable issues for which metaphysics-the idea that an objective order exists independently from us and to which we ought to conform to know (mirroring) and act (rights and “natural” ethics)­ still pretends to value as inevitable. We do not considerit a coincidence that the radical problem of the opposition between metaphysics and hermeneutics presents itself just where we pose the ethical-political problem of emancipation. It is mostlyin the ethical and political spheres that the Lmsustainability of metaphysics becomes evident. Those that preach that there “is” an order of the world to which we must all conform are really its consumers, that is, its satisfied and therefore most rabid defenders. If Being is history and nothing else-not an etemal objective structure-We would say that only what is history is Being. This would leave out everything that pretends to avoid history. This is not very different from saying that emancipation means openness, transformation, and projected interpretation instead of what alreadyis; this, after all, is probably why Rorty used to say “If you take care of freedom, tnith will take care of itself.”” In sum, we prefer the idea of Being as “event,” since without it we could not “exist” (as projects) for the simple purpose of living. Shouldn’t such a principle also function for the holders of power; the defenders of the world as a stable structure that ought to be respected? We may at least recommend such an idea to them with the hope they will endorse it ; nevertheless, we must remain ready to iight also in concrete ways in order to prevent the obstruction of such practice.

#### Weak Thought [bad cuttt better]

Hermeneutics did not begin because of a theoretical discovery; it is an interpretative response to the end of metaphysics. Interpretation, following Nietzsche and Heidegger, means an interested involvement. But the end of metaphysics is not something we must inevitably accept as a fact; it is the meaning we attribute, for our interest, to the vicissitudes that Nietzsche and Heidegger narrate. We read such vicissitudes as the dissolution of objective metaphysics because we are against objectivity which makes impossible the history and freedom of existence. Recent Italian philosophy calls this way of tying hermeneutics to nihilism and to the end of metaphysics “weak thought."\*3 Initially “weak” primarily denoted the abandonment of pretensions to absolutes that had characterized the metaphysical traditions. But the weakness of thought could not halt this critical-negative characteristic, just as Nietzsche’s nihilism could not be only negative and reactive. Together with Heidegger we consider the vicissitudes of metaphysics as the history of Being, which has to be interpreted as a process of weakening absolutes, truths, and foundations. In sum, weak thought becomes a (strong) theory of weakening as an interpretive sense of history a sense that reveals itself as emancipative because of the enemies it has attracted. Weak thought can only be the thought of the weak, certainly not ofthe dominating classes, who have always worked to conserve and leave unquestioned the established order ofthe world. Contrary to weak thinkers, when defenders of metaphysical realism face the postmodern condition (where principles, absolutes, and dogmas are critically questioned),"4 they tend to dismiss the political difference this condition implies in favor of a second-rate cultural difference. But for weak thinkers, philosophical debate can here become political struggle. Instead of yet another system of thought, such a struggle must rely on “weak thought,” that is, the idea ofthe impossibility of overcoming” metaphysics while at the same time establishing the capacity to live without legitimizations or grounding values. This is why Charles Taylor recently adirmed that “once we see this, we can break the spell of the narrow moral rationalism whose supposed strength and rigour merely hides a fundamental weakness. Thinking straight requires that we admit the full ‘debolezzaf weakness, of our thought.”‘° Weak thought allows philosophy to correspond to the dissolution of metaphysics (through hermeneutics) and to search for new goals and ambitions within the possibilities of the “thrown” condition of the human being: instead of an understanding ofthe eternal, philosophy redirects humanity toward an interpretation of its own history It is important to emphasize that the negative connotation of the term “weak” does not allude to a failure of thinking as such but rather to the consequences of the transformation of thought brought about by the end of metaphysics, hence, as a possibility of emancipation. Weak thought is a very strong theory of weakness, where the philosophers achievements do not derive from enforcing the objective world but rather from weakening its structures. Weak thought does not become strong once it weakens the structures of metaphysics, since there will always be more structures to weaken, just as there will always be subjects to psychoanalyze, beliefs to secularize, or govemments to democratize. In sum, the weakness of “weak thought” should not be interpreted in contrast to “strong thought" or as the result of a discovery (that there is no objective description of truth) but rather as an awareness of our postmodern condition

#### Language games

In order to explain this new postmodern condition of truth, Lyotard used Wittgensteinian language games, where the antifoundational nature of hermeneutics becomes evident. In the second period of his thought, Wittgenstein developed his notion that reality is not described by an overarching theory but rather by a number of language games. Lyotard comments on the implications of these games: The first is that their rules do not carry within themselves their own legitimation, but are subject to a contract, explicit or not, between players (which is not to say that the players invent the rules). The second is that if there are no rules, there is no game, that even an infinitesimal modification of the one rule alters the nature of the game, that a “move” or utterance that does not satisfy the rules does not belong to the game they define. The third remark is suggested by what has just been said: every utterance should be thought of as a “move” in a game.” Unlike some interpreters, we believe there is a political motivation behind Lyotard’s use of these language games, because they are used to represent the status of knowledge in postmodemity and also the plurality of truth this society presupposes. If we substitute the word “rule” in the passage above with “trutli,” then truth must respect the contingency within the processes with which it deals; in other words, each game implies a diiferent truth that cannot delegitimize other games. '1`his has a deep political import, for now politics cannot be based on accurate representations of reality but rather on singular different events that cannot be represented by rational theory The revolutionary political project of hermeneutics here becomes evident, making Lyotard one of the pioneers of interpretations call for emancipation. Lyotards deprecation of grand narratives has been welcomed by political, cultural, and intellectual minorities because it demands that difference is a principle to follow rather than to reject and also is an indication of civilization. These minorities have always been marginalized by rational politics on the basis of their di&`erence; that is, their di&`erence has been used as a factor of discrimination. Lyotard believes that the difference of each linguistic game (truth) should not only be incorporated into but also become a goal of social organization. But once we recognize how diiference becomes a condition we must pursue instead of reject, conversation substitutes for truth in order to cope with the plurality of linguistic games that surround us. The concept of conversation allows us to dismiss the modern grand narratives that tried to explain the totality of social practices in terms of their conformity to a universal pattern even when they encountered cultures different from their own. While many believed that the concept of conversation undermined our intellectual and moral hierarchies in favor of relativism, Rorty saw it as enforcing the possibilities of freedom from such hierarchies, because there is no position outside our historically situated language games from which to distinguish mind from world.

#### Other language games/TT card

Knowledge, explains Rorty after Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Derrida’s deconstruction of metaphysics, cannot be acquired by deciding which propositions are true and which are false but only through “conversation,” which has become the “ultimate context within which knowledge is to be understood.”” The American philosopher demands that the paradigm change from truth to conversation for the same ethical reasons that Nietzsche and Heidegger had to overcome metaphysics: because to “see the aim of philosophy as truth-namely the truth about the terms which provide ultimate commensuration for all human inquiries and activities-is to see human beings as objects rather than subjects.”"\* Rorty’s main philosophical operation has been to develop all the consequences of leaving the idea of truth as a matter of mental or linguistic representation of reality He invites all philosophers to substiitute for “philosophy as the mirror of nature” an “edifying hermeneutic philosophy” that guides, projects, and maintains the conversation of mankind. Like Schiirmann and Lyotard, Rorty also believes that nothing legitimizes or grounds our practices, since there is nothing that shows how they are in touch with the way things are. He believes it is much more productive to accept as justified practices those agreed upon by our epistemic community; in other words, it’s better to make practical decisions on the basis of our history education, and experiences instead of on the basis of truth or principles. Traditional principles have always been beyond the realm of human justification; they are metaphysical matrixes that presuppose that at a certain point in the process we will reach a goal (which could take various forms, such as eternal life, justice, or wealth). But Rortjg following Nietzsche's intuitions, reminds us that these goals do not exist; they are only projections of an insecure humanity in search of extreme reassurances. While these principles are not relative to anything we can experience, human finite justifications are always relative to a “language game community” It is in these individual and free communities that Rorty sees the potentiality for us to become historical contingencies, that is, determined for the cause of freedom instead ofthe signihcance of truth. As we can see, the guiding ethical thread behind Rorty’s philosophy does not depend on a strong conception of morality but rather on a weak one: In a “weak” conception, morality is not a matter of unconditional obligations imposed by a divine or quasi divine authority but rather is something cobbled together by a group of people trying to adjust to their circumstances and achieve their goals by cooperative eH`orts .... This humility will encourage tolerance for other intuitions and a willingness to experiment with ways of refashioning or replacing intuitions.”

#### A2 Triggers relativism

'The main accusation leveled against hermeneutic weak thought is that it supports a politics without truth, that is, relativism. But contrary to what many think, the relativism of interpretation favored by postmodemity does not imply a progressive accumulation of points of views but rather the impossibility of declaring once and for all the primacy of one interpretation over others. Although a given interpretation could be preferable to others, this preference will not depend on anything external and capable of guaranteeing its objectivity but only on a positive recollection of its premises, that is, the history that produced it. The relativism of hermeneutic weak thought cannot be absolute, since in its essence this is a thought against every claim to absoluteness, including “absolute relativism,” which would inevitably translate into political oppression. This is also why the “real” still exists for henneneutics, but only within certain paradigms, as Kuhn explained: it is always possible to establish whether an interpretation or a proposition is true or false, but only within a historical condition, a certain scientific discipline, or a political epoch

