

POVERTY

1.1 There is, however, another experience that comes before that of love on our path through the phenomenology of the common, one that is rooted in the present and is exposed to the immeasurable: it is the experience of poverty. We must now reflect on this experience.

1.2 Those most exposed to the immeasurable are the poor. When he appears before us, the poor person is naked on the edge of being, without any alternative. The misery, ignorance and disease that defines poverty, along with the experience of the indigent condition of the body, of the needy biopolitical situation, of the desirous disposition of the soul – that together form the shape of the arc of the bow – nevertheless constitute a point from which the arrow constitutive of time is released with increased strength.

1.3 But is this not an easy rhetorical game that is characteristic of negative dialectics, which aims to give to absolute nudity the privilege of an eminent valorization? It would doubtless be so had we not some time ago cut any links with the dialectic, insisting on the contrary on a subjectivity (understood from the standpoint of materialism), which finds itself on the edge of being and represents the exclusive power of giving sense to the *to-come*. The poor person is then not someone constituted by pain, but is *in reality* the biopolitical subject. He is not an existential trembling (or a painful dialectical differentiation): he is the naked eternity of the power of being.

1.4 If you are not poor you cannot philosophize. For poverty is an immeasurable place where the biopolitical question is posed in an absolute way. It is there that the body in its nakedness is confined to the experience of innovation on the edge of being; that language is opened to hybridization by the pressing recognition of the common; in short, it is here that the biopolitical, becoming immeasurable between the eternal and the *to-come*, finds its definition. So where in humanist thought it was ignorance that was at the basis of philosophical questioning, in the biopolitical it is poverty that forms that ground. To the 'learned ignorance' of the humanists, corresponds the 'powerful poverty' that makes us amazed at the world.

2.1 Naked and exposed to the immeasurable, the poor shatter the postmodern aporia of production and confer meaning on the materialist teleology of the common. For poverty cannot turn in the void, it can only go forward, and to go forward means to go forward in common. Were we not to start out from poverty, we would not start out at all; that is to say, in this situation the production of being could occur or not occur, because the force that sustains and propels it would not be necessary. Indeed, no teleological process would be given (and neither would a teleology of the common), were it not posited by poverty; because poverty puts the immeasurable production of the arrow of time in motion necessarily, one instant after another (there, where *kairòs* becomes a biopolitical event). So, if the power of poverty were not given, one would not have a teleology of material being either, and therefore eternal being itself would also not be produced.

2.2 If as we have seen, the common name is the event of the multitude, then the common is the product of the multitude. But it is only when poverty presents itself as the *topos* (location and motor) of the opening of the multitude within the teleological process of common being, that all the (postmodern) tautologies of the common are dissolved. In this way the common 'doings' of the multitude of the poor necessarily introduce the immeasurableness of the eternal, and imprints on this immeasurable becoming the seal of the common. This is what we mean when we say 'the poor are the common of the common'.

2.3 It is not wealth – which is forever a *quantitate signata* – but poverty that has always represented the common name of the human. From Christ to Saint Francis, from the Anabaptists to the Sans-culottes, from the communists to the Third-World militants, the needy, the idiots, the unhappy (i.e. the exploited, the excluded, the oppressed), it is they who exist under the sign of the eternal. Their resistance and their struggles have opened the eternal to the immeasurableness of the *to-come*. The teleology and the ethics of materialism have always been related to this naked and powerful community whose name is 'poverty'.

2.4 He who is born is a naked and poor being. Generation is the event of the common.

3.1 On the contrary, poverty is ostracized by transcendental axiology (and in the same way it is banned from the history of the

political). The name of the poor is defined by the determinations of wealth, i.e. by the presupposition of hierarchy and limit.

3.2 In classical civilizations and philosophies, the poor person is the slave. Hence, where man is centaur, the slave is the beast of burden, a 'quasi-animal' excluded from the human species. The most profound truth of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophies are to be found in this exclusion of the poor, where slavery is fixed within the presupposed hierarchy of nature. The ontological *archein* predetermines and orders slavery in the necessary rationality of life. The teleology of the common is broken at its most basic level so as to expel the slave from human nature, and so from the common. Yet he is a beast that is able to draw near to the human, can give birth to men and must reproduce the common: the slave is nonetheless an inferior beast to the centaur (to the man who, through the noble families [*gens*], through the hierarchy of biological heredity [*eugenia*], built the city). The slave who reproduces the common is excluded from it by force; the hierarchy of nature provides the ontological legitimation for this exclusion.

3.3 The thinking of modernity conceives of poverty as exploitation. The community of man-man is productive: it is thus in relation to production that the hierarchy of grounds must be reimposed. A new form of subjugation accompanies this becoming immanent of the concept 'man': exploitation is the enslaving of man within the 'second nature'¹⁶ produced by man. But the more the common is intensified, the more violent appears the dwindling of one of the two elements whose destiny is to be put into the productive service of the other. The teleology of the common is interrupted when it begins to show its greatest efficacy. The man-man commune becomes the common exploitation of man by man.

3.4 In modernity, the formal idea of the common serves as the basis for its real break-up; and the world of the Rights of Man is both proclaimed and shattered by the productive use and political subjugation of the poor.

3.5 A natural measure is imposed upon the slave; a measure of the exploitation of work is imposed on the proletariat: everywhere measure, against the immeasurableness of the practice of the eternal by the poor; a hierarchy, against the common; the rationale of wealth, against those of creativity. In other words: misery must let exploitation through work

be imposed upon it; ignorance must submit to the rules of understanding; sadness must reveal that man is-for-death. Economic, humanist, moral and religious – these are the measures that the transcendental imposes upon poverty.

3.6 The concept of poverty excludes that of death in as much as, in order to live, the poor have already overcome death. The poor have put death behind themselves: the common is exalted by this realization.

4.1 The more the poor produce the common, the more violent is the transcendental exclusion of the poor from the common. From the era of the centaur to that of the man-man, this violence increases in line with the emancipation of the proletariat from slavery. The more the exploited proletariat (i.e. the poor of modernity) are inserted into production and are determined by it in turn, the more they are absorbed within consumption (in contrast to the slave), and all the greater is the violence they must suffer.

4.2 Can we thus define the poor as the product of violence? A naked creature defined simply by violence? No, because this definition overlooks the fact that violence is exercised 'within' the common. And it is the exploited proletariat that creates the common. The creature that lies at the basis of exploitation and of Power is not naked: it is powerful, capable of the productivity of the common. Once again we are able to confirm just how far the experience of poverty has taken us from the dialectical conceptions – even the negative ones – of the production of being.