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Hermeneutics should not be considered a miraculous philosophical discovery in a long history of breakthroughs in human thought. It lacks such an excessive ambition, and it cannot be reduced to such a simple level. It does not aim to be a more “real” or objective representation of the world than other philosophies; neither does it pretend to be an interpretation ofthe world among others. We are not talking about hermeneutic communism because we are pretending to add to communism the energy of a philosophy (as with Lenin’s definition: “Communism is Soviet power plus electriiication”)' that would enforce its status as truer than other systems. Instead, we see in communism and in hermeneutics the destiny of an event, a sort of appeal of Being (excluding mysterious and transcendent factors) that hermeneutics does not invent or discover but rather receives and struggles to respond to. In this way hermeneutics is like the communism that the Manyfesto talked about: a specter that haunts us, avoice that calls from the events that we live in. I.n this wa); it does not require a philosophical investigation to be acknowledged but only to be an unforeseen appeal that is not submitted to the metaphysics that has dominated the past as the theory of the ruling classes. Hermeneutics is similar to communism because its truth, Being, and necessity are entirely historical, that is, not the outcome of a theoretical discovery or a logical correction of previous errors but rather the result of the end of metaphysics. Although this end implies certain conceptual disarrays (produced by such thinkers as Marx, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, and Kuhn), it could not have happened without the series of social transformations that accompanied, directed, and determined this same disarray In sum, hermeneutics would not have been possible without the end of Eurocentrism, which has also always been the sociopolitical correlative of Westem metaphysics. No one could have come up with aflirmations such as Nietzsches “there are 110 HERMEIIEUIIC COMMUHISM no facts, only interpretations” in a social, cultural, and anthropological milieu other than the colonial epoch of the late 18oos, which was also becoming more uncertain regarding its own supremacy. just as the bloodbath ofWorld Warl decisively confirmed the disarray ofthe Eurocentric convictions, so were the various crises of the dissolution of metaphysics in the twentieth century accompanied not only by wars but also by technological revolutions unimaginable in the past. If we hold the end of metaphysics accountable for the wars and violence ofthe twentieth century we should also recognize that the experiences of Soviet communism were an aspect of this epochal phenomenon. Although the two aspects of the response that we are trying to define are strictly interconnected, if not identical, to achieve a better comprehension it is best to discuss them separately First of all: why does the end of metaphysics, that is, the end of Eurocentrism and its pretense to universal “Westem” rationality which Searle defends in his debate with Derrida, provide a chance for the return of communism? We could summarize the answer by paraphrasing one of Heideggers responses in his interview with Der Spiegel: “Only communism can save us.”‘ We do not believe this is a ludicrous paraphrase, since it could even be justified by quoting the Gospel: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:zo). After all, “in my name” means in the name of justice, fratemity and the solidarity ofthe weak. But without moving toward a “theological communism”-which would be completely legitimate-it seems evident that the postmodern condition that the dissolution of absolutes imposes for the survival’ ofthe human species demands that we assume communism as the horizon of any possible liberation for the human being. In a Nietzscliean-Christian style, one could say: Now that God is dead and the absolute truth is not credible anymore, love for the other is HERMEHEUIIC COMMUMSM lll possible and necessary. Can anyone continue to doubt that love for the other can coincide with a communist politics? Although the arguments that sustain this doubt are numerous, they are either founded on the idea that there is an absolute truth with which communism contrasts, such as the “natural” rights of private property\* or on the tragic experience of Soviet communism. But while the actions of the Soviet state cannot be justified, it should be kept in mind that they were also a development of the October revolution, born of the resistance to the attack of the entire capitalist world, that is, the so-called industrial democracies together with fascism and Nazism. Paradoxicallyg though only to a certain extent, we aflirm the historical (not theoretical) necessity to recapture communism in the moment in which its “spectrality” seems to have reached its peak. World public opinion believes communism’s corpse definitively buried, to the point of not noticing its presence in the form of a specter. Derrida dedicated one of his last books to just this theme,‘ from which we wish to recover at least the justification ofthe necessity of the return to commtmism in a world dominated by framed democracies, that is, communism as the highest “weakness” This is our Abendland, “land of the sunset,” which, while it is setting, ought to do so consciously and openly toward the future, without being dragged away by our contemporary logics of war, that is, armed capitalism. It is in these wars (which, as we saw in the previous chapter are not only limited to lights of nation against nation but also are fought in our slums) that the oppressed, the weak, the losers of history are discharged, ignored, and left to perish‘ by the cruelty of the winners? Our argument is not only similar to Derrida’s but actually hopes to recapture his in order to show how and why communism, which is excluded from the horizon of our culture and so-called public opinion, should be rehabilitated and listened to. As we can see, recourse to spectral communism becomes an objective necessity today both because of the discharge of capitalism and because capitalism continues to impose itself with the absolute certainty of having “realized itself as the ideal of human history.” In order to justify why communism can become an altemative and model for the twenty-first century; when the “ideals of human history” are losing their credibility we must 'first expose its weakened essence, then its altemative manifestation in some of the democratically elected governments of South America, and finally how these same Latin American politics (so effective for the weak) can also become a possible model for the West to pursue. Our suggestion of a hermeneutic communism is aware of but also takes into account the weakness of communism in our world. Such weakness is probably attributable to the violent connotations of historical communism (as its Russian-Soviet realization demonstrated). Although we believe that these connotations were justified, considering the conditions in which Lenin and Stalin had to govem, especially the latter, with Hitler at his doorstep,” they were admittedly in stark contrast to communism’s promises of emancipation. Here lies the meaning ofthe youth and proletarian “revolution” of 1968: a revolt against those oppressions that communism demanded against the desires ofhappiness and friendship. The events of historical communism, which culminated with the fall ofthe Berlin Wall in 1989, are developments of this revolt, which can also be seen as having spread the economic crisis that today twenty years later, has also ruined the capitalism that triumphed over historical HERMEIEUIIC COHNUHISM H5 communism. We believe that both the fall of the Berlin Wall and the current crisis of capitalism are aspects of the general dissolution of metaphysics, in other words, of those socioeconomic policies that were founded on the objective truth of history. To Soviet communisms absolute scientifc claims, capitalism opposed the truth of market laws. Both of these ideological positions, with all their concrete political implications, were outcomes of absolute philosophies of history dominated by the idea of development. While communism tried to understand better the laws of economics, liberal capitalism opposed such knowledge through its functionality. Although Marx never stated explicitly that political economics is not a natural science, he did point out how the structures and laws of economics are always historical products put to work by some class, dominating group, or institutionalized establishment. This is why these structures and laws must always be challenged and changed when the collective sensibility or technological innovations render obsolete existent forms of social relations. Marx, in his Theories of Surplus Value (volume 4 of Capital) criticized the Physiocrats for their inability to historicize materialism: The analysis of capital, within the bourgeois horizon, is essentially the work of the Physiocrats. It is this service that makes them the true fathers of modern political economy. In the first place, the analysis of the various material components in which capital exists and into which it resolves itselfin the course of the labour-process. It is not a reproach to the Physiocrats that, like all their successors, they thought of these material forms of existence-such as tools, raw materials, etc.-as capital, in isolation from the social conditions in which they appear in capitalist production; in a word, II4 HERMEHEUIIC COMMIHIISM in the form in which they are elements of the labour-process in general, independently of its social form-and thereby made of the capitalist form of production an eternal, natural form of production. For them the bourgeois forms of production necessarily appeared as natural forms. It was their great merit that they conceived these forms as physiological forms of society: as forms arising from the natural necessity of production itself, forms that are independent of anyones will or of politics, etc. They are material laws, the error is only that the material law of a deiinite historical social stage is conceived as an abstract law governing equally all forms of society” Questioning the social relations of production does not occur automatically The errors and violence of many communist regimes were caused precisely by their failure to consider these aspects of collective subjectivity; which have to be interpreted in order to innovate those mutations of the productive forces. The scientific pretext of socialism was predestined to miss this interpretative stage; class consciousness, too, which certainly had a determined weight in theories of revolution, was imagined as a mechanical and necessary outcome of the proletariat’s condition of exploitation when, in fact, it wasn’t. As we can see, introducing the “interpretative” element into Marxism and communism is not a theoretical game; the crisis of Soviet communism (parallel to the crisis of neoliberal capitalism today) requires from Marxism a hermeneutic turn." Such a tum is necessary both in order to recuperate those elements of subjectivity that “vulgar” materialism (where only economic structures count) has always left aside and because it brings about all the antimetaphysical vigor of henneneutics, that is, its rejection of any political plan wherein objective truth ought HERMEHEUIIC COMHUHISM H5 to guarantee results. As we saw in chapter 2, Krugman held economists’ belief in an absolute truth responsible for capitalism’s current crisis, that is, their belief in a realm where “everyone is rational and markets work perfectly” In sum, if there is no “objective” truth behind society’s structures, then the communist goal of a society without classes, differences, and conflicts can never come about, because such a society would be the equivalent of Fukuyamas fantasy (the “end of history as triumph of democratic capitalism”), which we analyzed at the beginning of chapter 2. Communism’s promise of a society “without classes” must be interpreted as “without dominion,” that is, once again, without an imposed unique truth and compulsory orthodoxy. This could also be called a society of “dialogue,” had this term not been abused so much by the dominating classes to justify the conservation of the status quo. The “Soviet power plus electriiication” that Lenin proposes does not imply that the Soviet, workers, and peasant councils are gathered together only to acknowledge a unique truth. These are realms of discussions and regulated conflict between positions and different interests that also move within a frame that lacks a unique dominating power. This is probably why Nietzsche considered “nihilism” (the positive nihilism in which conversations develop instead of dialogues)" as “the devaluation of ‘supreme values""‘\*-not every value, decision, or preference but rather those constricting ones such as truth, nature, and ethical principles. We are well aware that Marx, Lenin, or any of their theoretical or practical successors never solved the problem of the complete “realization” ofa communist society” The problem is that the so-called cultural battles (conflicts between different ideologies, religions, etlmicities, and political systems) that we see in our daily experience become “polluted” when ownership takes place. Is it possible to imagine a society where this polluting factor is eliminated or at least reduced to a minimum? What we do know from our experience is that the battle to eliminate or reduce the polluting weight of ownership is still taking place; perhaps this is why the phase of communism that calls for the dictatorship ofthe proletariat was never overcome within Soviet communism. While we cannot imagine a world where communism is completed, neither can we renounce this ideal as a regulative and inspiring principle for our concrete decisions. But wouldn’t we lose in this way the meaning of the regulative ideal? Kant’s lesson of practical reason also has this meaning: the union between virtue and happiness is not only the end that gives meaning to moral actions but also something impossible to carry out in the world. Nevertheless, this impossibility does not remove the obligation toward the categorical imperative. In sum, communism is utopia or, as Benjamin would sa); a project ofthe “weak messianic power, a power on which the past has a claim.”'° After all, the messiah, asjesus teaches in the Gospels, never allows himself to be indicated positively The messianic power ofthe utopia is also a critical and indispensable limit; it is only when the revolution is considered completed (or, which is the same, when Being is identified with being as a present fact) that it becomes despotic power, hegemony and violence against any disclosure toward a di&`erent future. A society without classes and therefore capable of living in peace is the regulative ideal of any communist battle in the world. The fact that its complete realization is not imaginable is in part a function of the indissoluble link between theory and praxis: only by approaching the realization ofthe ideal will its traits appear more clearly.

#### Reform bad

The same could be said about the leftist reformist governments that have certainly obtained important partial transformations ofthe social order by aligning themselves with bourgeois, moderate, and conservative parties. Ignoring these relative successes would mean neglecting the improvements in the lives of so many of the “weak.” But there are now many signs that reformism has come to an end and is no longer capable of winning ground. Reformism today will not gain those partial transformations that have marked its history without the sturdy support of a movement that radically questions the existent capitalist armed order. As we have seen, framed democracies, which include these reformist parties, have complied with the establishment 's demands to conserve the banking and financial systems, at the cost ofthe |18 HERMEIIEUIIC COMNUNISM tax contributions of the weak. 'Ihese contributors were told that this was the only way to avoid the total collapse ofthe economy; which jives with the reformist fixation on “relative successes.” In addition to defrauding the taxpayers with these bailouts, the reformists have supported or joined the military interventions that have served since the fall of the Berlin Wall to conserve not only capitalism but, most of all, the global corporations." These compromises have destroyed the possibility of meaningful reform. Although reformism in Italy and other European “democracies” has been discarded by the ruling right-wing govemments, this does not mean that it is no longer practicable. In order for reformists to hope for productive results within nation-states, they must find the support of strong social-dissent movements on an intemational level instead: for example, in the popular democratic experiences recently realized in South America. Although it is obvious that these new socialist governments, starting with the Bolivarian regimes of Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales, do not have any direct effects on Europe’s framed democracies, their simple presence on the intemational scene is an important element for a diverse and more open intemational climate. After all, these alternative governments’ efforts to increase their economic, social, and political power (especially Brazil and Venezuela) are direct efforts to limit the excessive multinational capitalist power centered in the United States. While Obama has certainly not been “objectively” helped in his campaign for president by Castro's resistance, Chavez’s initiatives, and the other Latin American communist achievements, haven't they provided a real example of change? It is just in these examples that we can talk about a “spectral” presence of communism, a promise that, as Derrida indicated, circulates in the air, does not HERMENEUIIC COMMUHISN |19 identify itself with any concrete element, but can be sensed through public opinion and in the spreading suspicions over the capitalism of the framed democracies. In Derrida’s words: It is a link of adinitjy suffering, and hope, a still discreet, almost secret link, as it was around 1848, but more and more visible, we have more than one sign of it. It is an untimely link, without status, without title, and without na1'ne, barely public even if it is not clandestine, without contract, “out of joint,” without coordination, without partj; without country; without national community (International before, across, and beyond any national determination), without co-citizenship, without common belonging to a class.”

#### A2

#### Alt Examples

Chavez—Increased indigenous participation in ptx

Castro

Morale—idenigenou

#### Morales proves alts good for ideneous people

As Forest Hylton and Sinclair Thomson point out, although “Latin America has been the site of the most radical opposition to neoliberal restructuring over the past five years, Bolivia has been its insurrectionary frontline.”‘\*‘ Morales not only has become the first president of Bolivia from the country’s ethnic majority (Aymaras) but also is among the first in the region to undertake a radical nationalization of his countrys resources (oil, natural gas, and almost half of the world’s reserves of lithitun), against exploitation by foreign corporations (BR General Motors, Bechtel) and in favor of control by native Indians." But in order to recover control over Bolivia’s natural resources, Morales was obliged (through a referendum held onjanuary 25, 2009) to change the constitution, which had been written by the descendants ofthe Spanish colonizers. These colonizers, who today as then, represent the ethnic minority live in the eastem provinces of Bolivia, which contain most of the country’s resources. As we can predict, Morales’s greatest obstacle came from these white minorities, who, as Richard Gott of the Guardian explains, still “have a racist and fascist mentality and, after centuries in control, dislike the prospect of their future being dominated by the formerly suppressed indigenous majority” Nevertheless, the referendum passed with 61.43 percent ofthe vote, enabling a reform ofthe land and judiciary systems “for the benefit of the people. Yet more important-and at the heart ofthe new constitutional charter-are the clauses that strengthen the rights ofthe country’s indigenous peoples.”‘\*9 Unfortunately to win approval, the new constitution needed more than popular democratic support, because the eastern provinces of Santa Cruz, Tarija, Beni, and Pando not only tried to boycott it but also violently threatened to declare their independence from Bolivia. Although the European Union deployed a group of observers during the election,5° it was UNASUR (Union of South American Nations) that managed, after an emergency summit held in the Chilean capital, to obtain respect from the eastern provinces for their democratically elected president and receive assurances of their peaceful participation in the referendum. After the summit, which allowed the referendum to take place, Morales declared that this was the iirst time in the history ofthe region “that the countries have decided to resolve the problems of South America themselves. In the past, even to deal with some internal or bilateral . . . Latin American issues, they were discussed in the United States.”"

#### No Violence

In sum, hermeneutic communism proposes an effective conception of existence for those who do not wish to be enslaved in and by a world of total organization. Although we are not thinking about the professional revolutionary figure as the only possibility for authentic existence, we are not going to exclude that such an idea is interesting. Heidegger’s thesis, according to which existence is a thrown project, is the only one we manage to suggest as an alternative to the pure static discipline of the politics of descriptions, founded on dominion in all its fonns. That the transformation of the world cannot be projected in the form ofa violent engagement, which would only provoke increased repression, makes much more difficult the goal of resistance and opposition and therefore communism. After all, great revolutions ofthe past, such as the Russian and Chinese revolutions, seem today like events that had to adopt the arms of their enemies, leading to regimes as violent and repressive as the ones that they had set out to destroy But we do not accept the desperate vision of Sartre in his Critique o\_fDialectical Reason, according to whom any fo rm of renovation, after the great experience of “groups in fusion,” must fall again into the routine of dominion, in a triumph that he regarded as “practico-inert.” Today the global integration of the world offers different forms of resistance than the armed revolts ofthe past. Examples of nonviolent methods, from Gandhi to the “pressure” exerted by the simple existence of the communist democracies of Chavez and Lula, may operate to limit the current dominion ofthe great empire of capitalism. These are the most productive alternatives at our disposal today Other forms of passive resistance, such as boycotts, strikes, and other manifestations against oppressive institutions, may be effective, but only if actual masses of citizens take part, as in Latin America.” 'Ihese mass movements might avoid falling back again into the practico-inert, which is the natural consequence of those revolutions entrusted to small and inevitably violent avant-garde intellectuals, that is, those who have only described the world in various ways. The moment now has arrived to interpret the world.

#### Socratic discourse DA

Although the slave in Platos Meno might discover the geometric truth, he will not have “understood” it until he also submits to Plato's interrogation.]ust as philosophy in the epigraph from at the beginning of this chapter, must “[admit] of a scientiiic reso1ution,"“' so must the slave “submit to Plato’s truth.” Both are examples of oppressive impositions of metaphysics, which demand a correspondence without which the dialogue or philosophy cannot take place. As we can see, Plato’s dialogues, just like science, are the prelude to submission to truth oi; which is the same, violence, because Plato, by assisting his interlocutors on their joumey ( “from the darkened cave to the divine light ofthe Good” ), is still serving the existence of a society of dominion maintained by these same dialogues. Apart from the violence that truth imposes on the slave, another significant feature of Plato’s allegory are the dangerous consequences that will come from knowing the truth. As Plato narrates, upon the slave’s retum from the joumey the others not only mock him because he can no longer see in the darkness but also want to kill him for requesting that they follow him. 'They are afraid of the joumey that is, of truth, because it implies a certain violence that might not be worth it. As we can see, truth becomes violence not only for all those who do not accept leaving the cave but also for those who return (and have in the meantime become philosophers according to Plato’s “philosopher-lcing” model) and now feel compelled to lead: Once [the philosophers] have seen the Good itself, using this as a pattern, each in his turn must order [lcosmein] city private men, and themselves for the rest of their lives. Now for the most part they spend their time in philosophy but when a person’s turn comes, he labors in politics and rules for the sake of the city not as though he were doing what is line, but that which is necessary (Rep. 54oa-b) As we can see, the philosopher, according to Plato, must sustain the establishment. I-Ie cannot “work out Being for itself ”” again for a different paradigm or propose other possibilities to the established organization but instead “must order,” that is, impose, what “is necessary.” As the promoter of dialogues, Plato does not want the established order to be disrupted, altered, or shocked by either those artists that he banned from the Republic or by the philosopher, who could also act this way. Banning mimetic art because it is a copy that does not have limitations and can therefore bewitch us is not very diferent from circumscribing philosophy to what is necessary Such “necessity” is nothing other than the silencing ofthe other through dialogue, that is, an act of violence for the sake of conserving truth. '1'his points at the difference between dialogues and conversations. Conversations, just like Heidegger’s “event of unconcealment,” represent the disruption of the order that dialogues protect, because in the conversational exchange truth is not presupposed but rather discarded from the beginning. If a conversation is never what we wanted to conduct but rather a situation in which we become involved as it develops, it represents the greatest enemy of the dialogue’s order: an unannounced event.” While the concepts of “conversation” and “event” will be analyzed in chapter 3, its di&`erence from the concept of dialogue should be kept in mind, as it indicates a possible shift from dialogue (that is, from the politics of descriptions or; which is the same, framed democracy) to “hermeneutic communism." While the inevitable conflict that takes place in a conversation refers to a latent anarchism, relativism, and weakness of thought, dialogue’s impositions instead require a realism capable of conserving political order.

#### GCB Link

[https://sci-hub.tw/https://muse.jhu.edu/article/176867](https://sci-hub.tw/https%3A/muse.jhu.edu/article/176867)