4.3 The violence that the citizen of the *polis* exercises over the slave and that the modern capitalist exercises over the worker are negations of the power that the poor possess: the power of the poor to open themselves to the immeasurableness of time. This violence is envy of the eternal.

4.4 On the contrary, the violence of the poor person is the affirmation of the eternal.

5.1 The poor, the producers of the common from which they are – nonetheless – excluded, are the motor of materialist teleology, because only the multitude of the poor can construct the world under the sign of the common, pressing forth relentlessly beyond the limit of the present.

5.2 It is precisely this that is erased in the ideology (and historiography) of the transcendental. It establishes a philosophy of history – in the two forms of an apologia and of an eschatology – that presents itself as a ‘negative’ teleology of the common. In the apologia of the rationality of history, transcendental teleology denies the presence itself of the multitude of the poor as producers of the world; in its eschatological version, on the other hand, transcendental teleology postpones the recognition of this fundamental destiny to the ‘ends of time’.

5.3 There is, however, ‘another history’, which fuses with the teleological constitution of the common, and where the poor become the engine of teleology. From the ontological standpoint the path unfolds in linear fashion, although it is interrupted by innovative leaps that the multitude of the poor impose on history: these break the ‘order’ of the world so as to launch life beyond the limits of time, in order to render it radically immeasurable, through a search for and a reconstruction of the common. Ontologically this ‘other history’ presupposes the eternal to the arrow of time; historically it provides a new articulation of the eternal and the arrow of time. But this ‘other history’ is only grasped from the instants of *kairòs*.

5.4 When the poor begin to advance and to destroy the hierarchies and measures, wealth and domination, then that ‘other history’ leaves its mark. The history of the poor is always revolutionary, because the eternal (i.e. the being that produces) is the refusal of work, of understanding and of the limit.

6.1 In the present era, the experience of poverty is shaped in a dimension of the common that recognizes no ‘outside’; in a compact dimension of the common that no longer consists in spatial fissures or temporal suspensions. In the postmodern era the poor are excluded, and this exclusion occurs ‘within’ the production of the world.

6.2 But from the point of view of the consistency of the common, the excluded are a logical paradox: from the standpoint of a linguistic community, the excluded can only be a pathological factor; from the point of view of biopolitical productivity, a material impossibility. So here, in postmodernity, the first traits of the scandalous experience of poverty are presented (to the eyes of a superficial phenomenology). In the present, the poor are the poorest of the poor, because they are the

most integrated in the common – in the common of life, of language, of production and of consumption. The poor are excluded from within the biopolitical itself – in that same biopolitical in which the poor person produces and in which his subjectivity is in turn produced.

6.3 In the postmodern era, poverty is defined spatially and/or temporally within the intense confines of the common: if illness, unemployment and misery (which are only the superficial figures of poverty) are located in the interdependence of an extremely tight biopolitical relation, then the content of the violent postmodern exclusion is enormous, because it breaks the tension of the common at its core.

6.4 But in a biopolitical society, where all existence is a relation and every productive act is language, the tension of the common is exercised through the cohesion of a network of singularities. Consequently, the rupture of the tension of the common determines an infinity of sequences that deploy themselves everywhere. In other words, since within the postmodern network the singularity is rich in effects provoked by the production of subjectivity in the core of the common, the exclusion produces a variety of biopolitical effects, all of which are scandalous.

7.1 This scandal is ontological. Poverty has always been the salt of the earth, but here poverty directly illuminates the common, i.e. the power productive of subjectivity, weighing it down with suffering and pain.

7.2 Here, in the conflict between this negativity and the material teleology of the production of the common, we see dissipate the saccharine and illusory utopias according to which the postmodern development of production by way of language would create a world of pure circulation of goods, services, and of increasingly perfect languages. Faced with what these illusions would have us believe, the conflict becomes ontological. The conflict produces effects of crisis that denounce the crumbling away of appearances and then announce their radical de-mystification, not only in the face of the eternal, but also in the pain of singularity. But equally these effects of crisis can endow the common with a multiplicity of possible creative meanings.

8.1 My question is thus the following: in the postmodern era, how can one grasp – through the ontological scandal of poverty – the

meaning of the crisis of the common? How, within an experience that has no exteriority, is one able to sketch a line of flight out from the crisis of the common?

8.2 To answer the question one must deepen the analysis of the experience of postmodern poverty, i.e. one must identify the reactions, the counterblasts, the violence, but at the same time the effects of production and of construction of meaning which, in the experience of poverty and in the paradoxes it implies, are thereby freed up. We must try to do so from within the *topos* of poverty (i.e. within poverty as the *topos* of the common), because it is here that the *to-come* is produced. And if this experience is still insufficient to link production of subjectivity to the teleology of the common, we will nevertheless have consolidated the basis for a further stage in our enquiry (one that passes through love).

9.1 The experience of poverty is given on the edge of time, in the innovation of the eternal; it is thus a practice of the immeasurable. This practice presents itself as 'outside measure', i.e. as resistance; or it presents itself as 'beyond measure', i.e. as constituent power. In every case it gives ethical meaning to life by making it escape the dominion of the axiomatic of the limit, of measure and of wealth.

9.2 In the postmodern era, that is to say, when the teleology of the common is absolutely immanent, these practices of poverty are before us *in reality*. They can only be recognized clearly in the postmodern era, i.e. from the moment that materialist teleology is reborn in the tautology of the common that it interrupts.

10.1 How much the concept of 'resistance' has changed in postmodernity, and how its practices are transformed! If we attempted to identify it in accordance with the categories and experiences of modernity, we would now be incapable of understanding it. In modernity, resistance is an accumulation of forces against exploitation that come to be given a subjective determination through a '*pris de conscience*'. In postmodernity, none of all this. Resistance appears as a diffusion of singular behaviours of resistance. If resistance accumulates, it accumulates extensively, in circulation, mobility, flight, exodus, desertion: it is a case of multitudes that resist in a diffuse manner and that escape the

increasingly confining enclosures of misery and Power. And there is no need for a collective *pris de conscience* for this: the sense of rebellion is endemic and it traverses every consciousness and renders it proud. The effect of the common, which attaches itself to each singularity as an anthropological quality, consists precisely in this. So rebellion is neither a punctual event nor is it uniform; on the contrary, it traverses the expanse of the common and defuses itself in the shape of an explosion of behaviours of singularities that it is impossible to contain. In this way one can define the resistance of the multitude.

10.2 Therefore, in the first place, poverty is given as resistance. There exists no experience of poverty that is not at the same time one of resistance against the repression of the desire to live. 'Resistance' should be understood here as the affirmation of self as common and against exclusion: a 'self-valorization' that rises up from naked poverty against the enemy.