Vattimo’s interpretation of Christianity has developed over the course of his writing four books: La Religione, coedited with Jacques Derrida (1995), Credere di Credere (1996), Dopo la cristianità: Per un cristianesimo non religioso (2002), and Il Futuro della religione: Solidarietà, carità, ironia, coauthored with Rorty (2004).3 Vattimo’s religion arises from awareness of “the death of God,” which means, in effect, the end of metaphysics and epistemology, the end of worldviews and world pictures. Among the worldviews now deceased are those philosophical theories thought to have liquidated religion (scientifi c positivism, Hegelianism, and Marxism primarily). After the death of God, so defi ned, there are no longer any strong, philosophically plausible reasons to reject religion. If there is no longer a philosophy capable of demonstrating the nonexistence of God, then we are free again to listen to the Christian message. Moreover, if reality as we now think of it is the result of multiply intersecting images of the world (images that the media distribute immediately and globally), then salvation does not depend on knowing a univocal truth about the structure of reality (or a univocal meaning of sacred texts). Salvation in our postmodern condition depends on our transfer ring the real as we now experience it to the level of spirit (the only level on which Hegel and Marx thought that human beings could feel at home). Vattimo identifi es this spiritualization with what he thinks of as the “aesthetic” aspects of postmodern reality: democratic politics and social pluralism, information technology, and the global availability of basic necessities for survival. He has argued that, at last, humanity is now positioned to commence the “third age of spirit” prophesied (in the twelfth century) by Joachim of Fiore. Salvation in the age of spirit is characterized by buoyancy and lenience rather than by gravity or justice, and our technical resources make ever new kinds of fl exibility possible. If with those resources we have not yet achieved salvation—full aesthetic emancipation—it is only because we still take our Scriptures too literally. If there were a fi xed and global truth (and Cardinal Lustiger is right to say that most philosophers are now convinced that there is none), we could in any case know nothing about it. To grasp truth in its totality, humanity would need to occupy the absolute point of view that is God’s alone. The “death of God” means the end of the pretense that human intellectual powers are divine. Our intellectual powers are, blessedly, weak (“weak thought” is a key term in Vattimo’s vocabulary).4 The best that we can do is develop the postmetaphysical way of thinking called hermeneutics and employ it to justify secularization—metaphysical weakness—as the logic of Christian theology. It is always, Vattimo has said, thanks to God that we are, to the extent that we are, atheists.5 The scientifi c progress on which atheism depends would have been impossible without biblical monotheism: the European Enlightenment realized not only Greek rationalist principles but also principles of Christian faith. Still, the Christian principles realized in atheism, science, and the Enlightenment do not include the greatest ones—humility, caritas, and weakness. To think weakly means letting go of absolutist claims and distancing ourselves from the modalities through which our cultures impose order on contingency. But weak thought is not a condition to pursue; it is a recognition that weakness is fundamental to our thought and cultures. The postmodern world is said to be characterized by plurality, difference, and dialogue, but that idea itself is a regrettable product of self-assurance. Western political systems, subcultures, philosophies, and religions, however apparently sure of themselves and centralized, have tended to be plural, dialogical, and confl icted. Our culture at its most dogmatic revolves around widely diverging interpretations of its sacred texts.6 It is because we have belonged to this tradition of only apparent dogmatism that we are now capable of “weak thought” and entitled to its benefi ts. Postmodern weakness required the failed example of strong modern attempts at unifi cation, synthesis, and system. We are by now managing to live without neurosis in a world lacking fi xed, guaranteed structures that supply unique, ultimate, and normative foundations for our knowledge and actions. We are learning to live without anxiety in a world without magic. Absolute truth was a reassuring myth appropriate to a primitive stage of humanity. As the concept of reality fades, we are becoming satisfi ed with multiple images, interpretations, and reconstructions. Less and less do we feel nostalgia for the magical strength and transcendence that we used to believe necessary. For the result of living consciously in a provisional, unstable, and plural condition is that nonviolence, toleration, and dialogue become fundamental practices for survival. The result of our instability and doubt is that we can now be kinder to each other. The erosion of the reality principle is best expressed in Nietzsche’s announcement of the “death of God.” That announcement does not mean that, at last, we have realized that objectively there is no God, or that reality is such that it excludes him. Nor does Nietzsche intend to exclude the birth of a new God or gods. He explicitly says that it is the foundational and moral God, the supreme architect of rationalist Enlightenment, who has passed away. The great merit of postwar theology—of the “death of God” theology associated with William Hamilton, Thomas J. J. Altizer, Gabriel Vahanian, John A. T. Robinson, Harvey Cox, and Paul Van Buren—is to have escaped the metaphysical pretensions of traditional theology and to have elaborated a Christianity without God. Secularization and belief in the death of God are not (as traditional theologians tend to say) anti-Christian. On the contrary, these are consequences of Christian faith. According to Vattimo, the death of God announced by Nietzsche is nothing but the death of Christ. Thus, it is the advent of Christianity that made possible the progressive dissolution (or secularization) of metaphysics. Christ in becoming human, unto death, left the world in human hands. The formula “death of God” (which originally belongs to Luther) refers to the Incarnation, defi ned by St. Paul as kenosis (from the verb kenóo, empty). Paul teaches that the divine Word “emptied itself” when lowering itself to die on the cross as a human being. This death, according to Vattimo, implies neither the end of religion nor the beginning of a new form of belief, but rather a Christianity that can do, as Christ intended, without God, church, and discipline. Thus secularization, as Marta Frascati-Lochhead summarizes Vattimo’s argument, stands “in profound continuity with Christian faith.”7 Christianity without Discipline The continuity that Frascati-Lochhead points out demands a sharp distinction, which Vattimo makes, between Christianity and Christendom. The loving faith of Christ must be differentiated from the cultural bloc constituted by Western Christians, and it is this difference that clarifi es how the fl uidity and pluralism of our time permits Christian caritas to be recovered and applied.8 The truth about which Christianity can legitimately speak dissolves the metaphysical idea of truth. “I am . . . the truth,” Christ says, and he takes the truth with him to the cross. But unlike truth, love cannot die, cannot be deconstructed completely—and the Gospels, free of objectivist metaphysics, make a practical appeal to love. Of course the church has taught otherwise: Christ said the truth would set us free, and the church has presumed he meant objective truth. The church has gone so far as to attribute objective truth to biblical propositions and in the process has set itself up for the challenge to Christianity raised by science. (The current dispute over issues in bioethics, a dispute to which Cardinal Lustiger alludes, is the latest example.) To free itself of its long, costly war with science, the church must, Vattimo urges, end its claim to universality and take up instead the evangelical message of caritas. Charity dissolves all claims to objectivity. We do not believe in the Gospels because we know that Christ has risen; we believe that Christ has risen because we read it in the Gospels. Therefore, Vattimo holds, Christianity should now align itself with, rather than resist, postmodern pluralism and its effects. It is here that Joachim of Fiore enters Vattimo’s argument.9 After the “age of law” (which pertains to the Father) and the “age of grace” (which pertains to the Son), we have fi nally entered the “age of spirit” (which pertains to the Paraclete). This third age, according to Joachim’s prophecy, will be churchless and will be characterized by freedom and charity toward all. In the third age, Scripture will be read only in spiritual (never in literal) terms and its interpretation will no longer be a priestly prerogative. Vattimo interprets Joachim’s prophecy as referring to a time—our own—when metaphysics will end, and he understands Joachim’s ideal of spiritualization to mean secularization. Again, secularization is for Vattimo the ultimate goal of kenosis—the lowering, the deconstruction if you will, of supernatural aspects of the divine.

#### Truth is contextual/indexicals??

Farewell to Truth.

At this point, the meaning of the title Farewell to Truth comes into sharper focus. Leave is taken of truth as the objective mirroring of a datum that, to be adequately described, must be fi xed and stable—must literally be “a given” (which is what the word datum means). That is feasible in the sciences that “don’t think,” because they do not query the horizon (the paradigm) that envelops them and because they ignore the totality of the dialectical relations that condition their objects. A problem like the one that I alluded to above, of lying in politics, clearly fi ts into this context. If I say that the lies of Bush and Blair don’t matter to me as long as they were justifi ed by good intentions, meaning ones I share, I accept that the truth about the facts is a matter of interpretation, conditional upon a shared paradigm. That this sounds like Machiavellianism pure and simple I quite realize. But Machiavelli’s mistake (to put it in simple terms, since his thought is a lot more complex than that) perhaps lies merely in having left the faculty of lying, or of violating other moral imperatives, exclusively to the prince. Gramsci, I recall, said that in the modern world, the prince was the political party, and that in itself was a step in the direction of democracy, even if the party was not yet society in toto . It is a perilous step, evidently, analogous to that of Lukács when he imagines that the “empiric” proletariat is not identical to the “transcendental,” authentic proletariat—the party and its leadership. These are all ways of widening the application of Machiavelli’s principle to cover more ground and so fundamentally constitute advances toward greater democracy. But they always retain the limitation of supposing ulterior truth to be the metaphysical object of an intuition available only to a subject—a subject qualifi ed in some manner to receive it, in other words the prince, distinct from the collectivity in general, even when identifi ed as a collective subject. Such a limitation signals to me that these authors have not yet fully acquiesced in a truly laic conception of the State. They are unable to see that the truth that matters in politics—and in every other fi eld—is not objective correspondence but the paradigmatic horizon within which every correspondence is verifiable. What we might call the epistemological precondition of social and intercultural dialogue is precisely this truth of horizon, which politics has the task of grasping and attempting to make explicit and to construct. From this there follow important consequences for how we conceive politics and its truth. One is a radical retreat from all claims to ground politics in some scientifi c discipline, even economics or technology. One recalls, in passing, that one of the major themes of Marx at his best was the negation of the thesis that political economy is a natural science. The same stricture applies to the claim to know the truth about human rights, and to base policies of just war and humanitarian intervention on this true cognizance of the truth, without taking into account the cultural paradigms of others. These factual, so to speak “objectual,” truths hold good in politics only if they are legitimate within the horizon of the paradigm. Philosophers and intellectuals, following a pattern that basically derives from fi gures like Socrates— and from the sophists too, however much the divine Plato scorns them—labor on the plane of these “horizontal” truths, in an attempt to render a form of life more comprehensible, more shared, more argued over, and more emotionally participative. So today, much more clearly than in the past, the question of truth is recognized as a question of interpretation, of the application of paradigms that, in turn, are not objective (since no one verifi es or falsifi es them except on the basis of other paradigms) but that are a matter of social sharing. The exception that Machiavelli granted to the prince was basically only a correlate of the power, which also belonged to the prince, to establish the canons of the true and the false, to establish what it was more or less obligatory to accept as true (one thinks of what Nietzsche had to say in “On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense,” 1873).

#### Pluralism negates—For fascism CP, with a dispo brighltine that the judge kicks if objective truth doesn’t exist.

Farewell to truth

The conclusion toward which I am working is that the farewell to truth is the commencement, and the very basis, of democracy. If there were an objective truth to social and economic laws (economics is not a natural science), democracy would be an utterly irrational choice. It would be better to entrust the management of the State to experts, to Plato’s philosopher-kings or all the Nobel Prize winners in every category. A list of those who ultimately concur on these points would include Heidegger, Karl Popper (the foe of the closed Platonic society), Adorno himself, and Marx even ear- lier. Our pluralistic society continues to give credence to the metaphysical idea of truth as objective correspondence to the facts, as political debate proves day after day. It views interpretation as just interpretation and deludes itself that it can bring about agreement on the basis of factual data or even on the basis of the essential laws of nature. So we see the Italian Parliament passing laws on bioethics (embryos, assisted procreation, and so on) that impose on everyone a “natural” law that only the authority of the Roman Catholic Church deems such. The economy is managed in accordance with another supposedly natural law, that of the market and unlimited competition, and we see the result all around us in the current economic crisis. Truth faces a challenge in the world of postmodern pluralism—the challenge of coming to grips with the fact that consensus on individual questions is above all a problem of collective interpretation, of constructing paradigms shared or, at any rate, explicitly recognized. The parabola of the notion of truth in the twentieth century reveals a transition from truth to charity—a topic on which I shall expand. What Thomas Kuhn (1962) called paradigms are beliefs shared (ones tested by time, of course, and by experience gained within the framework they authorize) by entire societies or smaller communities, like those of physicists or theologians. It always comes down, in the end, to a question of belonging. Not “Plato a friend, but truth a greater friend” but rather “truth a friend, but (or: because) Plato a greater friend.” I repeat: this is not a profession of irrationalism along the lines of: let us think according to what, biologically and historically, we already are, period! Why not? Because the provenance on the basis of which we formulate our judgments is not a closed and immutable past (the stony weight that oppressed Zarathustra); it is not a cause. But to the extent that it summons us and offers itself up to interpretation, it is always already a motive, an ensemble of messages, a language that speaks to us (and about us) and that we speak.