10.3 A gigantic cultural revolution is underway. Free expression and the joy of bodies, the autonomy, hybridization and the reconstruction of languages, the creation of new, singular and mobile modes of production – all this emerges, everywhere and continually. Transcendental perversion opposes exercise and fashion to bodies; disinformation and censorship to languages; an untouchable command over the world to the new modes of organizing production; and rigidly defined frontiers and global tourism to stateless movement.

10.4 In other words, since resistance produces new spaces of creation and circulation, it follows that new institutions of measure will try to control them and bring them under their rule, while new enterprises will attempt to exploit them. In this way the world market of parasitical transcendentalism is constructed. In this way the *to-come* is opposed to the future, statistics to *kairòs*, and repetition to difference.

10.5 But the leap imposed by poverty is irreversible. When, in the postmodern age, production becomes production of subjectivity (starting from, through and for subjectivity), subjectivity is formed within the resistant singularity. The resistance of the poor person produces new subjective forms of life and widens its markets, invests new assemblages and expressive machines without interruption, and creates new linguistic spaces. For this reason we can say that it produces *in reality*. When, as occurs in the postmodern era, poverty is marked by

the exclusion from the common, resistance becomes a reaffirmation of the common, and plays itself out in – and against – the space of exclusion. Resistance is the indeterminate negation of the limit that exclusion imposes on the common. It is the unlimited (*apeiron*), against the limit (*peras*) of exclusion and of measure; it is an absolute opening, against the closure of the common and the perversion of its teleology.

11.1 In the second place, poverty is given as singularity. For it is evident that every affirmation expressed by the resistance of the poor (even when it is undetermined) is singular. The expression of the poor is always singular because the interweaving of resistance and the new opening on the edge of the *to-come* (which constitutes the ontological figure of the poor) is always immeasurable. It is the singularity that brings the 'outside measure' of resistance to exclusion into relation with the 'beyond measure' of the power that constitutes a new common.

11.2 Transcendental thinking affirms that it is necessary to exclude for order to be provided, and that it is not possible to dispose of being in an ordered fashion if the common is not withdrawn from the immeasurable. But the common is the immeasurable. And so singularity is the power of the immeasurable.

11.3 The postmodern philosophers, in order to try and identify the crisis that the singularity provokes in the core of the order of the world – which is presupposed by transcendental ideology – and so as to have a point of leverage to overturn its pretensions, have looked at the margins of the world and have fooled themselves into believing they have found an outside or a 'bare life'. No, the moment of crisis is rooted in the body of the postmodern common, there where poverty, in the shape of expressive *apeiron*, resists in the face of all order and every limit; and – at the same time – presents itself as the 'fount' of all expression, as a poor yet powerful singularity.

11.4 The highest form of the definition of the singular is to be found in the common name of poverty; a common name which recognizes no 'outside'.

12.1 Therefore, in this way, the common name of poverty presents itself as productive force. For what is production today for postmodern thinking, if not the valorization – in the biopolitical – of the singular

acts that, interweaving and forming a multitude, produce the world and reproduce it? Or in other words: valorization of relations of affect, of language and communication that, while each is entirely singular, begin to form subjectivity by virtue of their interweaving? And where is this 'generation' to be found if not in the poor, understood as the common singularity of existence, of resistance and expression? More than in any other constellation of the magical postmodern circle, it is poverty that can be identified as the salt of the earth. Poverty is the opposite of wealth because it is the singular possibility of all wealth.

12.2 The beautiful is lived as joy of the multitude; it is imagination and expression of all wealth in that absolutely singular moment when the poor lean over the edge of time. Aesthetic delight lies always in the perception of the immeasurable and there is no artistic creation that is not (or that could not be) delight of the poor as multitude. Consequently the monuments erected by the Powerful to the divinity of measure must be destroyed, just as the museums, veritable temples fashioned by the measure of Power, must be deserted. What is beautiful is the generation of subjectivity.

13.1 Finally, resistance and singularity find a third power in poverty: the capacity to give being meaning, that is to say, to construct common meanings for being. In this way poverty is experienced as action in the teleology of the common; action that marks the constitution of the common at each instant with the seal of resistance and of singularity, and so produces generation and innovation. By constructing common events, poverty endows being with teleological meaning.

13.2 To give meaning to languages and to innovate in the course of the circulation of meaning: these are the gifts that only poverty can bring. Every limit is overcome by *dispositifs* that are all characterized by a single teleological necessity: to remove and annul Power and misery, and so to make poverty – as the expression of the desire for life – triumph. One must thus return to the common the fullness of productive power and suppress all exclusions. The only rationality (were we to still amuse ourselves with fetishes of this sort) of the historical process (were we to still venerate teleological illusions of this type) is poverty!

13.3 The heart of common being beats to the rhythm of poverty and in its name; thanks to its power it leads into the heart of its vital

circulation. In other words the poor, as the form of resistance and of the affirmation of singularity, open themselves to the power that consists in giving meaning to the common.

13.4 Therefore, it seems that we must admit that this is the place where ethics is born.

13.5 And so in the present, the immeasurable is traversed by lines of force that are equally lines of power that trace creative *dispositifs* on the edges of time. And in so doing, project the eternal.

14.1 With this affirmed in principle, in what way precisely can one seize the productive key of common being – when considered from the standpoint of poverty – from within the teleology of the common? An attentive critic will always be able to point out that it does not follow from the recognition that poverty has the form and the power of resistance, that this power is able to constitute the determinations of meaning in a linear fashion. For the same reason, those who recognize in poverty the signature of singularity and of an indeterminate power of production cannot, on that basis alone, relate it back in linear fashion to the common. Unless one introduces surreptitiously a *deus ex machina*, or one assumes, as occurs in the ‘theologies of poverty’, the miracle of the untimely and extremely radical appearance of something that illuminates (and redeems) the ontology of the common. But we consider all illuminations to be illusory.

14.2 The ontological enquiry must thus be carried further. And although we can now assume that the answers we shall give will prove insufficient to overcome the difficulty that we have before us (which is still that of exhibiting the common *dispositifs* of innovation and of the eternal), the analysis will at least enable us to sketch out a more comprehensive scenario.

14.3 On the terrain of materialism, a conclusive answer to the questions we are posing can only be provided by a deeper reflection on the force of love, taking up the theme of *Alma Venus* again. But the experience of poverty shows us the ‘location’ of the ontological recomposition of innovation and of the eternal.

15.1 If the body is the ‘location’ of poverty, in conditions of poverty, the power of the body is exposed to the immeasurable. For in condi-

tions of poverty, the body is affected by the exclusion from the common that it constructs. Nevertheless, in conditions of poverty, that same body shows itself able to act, that is, as we have seen, of expressing resistance, defining singularity and bestowing meaning. And this is all the more the case the more the body is faced with poverty.

15.2 The Body, in opening itself to the immeasurable within the biopolitical, is affected by it; but its being affected is power. For if the body is the capacity to express affects, the body, when it shows itself as ‘being affected’ (i.e. able to undergo affect) by the productive relations of singularity, finds itself – on the contrary – augmented in its power. And this all the more the case the more poverty spurs it on.

15.3 ‘No one has yet determined the power of the body’, said Spinoza,¹⁷ taking up the experience of the revolution of bodies carried out in the Renaissance. This revolution, exalted by the new science and art, found its origin in the joyfulness of the body of the poor; in their laughter in the face of Power, in the free carnivals of *eros*, in the productive disenchantment of the bodies in struggle. This is the signal for the passage to that ‘other history’: in modernity transcendental discipline will no longer be able to contain this ‘other history’, but only to mystify or ape it.

15.4 In the postmodern context of our analysis, the power of the body is equally the power of knowledge. Reason, as we have already amply observed, by becoming common, by integrating the tool, becomes ever more corporeal; in the same way, the body becomes increasingly intellectual. Affect and knowledge, immersed in language (i.e. the most common form of the common), recompose themselves in the body and in opposition to all transcendental divisions. In other words, the affect integrates the common force of knowledge that traverses the production of life; and passion and reason together inhabit productive language. In other words, the common intellect (that is, the *General Intellect*)¹⁸ discovers *eros*, and love is intelligent.

15.5 When we say ‘general intellect’, we are speaking of the productive conditions of the postmodern era, in which intellectual and affective productive forces have become hegemonic and the primary fount of the valorization of the world. The general intellect is a machinic productive force, constituted by the multitude of corporeal singularities that form the *topos* of the common event of the general

intellect. With the generation of the general intellect we enter the epoch of the man-machine.

15.6 When poverty encounters the new revolution of bodies represented by the general intellect, the poor desire the machine in so far as the machine (tool or language) augments the productivity of bodies. That the poor have hated and resisted the machine, that they have at times proclaimed themselves General Ludd, has been because the capitalistic use of machines impoverished and destroyed the common productivity of the bodies of the poor. But in the epoch of the man-machine, when the productive machine is reappropriated by the body through language, machinic desire becomes fused with the desire [*cupiditas*] that seeks to generate new life, new bodies and new machines from poverty.

15.7 Therefore, in the biopolitical postmodern, when the poverty of bodies undergoes the most extreme violence, the power of the poor on the edge of time projects itself – despite everything – beyond measure; it is as though the immeasurable opens up within the bodies of the poor themselves. There are no linear presuppositions behind this production, and there is no linearity characterizing its course: it is in this that we recognize poverty. In as much as the power to act of the poor is corporeal, it is at once the expression of affects and of being affected, being worker and machine, living in pain and in joy, the production and reproduction of the man-machine and of the machinic body. Thus, in the postmodern era, we can situate the ‘location’ of the teleological movement of the common within the body of the poor.

16.1 If poverty represents the ‘location’ of the teleological movement of the common; if it is not only a matter of resistance, but of poverty’s surging up, through resistance, as singularity; and if it presents itself, through the construction of meaning, as common constitutive power – then are we also able to identify, in the ‘location’ of poverty, the seat of responsibility of a *dispositif* that leads from the common name to its ontological materialization, i.e. the setting in motion of materialist teleology? Can we once again take up the constitutive teleology of common being, but this time from ‘below’, from a reversed perspective than that given in the transcendental position on the common, the latest example of which is to be found in postmodernism?

16.2 In order to answer these questions we shall return to the analysis of the process characterized by the tool’s new nature, by the constructiveness of language, by the biopolitical materiality through which the postmodern common has come to be realized. This production repeated the characteristics of the physics of materialism in its chaotic linearity, in its powerful and eternal turbulence. The backdrop to this process was eternity. But, as we have seen, the common advances and innovates. The materialist physics of the *clinamen*, and following this modern asceticism, were both unable to explain this innovation. Therefore, the common appears as the product of an eternal agglomeration of elements, as a great shower of matter – or rather, as a linear constructive process, as an architectonic of ethical power. Finally, in the postmodern era, the common becomes the product of singular *dispositifs* of the multitude. An imaginary product. But what remains unclear in all of these cases, and paradoxically, this is all the more the case the more we approximate to ontological materiality, is the element in movement, i.e. innovation. We only begin to grasp it once we begin to seek it in poverty.

16.3 But if we situate it in poverty, can we really say that the aporia of materialism and the crisis of the common are resolved? That the circular character of this movement is definitively broken through the path of innovation? That innovation is expressed on a plane of immanence? That the eternal has really found a creative *clinamen*? And that the meaning – not the meaning marked by the inertia of physical movement, nor the ethical one of linear passion, but the creative one of innovation – is finally returned to the common?

16.4 If it were so, the power of poverty would – in itself (and *in reality*) – be not only the possibility of all things, but would be their determinate realization – the decision of the biopolitical, the immeasurable corporeal innovation. But one cannot draw this conclusion, because our premises have not yet been developed sufficiently. In effect, resistance, singularity and the production of meaning are not yet able to produce the autonomous imputation of action that we call ‘subjectivity’ (in the full sense of the term). So far we have only touched upon it.

17.1 We must be more careful. For the epistemological and ontological conditions of the innovation of the common – carried out

through a materialist teleology that originates from the 'below' of poverty – appear to have been constituted. But if one stops at this initial determination, the confrontation between the physical and circular teleology of postmodern thinking and the power of poverty (this power that goes 'beyond' measure) still risks appearing as a confrontation between structurally fixed positions – one which would therefore necessarily call for a dialectical solution.

17.2 This is what occurs in the most careful, critical, and attentive postmodern readings, as we have repeatedly underlined. In order to grasp the movement, they are forced to construct a structural dialectic that surreptitiously recuperates the margin or reinserts bare alterity within totality.

17.3 That is not the case here. Our insistence on poverty enables us to grasp it as a power that cannot be recuperated in any synthesis. Nevertheless this first position is insufficient. For what is missing from the beginning is something that renders the opening of power onto the plane of immanence not only corporeal (i.e. biopolitical), but also creative. Without this move the reasoning is open to crisis once again: a crisis that not only affects the epistemological and ontological consistency of the common name of poverty, but also the possibility of orientating oneself in the common itself.