#### Hermenuntics Alt really bad

<http://www.cosmosandhistory.org/index.php/journal/article/viewFile/117/225>

How can we speak about emancipation, that is, a process of liberation from constraints in the direction of greater freedom, autonomy, and possibility of choice, while associating it to concepts such as those of nihilism or hermeneutics? First of all, we should note that—as I had the occasion to show and illustrate in a number of books—the terms of nihilism and hermeneutics are here used as synonyms. Nihilism is understood in the sense inaugurally outlined by Nietzsche: the dissolution of all ultimate foundations, the awareness that—in the history of philosophy and Western culture in general—‘God is dead’ and ‘the real world has become a fable’. Is this valid only for Western thought and culture? This first difficulty is not thematically discussed here; yet, Nietzsche— and Heidegger, and Marx before him, and even Hegel—teach us that the growing awareness that we think only within the ambit of Western culture is indeed part of such culture and its nihilism, since the very idea of a universal truth and a transcultural humanism (as for example in the doctrine of natural law or ultimate grounds) matured precisely within this given culture. When Western philosophy becomes aware of this, it becomes nihilistic; it takes note that its reasoning is always historico-culturally situated, that even the ideal of universality is ‘comprehended’ from a determinate point of view. But with this nihilism becomes hermeneutics: a thought that knows it can aim at the universal only by passing through dialogue, agreement, or caritas, if you like it (see my Belief and After Christianity). ‘Veritatem facientes in caritate’: translated into the terms of today’s philosophy, this Pauline motto—which moreover echoes, maybe not from afar, the aletheuein of Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics—means that truth is born in agreement and from agreement, and not vice versa, that we will reach agreement only when we have all discovered the same objective truth. Emancipation is for us the meaning of nihilism proper if we read this Nietzschean term in the light of another crucial expression of the German philosopher: ‘God is dead, and now we wish for many gods to live’. The dissolution of foundations (in which we can even recognize the moment of the passage from modernity to post-modernity—see my The End of Modernity) is that which frees us—once again, with a profound echo of the Gospel ‘The truth shall make you free’. Does this mean that ‘knowing how things “really” are will free you’—finally discovering Pythagoras’ theorem? The necessary geometrical order of the world? Einstein’s relativity? No. Rather, it means that ‘truth is only that which frees you’; truth is thus first of all the ‘discovery’ that there are no ultimate foundations before which our freedom should stop, which is instead what authorities of every kind that want to rule precisely in the name of these ultimate foundations have always sought to make us believe. Hermeneutics is the thinking of accomplished nihilism, the thinking that aims at a reconstruction of rationality after the death of God, in opposition to any drift towards negative nihilism, that is, towards the desperation of those who continue to grieve because ‘there is no more religion’. It is clear that all this has significant implications for the way one conceives of ethics, law, and politics. After the death of God, will it still be possible to talk about moral imperatives, laws that are not founded arbitrarily, and an emancipatory horizon of politics? My work does not delude itself into believing that it gives exhaustive answers to these questions; but neither does it limit itself to echoing them rhetorically—this is what much contemporary tragicism [tragicismo] does, exhausting itself in the rhetorical emphasis of the problematicity of the human condition, often in order to prepare a ‘leap of faith’ (which then becomes a leap into pure irrationality and the subsequent defection to the dogmatic authoritarianism of churches, central committees, and charismatic leaders), or, at other times, in order to maintain itself in the pure and simple awareness that ‘there is no solution’, with the tacit pretension that, socratically, knowing not to know is always better (Nietzsche was right in unmasking the optimistic rationalism of such a demeanor). The hermeneutic exit from tragic and negative nihilism naturally also entails the retrieval of many of its aspects; one should say, with Nietzsche, that one cannot build without destroying. Or even, more realistically, one should say that the mother of all metaphysical authoritarianisms is always pregnant, hence the task of secularization— that is, the unmasking of the sacredness of any absolute, any ultimate truth—is far from having become outdated. Politics, law, and social life continually bear witness to this claim, not only in Italy, where the Catholic Church continues to (demand to) impose unreasonable limits on the state’s laws (think of civil unions, research on embryos, and euthanasia), but now also in international politics, where American dominance masked as democratic humanitarianism threatens to impose a kind of universal state of police which is ‘legitimized’ by an (alleged) respect for human rights, or those that the empire considers such. Won’t the new Napoleon instigate some new ‘romantic’ rebellion of nations—of cultures, of ‘people’ (with all the reservations that should be induced by these terms)—against the armed pax Americana? Trying to measure up to such problems—albeit in a very theoretical way—hermeneutics thus inherits first of all much of the critical and ‘destructive’ contents of tragic nihilism. But hermeneutics also harbours two openings towards constructiveness. First of all, the death of God does not claim to be a finally achieved truth, on the basis of which one could dogmatically found some natural law of atheism, of the ‘unfounded’ world, or of some Nazi-type Übermensch. The constructive nihilism of hermeneutics does not only have to defend itself from the neurotic return of authoritarianisms, but also from the metaphysical sclerosis of antifoundationalism (for instance, the latter easily goes hand in hand with the imposition of freedom and democracy by means of armed interventions against what President Bush named ‘rogue states’—these usually are such, but it is not Bush or the United Nations transformed into an ethical court of law that can pass judgement on them). To all these distortions of nihilism, hermeneutics first and foremost opposes the very principle of the plurality of interpretations, that is, the principle of the respect for everyone’s freedom of choice. Certainly, this is not much more than Habermas’s communicative rationality; but the latter is here stripped of the remnants of metaphysical rationalism that still invalidate it—such a theory, with its idealisation of a knowledge freed from opacities and ultimately modelled upon the scientific method, always runs the risk of legitimising a future world dominated by ‘experts’ of various kinds. The critical weapons of negative nihilism thus remain decisive for the constructiveness of hermeneutics. Attempting to shape laws, constitutions, and ordinary political measures, according to the idea of a progressive liberation of norms and rules from any alleged ‘natural’ limit (i.e. one that is manifest only to those who possess power) can already constitute a positive political project. Recall that, already many years ago, a theoretician close to Habermas like Karl Otto Apel (see his Transformation der Philosophie) even accounted for the fight against world hunger on the basis of the respect for the equal rights of our interlocutor, which is imposed on us by any use of language, on pain of a performative contradiction. That is to say: even when I speak only to myself I have to respect some rules; I am responsible for such respect before any interlocutor, which means that I grant my same rights to any interlocutor; but then I must also positively guarantee him the conditions for the exercise of these rights, and consequently the human conditions of survival. Now, the hermeneutic (and ‘nihilistic’) ideal of founding every law and social behaviour on the respect of everyone’s freedom and not on allegedly objective or ‘natural’ norms implies positive consequences that are much broader than those that Apel indicated in his work of the 1960s—after all without giving them an explicitly programmatic development. For instance, peace—even when it is not understood too theologically as the ‘tranquillity of order’, according to Augustine’s phrase which the Catholic Church has used to justify its worst silences on Fascism and Nazism—is a basic human right whose topicality and problematicity has sadly come to the fore recently. Isn’t the reforming of constitutions and the drafting of laws that take into account rights like this also the basis of a positive political programme? At the end of the day, this is what marks the (necessary) passage from liberalism to democracy and, for us, socialism; in order really to achieve the rights of freedom preached by liberalism, we should not let things take place ‘according to their own principles’, as for example, in the laws of the market (there is an unacceptable ‘naturalism’ in Adam Smith!). Rather, we must build conditions of equality that, indeed, are not given ‘naturally’. If we wish to summarize in a few words the meaning of a nihilistic hermeneutics—one that is, after all, an entirely open enterprise—what I myself see in it at this moment is a confirmation of Heidegger’s thesis on being as ‘event’, and not as a stable structure given once and for all (what Heidegger calls ‘metaphysics’). An event that is possible only on condition that being ‘is not’, or is no longer—on condition that God is dead and that the eternal structures of values have been unveiled as a lie. Only on condition of traversing the experience of nihilism understood in this way is it possible to plan a society where freedom will not be an empty term: truth is always ‘to be made’, and thus values are always to be invented anew. It is in nihilism thought in this way that equality finally establishes itself, and what Richard Rorty calls solidarity becomes possible—or better necessary—for life, the only possible basis for a truth that does not claim to evade the historical conditions in which existence is always ‘thrown’.

#### Plant Studies lmao

Response to Marder

If weak thought has always been attentive to everything which is weak, from oppressed groups, to animals and plants, it is not simply because they are discharged at the margins of framed democracies, but also because they belong to the weak. Weak thought, as we said, is the “thought of the weak.” The weak are always striving for interpretation, that is, they are always striving to resist Being’s annihilation. This resistance is particularly evident in plants, which seem to be almost invisible, even to many environmentalists. Although contemporary societies are finally becoming ecologically aware and conscious of the vital significance of plants, it is important to continue to study them not only scientifically, but also politically and philosophically. After all, in Hermeneutic Communism we praise Correa’s Ecuador for being one of the first countries in the world to reform their constitution in order to make space for nature and earth rights. While Marder praises our political stance, he is uncertain hermeneutics is the right philosophy to sustain its goals. This is probably why his contribution is focuses on defending phenomenology, given its Heideggerian rejection in our book.

#### Threat link ( For neg??)

Hermenutical communis

Framed democracies are interested in the conservation of their liberal

impositions and financial system and in protecting this global condition against any change. While an “emergency” for framed democracies represents the possibility of change, “emergency” for the weak is precisely a “lack of emergency” that is, a lack of change, alteration, or modification ofthe current state of a&`airs. As we argued in the first chapter, the weak are the losers of history 'Ihey are those who instead of being framed within the scientific political organization of all beings (realism or, which is the same, the neoliberal system) are left at its margins. In this way they represent Kagan’s fear of the “retum of history” Heidegger’s unpredicted “event of unconcealment,” and Benjamin? discontinuous “tradition of the oppressed.” These marginal peoples occupy both those states (such as Iraq, Afghanistan, or Iran) that do not comply with liberal measures and the slums ofthe cities ofthe framed democra

cies; that is, they occupy those places where history continues, where events are unpredicted, and where the population is discontinuous. Framed democracies have begun to reshape their security measures not because the weak have started attacking them but, on the contrary because they have not yet begun to attack. In order to understand why and how the Pentagon war-fighting doctrine is preparing for “low-intensity world wars of unlimited duration against criminalized segments of the urban poor,”” it is first necessary to indicate why together with states, the urban poor may also be considered “weal<." As we argued earlier; Iraq was invaded because it became a threat to framed democracies; that is, it was outside the control ofthe neoliberal system. But among the many reasons it was “out of control” was its forced isolation from the liberal, cultural, and financial measures of framed democracies." This precarious condition forced it to remain both economically inferior and incapable of becoming the real technological threat that Saddam Hussein’s govemment wanted the West to believe it already was. But Iraq is not the only state to have been discarded; many other states in other regions ofthe world also faced similar impositions, becoming not only financially oppressed through the IMF but also useless for the development of liberal science." Although the chances that these states could become effective threats to neolib

eral states are minimal, because of their precarious condition and the unequal balance of power, they still constitute emergencies for framed democracies, because they include elements that are not fully recognizable or controllable by those states. These useless, insignificant, weak elements represent both the discharge of framed democracies and the possibility of emancipation from its control. But more importantly this weak condition does exist in both foreign states and also at the margins of framed democracies, in all those slums that have also become useless and insignificant. The weak populations in these slums have also become an emergency and a threat: they are closer than the disenfranchised populations of foreign states and, most of all, because their numbers have drastically increased in the last fifty years because ofthe social inelfectiveness of capitalism.