17.4 But is this crisis real or apparent? In order to overcome it, if it is possible to do so, what other transitions are we in need of – while avoiding any structuralist deviation and every dialectical shortcut?

18.1 What is certain is that this crisis is no longer played out around the recognition of the opening of common time to the immeasurable, as was the case at the end of the prolegomena to 'The Common'. Here the crisis is transferred from poverty to power itself as the 'location' of corporeal singularization and, at the same time, as 'location' of the common.

18.2 In placing itself on the limit of time, between plenitude and the void, between the eternal and innovation, poverty demands love.

LOVE

1.1 Poverty and love are tightly interlinked. Not because *eros* is the son of misery (and of wealth, in that tension between animality and virtue embodied in the classical centaur) – on the contrary, but because from the start it represents, ontologically, the location from which the power of the whole of the possible is generated. When, having experienced it, we located the power of poverty through the rupture that resistance opened and, at the same time, through the meaning it bestowed on the common, we – in that way – exposed it to a creative and indestructible relation with all the possible *to-come*. But we also pointed out that this relation was uncertain, hazardous, and that once again it could flow back into the insignificance of the postmodern tautology. We must therefore once again analyse the experience of poverty as the ontologically constitutive location. But how are we to do this? The common name of love will be our guide.

1.2 That love is the constitutive *praxis* of the common has been a truth since antiquity. Love is the desire of the common, the desire (*cupiditas*) that traverses physics and ethics – Spinoza said as much. Knowing that desire (*cupiditas*) buries its roots in the eternity of being, we have still to demonstrate that the experience of love constitutes the dynamic of the innovation of being; but further, that love re-invents the relation between poverty and the common, and lays bare its absolute teleology; i.e. if poverty re-embodies the teleology of common action, then love makes a subject of it.

2.1 Without poverty there is no love. To speak of poverty is in some sense to speak of love. This appears evident even to the most elementary phenomenology: for it is beginning with poverty that love is set in motion. The poor person is the subject of love, even (and above all) when he is absolutely naked or is crushed by misery. It is the poor person who renders love real.

2.2 One of the greatest evils perpetrated by Christian philosophy consists in considering the poor person not as the subject but as the object of love. It is of course true that Christ's mysticism and theology overturns this proposition, such that in each poor person one discovers the figure of Christ. But in common usage, traditionally and in the

triumphal history of Christianity, the hegemonic affirmation is that of the object-like status of the poor. The very name of the poor is rendered unusable by pity. On the contrary, the corporeality of the poor, their immediate reality (contrary to what is sustained by the dominant philosophies, 'which cannot claim not to be Christian', in the words of Benedetto Croce), is given a subjective determination in love. The latter, after being animated by poverty, puts poverty in relation to the common.

2.3 The experience of poverty introduces one to the constitution of the common; the experience of love is an activity of construction of the common. If the common is the incarnation of love, then poverty provides the corporeal basis of this relation.

2.4 From this perspective one can say without any doubt that the relation between poverty and love is configured as an eternal return of the power of love to the location of poverty. And it is a creative return that installs itself in the physical and ethical context of the fall of the atoms of life, yet it breaks the linearity of their fall and so generates the common. It is the figure of the *clinamen*, but in subjective form; it is the chaos of the eternal cosmos, but brought back to subjectivity.

2.5 The common is animated and given subjective determination when born of the creative relation between poverty and love. It is for this reason that, in order to nourish the desire of the common, one must be or one must make oneself poor; and if one wishes to construct the common, one must love.

3.1 In materialism, love is the ontological power that constructs being. But being is not a given, but a constructed product. From the standpoint of *kairòs*, we have seen in the first part of these lessons how this construction of being occurs when the arrow of time precipitates into the void of the *to-come*. Further, we have also seen that love has the effect of making the relation between the eternal and the *to-come* immeasurable. From the ontological point of view we are confronted by the 'being that is there'; but this being is there in its quality as artefact, as a contradictory determination of the common that is always exposed to the immeasurability of the *to-come*. Materialist teleology exhibits an aleatory history of the construction of being and, through it, of the

common. And it cannot but exhibit this since it is a construction, an artefact (and the fact that in the biopolitical, nature and artefact can be used as interchangeable names, does not change the substance of the problem); but all that which is constructed is aleatory, i.e. is born of the necessity of exposing itself to the void; and the multitude is made common by nothing other than this necessity.

3.2 How, then, can we demonstrate that love is the key to the dynamic of the construction of being? We have already answered this question: because poverty and love construct the common name of the common, they consequently call the common into being. But if it is so, and it is indeed so, we must nevertheless deepen our exposition in order to shine a light on the entirety of the power of the ontological construction that love is capable of. To do so *in reality*, we must grasp this power in terms of the constitution of the ontological parameters, that is to say, of the production of the temporal and spatial dimensions of the world.

4.1 The first fundamental dimension of the experience of the world is that of time: love must therefore become the temporal construction of the world. Now, being is indeed constructed in accordance with the arrow of time that advances without conclusion. But temporality is unable to emancipate itself from the eternal and open itself to production – i.e. to augment the eternal, opening it constitutively to the *to-come* – except for when it is sustained by love. It is 'generation' that augments the eternal, that innovates being.

4.2 What do we mean then by 'generation'? 'Generation' is love that follows the thread of time from its beginning and so weaves its fabric in the common. Through generation love gives subjective determination to time by projecting it in the common. There is no solitary love: love constructs tools, languages and politics of being within the common; and in generating, it creates being, i.e. it renews the eternal. But in the common, generation is always singular because it is characterized by poverty. Common being is generated setting out from a multitude of singular existences, and the eternity of the common is a sky whose stars are singularities. Love continuously illuminates the stars of this common sky.

4.3 The Lucretian hymn to *Alma Venus* no longer resounds like a

desperate song in the night, representing the triumph of the cosmic turbulence of a tempest of atoms that repeat the blind eternity of the world; it is not a pathetic comet in the immobility of the skies. No, *Alma Venus* is here something entirely creative, it is a hymn that sings the continuous creation of the eternal. Generation is irreducible: the horrible fairy-tale that considers corruption and destruction as its necessary complements is merely the illusion of an immobile world, of a cosmos that adds up to zero, of a being deprived of love. Against this, once generated, being is no longer inclined towards death, and generation holds for eternity. Nothingness and death are prior to love, before the experience of the generation of being; then being is regenerated in the common and in the eternal.

4.4 Love thus embraces the arrow of time, making it creative, and it prolongs its trajectory within the tension of the generation of the *to-come*. Time is the offspring of love because only generation prolongs the temporality of the *to-come*. The time of the eternal is made immeasurable, through generation, within the *to-come*.

5.1 The second fundamental dimension of the experience of the world is that of space: love must therefore become the spatial constitution of the world. But spatial being is made and remade in the common, as we have repeatedly underlined from the standpoint of *kairòs*. It is only when love constructs the common name of space that it is called into existence. Or rather, love constructs space only in so far as space is constitutive of the common. But why does love construct space? Because love seeks the common, both the eternity of the common (i.e. the already generated) and the *to-come* of the common (i.e. that which is to be constituted on the edge of time). Space is the projection of the accumulation of the experience constitutive of being produced by love within the temporality that is rendered immeasurable between eternity and the *to-come*. This constitutive experience is proper to the multitude of temporality, i.e. to the ontological subjective determinations of time when – urged on by poverty – they extend themselves over the edge of being. Space is born from this experience; from this point the arrows of time, driven on by love, constitute while projecting themselves into the void in order to go on perpetually constructing common being in the modality of space.

5.2 That which, in time, is generation (i.e. a formidable innovation of the eternal) is, in space, co-operation. Co-operation is love that proceeds by making itself common among multiplicities. Consequently, it is the power of love multiplied. Co-operation is the space constituted by the common and so is multiplied in its productivity – productivity: nothing other than the capacity of the common to become increasingly common. Co-operation is a common generation of space. And the co-operation of singularities is more productive than any singular existence, because it expresses communally the striving of the multitude of singularities that attempt to endow being with meaning. But this striving would not in turn exist if co-operation were not an amorous force, i.e. the exploration by the poor singularity of the common as the expression of power.

6.1 The common name of love is thus the constitutive ontological power in the true sense – constitutive of time and space, adequate representation of common being and, above all, the establishment of the foundation of the biopolitical.

6.2 If generation and co-operation, i.e. love, augment the eternal, better still, render it ever more productive, the dilemma of materialism between eternity and innovation is resolved; and the fact that the eternal can be rendered more powerful disengages it from the paradox of classical metaphysics which, every time it spoke of the eternal, spoke of the global invariability of being. But resolving this dilemma also means arriving at the awareness that the common is a biopolitical production. In other words: all the temporal and spatial powers of love, in their precipitation towards and beyond the edge of being, make the common into a vital force that brings together – almost as though it were set in a natural context – the resistance and the power of the multitude.

6.3 From the standpoint of the epistemology of *kairòs*, it also means that in the biopolitical common, the power of knowledge is defined by the interweaving of intelligence and affect, of brain and body, that becomes concrete in the ontology of love announced by the phenomenology of poverty.

6.4 Love as biopolitical power is the name of absolute immanence, but of an immanence that generates. To insist on the biopolitical figure of the constitutive force of love means not only to offer elements

towards a solution of the enigma of ancient materialism but also to those of modern materialism, and more precisely still, to that of Spinoza's materialism. For the immanence of love to the ontological process was certainly formulated in terms of constitution and production in Spinoza; but the constitutive *praxis* was unable to unfold its generative potential by bringing together the logics of constitution in a biopolitical epistemology. Inhibited by the difficulties of modern rationalism, of the ideology of the man-man, Spinozism resorted to mysticism, and through mysticism there re-emerged the old and always repeated pantheist illusion of the immobility of being.

6.5 Only love produced by poverty constitutes the common in the biopolitical, i.e. puts the process of constitutive *praxis* back on its material feet. Therefore, absolute immanence presents itself not only as 'absolute democracy' – which is still merely a repetition of the typology of forms of government proscribed by the classical tradition, but rather as a constitutive *praxis* of the multitude and of all its powers of life brought into relation with a new virtue (*virtus*) of the common. When this virtue (*virtus*) is developed, the political is dissolved into the forms of life, so that we can here look back over ontology through the meshes and practices of the biopolitical. With no residues.

7.1 Thus in the biopolitical, the name of politics understood as command is dispelled. And if politics presents itself as command again, it is simply a matter of violent mystification. The self-government of the forms of life becomes the only possible horizon for the teleology of the common. If constitutive *praxis* proceeds through a common language and biopolitical *praxis* of the common, it is within this movement that we live and construct the common at the same time as we construct being. In the biopolitical traversed by love, politics also becomes common, along with the production and reproduction of life. Who doubts that these tasks of the *vita activa* constitute the specificity of our daily engagement? For politics is a daily task revealed by love as the productive power of the present. It is the quotidian responsibility for the generation of the eternal. In the common name of that which is productive and political one discovers one of the keys to the understanding of common being. Politics as command is thus the mystification of being that violently subtracts being from the common.

7.2 Every shortcut, every mystery, every hypostasis in the definition of Power is thus swept away by the simple sense of the common construction of being. In this way the cynical fables of the autonomy of the political, the perversions of Machiavellianism and the vulgarities of the Raison d'État are subjected to the destructive critique of the biopolitical, and thereby lose any credibility. And all this despite the massive and spectacular instrumentalization that is played out around them so as to hide their violent and parasitical character. But the real is stubborn. The real takes another course, traversed as it is by love that inclines poverty towards the common, that is to say within the teleological *praxis* of the common.

7.3 The materialist teleology of the common is revealed here as practical force, because its finality rests on the necessity (for production) of constructing, within the *vita activa*, its conditions of reproduction, and consequently of activating the singularities in view of the construction of the common – which is what the finality of the singularities themselves consists in. And what, therefore, is politics, if not the common transcription of this production of life and the interpretation of these material finalities? We shall return to this later, when we tackle the topic of the biopolitical not only from the standpoint of the teleological substance, but also from the point of view of the practical *kairòs*, that is to say, of the decision of the singularities that project it.