#### State good? Card is fucking incoherent

http://www.cosmosandhistory.org/index.php/journal/article/viewFile/117/225

The hermeneutic exit from tragic and negative nihilism naturally also entails the retrieval of many of its aspects; one should say, with Nietzsche, that one cannot build without destroying. or even, more realistically, one should say that the mother of all metaphysical authoritarianisms is always pregnant, hence the task of secularization— that is, the unmasking of the sacredness of any absolute, any ultimate truth—is far from having become outdated. politics, law, and social life continually bear witness to this claim, not only in italy, where the catholic church continues to (demand to) impose unreasonable limits on the state’s laws (think of civil unions, research on embryos, and euthanasia), but now also in international politics, where american dominance masked as democratic humanitarianism threatens to impose a kind of universal state of police which is ‘legitimized’ by an (alleged) respect for human rights, or those that the empire considers such. 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#### Farewell to Truth a2 Psycho

To begin with: the view that truth is a matter of interpretation largely coincides with the overall modern critique of the social lie that has always propped up the power of the strong over the weak. Nietzsche (yes, him again) used to say that the voice of conscience that we feel inside us is only the voice of the herd, the pressure of a social discipline that each of us assimilates and turns into a personal daimon. Precisely of that which appears most evident, he adds, we ought to be most mistrustful—for the same reason. Marx’s critique of ideology is likewise grounded, in the last analysis, on the same constatation of the interpretive character of truth: ideology is an instance of interpretation (on the part not just of individuals but of social classes) unaware of itself, and for just that reason convinced that it is absolute truth. In general, the whole area covered by the term “school of suspicion” (another Nietzschean expression, taken up by Paul Ricoeur), which obviously includes Freudian psychoanalysis, is an array of variations on the theme of the interpretive character of every experience of truth. That’s not all. Clearly the hermeneutic stance has links to deconstructionist thought inspired by Derrida and also to a great deal of postanalytic philosophy inﬂ uenced by the so-called second Wittgenstein. When the latter talks about “linguistic games,” within the bounds of which truth can arise only out of the observance of shared rules, never out of evidence of some correspondence with things, he is practicing hermeneutics without knowing it. As for Derridean deconstruction, it too is entirely inspired by the (highly Freudian) notion that the representation of the world in the mind is already a “second” scene springing from an earlier, more original one, and an even earlier one before that, and so on.

## Topical Links

## Framework Links

### Otherness

<http://www.otherness.dk/fileadmin/www.othernessandthearts.org/Publications/Journal_Otherness/Otherness__Essays_and_Studies_4.1/Journal_of_Otherness_Vattimo_and_otherness.pdf>

As Vattimo makes clear that the death of God is the death of the metaphysical notion of truth and its corollaries such as the ontotheological notion of God, why should Vattimo only think we are resigned to ironically distorting the traces of metaphysics? Inspired by Nietzsche’s unpublished ‘On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense’, Vattimo regards language as essentially metaphorical. The death of God liberates metaphor, since language is no longer dominated by a single metaphysical semantic field, liberating a plurality of myths (Vattimo 1997, 54). Could the death of God liberate not only language, but also the possibility for an encounter with a God-beyond-God, of the ‘Wholly Other’ (‘Other’ with a capital ‘O’)? If metaphysics has been constraining our idea of God into logical, Otherness: Essays and Studies 4.1 September 2013 4 human, all-too-human categories, then could the end of metaphysics not ironically clear the way for a return to religion conceived as the recovery of the transcendence of God? The language of transcendence has been banished to the margins in the last phases of the history of metaphysics, Positivism and modern science. If our linguistic heritage limits thought, and if we are no longer able to believe this heritage, then Positivism and thorough-going empiricism should no longer prevent us from opening our minds to the infinite, even if the ‘Wholly Other’ could not possibly be circumscribed in thought. This Other could then ground a non-metaphysical way of overcoming metaphysics, healing ourselves from its violence along broadly Levinasian lines. Vattimo unqualifiedly rejects any notion of the ‘Wholly Other’. He says that God as ‘the wholly other of which much of contemporary religious philosophy speaks is not the incarnate Christian God. It is the same old God of metaphysics’ (Vattimo 2002, 38). He thinks the Other and transcendence go handin-hand, and that transcendence is a metaphysical category (Vattimo 1999, 49, 55). To this end, Vattimo categorises philosophers such as Derrida and Levinas with Protestant theologians such as Barth and Bonhoeffer, as well as 1960s ‘Death of God’ theologians such as Altizer, Van Buren, Cox, and Hamilton (Vattimo 2002, 36-37). While Vattimo certainly thinks that the liberation of metaphor enables a return to religion (arguably this has been the defining theme of his later work), the return to religion must be a purely historical affair; it is a response to the event of the death of God and the perceived liberation of metaphor associated with the rise of society of mass communication. For Vattimo, metaphysics must be thought of as the history of Being with a guiding thread (its vocation for weakening, according to Vattimo’s interpretation of this phenomenon), for if it were conceived as a discrete series of conceptual schemes and/or of the possibility of the ‘Wholly Other’, ‘it would still leave an ontos on outside itself’, Vattimo thinks, ‘a thing in itself thought in metaphysical terms’ (Vattimo 1997, 108). Therefore, Vattimo takes what he calls a ‘left Heideggerian’ approach. ‘Left’ corresponds to a ‘historicist’ reading of Heidegger on the one hand, and ‘right’ to Otherness: Essays and Studies 4.1 September 2013 5 one in which a ‘return’ of Being is possible, the latter implied at the end of ‘The Word of Nietzsche: “God is Dead”’ (Heidegger 1977, 112).

#### Institutional Ethics Link

We believe that the most important feature of Searle’s conservative realism rests in his belief that institutional structures, such as govemment, money and education, enable us to control our lives within these same structures, when in fact they limit our freedom. '1`his control, according to Searle, should not only increase our power but also provide us with motivations (as “winners,” as we will see in the next section) for acting within them. But these motivations are nothing else than Searle’s desire to avoid conversions, that is, emergencies within our institutional realities.” This must be the reason that he considered it a positive factor that G. W Bush received the status function of president in the zooo presidential election regardless of the “fact” (note that this is also an “institutional fact”) that many American citizens considered that he had obtained it illegitimately But the “important thing,” explains Searle, “for the structure of deontic power in the US is that with very few exceptions they continued to recognize his deontic powers.”4‘ As we can see, the priority of Searle's metaphysical realism is to conserve institutional facts in order to submit to power, even though in the end, “perhaps we will have to give up on certain features of our self conception, such as free will?"