8.1 Let us return now to an observation we have made on more than one occasion, that is, to the fact that the revolution of the common presupposes postmodernity. Materialist critique (i.e. the teleology of the common) discovers in the postmodern era the emergence of the common name of the common in forms that are frequently contorted and mystified, but which are nevertheless strong and effective. To clarify this frequently reiterated observation, let us compare the (generic) postmodern perception of the common with the definition given it by modernity. Modernity constitutes the common as public space, as cultural and/or sociological and/or transcendental ensemble of individual interests. This constitution of the common is therefore understood as a transcendental (general and abstract) of the interests of individuals, and not as the product of the *vita activa* of singularities. It should also be borne in mind that, in modernity, interests are not individual only in

their social form; modernity expresses them in this way because it formulates them on the basis of a corresponding anthropology. Man and citizen, society and market, are derived from one and the same genealogy, which is that of individuality. Now, postmodernism, in as much as it is the philosophy of our epoch and the (generic) perception of the common, rejects the genealogy of modernity and rather poses citizenship (Man) and market (society) in a relation of uninterrupted circulation, almost as an equivalent tautology, and does so against the backdrop of a decisive attenuation of the progressive characteristics of history and of the exclusion of any prophetic destiny, going so far as to speak of an 'end of history'. Postmodernism radically de-substantializes the categories of modernity. It follows that the categories of the private (individual) and of the public (juridical abstraction, or socio-institutional concretization of a general norm of work, language and the *bios*) are now proposed as interchangeable functions in time and space. Postmodernism thus correctly registers the mutation that the organization of work, the structures of the markets and the order of the world have undergone, and enables us to subsume them in theory. Up until the present, perception, although generic, has been common; but it is equally from this point that the differing points of view emerge. The retainers of Power (as well as the philosophers who applaud their hegemony) do not, however, draw adequate consequences from the new perception of the world, from this revolution that has radically overturned the relations of production and the forms of life. If this perception of mutation has enabled one to move away from the ideologies of modern philosophy, this point of view repeats them in the evaluation of the situation, for it once again posits, in the present case, the modern measure of the transcendental (of the private, of capitalist appropriation, etc.) above and against the mutation which has taken place. The mutation reveals that the common is not an abstraction of individual interests, but is the circulation of singular needs; that the public is not a juridical category, but is biopolitical; that politics (law, government, etc.) are not above, but within life. Postmodern philosophy, inspired by Power, takes no account of all of this, if not so as to better adapt the old measures to the new immeasurable. Incredibly, postmodern philosophy, inspired by Power, seems here to realize (in relation to the categories of political thought and of juridical practice,

to not speak of other areas) that sort of 'communism of capital' of which Marx spoke when prophetically analysing the emergence of 'stock-companies'.¹⁹ But in the face of the generic perception of the common in the postmodern era there emerges another standpoint, and it is precisely to this that our critical analysis of postmodern philosophy refers. This standpoint denounces the mystification of the new relation that Power attempts to establish between the singularity and the common. And it insists on the necessity of providing the revolutionary mutation with revolutionary consequences.

9.1 This internal relation of the singular and the common must thus be explored so as to understand how love constructs being. And in order for us to begin to perceive this, let us recall that in the history of human *praxis*, love has always sought to become a technology of constitution and, it goes without saying, of the transformation of being. Love is rooted in that 'way up' that passes from the singular to the common and that determines, in each epoch, the specific materialist teleology of the common. Outside the maturation of this technology, the 'technologies of love' are incomplete and unsatisfied. They seek transcendence, instead of interpreting and developing immanence. They live the transcendental illusion itself, instead of innovating the world.

10.1 In this way Christian *caritas* (but this is already the case with the pagan *virtus* or *pietas*), in fighting against slavery, sweetens its contours but puts off the solution until the kingdom of God. What power is to be observed in that *caritas*! And what a revolution it sets in motion! But it is a subterranean power, which is never able to give a name to the real, which in other words is unable to recognize the common name of poverty without making reference to transcendence. This power comes to a standstill before the State, acknowledging its autonomous and necessary consistency. The illusion gives the heart power and, when necessary, nourishes martyrdom. The revolution is implicit, whispered to spirits, entrusted to angels. But in the age of the centaur, *caritas* can never – by means of the soul – redeem the bare matter that constitutes the body of the poor.

11.1 In the modern age the technology of love is ascetic. *Amor*, on the one hand reaches the lofty heights of metaphysical expression

constructed by the philosophies of immanence (from Bruno and Campanella up until Spinoza), on the other hand searches for a worldly course in the protestant theories of predestination – but it is unable to get a hold on the teleology of the common other than by insisting on the passion of the individual and entrusting itself to an improbable community of ends. A sort of providence has moved from the transcendent to the transcendental so as to bring together the ethical ends and the ascetic individual, linking itself to the genealogy of the social, but always understood exclusively in terms of individuals. It comes to a standstill before the law, which is the law that extols the contract and exploitation in the hypothetical perspective of the community of ends and of progress. Love and its technologies become historical, they attach themselves to an object-subject to be constructed historically, but are always closed in the indecent circle of individualities. What formidable powers and illusions are expressed there! And what pride is revealed in the affirmation of the historical power of the man-man! The asceticism of work, wherein resides the ethicality of modern Man, is here the centre of the genealogy of the common. The man who dominates this tableau is the man who works hard and with a civic sense pays the price, the man who from being a worker becomes a citizen. But all this unfolds within a horrible secret: of the one who, in sacrificing himself, wants Power; of the private sphere that, through a juridical framework, constitutes the public in its image and only elevates itself through exploitation.

12.1 'Militancy' is the third technology of love to offer us the experience of the common. It corresponds to the highest maturation of the technology of the common. It was anticipated ambiguously (and was pre-constituted in an almost vicious manner) in the tradition of revolutionary social movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Anticipated and pre-constituted because, in this history, singularity and the common effectively become, within the experience of the multitude, a form of co-operation; ambiguously and viciously, because this process of the co-production of the common has been broken by prophetic and consequently bureaucratic moments that overlay the movement of the multitude; but also because the definition of the common has, with increasing frequency, been confused with the

achievement of modernity and has been subjected to its construction. In that tradition to which we refer, instead of speaking of 'the multitude', one would speak of 'the masses'. But in the concept of 'the masses' there lived the shadow of the transcendental – when one did not go to the extreme of configuring the term as a dialectical moment. Today, against this, outside every preconception and all prefiguration, can love constitute an adequate technology in the heart of militancy? And what would it consist in? As we have already said, it could consist in co-operation, i.e. in the co-production of singularities and of the multitude. Therefore, in place of the 'masses' we now have the 'multitude' – which is precisely the always open striving of the multiple singularities within the constitution of the common. Militancy, as the *praxis* of love, reveals the coexistence of the dynamics of poverty and of the constitution of the common.

12.2 But why do we continue to refer to this technology of love with the old name of 'militancy'? Has not this old name been completely discarded (and objectively displaced) following the crisis of real socialism? Perhaps. But who will ever forget the virtuous energy of those movements, of those men and those multitudes that in the course of more than a century rebuilt hope? And who invented, in new forms, the common name of the common in revolutionary practice?

12.3 Another objection to the use of the old name of 'militancy' seems more pertinent. Given the new biopolitical dimensions (within which the definition of the technology of love is about to be provided), the name of militancy lacks the entrepreneurial and constitutive qualities that give birth to linguistic, productive and political networks that define its novelty. But what should take the place of 'militancy'? 'Entrepreneur', 'political entrepreneur' or 'social entrepreneur'? What contradictions would be provoked by such a linguistic contamination! (Should we use the anodyne name of the 'voluntary sector'? But does this not bring us back to a transcendental culture from which we are now far away?)

12.4 So, despite these reservations, let us for now keep to the terrain of militancy. And let us insist on the material dimension of the common name rather than on a linguistic formula. Militancy is therefore resistance, rupture, the discovery of singularity (of itself and of the event), and the production of the common name. These are the

essential moments of this experience, which are what render it irreducible to any other. The intensity of the common that it comprises is precisely what defines it. 'Militancy of the common'. Therefore, it is an experience that develops within the complex totality of the biopolitical. It does not create superstructures that hold it back or sustain it in illusory form; this experience expresses itself as constituent power across every articulation of the biopolitical experience. It traverses the reproduction of life, just as it works on the production of relations and of the social relations through which values are formed; at each moment it is affective energy and rational passion. It is the construction of the multitude through the production of subjectivity. It is at once the capacity to command oneself and the common in command.

13.1 But if we wish to deepen further our concept of the militancy of the common understood as practice of poverty and love, we must turn our attention to the radical transformation of the relationship between anthropology and ontology that is presupposed by the practice of the common. The construction of the common does indeed take into account the modifications of the ensemble of anthropological conditions. And this is possible today not only because the revolution of the tool and of language completely transform sensoriality and affectivity, but also because the limits of the human being are extended and now comprise the environmental context. These anthropological qualifications cannot be considered purely extensively; this is only the case – at least in part – in modernity. In postmodernity, the transformation of the tool, the productive hegemony of linguistic practices and the formation of a biopolitical context within the production of subjectivity, metamorphose the human being and realize its hybridization across all pre-established boundaries.

13.2 All this is well known. What we want to underline in this transformation is the power of love, i.e. the technology of loving and the militancy of the common, which develops into the capacity to meaningfully arrange the diagrams of the common through metamorphosis. Overcoming the 'natural' limits, the contamination of languages, mixing of genera and races and the general hybridization of being are all constitutive elements of the common in postmodernity. The only problem is that of endowing the interweaving of languages

and of bodies with the meaning of the common; and it is indeed love that takes up this task by referring back and verifying once again the teleology of the common understood as an experiment in metamorphosis. In postmodernity the common presents itself as metamorphosis. The materialist teleology is a teleology of metamorphosis. Anthropology and ontology live in this *milieu* of hybridization, in the heart of this process of love that the new technologies of love are able to endow with meaning – and that thereby become indistinguishable, because the one has become the prosthesis of the other.

13.3 One final remark regarding these reflections on anthropology and ontology concerns the question of poverty. If we look at it attentively, this experience includes a first definition of the new relationship that we are describing – in as much as it is the possibility of all positivity, because it is lacking in all determination of wealth, of inclusion and of liberty. This lack is total. Therefore it places poverty (as anthropological experience) in relation to the ontological totality. The experience of love, when it comes to maturity through militant activity, exalts this constitutive relationship and reshapes the general fabric of experience. It is from this standpoint that we can best define that same concept of metamorphosis. It is no more a concept designating the transformation from one natural or human form to another, as in the epoch of the centaur, any more than it designates the metamorphosis of work, of commodities and of capital (that is followed by the metamorphoses of spirit, whether individual or absolute), as in the epoch of the man-man. Here the concept of metamorphosis designates the creation of new forms – *tout court* – in and by the common. The completely open possibility that is given in poverty shows itself here as creative plenitude. The ancient and modern enigma of the relation between eternity and innovation is resolved, once again, thanks to the determination of poverty-love as the energy that constitutes the new forms of the common.

14.1 The requalification of the nexus between anthropology and ontology leads us on to ask ourselves about the procedures of that technology of love that we have called the 'militancy of the common'; and in particular to that dimension of the procedure that is immediately common, and that tradition has handed down to us under the

name of politics. If politics is given to us in this way, we must settle our accounts with it as such. We must do so radically, entirely destructively, because traditionally the political is the opposite of love. And yet it is a form of the common; up until the entry into postmodernity, it has even represented its highest form. The role that mythology and teleology played in the centre and at the margins of the epoch of the centaur was taken up by politics in the age of the man-man. But today it is no longer so. And when it still presents itself as such, politics (and with it all the other fetishes that lay claim to the form of the common: property, right, civil society and its various institutions) represents a ghastly anachronism. Closed in this anachronism that tears it from what it wants to represent, politics becomes spectacle and violence. The parasitical character of the political has become total. The technology of love thus denounces this figure of Power. It goes against it with that same naturalness with which the lion tears the lamb to pieces. But what else do you expect when the most intelligent political scientists define politics as the practice of systemic compatibility? This definition is sufficient to justify the contempt, and often the disgust, with which even the most intelligent politicians are effectively considered.

15.1 The common is anything but accountancy, compatibility and systematization. Today, the militancy of the common takes the place of politics. What does it consist in, how does it operate? Militancy, this construction of the common, acts in the common by producing meaning. Will it still be possible to call it 'politics' and consider it as an activity that takes up the same space occupied by modern politics? It acts on a different terrain, that of the totality of life. From this point of view 'biopolitics' is already a more plausible approximation to the common name. For biopolitics brings to the forefront the constitutive movement, the productive force and the procedures of love understood as energies that traverse common matter and transform it. But this is still only an approximation. In reality we will only be able to construct a common name in a definitive manner once love, as technology of the common, has invested the entire political context, destroying and replacing it.

15.2 That is precisely what is happening: since 1968 the history of humanity has taken this course; the materialist teleology of the

common is engaged in this task. And it is precisely at the moment when Power celebrated its most propagandized success – that is, postmodern globalization – that the genealogy of the common transformed itself into a technology of love and began to emerge. The destruction of the separation between public and private, nomadism and the flexibility of labour-power, the new configuration of the social as the structure of the common (in all its biopolitical dimensions), the emergence of mass intellectuality – here are just some of the powerful prefigurations of the common animated by love. Every attempt by Power, by 'politics', to throw new nets over this powerful production of subjectivity, determines new resistances, new communities, new programmes on the side of poverty; but also movements and powers that go against, that trace new horizons and create 'another' order of life: the common. It is politics in its entirety that is assailed by the common movement of poverty and of the militancy of the common – it is 'another common', other than politics, to which love gives meaning.

15.3 So what is 'politics' today? It is the activity of production of the common name between poverty and love. But how? And then?