## Framing

## Alt

## Case Add Ons

# Vattimo 2NR

## Extensions

## Frontlines

# A2 Vattimo

#### Abandoning of Truth Bad

Politics, Hermeneutics, and Truth Jeff Malpas and Nick Malpas

Vattimo and Zabala identify truth as both “a reflection of a given objective order” and also as “an imposition” (of "the existing paradigm") by the strong on the weak. Such a conception of truth is deeply problematic no matter how commonplace such a conception of truth may be in certain “critical” modes of discourse. The reason is simple: the two aspects that Vattimo and Zabala impute to truth are contradictory. The objective is that which stands apart from both the subjective and the intersubjective, just as truth stands apart from belief (being true is distinct from holding true). Truth as it is tied to an objective order is precisely something that cannot be “imposed,” and although the exercise of power may be able to make someone believe something, that power alone cannot make the belief true. One might be tempted to dismiss such observations as trivial and irrelevant to what might be seen as the larger philosophical issues at stake here – issues relating, not to any matters of 'mere' semantics, but to the way the rhetoric of truth plays out in concrete social and political contexts, and the way regimes of truth, to use a Foucaultian turn of phrase, are also always regimes of power. Yet the operation of power is not independent of what may appear as the 'trivial' distinctions at stake here, and understanding how power relates to truth itself depends on a proper understanding of both power and truth. Truth is not the only concept that has an important connection to power. Any concept that carries a degree of imperatival force (as truth does inasmuch as it commands belief), will always be a concept that will be connected to structures of power and that will also be drawn upon by the institutions of power. Even the concept of justice, which might be seen as implicit in the argument offered by Vattimo and Zabala on behalf of the weak against the strong, is a concept that has a similar imperatival force. Justice, like all normative political concepts – as well as the normative concepts of ethics – commands certain forms of action and decision. Moreover, the way power connects to notions like truth and justice indicates that power itself has to be understood, not as some external imposition onto the social and political order, but as integral to that order. Indeed, if we turn back to Foucault here, we would be reminded of the fact that power is not to be construed in purely negative terms. Instead, power is productive, and what it names, in one sense at least, is the structuration that makes social and political, that is, human life possible. That truth is connected to power follows simply from the fact that truth is necessary for human collectivity and communication. The mere fact that truth is connected to power implies nothing about whether truth is associated with any particular form of politics, and it certainly does not imply that truth is necessarily oppressive. Rather, truth, like power, is implicated in the very structure that makes politics, and political action and decision, possible. Of course, merely recognizing that truth and power are implicated in the structure of political, and more generally, human life, leaves open the question of exactly how truth is implicated here. To understand the latter we need to inquire more deeply into the role truth plays in relation to language, communication, and meaning. Truth is a property, in one quite straightforward sense, of assertions.5 Although not all forms of language are assertoric, all forms of language do depend upon their embeddedness within and their connection to assertions. This follows from the systematic character of language in terms of the systematic interconnectedness of the various modes and moods of discourse – so not only is it possible to reinterpret a command as an assertion, but any particular command also necessarily implies a range of assertions.6 Inasmuch as assertion is arguably the primary linguistic form, so all language use is inextricably bound to truth. Indeed, thinking about truth really has to begin with this understanding of truth as implicated in our most ordinary speech and activity, and not with some exotic idea of truth only as the marker of some transcendent metaphysical reality (big “T” Truth) or some instrument of hegemonic power. Hannah Arendt emphasizes this aspect of truth – its centrality to communication – as well as its related role in the possibility of human collectivity, when she writes: Truth itself is communicative, it disappears and cannot be conceived outside communication; within the “existential” realm, truth and communication are the same. “Truth is what binds us together.” Only in communication – between contemporaries as well as between the living and the dead – does truth reveal itself.7 To overlook truth as it is tied to communication, that is, to the very possibility of linguistic expression and understanding, is to overlook the very character of truth, but also to overlook, and to misunderstand, the very character of communication, language, and community.8 One of the hallmarks of hermeneutic thinking has been its recognition of what Gadamer refers to as the “linguisticality of understanding” [2]. Because of hermeneutics’ foundational concern with language and communication, no less than with understanding or interpretation, hermeneutics is centrally concerned with truth in the basic and fundamental sense referred to above – a sense that is bound to its essential role in language (although this communicative sense of truth is not exhausted by any account of truth that treats it merely as a disquotational predicate attaching to individual sentences). That hermeneutics is concerned with truth is suggested by the very title of Gadamer’s magnum opus, Truth and Method, as well as by the way in which truth appears at the heart of Heidegger’s thinking. Even though hermeneutic philosophers stress the need to critique the narrowly ‘realist’ or metaphysical conception of truth as some form of ‘correspondence’ between sentences and world (a rethinking that is evident in the work of Davidson as well as Heidegger),9 still this critique does not involve an abandonment of truth or ‘farewell’ to truth (as Vattimo has it elsewhere [3]), but rather a rethinking of the very idea of truth. In hermeneutic terms, truth is understood as foundational to the possibility of meaning, and as that which, in Arendt’s terms, allows for the possibility of human communication and community. In this respect, truth not only stands in an essential relation to language, and to being (which, following Heidegger, is to be understood non-metaphysically), but also to the very possibility of politics and political critique. Critique does not involve mere opposition. It is instead founded in that which can be contested, which also thereby lies between people, and which is itself the proper focus for contestation. In hermeneutic terms, contestation or disagreement, as well as agreement, must always be about something, and, must thus be grounded in a common subject matter. This point is emphasized by Gadamer, and it is here that the concept of truth, as well as of objectivity (understood simply as that which pertains to the object), plays an essential role. This understanding of truth as communicative enables us to see, contra Vattimo and Zabala, how truth is actually opposed to violence. Vattimo and Zabala describe the politics of description – the politics they associate with contemporary liberalism and capitalism – as also a politics of truth, and since Vattimo and Zabala take this to mean that it is a politics that operates “in favor of the strong against the weak”, so they also view it as essentially a politics of violence. Indeed, they claim that violence is itself the “political meaning” of truth: Truth is not only “violent,” in that it turns away from solidarity, but it is “violence,” because it can easily become an imposition on our very existence. Being “violent” might imply that it can also be peaceful, but truth instead often implies an imposed description whose acceptance is assumed. Violence is the political meaning of truth, because truth always implies a concluding constriction.10 There is no question that, as we noted earlier, truth has an imperatival force – it commands belief. Moreover, the making of truth claims, like any linguistic act, can also have negative effects on others – sometimes harmful and sometimes coercive. But these facts do not warrant the claim that truth as such is violent. The power truth has over us, which is not identical with political power, is a power that derives from our own being as already given over to truth, given over to care for and about the truth. This is, moreover, not a power that we can ever escape, since it is not a power exerted over us from without – instead, the power of truth is a power generated through the way truth functions as a necessary part of the very dynamic of meaning, desire, belief and action in which we are ourselves enmeshed. To suppose that we could somehow escape the power of truth would thus be radically to misunderstand our own being. The inference from the character of truth as a “constriction” or “imposition” to the claim that violence is the political meaning of truth, involves a misunderstanding not only of truth and violence but also of the way in which truth constricts or limits.

#### Truth is key

Politics, Hermeneutics, and Truth Jeff Malpas and Nick Malpas

Understood as a limit, truth is not, to paraphrase Heidegger, that at which we stop, but rather that from which we begin.11 Truth enables while it also limits, and this is why truth has so often been understood, quite properly, as essentially tied to freedom. To be able to act at all, one must have largely true beliefs about oneself (for example, one’s abilities and intentions) and about that on which one acts. Truth enables not only the possibility of individual action and understanding, but also, the possibility of human being together. This is a point made, in different ways, by Heidegger, Gadamer, and Arendt. Thus, rather than being “an imposition on individual differences and identities,”12 truth refers us to a common world which goes beyond any individual’s perspective or will, and so forms a common basis for both individual differences and for relationships between people. As Arendt writes: “Facts inform opinions, and opinions, inspired by different interests and passions, can differ widely and still be legitimate as long as they respect factual truth.” [4] Moreover, as she also points out, when people lose the ability to distinguish between truth and falsity and the connection to a common reality (as is the case under totalitarian regimes, which “conjure up a lying world of consistency”), then “loneliness” pervades society. Under such circumstances, people lose a sense of their own identity as they also lose the capacity to relate authentically to others [5]. The failure to recognize the way in which both human identity and human relationality are connected with truth and the commonality of the world leads Vattimo and Zabala to make the strange claim that, in the politics of description, violence takes place through “dialogue” in which claims to truth amount to a “‘silencing’ of [the] other interlocutor.”13 Undoubtedly ‘dialogue’, like ‘truth’ (or like ‘justice’), can be deployed rhetorically to advance particular agendas of coercion or oppression. Yet that should not blind us to the fact that genuine dialogue (and also truth) is foundational to non-coercive modes of discourse and conduct. Indeed, the only way in which people can break out of what Foucault calls the “silence of slavery” is through dialogue, and that dialogue would be meaningless if people could not speak truly, for the most part, or were not committed to such speaking – which is why Foucault himself claims that respect for the task of speaking the truth (a task he describes as an “infinite labour”) is an obligation “that no power can afford to shortchange” [6]. If politics is to be conducted in a non-coercive (and thus non-violent) fashion, then there can be no other course open other than that of commitment to dialogue and respect for truth. In political terms, real violence – the violence that involves deliberate assault on people’s bodies, possessions, and relationships – actually stands in an antagonistic relation to truth. Untruthfulness – deceit, evasion, concealment – amounts to a form of discursive violence. It is violence against others by means of speech, and, since truth and truthfulness are conditions for the very meaningfulness of speech, it is also violence against speech itself. Untruthfulness is also wedded to violence pragmatically, since untruthfulness is one of the means by which violence can be enacted without retribution, as well as one of the means by which its effects are often intensified. Conversely, speaking the truth is at work in the uncovering of violence, in ensuring accountability for violence, and in preventing violence. It is also essential in the reconstitution of social relations in the aftermath of violence – a key idea in the theory of restorative justice. Indeed, the very possibility of non-violent relations depends on modes of social interaction regulated by truth and conducted through dialogue. Of course, the antagonism that exists between truth and violence is obscured when we forget the distinction between what is true and what is merely claimed as true. Violence itself is the inevitable outcome of this forgetting, since it arises out of the inability to recognize that what one holds to be true, or what one wants to be true, need not coincide with what is true. The assertion of one’s own belief or will despite the truth is itself a form of violence – violence against reality and one’s own capacity for knowledge and rational action and, potentially, violence against others. It is precisely because truth and violence are antagonistic that resistance to violence – and so also the resistance of the weak to the strong, the resistance to tyranny and oppression – has so often depended on the mobilization of truth. This is no less true of the resistance to the oppressive forms of contemporary corporate capitalism than it has been of the resistance to other forms of domination – be they monarchical, imperialist, fascist, or communist. It is no accident that one of the key issues underpinning the corrosion of democratic governance in the United States and other “Western” democracies is the increasing control of information and the use of deception and disinformation by government and corporate agencies. This is why the disclosure of government information by independent groups or individuals (such as Edward Snowden or Wikileaks) is of such contemporary significance – such disclosure is an attempt to call governments to account for their misdeeds at a time when the accountability of power has been eroded. The political meaning of truth is not violence, then, but precisely the refusal of violence. Moreover, we can now appreciate how the refusal of violence and the respect for truth come together in what we would argue is the core hermeneutic commitment to allow the other to speak, and, also, to allow that the other might be right. As Gadamer claimed (echoing Albert Camus’ famous claim regarding the essence of democracy): “The possibility that the other might be right is the soul of hermeneutics”14 – it is also the soul of any genuine alternative to violence in the political sphere or elsewhere.

#### Theory of interpretation is bad/sick perm card

Politics, Hermeneutics, and Truth Jeff Malpas and Nick Malpas

As we have already seen, the opposition between description and interpretation is central to Vattimo and Zabala’s critique of contemporary politics, in particular, to their critique of it as metaphysical. Vattimo and Zabala construe hermeneutics almost purely in terms of the commitment to interpretation, which they oppose to description. Truth, in their view, stands firmly on the side of description, and is thus dissociated from and opposed to interpretation. Although this emphasis on interpretation might seem an uncontroversial way of characterizing hermeneutics, the idea of an absolute distinction between interpretation and description threatens to reinstate a mode of metaphysical thinking of exactly the sort that Vattimo and Zabala claim to reject. The opposition they posit between interpretation and description is one of the very “established polarities” with a “hierarchical order” that they decry and regard as characteristic of metaphysics.15 Recognizing the universality of the hermeneutic problem means recognizing, not only the way in which any and every distinction is always subject to a degree of hermeneutic indeterminacy, but also the impossibility of absolutizing the distinctions that arise within an interpretive context. This indeterminacy affects even the distinction between interpretation and description. Indeed, interpretation and description cannot be regarded as antagonistic. Description itself always involves interpretation (in the sense of imputing meaning to something) and each interpretation always takes a certain description of its subject matter (which identifies that which is to be interpreted) as given. Thus, rather than rejecting the distinction between interpretation and description, a properly hermeneutic understanding should recognize the interplay, within particular discursive and interpretive contexts, between what can be understood as interpretive and descriptive modes. The distinction between those modes, together with the distinction between holding true and being true, will itself figure as an element in the larger dynamic of hermeneutic engagement as such.16 We would argue that, properly understood, truth is not a metaphysical concept at all, but is rather anti-metaphysical. Attending to truth means attending to the character of discourse as always oriented by and towards the truth, as always concerned for the truth (although truth is not the only concern of discourse), even while truth always remains beyond any absolute determination in terms of a single foundational statement or any finite body of statements. Truth is always the truth of this or that claim, in this or that discursive context. Attending to truth means attending to the complexity of our situatedness in the world, to the complexity of the situatedness of others, and to the complexity of the world itself. In politics, this ought to counsel against the idea that any single ideology – any single descriptive or interpretive frame – will provide a final answer to the demands of political action and decision. In this respect, hermeneutics should not be taken to be necessarily allied with either communism, capitalism, or any other political doctrine. Hermeneutics does, however, have a strongly democratic tendency – not in the sense that ‘democracy’ denotes a comprehensive political outlook or any specific political arrangement, but rather as it entails a commitment to dialogue, openness of debate, transparency of process, accessibility of information, and, crucially, equality of participation as the proper basis for political decision and action. Democracy in this sense involves a commitment to politics as a domain of public contestation, negotiation, and participation rather than to any particular political outcomes or even procedures. Indeed, it seems that any determination of the specific outcomes that politics should achieve (such as the control of production and the distribution of social goods that has traditionally been the focus of communism) that did not arise from actual political debate amongst both politicians and the general public would be precisely the kind of imposed paradigm that Vattimo and Zabala reject. Resisting the imposition of political measures (and the violence, oppression, and injustice they would entail) requires that we make public power accountable and that we facilitate wide participation in public affairs, neither of which are possible unless people have access to and respect for the truth. At times, Vattimo and Zabala seem to agree that politics should be a matter of such free public action17 and that “non-violent methods” are “the most productive alternatives” to fight capitalist oppression18 – although we would stress that non-violence should be chosen primarily for moral, rather than strategic, reasons. Rather ominously, however, Vattimo and Zabala also claim that violence and violation of democratic “rules” “ought to be defended” inasmuch as they are necessary for realizing other socially or economically beneficial aims. Thus they approvingly cite Mao’s dictum that “A revolution is not a dinner party … A revolution is an insurrection, an act of violence by which one class overthrows another.”19 It is strange that here violence seems endorsed, whereas elsewhere the supposed violence associated with truth is taken as grounds for the refusal of truth.20 Although we would agree with Vattimo and Zabala that hermeneutics does indeed provide a powerful platform from which to formulate a critique of the oppressive character of contemporary liberal and capitalist ideologies and political formations, it does so in a way that enables a similar critique of many of the ideologies and forms of communism also. Hermeneutics is founded in the normative ideas of concern for truth, respect for others, and the commitment to mutual understanding, but these ideas provide a platform from which to critique any political doctrine, action or institution, and not only those associated with capitalism. In this respect, a genuinely hermeneutic politics ought to be one that takes its bearings, not from any particular political ideology, but from the actual character and circumstances of human life; that seeks to maintain a genuinely open and transparent realm of public debate and decision-making; that allows for the open-ended and negotiatory character of politics without avoiding the necessity to judge and act; and that refuses to accept that the subordination of moral and ethical considerations to state or corporate interests (especially the supposed imperatives of economics). A genuinely hermeneutic politics would be, in short, a politics oriented to truth and to the human,21 which together form the essential limit and enabling condition of politics. Only with respect to a politics such as this could one truly say that it that has ceased to operate under the sway of metaphysics.

#### Fucking Sick Warren Link

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For the black nihilist, however, the question is this: Will the dissolution of metaphysical Being that Vattimo advances eliminate anti-black violence and redress black suffering? What would “emancipation” entail for black-objects (as distinct from the “human” that grounds Vattimo’s project)? Anti-blackness becomes somewhat of an unacknowledged interlocutor for Vattimo: Philosophy follows paths that are not insulated or cut off from the social and political transformations of the West (since the end of metaphysics is unthinkable without the end of colonialism and Eurocentrism) and “discovers” that the meaning of the history of modernity is not progress toward a final perfection characterized by fullness, total transparency, and the presence of, and the presence finally realized of the essence of man and the world. (Vattimo 2004, 35, emphasis mine) Vattimo adumbrates a relationship between metaphysics and colonialism/ Eurocentrism that renders them coterminous. If, as Vattimo argues, “the end of metaphysics is unthinkable without the end of colonialism and Eurocentrism”—which I will suggest are varieties of anti-black violence—then hermeneutical nihilism must advance an escape from anti-blackness to accomplish its agenda. Furthermore, if philosophy follows paths created by sociopolitical realities, then we must talk about anti-blackness not just as a violent political formation but also as a philosophical orientation. The nihilist would insist that its hermeneutics would transform political reality and, concomitantly, eliminate black suffering. Ultimately, we rely on An-denken (thinking otherwise) to resolve the problem of asymmetrical power relations and the uneven distribution of resources that characterizes black suffering in the modern world. But how would a philosophical project translate into a political program or usher in the “yet-to-come” social unencumbered by metaphysics? Must we eradicate anti-black violence before we can think otherwise? Or, to put this issue differently, can we think at all without anti-blackness? For the black nihilist, anti-blackness is metaphysics. It is the system of thought and organization of existence that structures the relationship between object/subject, human/animal, rational/irrational, and free/enslaved—essentially, the categories that constitute the field of Ontology. Thus, the social rationalization, loss of individuality, economic expansionism, and technocratic domination that both Vattimo and Heidegger analyze actually depend on anti-blackness.5 Metaphysics, then, is unthinkable without antiblackness. Neither Heidegger nor Vattimo explores this aspect of Being’s oblivion—it is the literal destruction of black bodies that provide the psychic, economic, and philosophical resources for modernity to objectify, forget, and ultimately obliterate Being (nonmetaphysical Being).We might then consider black captivity in the modern world as the “perfection” of metaphysics, its shameful triumph, because through the violent technology of slavery Being itself was so thoroughly devastated. Personality became property, as Hortense Spillers would describe it, and with this transubstantiation, Being was objectified, infused with exchange value, and rendered malleable within a sociopolitical order. In short, Being lost its integrity with the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade; at that moment in history, it finally became possible for an aggressive metaphysics to exercise obscene power—the ability to turn a “human” into a “thing.” The captive is fractured on both the Ontological and ontic levels. This violent transubstantiation leaves little room for the hopeful escape from metaphysics that Heidegger envisions. Can the black-as-object lay claim to DaSein? And if so, how exactly does hermeneutic nihilism restore Being to that which is an object? If we perform a “philosophy of history,” as Vattimo would advise, we understand that metaphysicians, and even those we now consider “postmetaphysicians,” constructed the rational subject against the nonreasoning black, who, according to Hegel, Kant, Hume, and even Nietzsche was situated outside of history, moral law, and consciousness (Bernasconi 2003; Judy 1993; and Mills 1998). It is not enough, then, to suggest that metaphysics engenders forms of violence as a necessity, as a byproduct; thinking itself is structured by anti-blackness from the very start. Any postmetaphysical project that does not take this into account will inevitably reproduce the very structures of thought that it would dismantle.

#### End of the world

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Hermeneutic nihilism provides a discursive frame to understand the intransigence of metaphysics as the residue of anti-blackness in the contemporary moment. The black nihilist, however, must part ways with Vattimo concerning the question of emancipation. For Vattimo, hermeneutic nihilism avoids “passive nihilism.” Passive nihilism is characterized by strands of fatalism or by melancholic nostalgiafor lostfoundations. To avoid this situation, Vattimo introduces hermeneutics as an alternative to passive nihilism and conceives of hermeneutics as the natural result of an accomplished nihilism—namely, after the weakening of metaphysical Being, hermeneutics replaces metaphysics as a self-consuming “foundation.” He attempts to move beyond the metaphysical remnants found in the theories of Gadamer, Ricoeur, and Wittgenstein and think of hermeneutics as competing interpretations that reduce the violence of secure foundations. This of course provides the possibility for a radical democracy and a reconfiguration of Ethics, Law, and the Political. Ultimately, this weakening of metaphysical Being allows the human to project him-/ herself in the world, what Vattimo calls “projectionality,” and engage in the unique project that constitutes existence. This is the crux of emancipation for Vattimo. We, ironically, find ourselves back in the province of “progress,” “hope,” “betterment,” all the metaphysical instruments that constrain the very life that he would emancipate. This, of course, is unavoidable, for he can only twist these concepts and reclaim them as part of a postmetaphysical agenda. Vattimo’s hermeneutic nihilism is not very much different than political theology and democratic liberalism. It is a discourse of hope, a politics of hope that advances the belief that we can weaken metaphysics and reduce suffering, violence, and pain. When it comes to black suffering, however, we are compelled to hold up the mirror of historicity and inquire about the possibilities of emancipation for the black-as-object. Anti-blackness is the residue that remains, the intransigent substance that makes it impossible to destroy metaphysics completely. The black nihilist must confront this residue, but with the understanding that the eradication of this residue would truly end the world itself. Black emancipation is world destructive; it is not an aperture or an opening for future possibilities and political reconfigurations (Wilderson 2010). The “end of the world” that Vattimo envisions does not take into account that pulverized black bodies sustain the world—its institutions, economic systems, environment, theologies, philosophies, and so forth. Because anti-blackness infuses itself into every fabric of social existence, it is impossible to emancipate blacks without literally destroying the world. Moreover, this means that black emancipation will not yield a new world or possibilities for reorganization—black emancipation is the nihilistic “solution” that would destroy the field of all possible solutions. In this sense, black emancipation becomes something like death for the world—with all its Heideggerian valences. Black bodies and black suffering, then, pose a problem for emancipatory logic. If literal black bodies sustain modernity and metaphysics—through various forms of captivity, terror, and subjection—then what would emancipation entail for blacks? How do we allow metaphysics to self-consume and weaken when blackness nourishes metaphysics? (We can define the “problem” in W. E. B. Dubois’s poignant question “what does it mean to be a problem?” in the twentieth century as metaphysics itself [1903, 10]. Now we must ask: “what does it mean to be the source of metaphysics’ sustenance in the 21st century?”) Either the world would have to eliminate black bodies, which would amount to a self-destructive solution for all, or it would have to wrest blackness from the clutches of metaphysical anti-blackness that sustains the world. Our hope is that black emancipation would be accomplished through the latter, but history does not prove that this is possible—every emancipatory strategy that attempted to rescue blackness from antiblackness inevitably reconstituted and reconfigured the anti-blackness it tried to eliminate. Anti-blackness is labile. It adapts to change and endlessly refashions itself; this makes emancipation an impossible feat. Because we are still attempting to mine the depths of anti-blackness in the twenty-first century and still contemplating the contours of this juggernaut, anti-blackness will escape every emancipatory attempt to capture it. We are left, yet again, to place our hope in a future politics that avoids history, historicity, and the immediacy of black suffering. For this reason, the black nihilist rejects the emancipatory impulse within certain aspects of black critical discourse and cultural/critical theory. In this sense, the modifier “black” in the term “black nihilism” indicates much more than an “identity”; a blackened nihilism pushes hermeneutic nihilism beyond the limits of its metaphysical thinking by foregrounding the function of anti-blackness in structuring thought.